

2.14 The Deputy of St. Martin of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the appointment of an Acting Deputy Chief of the States of Jersey Police:

Is the employment of a retired overseas police officer to the temporary post of Acting Deputy Chief an indication that none of the current top management of the States of Jersey Police is fit to act above their present rank? If so, what impact on officers' morale will this loss of this ideal development opportunity have?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs):

The answer to the first part of the question is no. The answer to the second part of the question is that it is a rhetorical question, it is not a real question, it is an attempt to make a statement through a question and I do not agree with the implications of the question.

2.14.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Well, will the Minister agree then that the appointment of an Acting Deputy Chief is denying officers the opportunity of proving their worth by acting-up and thereby the opportunity of ... sorry, the appointment of the Acting Deputy Chief is to the detriment of local officers?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

One senior officer was in fact acting-up for a period of in excess of 3 months but the pressures upon the leadership team are such that it was necessary to bring in an additional person from outside to support that team. If someone had been, as it were, internally promoted up, that would not have solved the problem because we need additional people. There is also a technical issue in that it is an A.C.P.O. (Association of Chief Police Officers) requirement for an officer of the rank of Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer to have completed the strategic command centre course and at this moment no local officers hold that qualification, with the exception of course of the Acting Chief.

2.14.2 Deputy A.E. Jeune of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister confirm my understanding that this position is, in fact, on a short-term contract and it is not, in fact, a long-term permanent contract?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

That is absolutely right. Of course, because we were out of time last week I was not able to answer this verbally but I did by email. It is a 3 months fixed-term contract followed by continuing on a monthly basis. So it is purely temporarily bringing someone in to cover during a period of great pressure.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

The Minister will agree that the current problem arises because 2 senior officers are suspended at present; one for around 9 months and another one for about 5. Is the Minister aware of the hardship and the feeling of helplessness that both officers are experiencing? If so, what steps is he taking to expedite the investigations into the officers' alleged misdeeds so they can either be returned to duty or face a disciplinary board?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy, I am not sure that arises out of your question, but I have seen 2 other Members who wanted to ask questions; Deputy Fox and then Deputy Le Hérissier.

2.14.3 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

In relation to the Senior Command Post at Bramshill in Hampshire, could the Minister advise, if possible today but if not in writing, of the consequences ... sorry, let us turn it the other way ... could advise in writing of what current officers are being considered for this accelerated year-long course to be able to take up the A.C.P.O. positions in the future that are required as just previously stated?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I do not know if I can or cannot, I am afraid, because I do not know how that would be viewed from the point of view of confidentiality. I would need to take advice on that.

2.14.4 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Could the Minister not give us the numbers, if not the names?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

The numbers who have been considered? Yes, I could give that information.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Now or later? [Laughter]

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

But not now because it is a complete and utter surprise. No one could have guessed at this line of questioning, I think.

2.14.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Building on that question, would the Minister give us an assurance that there is in place a proper succession planning system within the force?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I am afraid I do not know the answer to that question. It is clearly a matter of some importance to me because one of my primary roles is to ensure that there exists an efficient system and succession planning is an important part of that. Of course the position of the Chief Officer remaining uncertain, it is difficult to formulate clear plans until his status is finally determined.

2.14.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Supplementary. Would the Minister not acknowledge that, given that succession planning is a very long, long-term process as the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture knows, would he not acknowledge that therefore it is strange that every few years we shudder to a halt and discover that there are no people apparently in the pipeline?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I cannot comment on the past, but I can indicate that I am not very happy with the situation which currently presents itself to me.