

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY T.M. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2012**

Question

Given the potential conflicts of interest that exist in both States Members and Advocates proposing or seconding individuals to sit in the courts as Jurats (for example an Advocate nominating a Jurat may subsequently appear in a case in which that Jurat is sitting), would the Chief Minister agree to bring forward for approval amendments to the Royal Court (Jersey) Law 1948 so that the election of Jurats is no longer undertaken by an electoral college but overseen by a body such as the Appointments Commission and, further still, what, if anything, would prevent this body being involved in the appointment process?

Answer

Whilst I have full confidence in our system of justice, I am not closed to the system of judicial appointments being considered. I recall that the Second Interim Report of the Constitution Review Group, presented to the States Assembly on 27th June 2008 by the Council of Ministers, included a recommendation that consideration should be given to the creation of a Judicial Appointments Commission. I expect that this recommendation will be considered carefully during the coming months and that the Council of Ministers would be content to consider any such proposal.

I note that the Attorney General in an answer in this Assembly on the 15th May 2012 dealt with the matter of whether or not a relationship between a judge and counsel, professional or personal, would necessarily amount to a conflict of interest.