

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES
COMMITTEE BY DEPUTY T.M. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 31st JANUARY 2012**

Question

Would the Chairman advise whether he personally supports moves to change the fully independent status of the Electoral Commission, as agreed by a large States majority decision in March 2011, and, if not, who will be acting as Rapporteur when the matter is brought to the Assembly for debate?

Would the Chairman advise whether the proposal was only considered by the Privileges and Procedures Committee following the Chief Minister's decision to support Senator Bailhache's desire to chair the Commission?

Answer

My views on the composition of the Electoral Commission were indicated in the answer to a question at the last States meeting. I believe that the current States Assembly should have the opportunity to debate whether or not States members should be appointed to the Commission. It makes little difference, therefore, what position is taken by the Privileges and Procedures Committee. Either the States would be debating a proposition for an independent Electoral Commission with an amendment to allow States Members to serve on it, or vice versa. The members of PPC were divided on which route to take and have by a majority lodged 'Electoral Commission: composition and terms of reference' (P.5/2012), to which an Amendment has been put to allow the debate to take place as anticipated.

Under the circumstances I foresee no difficulty in proposing P.5/2012, and expect that the majority of the time spent debating the issue will be devoted to the amendment.

The suggestion that PPC should draft a proposition that would, if adopted, enable States members to serve on the Electoral Commission, was initially considered by PPC as presently constituted at its first meeting on 14th December 2011. It is my understanding that the Chief Minister announced his intention to support Senator Sir P.M. Bailhache as chairman of the Electoral Commission on 16th November 2011, before I had been appointed as Chairman of PPC, and before the Committee as presently constituted had been established. It therefore follows that the proposal could only be considered by PPC after the Chief Minister made his decision to support Senator Bailhache.