

### **3.12 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Chairman of Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding the cost of the proposed survey of voters in the last election:**

Would the Chairman inform Members of the cost of the proposed survey into, among other things, the reasons for people not voting in the last elections and how the results will be followed up?

#### **Connétable D.F. Gray of St. Clement (Chairman of Privileges and Procedures Committee):**

The Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC) has begun considering how to go about bringing forward proposals on the further composition and election of the States. In its initial discussion, PPC recognised that this is likely to be a very controversial issue and one where it may be difficult to achieve any political consensus. The Committee also decided it would be ill-advised to bring forward any proposals without a proper analysis of the problem which any proposal is designed to solve. One of the problems the Committee feels must be addressed is the issue of low turnouts. The Committee has sought advice from the Statistics Unit and the Communications Unit on the appropriate way to go about this research. A number of professional organisations in the U.K. and Jersey have been asked to provide proposals by the end of May on how they would undertake a survey on these issues. The Committee will consider the various proposals put forward in early June or make a final choice at that stage. As the Committee is currently awaiting proposals and will make a choice based partly on cost, I hope that Members will appreciate that I would prefer not to give any public information of the sort of cost that we are expecting although I would be happy to talk to Members privately on a confidential basis about this. I would simply say that we recognise that a properly conducted survey that will have the necessary credibility is needed, and we are realistic about the cost that will entail. Once the results of the survey have been received, the Committee will assess whether there is any clear indication of measures that could be brought forward to increase turnout. It would be premature to suggest what these measures might be until the analysis has been received. Once proposals have been put forward later this year by the Committee and considered by the States, it is likely that the Committee will recommend that a referendum of the overall package be organised before any proposals are implemented.

#### **3.12.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

I have been slightly caught by the word “referendum”. Would the chairman acknowledge, therefore, that the survey, in a sense, amounts to a referendum? Would he further acknowledge that there is liable to be a high degree of public cynicism in that the people whose answers are most needed for the survey (i.e. the non-voters) are those who are probably going to be the least likely to participate?

#### **The Connétable of St. Clement:**

Well, one would hope, as it is going to be professionally organised, it will cover the voters and non-voters in a professional manner. I cannot remember what the other question was.

**3.12.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:**

I assume, Sir... does it amount to a referendum?

**The Connétable of St. Clement:**

No, Sir, because a referendum, we hope, will bring out as many electors as are on the electoral register. Obviously, a survey will not cover that sort of scope.

**3.12.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Has the Chairman given any consideration to the introduction of compulsory voting, Australia-style, or linking the right to vote with the unique identifier attached to migration registration policy?

**The Connétable of St. Clement:**

That might be a result of the survey conducted, but at this time, that has not been considered.

**3.12.4 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Would the Chairman not consider that really what he is doing is really a re-run of what has already happened and really is a considerable waste of time? If so, could he also tell us how much this is likely to cost the taxpayer?

**The Connétable of St. Clement:**

Well, as far as the latter question is concerned, I think I answered that by saying that at this stage we would prefer not to reveal that because that is part of the consultation, part of the proposals that we are getting from the various organisations. We did not feel the MORI poll, which I think the Deputy is referring to, covered the areas. Much of that poll was about the system of government, and this has now been addressed with the machinery of government changes. So, I do not think what we are proposing covers that area.

**The Bailiff:**

We come then to a question by the Deputy of St. Peter. Deputy Pitman has indicated that she would like to put her question to the Minister of Education as a written question, so we come then to the question after.

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

May I ask a question of the Deputy? Whether it is right that as her husband is very much involved, that she should be asking questions of this nature of the Minister of Education? In view of her very close interest in the matter, whether it is correct? I feel a little bit uneasy about it, Sir.

**Deputy S. Pitman:**

Yes, there is no conflict of interest. This is a community service and I am concerned mainly of the welfare of youth workers in the service, and also young people who use the service. I see no conflict of interest.

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

But, Sir, I believe there is a conflict of interest. Her husband is a youth worker and the questions relate to youth work and I would take a step backwards if it was me. I believe that it is a conflict of interest and it should not happen.

**The Bailiff:**

Senator, the questioner has withdrawn the question as an oral question and is going to resubmit it as a written question. I am sure she will take into account the points that you have made and take advice if necessary. Then, if the question is put as a written question, you may raise the matter as a point of order or of privilege in due course.

**Senator M.E. Vibert:**

Just interesting on that information to Members, I was looking at the Standing Order on the conflict of interest as regarding written questions and it does not seem to be as broadly drawn as those regarding debates. I have asked the Privileges and Procedures Committee, of which I am a Member, to re-look at that Standing Order.