

3.13 Senator S. Syvret of the Chairman, Comité des Connétables regarding the discharge of duties by Connetables under the Firearms (Jersey) Law 2000:

Is the Chairman satisfied that all Connétables are correctly discharging their duties under the Firearms (Jersey) Law 2000 and if not would he explain whether there are any deficiencies in the application of the Law that he is aware and to which Parish this applies, if any, and whether any difficulties exist with the Parish in issuing firearms licences?

Connétable K.P. Vibert of St. Ouen (Chairman, Comité des Connétables):

Yes, Sir, I am satisfied that Parish Connétables are correctly discharging their duties under the Law. I welcome the Senator's question because it gives me the opportunity to point out to the States and to the attending media that since the promulgation of the Firearms (Jersey) Law 2000 all - and I repeat all - the required paperwork for every application, be it for the grant, variation or renewal of a firearms certificate, has been forwarded to the States of Jersey Firearms Index Unit and has been recorded in the central firearms index maintained by the States of Jersey Police. Police checks have been undertaken on all applications prior to consideration of any application. The issue raised in the *Evening Post* regarding the non-compliance of 4 Parishes was an administrative one and following identification of which Parishes were involved - which I would say only occurred last Thursday - I can give an assurance that the information required should be made available by close of play today. I would further point out that all the information has previously been viewed and processed by the Index Unit at the time of application. As to the question as to whether difficulties exist for the Parishes, if any such do exist they will be identified and addressed by the proposed review of the Law.

3.13.1 Senator S. Syvret:

Could the Chairman inform the Assembly which of the 12 Connétables was the one responsible for issuing or granting or renewing a firearms licence to the individual with firearms and drugs convictions?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I have not been made privy to that information yet, Sir.

3.13.2 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:

I wonder if the Chairman of the Comité will confirm that in fact as far as he is concerned the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act applies?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I cannot confirm that but I can confirm that under the Home Office guidelines to chief officers on the mainland, it says that they should consider the application firstly from the standpoint of the applicant rather than from that of a possible objector. Each case must be judged on its own merits, being mindful of the consistent administration of the law and the need to provide fair and equitable treatment to all applicants.

3.13.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérrissier:

Could the Chairman please confirm, following on the question from the Connétable of Grouville, that there have been no instances where the advice of the States of Jersey Police has been disregarded or denied or whatever?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

That is my understanding, although I have not sought positive proof of that statement.

3.13.4 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Can I just seek to get the Constable to answer the question the other way round. Are Constables taking the advice of the Police in saying that, yes, a firearm certificate could be issued but not agreeing it because of other information. Does he have any statistics to back any evidence of that arrangement where the Constables are being tougher than the Police are saying?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

We are going into a field where each Connétable has the consideration to be made on the evidence provided before him or her, only him in this case at the moment. Certainly from my own point of view - from the Parish of St. Ouen - if there is a query on the application form when it is returned to the Parish Hall, I will then discuss that with the relevant authorities at the States of Jersey Police prior to making my consideration.

3.13.5 Senator S. Syvret:

Does the Chairman not accept there was a very, very important issue of public accountability here? If he is not at present party to the information as to which of the 12 Connétables was licensing firearms for a person with firearms convictions, will he undertake to find out that information and make it public and, as a matter of general policy, will the Constables be prepared to stand up and be counted for their decisions? Does he also believe that in the event of a firearms licence being issued to somebody with criminal convictions, if they were then to commit further criminal offences, particularly involving the firearm, that that Connétable would have no other decent option other than to resign?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I can confirm that if that information is made available to me, I will ensure that the matter is properly looked at and properly investigated and that any mistake in the application of the Law is addressed by the bodies which need addressing them. I would refer the matter to the Attorney General.