

### **3.17 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Home affairs regarding the investigation of cases of alleged child abuse and child protection issues by the States of Jersey Police:**

Can the Minister assure Members and the public that all cases of alleged child abuse and child protection issues are fully investigated by the States of Jersey Police and that they liaise fully with the various child protection bodies, the Law Officers' Department and the Judiciary?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs):**

All cases of alleged child abuse are fully investigated by the States of Jersey Police working whenever appropriate in conjunction with other child protection bodies. Where appropriate, a report is then produced for the consideration of prosecutor from the Law Officers' Department, which department will decide as to whether there is sufficient evidence or not to bring a prosecution. The States of Jersey Police work closely with the other child protection bodies in relation to child protection issues. There is a very effective system known as M.A.S.H. (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) for sharing of information on such matters. The role of the Judiciary is different. It is to judge matters which are within their area of responsibility, and so they are not involved in relation to such matters unless called upon to make a decision.

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

Can I ask the Minister why it is then that the States of Jersey Police who investigated a case of concern regarding child protection, and botched it because they did not review the evidence fully, made a report to the child protection agencies which went to the Judiciary who made decisions have refused to date to review that evidence and provide the information to the various child protection agencies and to the Judiciary? My question is: how can we have confidence in the States of Jersey Police in their investigations when first of all they do not review evidence that was on a video clip, that was approximately 6 hours long? They must have got tired at 5½ hours because they did not watch the last half hour, which showed a sex act between a couple who were unmarried with a young child present and one could argue almost participating. That information was not passed on to the child protection body nor to the court. At the present time, the States Police are refusing to correct that information and pass it on. Will the Minister investigate this and does he think it is acceptable?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

Deputy Higgins, over the years, has a habit of asking me general questions, which I answer most assiduously, and then following up with particular allegations in relation to particular matters of which I know absolutely nothing. I would urge him on such occasions to email me with details of the matter. All Members who have done that in relation to various concerns know what my practice is. I will then forward on without comment a copy of the email to the Chief Officer address and it will then be forwarded through, and I will then seek to check that there is a proper response to that. But I cannot deal with such matters on the Assembly floor, particularly when I have absolutely no detail. I have no idea whether what he is saying is correct or not.

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

Point of information, this matter was first raised by former Deputy Pitman to the Minister for Home Affairs and this matter has been going on ever since. What I am saying is, information is being held back by the States of Jersey Police, they have not corrected the records. So both the child protection body and the Judiciary do not have full information. They made information based on the fact there was no evidence of a child protection issue because the

police had not investigated properly. I am asking the Minister, will he go back now - I will give him the names and all the rest of it - and correct the situation? It is totally unacceptable.

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

If I could be provided with names in relation to a certain case I will pass that on in an appropriate manner to the police, and I will then seek to ensure that they deal with it in an appropriate manner, but I cannot do anything without knowledge of individual names and matters.

**3.17.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:**

On a more general point, could the Minister assure the House that when a police investigation has been carried out, and irrespective of whether or not it proceeds to prosecution, do the police write a report identifying any issues they feel, while not within their purview, need to be followed up by other agencies related to that investigation? Do they write such a report and reflect upon what has come up within that investigation?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

I tried in my answer to distinguish between the criminal aspects, which goes down a particular route, and the issue of concerns which may be raised in relation to a matter even though it does not lead to a criminal prosecution. That is where there is a sharing of information and a sharing of concerns with other agencies because although there may not be sufficient evidence for a criminal prosecution there may be a need for agencies to take action in some form in order to protect the children involved.

**3.17.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:**

Can the Minister confirm that such reports are written and he is fully convinced that they are as robust as they should be?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

I do not know whether this happens in the form of a formal written report or whether it happens in terms of case conferences and meetings of interested parties because there is a very good system now in place in relation to that which has certain initials which I cannot remember. But for sharing information among officers at that sort of level, that is a much more effective way of doing things than writing formal reports, which can take ages to produce and may delay the information getting there.

**3.17.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Just following up on the Minister's last answer. Will the Minister not confirm the information the panel get is only as good as the information they are given? If they are given inaccurate information and that information is not corrected that is totally unacceptable; would the Minister agree with that?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

Any agency can only act on information which they get and it is necessary that they get the best available information. I can only agree with that, yes.