

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
BY DEPUTY T.M. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2011**

Question

"Will the Chairman clarify that other than the role of Senator having arisen from the position of 12 Jurats, these originally being elected for life and only by a vote limited to the 'King's men' whether the Privileges and Procedures Committee is aware of any historical justification for the necessity of the Island electing 12 Senators; further still, whether the Committee is aware of any research since 1948 demonstrating that there is public support specifically for the retaining of 12 Senators as opposed to a general support for retaining an Island-wide mandate in some form itself?"

Answer

The question of the number of States members has only received serious consideration since the Report of the Review Panel on the Machinery of Government in Jersey chaired by Sir Cecil Clothier ('The Clothier Report') was published in 2000. In 1948, there is no evidence that there was a discussion on the reduction in the number of States' Jurats, later named Senators, and 12 were provided for in the Assembly of the States (Jersey) Law 1948 to replace the Jurats who then confined their duties to the Royal Court.

Again in 1966 there is no evidence that the number of Senators was looked at, although the term of office was reduced from 9 to 6 years.

The Clothier Panel in 2000 did conduct a MORI poll and looked at the numbers of States members overall. Amongst other questions, it asked the public which of the categories of member the public would prefer to reduce or remove and the results were as follows -

Deputies	37% Reduce	5% Remove
Constables	13% Reduce	17% Remove
Senators	16% Reduce	3% Remove

However, the Panel's proposal at the conclusion of its work to abolish the office of Senator and remove the 'ex officio' membership of the States of the Connétables proved to be extremely unpopular during the Policy and Resources Committee's 'road show' of all the parishes in 2002, and that Committee decided to come forward with the machinery of government reform (ministerial government and scrutiny) only in the first instance, and undertake further work in the other areas later.

In 2002 the States established the Special Committee on the Composition and Election of the States Assembly to investigate the other areas of reform, and this was later taken over by PPC. PPC conducted a MORI poll, and the results were published in the States of Jersey Survey on Electoral Reform 2006. In relation to Senators, the Island wide mandate and the numbers of members, the following results were seen -

- In the 2005 election for senators there was a 43% turnout, and this fell to 33% in the deputies' elections a month later.
- 55% know a great deal/fair amount about the role of Senators
- Two thirds of residents (66%) think that there are too many States' members. This is an increase on the survey conducted in 2000 when 46% thought that 53 was too many.
- 46% thought all members should be elected on an Island wide basis.
- 32% thought there should remain a mix of Island wide and Parish or District.
- Only 11% thought that members should be elected on a Parish or District basis only.

A question has never been put on precisely the number of Senators that the public would like to see. There were extensive questions surrounding the composition and election of the States and on electoral reform, and it was important to ensure that that questionnaire was balanced over those two areas, and not inappropriately complex.