

4.11 The Deputy of St. Martin of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the employment of the former Senior Investigating Officer by the States of Jersey Police:

Will the Minister inform Members whether the former senior investigating officer who, on his departure from Jersey, made remarks in relation to the historic abuse investigation which the Minister considered to be inappropriate and unprofessional, is he currently employed by the States of Jersey Police and, if so, in what capacity, on whose authority, and was the Minister informed of the appointment?

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

The person concerned has, since leaving the Island, continued to give some assistance in relation to the tidying-up of loose ends in relation to the historic abuse inquiry. He was paid for a period of 4 days' work in this area during which, among other things, he assisted in the documentation - that is setting out in writing - of certain information in relation to the inquiry. This was authorised by the Acting Chief Officer and is quite a normal occurrence when an officer has been involved with a major investigation, particularly a senior officer, that there will be loose ends to be tidied-up. I was not informed that this was happening and do not consider that there was any need for me to be informed, this being merely the sort of matter that will be dealt with at an operational level by senior officers. If I had been so informed, I would have supported this decision because the importance of the inquiry is paramount.

4.11.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I do not have a problem with the officer coming back because I agree with the Minister that he has to finish the job there but when an officer comes back, as he did, would it be necessary for them to sign some Official Secrets Act and also then be compliant with any particular code when they do come back after retirement? Would they be required to sign some Official Secrets Act?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I do not know the answer to that question. If it is a temporary appointment and they are no longer an officer, I am afraid I do not know the technical answer to that.

4.11.2 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Just to finish off, given that the officer did make what the Minister himself considers to be inappropriate and unprofessional comments when he left, was he given suitable words of advice to ensure that when he left this time that he was not going to make unprofessional and inappropriate remarks?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

That I do not know. I must hasten to mention that my comments were in relation to the professionalism of an officer who went public in the way in which he did. My comments were not in any way or should not in any way be interpreted to mean that I either agree or disagree with his comments. All these matters will come out in the fullness of time. But I would not have expected that there would have been a further process. He was purely coming to finish off aspects of a particularly important job which needed to be finished-off.

4.11.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Could the Minister advise whether the former senior investigating officer's brief return is in any way linked to the fact that I am advised that the author of the Metropolitan Police Interim Report is himself under investigation following a complaint lodged in the U.K. Are the 2 in any way linked?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I cannot see any link there. I cannot see any link whatsoever and, of course, I do not know who has made a complaint against this person or for what purpose.

The Bailiff:

A brief final question, Deputy of St. Martin?

The Deputy of Grouville:

Could I ask a supplementary question?

The Bailiff:

Yes.

4.11.4 The Deputy of Grouville:

Yes, it was in answer to a question that I asked whereby the Minister remarked that the officer's comments were inappropriate and unprofessional yet today are we to understand that he is not making comment one way or another? Surely if a comment is unprofessional and inappropriate, the Minister cannot agree with these comments. It sounds to me as if he wants to remain neutral now. Could he comment?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

No, I do not agree with that. The comments that I made on that occasion were criticism of an officer who, quite frankly, gave way to the human weakness of being baited for a long time with unfair criticism of him on blog sites and elsewhere and lost his cool, as it were, and decided that he was going to have his say before he left the Island. Now, I do not think that is a professional thing to do but that is no reflection whatsoever. I have commented neither way on the accuracy of what he said. I am perfectly able to hold an opinion that an officer should exercise more self-restraint although I do understand his frustration in this without my in any way criticising the contents of what he said.