

3.3 Deputy J.A. Martin of the Chief Minister regarding the date on which Senator P.F.C. Ozouf received a letter of appointment as Assistant Chief Minister in November 2014 [1(295)]

Will the Chief Minister advise whether Senator Ozouf received a letter of appointment as one of his Assistant Ministers on 4th November 2014, before the Council of Ministers and Scrutiny Panel chairmen were appointed?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

Yes, that is correct. I was re-elected as Chief Minister on 3rd November and the following day I wrote to each ministerial nominee, appointed Senator Ozouf as an Assistant Minister, and tabled before the Assembly my nominations including an outline of the position in respect of Senator Ozouf.

3.3.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Is this a usual practice? Would not the Chief Minister normally wait for his Council and have a discussion and, secondly, did he appoint his other Assistant Minister on 4th November with an appointment letter?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I think it is fair to say it is not usual because in this instance at that point I was both the Chief Minister Designate for the new term of office and the Chief Minister, because the Chief Minister remains Chief Minister even while there has been a Chief Minister Designate appointed until the final Minister is appointed. So in this instance I was able to appoint Senator Ozouf as an Assistant Minister but I think it is potentially something that P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) might want to look at into the future because any new Chief Minister that is retiring or not been re-elected would only be able to appoint them then for a set number of 2 or 3 days, depending on how long that process took. So it is an anomalous situation where you have one Chief Minister then becoming the next Chief Minister, and I will be speaking to P.P.C. to see if they want to make any changes to that particular piece of legislation.

3.3.2 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that ... I see the Chief Minister's point that he was already Chief Minister but this was a new Council of Ministers and even in the letter of recommendation or recommendation for the Minister for Economic Affairs, the Chief Minister took out 3 responsibilities, which he had already given to his Assistant Minister, without any discussion. Did he know then that that Minister was going to be elected because it was contested? Deputy Andrew Lewis went for the job. I am really disappointed. Does the Chief Minister not then also agree it is about time we sorted out how, when and who is elected as Assistant Ministers?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Yes, I do. That is why I said what I did at the last States sitting, and ever since then people have been accusing me of a power grab. It is not a power grab. It is about making the system fit for purpose. It is about avoiding those anomalies and it is about creating unity in this Assembly for the benefit of the public. Assistant Ministers that can work in departments, help Ministers make decisions, put their skills and talents towards the Executive and, at the same time, scrutinise other departments as well in the best interests of the public. The Deputy is absolutely right.