

STATES OF JERSEY

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MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT REFORM: COMPOSITION AND ELECTION OF THE STATES ASSEMBLY (P.151/2004) – THIRD AMENDMENTS

Lodged au Greffe on 26th October 2004
by the Deputy of St. Ouen

STATES GREFFE

MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT REFORM: COMPOSITION AND ELECTION OF THE STATES
ASSEMBLY (P.151/2004): THIRD AMENDMENTS

- (1) *Delete paragraph (a)(iii), and in paragraph (a)(iv), delete all the words after the words “a new category of States member” and substitute the words, “with 35 such members being elected in the 12 Parishes in the following numbers, thereby making a total of 47 States members including the Parish Connétables –*

St Helier	12
St Lawrence	2
St Peter	2
St Brelade	4
St Ouen	1
St Mary	1
St John	1
Trinity	1
St Martin	1
Grouville	2
St Saviour	5
St Clement	3

- (2) *After paragraph (a) insert the following new paragraph and renumber accordingly –*

“(b) to agree that no elections for Senator should take place in October 2005 and that the membership of the States should be reduced to 47 with effect from December 2005 when the term of office of 6 Senators expires.”.

DEPUTY OF ST. OUEN

REPORT

I am proposing these amendments so that States members are able to consider alternatives to those currently proposed.

The position of the Connétables

Currently the Special Committee is proposing that the 12 Parish Connétables should no longer be members of the States by virtue of their office. I do not subscribe to that view for the following reasons –

1. With the recent review of the relationship between Parishes and the Executive in May 2002 and the subsequent adoption of (P.40/2004) in May 2004, it is essential that all Connétables remain and actively participate in the States enabling that relationship to develop.
2. The Connétables as heads of the Parishes are responsible not only for the day to day running of their Parishes but all income and expenditure related to it. This I believe cannot be viewed in isolation and must be considered when looking at Islanders' overall contributions to maintaining the infrastructure of this Island. For this reason alone it is essential for the Connétables to remain members of the States and have a say.
3. The role of the Connétable is totally different to that of a Deputy or Senator and as such cannot easily be taken on by another member.
4. The Honorary Police system equally deserves recognition and a voice in our States Assembly. This is currently the responsibility of the Connétables.

I am therefore proposing that the 12 Parish Connétables remain as members of the States, and the maintenance of Parish elections. I believe that it is extremely important that, with the advent of Ministerial Government, we maintain strong links with our local parochial government.

Parishes versus 6 Constituencies

I do not support the creation of 6 constituencies, as it will create a disconnect with the existing Island Parochial system. Where will be the necessary links to ensure that our effective local government continues especially without Connétables in the States? How will the electorate of the 6 constituencies be able to hold those elected to account? Even the Clothier Panel concluded that it was preferable to retain the Parochial system. They acknowledged that each representative having a small constituency of voters where opinions can more easily be sampled and judged, was better than a large one. Equally the Panel stated that a relatively small constituency gives easy access to the representative concerned for those with something to say. I am, like many, totally committed to retaining the Parish and honorary system, which needs to be enhanced, not weakened by ignoring one of the main foundation stones of our Island Government.

Total States membership and the progressive abolition of the position of Senator

I support the views of the Special Committee that we are able to reduce the current number of States members to 47. Where I differ from the Committee's views is the way that this is achieved.

As can be seen from my amendment (2) the proposal would reduce the number of States members by agreeing that no elections for Senators should take place in October 2005. This would automatically reduce the total number of States members by 6 from 53 to 47. It seems to be the easiest way to achieve the desired result with only a minor change to the relevant legislation required to achieve this objective. It would also be consistent with the view that an "Island wide" mandate is not essential to achieve good government. This view has been supported by the Clothier Panel and subsequently by the Special Committee proposals. Clearly it is more important that the Island's electoral system is both fair and equitable ensuring all electors are fully represented.

Unlike others I am not proposing a dramatic reduction in States members, as I believe that currently we have not

reorganised our Civil Service workforce to ensure adequate accountability enabling further delegation of powers. Also, until we have instigated all aspects of ministerial government it would be unwise to rush into hasty decisions regarding membership numbers based solely on conjecture rather than fact. It is true however that the majority of individuals involved in the extensive Machinery of Government Reforms consultation process agreed that a reduction could be made.

The second part of my amendment (1) is to address how the future make up of the States would look if the Connétables were retained and 12 Senator positions were progressively abolished by 2008. The aim would be to allocate the seats of the 6 remaining Senators whose term ends in October 2008 to the Parishes, thus removing most of the discrepancies within the current system. In summary, 2 would be added to the existing number in St Helier, 1 in St Peter, 1 in St. Brelade, 1 in Grouville and 1 in St. Clement.

Finally I do believe that the electorate require from any prospective candidate, a better understanding of that person's policies and objectives if they were elected. This must be addressed in any transitional arrangements required to enable these amendments to come into effect.

Financial and manpower implications

Overall cost implications are difficult to assess however based on the current pay levels one should see a direct annual reduction of up to £232,500 as of November 2005. Furthermore one should see cost reductions related to indirect support offered to States members as well as savings on election costs.