

2018.03.06

6 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Chief Minister regarding the number of cases of alleged corruption in the public sector that had been made to him since he became Chief Minister: [OQ.43/2018]

Will the Chief Minister advise how many cases of alleged corruption in the public sector have been made to him since he became Chief Minister, if any, and what actions he has taken regarding any such claim?

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

While I do not keep a running total, I have over the years met with members of the public who have made such allegations. Alleged criminal offences should of course be reported by the public to the police who have the necessary powers to investigate the matter, and this has generally been my advice in such circumstances.

3.6.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

As the Chief Minister knows, the police in the past have failed to investigate some of these alleged offences, in fact I say it was cursory, they knew the people concerned and there were no proper investigations. The Chief Minister has seen evidence recently of allegations of perjury, perverting the course of justice and misconduct in public office. I am sure he agrees with me that this type of activity should not be allowed to exist within our Island and I would ask what steps he would say, if the police fail to take action and the prosecuting authorities fail to take action, what we can do next?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

There is a whole host of difference between failing to take action and a perception of failing to take action. The Deputy knows that there are processes in place for either Members of this Assembly or members of the public who feel the way that the Deputy has described. We have made great process in publicising those processes, be they about the Prosecution Service or be they about the Police Service, and members can follow those processes.

3.6.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

When you have virtually exhausted every one of the official routes because people are not taking the action they should do, and I criticise here also the Police Complaints Authority who were absolutely unbelievable in looking at a complaint... said that the person concerned would be interviewed by inspecting officers and nobody came near him, asked to see any evidence, and yet the police dismissed it as not valid. Now, when you are faced with that and we go through the various channels, what is the route? Do I have to stand here and start naming names or do we have to go to the press? We must have some way of trying to deal with these matters. Could I ask the Chief Minister what his solution would be to this?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I know the Deputy is referring to an individual case and it would not be right for me to be drawn on that. He and I have had discussions with officials. I say in my department, we do not work like that anymore, we work in a much more joined-up way, and that process is ongoing and it would not be right for us to consider it further in this Assembly.