

2.2 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the nature of police investigations into certain operational practices within Jersey Customs:

Will the Minister advise Members of the nature of the police investigations into certain operational practices within Jersey Customs and explain why the investigations are not being carried out internally by the Customs Service?

Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John (Assistant Minister for Home Affairs):

I can confirm that the following consultation with the Law Officers' Department, the force is conducting an investigation with a view to submitting a report to the Attorney General. As the investigation is live no further information can be given at this time.

2.2.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am just concerned about the operation of the Customs Service. Are the people suspended and are those people who are suspended, are their places being implemented by someone else? I think it is interesting that Customs are running the country.

The Deputy of St. John:

I can confirm there are no suspensions at this time, Sir.

2.2.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

Why is it that when I spoke to the Deputy on the Friday afternoon he was unable to tell me any of the detail in relation to something that was occurring and yet States Members learn about the detail in the *Jersey Evening Post*. Why is it that matters of this nature that are sensitive appear in the newspapers and other forms of media when States Members are unaware of the issues themselves?

The Deputy of St. John:

The detail the Deputy is referring to is in fact that there is no detail in that press report, if you look at it carefully. In fact, some of it was wild speculation so I can confirm that ordinarily we would inform Members of this House when appropriate before the media. That is certainly the process that we would take. Some of the speculation in the media was speculation and I cannot really comment on the case any further. You will see from that reporting that they made little comment as well because they did not have any information of any substance.

2.2.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Could I ask then, Sir, how the media came to know about the situation? Although there is no detail, how did the *Jersey Evening Post* know about the situation?

The Deputy of St. John:

Knowing that this situation was occurring, a press release was drawn-up should we have had an inquiry from the press - which we ended up having - and so the release was made and you will see from the statement it was very brief because we cannot give much information at this time. Quite how the press found out about it, I am afraid I do not know. They made a call to our department to ask some questions. We gave them a brief statement which was already prepared in anticipation of this possibly happening. How, effectively what the Deputy may refer to as a leak occurred, I do not know, Sir.

2.2.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Last question, Sir: would it not be then if it is prudent to prepare for the media inquiring, a general statement prepared for the States Members at the same time. If you are going to prepare information for the media in case they get leaked the story, is it not also appropriate the States Members are given a brief at the same time?

The Deputy of St. John:

Ministers that needed to know about this were made well aware and it... should in the future it be necessary to make such a statement to Members, we will certainly consider it, but like I say, this is a very sensitive inquiry and there was, at that stage, no need for Members to know. But I do accept the Deputy's concern that Members perhaps should have known about this before it broke in the press. I do accept that, but it was a sensitive inquiry and it was... information was released on a "need to know" basis and that field was quite narrow.