

STATES OF JERSEY



MINISTERIAL GOVERNMENT: REVIEW

**Lodged au Greffe on 10th December 2008
by the Deputy of St. John**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to carry out a review of the current system of Government and present a report with fully researched recommendations to the States within 9 months and to lodge a proposition so that the proposals for improvement may be debated by the States.

DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN

REPORT

The introduction of Ministerial Government hasn't arrived without its problems. During the recent Senatorial and Deputies' Elections it was made apparent that States Members aren't given sufficient information from the Ministers. Having spent 3 years out of the Chamber I have had time to listen to many debates and take soundings from the public at large. Many are unhappy that Ministerial Government is not fully democratic and needs to be more transparent; people have said we need to revisit Clothier and put in place the checks and balances recommended, along with an election for all Members on one day every 4 years.

I recall, on occasions, reading in the media, a Minister being quoted as saying he considered he had too much power and, also hearing a comment from another Minister having been challenged on the cost of a new air route, answers could not be given because of confidentiality. We have seen a Minister fail to notify the States that a conflict existed and this prevented the Minister from carrying out duties in full; it took some months for the Minister to notify States colleagues of the conflict and hand over this area of responsibility to the Assistant Minister.

Furthermore, I have seen from outside the Chamber the débâcle between the Customs and Police Departments which has left the relationship between both forces strained, to say the very least. After the events had been resolved because of the lack of input from the Minister by failing to meet all the officers involved to assure them of their worth, it is very important that your frontline officers know they have the support of politicians. As a former Home Affairs Committee member who had responsibility for Customs, and in part certain areas of the States Police, I can testify to this.

More recently we have seen in newspaper headlines (17th November 2008), where the Constable of St. Helier cancelled a trip to Germany as he had concerns that there was a crisis of leadership in the Island. There are many other examples I could refer to but will wait for the debate, but will say I note in a candidate's statement for Chief Minister that he too realises more needs to be done to embrace some of the Clothier recommendations.

I therefore ask members to support my proposition.

Financial and manpower statement

The payback of any costs of this review would be substantial in that having in place a more transparent and joined-up system of Government would result in financial and manpower savings year on year.