

2.18 Deputy M. Tadier of the Chief Minister regarding consultation between Ministers and Constables should the latter no longer be members of the Assembly in the future:

Would the Chief Minister advise in what capacity the Chairman of the Committee des Connétables has a seat at the Council of Ministers' meetings? Can he confirm that if Constables lose their automatic right to sit in the States Assembly, he will work closely with the Committee to provide a mechanism to ensure that consultation takes place between Ministers and Constables when appropriate?

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

The Chairman of the Connétables attends meetings of the Council of Ministers by standing invitation. If the people of Jersey decide they do not wish the Connétable to sit in the States Assembly, then we will, of course, need to continue to ensure that consultation takes place between Ministers and the Connétables when necessary.

2.18.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for that confirmation. Would he also confirm that perhaps members of the public do not need to be worried about the fact that Constables will have trouble accessing Ministers or the various departments, not simply because they have phones and internet, but because irrespective of what the future changes of reforms are, as civil servants, Ministers will respect the fact that a parallel jurisdiction exists and interactions need to take place in an efficient and effective manner.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Of course, I would not want the public to be worrying at all. However, I think what the Deputy is trying to do is make a political point in favour of the particular option [**Approbation**] that he is supporting. I am not sure if you are going to allow me the same indulgence.

2.18.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am often trying to make political points. That does not mean the Chief Minister should not give a straight answer to a straight question. Can he just confirm that Constables, whether they are in the States or not, will have access to Ministers and that the systems will be able to run in train? Can he just answer that question?

[11:45]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Chief Minister, you may answer it as you see fit.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Of course, Connétables will have access to Ministers but it will be in a very different manner from the access that they have today, and I am on public record as saying that I believe that we remove the Connétables from this Assembly at our peril. [**Approbation**] I believe that it will undermine fundamentally once and for all the parochial system and that is not something that I can support.

2.18.3 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can I just clarify that? Is the Chief Minister saying, effectively ... no, is the Chief Minister saying effectively that he will not be able to function without the support of the Constables because he has had to rely on their voting up to this date? [**Members: Oh!**]

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Not at all. My propositions and legislation that I bring to this Assembly, be it on my behalf or on behalf of the Council of Ministers, are well reasoned, they are based on common sense, and they

are based on building a better Jersey for future generations, not on whether I can get the Connétables to support it or not. My point was this, that I believe that if we removed the Connétables from this Assembly we once and for all fundamentally change our parochial system upon which our society is built, and I do not believe that we should do so. [Approbation]

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do I call on option C for a question? [Laughter]

Senator L.J. Farnham:

No, thank you, Sir. I just want to welcome the Chief Minister to our campaign. [Laughter]

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Perhaps I should at this point while I stand by, as you would expect, exactly what I have said in response to Deputy Tadier, I can give no comfort to the Senator because I believe that we need to reduce the number of Members of this Assembly, therefore the only option open to me is option B.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am pleased to say, I think question time has now come to an end.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Do I not get a final supplementary?

The Deputy Bailiff:

No, the time has expired, Deputy.