

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES
COMMITTEE**

**BY DEPUTY D.J. DE SOUSA OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 11th MAY 2010**

Question

“Will the Chairman inform the Assembly what steps, if any, the Privileges and Procedures Committee have taken toward a single date for the 2011 elections and would she also advise whether the Committee is continuing to look at bringing proposals forward to reform the constitution of the States Assembly and, if not, why not and will the Committee consider these issues?”

Answer

The Committee considered the draft States of Jersey (Period for Election) (Jersey) Regulations 201- at its meeting on 27th April 2010. The Regulations are designed to implement the decision taken by the States on 10th September 2009 to institute a single election day. The Committee requested some amendments to the accompanying Report and the draft Regulations were subsequently finalised and lodged ‘au Greffe’ yesterday. The Committee will be asking for them to be debated on 22nd June 2010. As explained in the Report accompanying the Regulations, there was a delay between the September 2009 decision and the lodging of the Regulations because PPC needed to discuss the interaction between the single election day and the date of the debates on the Annual Business Plan and Budget .with the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

Complete proposals for reform have been discussed by the States on numerous occasions and rejected. On 5th June 2007, the then Privileges and Procedures Committee lodged the proposition: Composition of the States – revised structure and referendum (P.75/2007 refers), which was rejected by the States on 18th July 2007 by 26 votes to 21. The following day the Assembly rejected by 32 votes to 13 the proposition of Senator J.L. Perchard to hold a referendum to seek the views of the electorate on options for the future composition of the States, but adopted the proposition of the Comité des Connétables to implement a single election day and a 4-year term of office for the 12 parish Connétables (P.54/2007 refers). On 26th September 2007 the States adopted Deputy P.N. Troy’s proposition: Deputies: extension of term of office to 4 years, by 22 votes pour and 18 votes contre, but when the draft legislation to give effect to this decision was brought back in January 2008 (P.183/2007 refers) the decision was overturned, principally because the then PPC had also proposed reform to the position of Senator as it was clear that a 4 year term for some members was not workable with the 3 year election cycle needed to elect half of the Senators for a 6 year term. (It should be noted that in accordance with new Standing Order 89A introduced in early 2008 any proposals which alter the membership of the States, members’ term of office, or their constituencies, must now be decided by a majority of elected members (currently 27) and if the debate on Deputy Troy’s proposition had taken place after that was in force the proposition would not have been approved).

After its appointment in December 2008 the Privileges and Procedures Committee agreed that the reform of the composition of the States was its top priority. Accordingly, in May 2009, the Committee lodged ‘au Greffe’ the proposition: Composition and Election of the States: Revised Structure (P.72/2009 refers). This was debated by the States on 9th September 2009 and rejected by 38 votes to 10. The Committee made it clear at the time that it saw no merit in continuing to undertake more research or seek further options, as it genuinely believed that there were no other acceptable, workable, options available (see page 32, P.72/2009).

Despite the Assembly’s apparent lack of appetite for overarching constitutional reform in the formats suggested to date, the Committee recognises that this matter falls within its terms of reference and on 30th March 2010 (Minute No. A5 refers) agreed that, although the proposals on the single election day should be brought forward first in isolation, there could be merit in considering whether there was any scope to carry out a further body of work in respect of individual reform measures such as a 4-year term of office, a move to a spring election, and a reduction in the number of States members.

