

## **2.11 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chairman of the Electoral Commission regarding the Commission's efforts to seek out the views of the public on electoral reform and research with comparative jurisdictions:**

What efforts has the Commission undertaken to seek out the views of the public on electoral reform, how successful have these been and what research, if any, is being undertaken into comparative jurisdictions?

### **Senator P.M. Bailhache (Chairman of the Electoral Commission):**

Shortly after the Commission was established it published a consultation leaflet which was sent to every household in the Island, inviting submissions to the Commission. Copies of the leaflet were also sent to doctors' surgeries and community centres, for example, with a request that they be left in public areas for Islanders to read. The Commission has advertised very widely in the media. It issues frequent press releases to publicise its work and to encourage Islanders to make submissions. So far the Commission has received more than 170 submissions from members of the public. It continues to receive submissions on a daily basis and I hope that this will continue until the closing date of 31st August. Research is being undertaken in respect of other jurisdictions and an external adviser has been appointed to advise the Commission in this respect. The Commission is also undertaking its own research in relation to other jurisdictions. Members visited Guernsey at the beginning of the month and held a productive series of meetings with members and officers of the States of Guernsey. The Commission is also planning a visit to the Isle of Man and is considering visits to other jurisdictions as well.

### **2.11.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Could the Chairman state which other comparable jurisdictions he is considering visiting, apart from the Isle of Man, and state how many members of his committee are likely to visit there and what the potential cost might be?

### **Senator P.M. Bailhache:**

The Commission is contemplating visits to Gibraltar, to Barbados, to Antigua and to Bermuda. The last 3 of which have jurisdictions which have bicameral legislatures; not Gibraltar. The plan would be for a limited number of members of the Commission to visit any of the more far-flung jurisdictions to which visits might be paid and I am not able to assist on the question of cost.

### **2.11.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

In terms of researching the information required on comparable jurisdictions, would not the use of Skype and the internet be considerably cheaper than physically going to some of these places, which appear to be across the Atlantic and a long way away?

### **Senator P.M. Bailhache:**

The Commission is acutely aware of the cost of any visit involving members of the Commission and that will certainly be taken very much into account.

### **2.11.3 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John:**

Will the Chairman give details of the number of States Members who have given oral or written submissions to the Commission to date? Many of the Members in this Chamber will have attended Commonwealth parliamentary meetings around the world. Of those Members, have any of them made reference to other jurisdictions within the Commonwealth of a similar nature to ours?

### **Senator P.M. Bailhache:**

Only a limited number, I am sorry to say, of the Members of this Assembly have so far made submissions to the Commission.

[11:15]

I am pleased to say that the questioner is one of them and I would very much encourage any Member who would like to say something to the Commission to do so. As I have said in this place and elsewhere, it is important that the ultimate recommendations of the Commission find favour not only with members of the public in a referendum, but also of the Members of this Assembly. I therefore hope that many Members would make a contribution.

**2.11.4 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I would just like to reassure the Senator that I am making submission. I would be very pleased to come and talk to the Commission. What I would like to know is, with any of these visits to far-flung places, will those flights be first class or will they be economic or business class or what will they be? Will we get value for money?

**Senator P.M. Bailhache:**

I am sure the Assembly can be assured that value for money will be obtained and that any visits will be in accordance with the standard procedures of this Assembly or of departments of the Government.

**2.11.5 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

So he is going first class then; did I understand that right? I think that is the policy, is it not? Perhaps the Senator could clarify?

**Senator P.M. Bailhache:**

Unlike the Deputy, I have never travelled first class, I do not believe. I do not know exactly what the policy is but, whatever the policy is in relation to long-haul flights that is the policy that will be adopted.

**2.11.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Commission actively use Facebook or Twitter in order to assess opinions in the general public?

**Senator P.M. Bailhache:**

I am sorry to say that I do not personally use Facebook or Twitter. The question of whether or not the Commission should use these methods of communication was considered and perhaps remains under consideration. The difficulty with modern methods of communication of that kind is that they require quite an intensive amount of time in order to monitor and the resources of the Electoral Commission are only finite. If the Deputy wishes to make specific recommendations to the Commission, either in the context of his submission or more generally, the Commission would be pleased to receive them.

**2.11.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

If I can have a final bit of what might be clarification. Is the Chairman saying that a visit to a Caribbean jurisdiction is a more profitable use of time and resources than manning and getting a suitable response time worked up for an internet site like Facebook?

**Senator P.M. Bailhache:**

I do not think I am saying any such thing.