

5.17 Deputy T.M. Pitman of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the resignation of a States of Jersey Police Officer.

Will the Minister advise whether a disciplinary investigation was pending in respect of the States of Jersey Police Superintendent who recently resigned after just a few months in his post, and, if so, what was the basis for this investigation and will he advise whether the officer concerned received a final salary settlement outside of his contracted entitlement?

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

The superintendent in question resigned and no disciplinary investigation was pending. The officer did not receive any salary supplement outside of his contracted entitlement.

5.17.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I thank the Minister for his answer and I am interested in it. Could he not confirm that what under lay this included allegations of sending out another on-duty officer to fetch a takeaway and, far more seriously, allegations which I could only describe as of a sexual harassment nature? If that is the case, why has that not been made public?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I am not going to comment publicly on the reasons why an individual has resigned as that would be very unfair to the individual. Personal reasons should not be made public. If hypothetically there were issues of complaint against an individual and that person then resigned, those issues should also not hypothetically be made public as that would be unfair because there would have been no proper investigative procedure or anything of that nature. So, I would neither comment in either set of circumstances hypothetically. The fact is that despite a proper appointments procedure this appointment has not worked out. The situation has been dealt with speedily and satisfactorily and a replacement appointment has been made.

5.17.2 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

I wonder if the Minister could inform Members why, when the original appointment was made, nobody on Island was found to be able to carry out this position and yet somebody now from the Island is carrying out the position?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

That is not correct. Unfortunately there was a very misleading article, which had even more misleading headlines in the *Jersey Evening Post*, which gave the impression that I was saying that there was nobody suitable in the Island to carry on this post. Anyone who read later on in the article would see what I was saying but that got buried by the very misleading headline. Fortunately, the article in the *Jersey Evening Post* recently, when I was re-interviewed on this matter, did correctly state that which I have always been saying, and that is that in relation to this particular post that there was a local applicant who was appointable, but the view of those interviewing was that the gap in ability, experience, et cetera, et cetera, between that person and the non-local person was too great and that local knowledge and experience was not sufficient to compensate for that gap. That was the view of the initial appointments board and that is, in fact, what I told the press although they misreported me.

5.17.3 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

Could the Minister just advise the Members, are the States of Jersey Police contracts, like other States and business contracts that, in the first few months of taking up an appointment you can choose to leave or you can be asked to leave quite easily; there is no big deal about it?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

That is exactly the position. The officer concerned, of course, resigned during his probationary period.

5.17.4 The Deputy of St. John:

Could the Minister explain to us how the gap of the experience between the 2 officers was overcome?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

That was overcome by the resignation of the first officer. As I said before, it was always reckoned that the Jersey-based officer was appointable; simply that the gap between, in the view of the appointments board, was too great to be compensated for by local knowledge. It is well-known that I am very keen to see local appointments made whenever that is possible. That is my view and that has always been my view. The issue is what weight you give in relation to any individual appointment as to the value of local knowledge. Those who might re-read my campaign literature from 2008 might find that I was saying there that I do not feel that sufficient weight was being given, but at the end of the day there is a limitation to the degree of weight that can be given for that. That is a matter for assessment by individual appointment boards in these cases.

5.17.5 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am sure the Minister feels terribly let down by possibly the process that allowed this officer to come to Jersey but one lesson surely must have been learned? Can I have an assurance from the Minister that that lesson has been learned that when references are produced at interview boards that they are thoroughly checked and not just accepted, because we all know that there can be very good letter writers?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I am satisfied that things were done properly and professionally and things were checked but, nevertheless, in this particular case I have said things have not worked out.

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

In light of this recent incident, can the Minister assure the States that there will be a review on our succession planning for the benefit of future applicants?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

Recently there was an excellent report produced by my Scrutiny Panel, to which I have not yet replied, to indicate that in my view it was excellent, with one error, in my view, in it. But apart from that one error it was an excellent report; it highlighted exactly how we have arrived in this situation. My own view, not just for the police but right across the States is this; if we are serious about succession planning of local officers we are going to have to invest in them. We are going to have to invest in their training; it is going to cost. I think what has happened historically has been this; when there has been a paring down of monies in relation to areas, what tends to go

first or very early is money on training and when that goes, so does succession planning. **[Approbation]** So, we have to face that and I firmly believe that if it is the will of the Assembly and of the Island that we should be developing our own officers as much as we can, we must invest in them.

5.17.7 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I fully support appointing our own people. What I would like to ask the Minister, following on from other questions, is that it is my understanding that the local appointee now scored fourth, I think, out of 4 candidates, so I could ask the Minister what happened to the other 2 in the middle who, presumably, were viewed as better candidates? Were they no longer available or how did that process work?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

There were other candidates who scored quite highly but I understand that there were particular issues in their cases. These were not local candidates, there were particular issues in their particular cases and, as I say, one has to give appropriate weight to local knowledge.