

3.11 Deputy M. Tadier of the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables regarding revised procedures for Senatorial hustings meetings:

Given the increased number of Senator seats to be contested in this year's elections, has the Comité given any consideration to revised procedures for hustings meetings to make them more effective?

Connétable J.L.S. of Gallichan of Trinity (Chairman, Comité des Connétables):

In a word, no. The organisation of hustings meetings are the responsibility of candidates not the Connétables.

3.11.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I anticipated that answer and I put it as a footnote when I sent the question in, because of course that is absolutely true; but we know that also the Comité in advance do meet ahead of the nomination meeting and schedule dates, because it does not happen by magic, and usually a little piece of paper appears out of the Chairman's pocket. Of course it is for candidates to arrange their own meetings, who are there like rabbits in the headlights, some of them, for the first time. But this piece of paper comes out with suggested dates. All I am saying is that clearly the Comité do have an interest in the smooth running of hustings' meetings, especially for Senatorial hustings where they tend to take place traditionally in each of the Parishes. What I am asking is if, in advance, they would give consideration perhaps this time to revise procedures which may include, for example, not having hustings in each of the Parishes and having a different format whereby the timings, *et cetera*, will be given consideration. I contextualise that because we may have a scenario this time where we have 30-odd candidates contesting for 8 seats. It is the most we have ever had in one go.

The Bailiff:

The question is whether the Comité will give consideration to this?

[11:15]

The Connétable of Trinity:

It is entirely up to the candidates. I think the Deputy has to realise that there could also be a Connétables' election and a Deputies' election in our Parish so what we do is to see what dates are available if the candidates wish them. If maybe the Deputy is thinking of standing for Senator, maybe he could organise something with those who are candidates to say: "This is what we would like." We will do what the candidates wish, but if we do not agree before the dates available in St. Clement, Trinity, St. Martin, whatever, we then have all the candidates saying on nomination night ... and it is far easier to say: "Look, these are the possible dates. If you wish them they are available." It is entirely up to the candidate. We will help wherever we can but obviously, I totally agree, most probably to have 30 candidates is a nightmare, but it is a nightmare we have to put up with. If the candidates can come up with some well-thought idea of a way to improve it, we will consider it and hopefully do it for you.

3.11.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Constable in his role as a Constable tell the House how he would propose to raise electoral excitement to new levels?

The Connétable of Trinity:

I certainly would not employ Deputy Le Hérissier. [Laughter] [Approbation]

3.11.3 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not normally have the opportunity of asking questions so I will. It is interesting that many of us have worried about the potential chaotic nature of the coming elections. While I absolutely respect the Connétable and the Chairman of the Comité's statement, and he is right to say it is up to candidates, does he really not think that there is something... could he not work with his Comité, could he perhaps not work with P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee), work with the Greffe, perhaps work with our eminent Jurats who help oversee elections to find at least a proposal that could be put forward rather than turning into a chaotic decision on the night by 30 candidates.

The Bailiff:

A precise question if you would, Senator.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

He has a lot of clever that could probably come up with a proposed alternative.

The Connétable of Trinity:

I fully agree with what the Senator is saying. The problem that I foresee is whatever we decided to do there would be some candidates who say: "This is not right for us, it is not right for me. It helps another candidate who may have had previous ... or he attended a hustings from previous years." I know it is lovely to talk to everyone but often the more you talk the less decisions get made. If we could find a format ... the trouble is it is always on the night of the nominations that this is discussed and it is not until we know how many candidates stand ... this is the problem. It could end up you might only have 10, well then that is manageable. If you have 30 it is not manageable. The other thing is how do you organise it? The normal thing is the candidate will say ...

The Bailiff:

I think the question, Connétable, is whether the Comité are going to think about this or not?

The Connétable of Trinity:

We have thought about it. [Laughter] It is not an easy answer. We will do whatever we can to help.

3.11.4 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I understand what the Connétable is saying but could he at least consult to do scenario planning? Could he do a scenario of a preferred arrangement, say 15 candidates or 30 candidates, and put that out on the night, publish it, explain it and say: "We are going to put these 2 scenarios, depending on how many candidates, to the candidates to vote on so that they can decide in majority" rather than leaving it until last minute and have a chaotic arrangement, which simply does not work.

The Connétable of Trinity:

All I will say is I will put it to the Comité and we will come back and see what they say.

3.11.5 The Connétable of St. John:

Does the Constable agree with the Constable of St. John that it is not for the Comité of Connétables to try and influence the candidates who are standing for election on where they should hold their hustings, whether it is Fort Regent, a hotel or in a Parish Hall? With all the good will in the world we should not be inferring in election procedures.

The Connétable of Trinity:

I tend to agree with the Connétable of St. John, surprisingly.

3.11.6 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If the Chairman's election as Constable is the same as over 70 per cent of Constable elections since 1999 and is uncontested, will he endeavour to have a public hustings anyway where his parishioners will be able to question him, regardless of the fact there will not be another candidate?

The Bailiff:

I am not sure that arises out of a question about Senators, Deputy.

3.11.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Hopefully this one does. Any election is 2-stage process. There is registration and then the ballot. I understand that registration forms are currently going out. What efforts will the Constables, in conjunction with the Greffe and P.P.C., make to ensure this year registration reaches new heights?

The Connétable of Trinity:

That is a good question, is it not? We do our best. I would say everyone ... history will tell the Deputy that we have a vast number of the electorate who ... I will praise him now, Deputy Le Hérisser wanted more on the electoral list and we have got them. We do our best. We send to every occupier in each Parish and it is up to them to reply. We can only do what the occupiers of these properties do. Send it back to Parish Hall, they will be on the list.

3.11.8 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Are there no fresh initiatives? We will not be talking to P.P.C. about how to maximise the registration or is it otherwise?

The Connétable of Trinity:

It is down to P.P.C. to push that and then we will then get the replies back. We send them out now, the form is out, all the Parishes are sending out their electoral forms now - and I am sure you have had one, Deputy - and if you do not send them back you get another reminder.

The Bailiff:

Through the Chair, Connétable.

The Connétable of Trinity:

We do our best.

3.11.9 Deputy M. Tadier:

I do appreciate the thought that the Comité have given this and I think we will, no doubt, be speaking further on this. If I finish by asking the last question, it seems to me that although candidates ultimately organise the hustings, the nomination meeting does fall to the Comité to organise and that is perhaps where the issue lies. When the candidates are assembled by the Chair of the Comité and asked to decide their meetings on the night, that is perhaps not the best way to do it because they are not in a full position to be able to do it on the night. So I think it would be helpful if we could consult further with the Comité, perhaps with P.P.C. and interested Members. Just to clarify, I ask this not from a personal motive but simply from a generic motive because I think we are all interested in the smooth running of elections, whether they be for whichever of the 3 positions.

The Bailiff:

Was there a question in there, Deputy?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, the question was: do they accept that as the Comité they do organise the nomination meeting and they will have some influence on what the candidates feel is the right way forward for a hustings meeting?

The Connétable of Trinity:

We will do what we can, and I am sure the Deputy will understand, but we go to the nomination meeting completely blind. We hear in the media who may be standing but as you well know you can come to a nomination meeting and there may be 3 or 4 that come up with a nomination paper. Do we ignore those people? It is not easy. The only thing I would say is you would have to have a meeting and then meet together on a different day. The problem with that is we try to get the dates on those nights so people can start organising because there is a short time between hustings and the election time. But we will do our best.