

2.6 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour of the Chairman of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding preparations for a single-day election:

With the move to a single-day election, what preparations, if any, has the committee decided to make in order to promote and educate the electorate on the new system when voting?

Connétable J. Gallichan of St. Mary (Chairman, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

Standing Order 128(b) states that it is the committee's responsibility to keep under review the rules for enfranchisement and for the conduct of elections and to bring forward for approval, by the States, amendments to the Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 as considered appropriate. As with the 2008 elections, the Privileges and Procedures Committee will undertake an advertising campaign in advance of the 2011 elections in order to raise awareness and to encourage potential voters to register to vote. This will be followed by further advertising to promote polling day, itself. At its next meeting P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) will discuss the findings of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel's report on political education in Jersey and among these it will discuss recommendation 11, which suggests that P.P.C. should oversee the setting up of State sites on Facebook and on Twitter.

2.6.1 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The Chairman talked about the advertising campaign that it is undertaking. Can the Chairman explain how the effectiveness of these advertising campaigns is measured?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I do not believe there has been an evaluation prior to an election, but by the way in which the election is carried out and by the turnout, we would hope to show that the advertising has been effective. This time, of course, there will be various changes in the actual structure of the elections which will need to be promoted. We will need to be very careful to make sure that the information is widely available before the election, obviously. Therefore, I am not sure how we can evaluate it until after the election to see how the turnout has, hopefully, increased.

2.6.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chairman use all her power to promote turnout in these elections, including the promotion of postal and pre-poll voting to assist the elderly and those with a disability?

[10:15]

The Connétable of St. Mary:

The committee recently established a public elections working party, in fact it was in 2009, to examine the way the Public Elections Law was working in the run up to the single election day. We have been discussing the working party's recommendations and will shortly propose a number of amendments to the Public Elections Law. Until the amendments and the Public Elections Law is in its final form, is passed by this Assembly, it is premature to make any commitment as to what kind of voting will be promoted.

2.6.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Supplementary. Is it the Chairman's intention, then, or the sub-committee's intention, to reduce the ability for people to pre-poll or postal vote, rather than promote that as a means of assisting the elderly and the disabled to participate properly in a full election?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

As I explained, the P.P.C. will shortly be coming forward with proposals, it is premature for me to pre-empt the decision of the committee.

2.6.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chairman acknowledge that following what seemed to be excellent advertising campaigns; yes, there was an increase in registration, but the real difficulty was following up with an increase in voting turnout? Would she not, also, accept that with the 16-plus group, now in the frame, that perhaps specialised advertising and promotion campaigns will be required?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

It is one of those strange facts that, of course, the higher percentage of registration, even if we increase the number of turnout slightly, that the percentage turnout may go down. It is very difficult to keep aware of that. As I have said previously, the committee will be discussing the Political Education report - SR 14 - and so I am hopeful that that will address some of the issues that the Deputy has raised in his question. But I would say, also, that Education, Sport and Culture do play a vital part in raising awareness among students already. Prior to the 2011 elections they will be distributing a leaflet entitled: "Are you 16 or over? Do you know how to vote?"

2.6.5 The Deputy of St. Mary:

Given the very sad turnout of the student's hustings at the last election, what steps will the Chairman be taking to ensure that students are reached, in ways specific to them, to encourage them to get to know what the elections are all about, what the policies are and so on. I hope I can ask a second question.

The Bailiff:

No, I think not. That was the first question, which seems to be exactly what Deputy Hérissier had asked, Deputy, if I may say so.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you, I would concur that my previous answer covers it. There has been a report produced, a thorough report ...

The Bailiff:

I think your previous answer covers it, it covers it. Are there any other questions? I am sorry you have had your go, Deputy.

2.6.6 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

If the Chairman accepts that specific promotional activities have to be undertaken, with the difficulty of postal voting, will the Chairman undertake action to advertise the role of the Autorisé that can go from the Parishes to people's houses because many of the electorate do not realise that that service is available. Will the Chairman undertake to promote that particular activity as well?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

The importance of the “sick” vote, as we call it, has been an area that was highlighted in the work of the working party. I am sure that will be carried forward in the recommendations, but, as I said, P.P.C. has yet to bring forward its concrete proposals, but I will bear the Deputy’s concerns in mind.