

### **3.6 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence of the Chief Minister regarding the outcome of the Steel Review:**

As this stage in asking this question, I am delighted that the Bishop of Winchester has made the confirmation already alluded to by yourself earlier in this sitting. But the question I want to ask - one of 2 - given that the terms of reference of the Steel Review clearly state that upon receipt the Bishop of Winchester will supply a copy of the report to, among others, the Dean and the Bailiff, can the Chief Minister advise whether the report has now been circulated and what action, if any, he proposes to address the way in which the matter has been handled?

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

As noted in the public statement issued by the Bishop of Winchester on 22nd November, Dame Heather Steel is still finalising her investigation report and, therefore, the final report has not yet been delivered to the Bishop. I would expect that the Bishop will honour the commitment made in the terms of reference of the investigation that upon receipt of the final report the Bishop will supply a copy to the Bailiff, the Dean and the Ministry of Justice.

#### **The Bailiff:**

Can I just advise Members that we are about to go inqorate if another Member should leave the room. There should be some Members in the anteroom, ask them to come back into the Chamber to make sure we have a suitable number.

#### **3.6.1 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

The Bishop was obviously very quick to release the Korris Report which would now appear to have been discredited, if not been shown to be socially defective, on the basis of the comments made thus far. Does the Chief Minister agree that it is only by enacting at the same speed and releasing the Dame Heather Steel Report when it is finally ready that the Bishop can avoid allegations of cover up, accusations he is trying to hide seriously poor performance, either by himself, Korris or members of his own team?

#### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

The Bishop is on record as saying that he is absolutely committed to transparency and that was why he published the Korris Report in the way that he did and that the Church of England was an organisation which is committed to openness and transparency. Therefore, I find it virtually inconceivable that the Bishop would do anything other than publish the report in a timely manner. Of course, 9 of the terms of reference says: "Where it is proposed the report will make adverse findings of fact or recommended the consideration of disciplinary action against the person, the investigator shall ensure that the person has had the opportunity to comment on the proposed findings or recommendation before finally determining or reporting the matter." I can only assume the Bishop is going through that process at the current time.

#### **3.6.2 The Connétable of St. Martin:**

I just want the Chief Minister to clear up the reports and the statements we have had, it is that the report would not be published by the Bishop and that was made public last week. Did the Chief Minister hear something different since that time, whether the Bishop has told him the report will be made public?

#### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

The Bishop made the statement which I read from in my early first and second, where the Bishop says at this time the report is not yet in its final form, therefore, I expect when it is in its final form, as I just said, the Bishop will publish it for the reasons that I have just given.

### **3.6.3 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

I would echo Deputy Le Fondré's request. The Chief Minister insists that the Bishop does reveal the report because I am afraid that the whole saga from start to finish, from the moment of the first allegations to the present time, have shown the church in a terribly bad light. However, I would ask the Chief Minister if he will also ask the Bishop to release the transcript of his meeting with former Deputy Bob Hill. Dame Heather Steel said she would reveal the transcript because it includes details of relationships with Senator Bailhache and whether she felt she was conflicted or not in doing her report. We would like to have it all out, total transparency, please.

### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I was not clear what the Deputy was asking. He started asking whether I would ask the Bishop to release the transcripts of a meeting that he had had with an individual. I am not sure if that is how ...

### **Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Sorry, the meeting between former Deputy Bob Hill and Dame Heather Steel, that is the transcript. He was promised a transcript; she has yet to deliver on it.

### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I imagine that does not flow from this question, but that is an issue for Mr. Hill to take up with Dame Heather.

### **The Bailiff:**

Chief Minister, if I may say so, the more difficult question around this question, and some like it, is that you can only be asked what you are able to do, you are not responsible for the Bishop of Winchester and, to the extent that questions are put to you as to what he should do, those are clearly out of order, you can only say what you are going to do.

### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

It appears from where I am sitting that many questions in this Assembly are out of order, but there we are, I am pleased that you are stepping in to say so. Indeed, as I said in my earlier questions, I personally cannot see any reason why the report would not be published, given the previous undertakings of the Bishop around transparency and openness.

### **3.6.4 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

Does the Chief Minister, and I am obviously asking the Chief Minister's opinion on the matter, consider that the Bishop of Winchester was misleading when he stated that the Dean, who is obviously a Member of this Assembly, had declined to travel to the U.K. to see him when in fact the Dean had declined both on health grounds and on the grounds that he needed adequate time to prepare for the meeting and arrange support? Is it not the case the Dean had previously suggested that a meeting should take place and, accordingly, is there not a clear inference from those facts that the Bishop has been misleading in his comments on this particular matter to remember this Assembly?

### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

Bearing in mind your ruling some moments ago, perhaps I can simply say that one would have hoped, and we shall find out, that the report of Dame Heather Steel might address these particular issues, other than to say that there are many concerns that have been raised about various actions and words emanating from elsewhere which will need to be addressed in due course.