

2.3 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier of the Chief Minister regarding the establishment of a Committee of Inquiry into historical child abuse:

Following the States decision on 2nd March 2011 to request the Council of Ministers to bring forward a proposition asking the States to establish a committee of inquiry into historical child abuse would the Chief Minister explain why no draft terms of reference have yet been published? Would he state when the proposition will be lodged to enable the committee of inquiry to commence work if the proposition is adopted?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

I gave an undertaking to the States on 6th December last year that I would be in a position to lodge draft terms of reference for a committee of inquiry into historical child abuse within the first quarter of 2012 and I still intend to do so.

2.3.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour:

I wonder if the Chief Minister could tell us whether he is having difficulties in formulating the terms of reference and if so in what areas have problems occurred?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not sure that “difficulty” is the word to describe the process that I am going through. As the Member will know the previous Council of Ministers instructed an independent body to suggest terms of reference. They have been reviewed and considered and I need to be in a position that I can bring forward terms of reference based upon the decision of a previous Assembly which I hope will gain the support of this Assembly.

2.3.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask the Chief Minister whether he has come under any pressure or whether he, himself, is minded to cut any of the terms of reference as agreed by the States?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

As I said, I hope to be in a position to bring forward terms of reference which are based upon those agreed by this Assembly.

2.3.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I will have a supplementary. Of course we are getting into semantics here “based upon what the States agreed” does not necessarily mean what the States agreed, otherwise presumably there will be no hold up in bringing those forward. Can the Chief Minister confirm whether or not my amendment which was brought which discussed looking at whether prosecutions ... why prosecutions were or were not pursued and whether there was any political interference will be part of the terms of reference or has he come under pressure to cut that particular terms of reference?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I have not come under pressure to cut, as the Deputy says, any particular terms of reference. I think it is probably appropriate that I bring forward my suggested terms of reference, that will be quite a fulsome report, and then Members will be able to decide whether they agree with those terms of reference based upon those agreed by this Assembly or whether they, in due course, wish to amend them again.

2.3.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

In formulating the process, has the Chief Minister been able to reconcile the search for justice for the victims but also the need to ensure that it does not become an open-ended inquiry, rather like the Bloody Sunday Inquiry that was operated by the British Government. How does he intend to reconcile those 2 matters?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy puts his finger on a very good point indeed. They are some of the issues which I am considering and trying to reconcile although I have got to inform this Assembly they are very difficult to reconcile.