

2017.06.20

**3.9 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Chief Minister regarding the employment of former employees of the States of Jersey Police by the Office of the Information Commissioner: [1(358)]**

Will the Chief Minister request from the Information Commissioner confirmation of whether the person described as "Police Employee 1" in the Police Service of Northern Ireland report on Operation Belfong was employed by the Commissioner's office after leaving the employ of the States of Jersey Police in 2014 and provide information on how many former employees of the States of Jersey Police, if any, are currently working for the Commissioner?

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

Extensive work was undertaken to anonymise the Operation Belfong report to ensure it was consistent with the rights of individuals to privacy and with their rights under Jersey's data protection and human rights laws. To either confirm or deny the points raised in Deputy Higgins' questions would compromise and undermine this extensive work. If there are concerns about the operation of the Information Commissioner's office, including the conduct of any employees, those concerns should be raised with the Commissioner directly.

**3.9.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

For the benefit of Members, it is the same person who was working for the police who is now working for the Information Commissioner and that same person spent years frustrating subject access requests by former employees of the States of Jersey Police that I was helping. The Operation Belfong report was not just about the ...

**The Bailiff:**

Deputy, this is not an opportunity for a speech. Do you have a question?

**Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Very well, Sir. What I am trying to say is that there were major deficiencies in the report of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, very critical of the very person who is now working for the department. That department, in fact that individual, was trying to get information from his replacement that he refused to answer for about 4 years before. Surely we need to make sure that the people who are employed are the best for the job and not someone who was facing misconduct charges had he remained. Is that not the case, Minister?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I cannot add anything to the opening answer that I gave. I do not think it is appropriate to try an individual in this Assembly. The Deputy will know the work of the Minister for Home Affairs and the Assistant Minister, first of all in setting up this inquiry and their subsequent response to it.

**3.9.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

There are 2 elements to it. One is the second part of my question: how many police officers or ex police officers work for the Information Commissioner out of the total size? That is not affecting any individual. Secondly, you have just complimented the 2 Ministers concerned. I am pleased they have brought out a report because it was a vindication of my attacks in this House on the failure of the States of Jersey Police to answer subject access reports within a reasonable time, some of them taking years. Will the Chief Minister please find the answer to the second part of my question: how many police officers or ex police officers or employees work for the Information Commissioner at

the present time in Jersey - we could always ask about Guernsey but they can ask their own questions - so that we at least are aware of how many?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

Of course, as the Deputy knows, I do not know the answer to the question about employees at the Data Information Commissioner's office or what their former employment was. They are employed to do the job that they are employed to do. As I said, if he has got concerns he should raise them directly with the Commissioner. The Minister for Home Affairs and the Assistant Minister have met with the Police Authority and with the States of Jersey Police and they are developing an action plan and they are accepting the recommendations, and that is the appropriate response, I think, to that report.