

6. Connétable D.F. Gray of St. Clement (Chairman of Privileges and Procedures Committee):

Members will have found on their desk this morning a copy of P.P.C.'s (Privileges and Procedures Committee) proposals on the reform of the composition of the States. Members will also have found an amendment, in the name of Deputy Baudains, putting forward an alternative option for reform. After working on this issue since it took office, and analysing all possible reform options, P.P.C. has concluded that there are only 2 workable and acceptable options to be put to the electorate in a referendum, both involving an Assembly comprising of Connétable and one other category of Member. The other category could either be an increased number of Deputies - an option proposed in the amendment of Deputy Baudains - or the Committee's preferred option of 36 Members, still to be known as "Deputies" elected in 6 new large electoral districts. P.P.C. urges all Members to read the Committee's proposals very carefully, and to assess the arguments for and against other options before jumping to any conclusions. The Members of P.P.C. are not afraid to admit that they were not all initially supportive of this option but, by a majority, eventually concluded that it represented the best way forward to accommodate as many, as possible, of the underlying themes that have emerged from the public consultation undertaken by the Committee. P.P.C. came to the conclusion after weighing-up the disadvantages and advantages of all options very carefully, and it is for this reason that I strongly implore all Members to undertake a similar exercise for themselves. P.P.C. believes very firmly that reform of the composition of the States is necessary to complete the machinery of government reform, begun in 2001. As a result, the Committee very much hopes that States' Members will be prepared to make a final decision in the coming weeks, by putting aside their own personal views and supporting an option to put the electorate in a referendum so that the public will have their say on this important issue. P.P.C. has analysed all options and is convinced that there are only 2 options for real reform that are workable and acceptable. If these are rejected, the *status quo* will have to remain. It is, unfortunately, naïve to believe that there are yet more workable and preferable reform options that could be found through further investigation. Might I add that my Committee is keen to have an orderly debate on this issue, and thank Deputy Le Claire for withdrawing his Projet, P.64. Perhaps to further this aim in achieving an orderly debate, the Comité des Connétables may consider postponing the debate on their Projet, P.54, until 17th July when P.P.C.'s Projet will be debated. Thank you, Sir.

6.1 Senator J.L. Perchard:

The Chairman of P.P.C., in his statement just now, said there are only 2 real options for possible reform and he wants the States to debate these options, before recommending that we go to the public of the Island in a referendum. I just wondered, Sir, if we take his point, that there are only 2 options for real reform that we do not cut out the man in the middle and go straight, with his 2 options, to a referendum?

The Bailiff:

Well, questioning of statements: may I remind Members is meant to be done to remove anything which is not clear. The maker of a statement may be asked to clarify the statement. I do not know whether that is really asking the Chairman to clarify it or whether engaging in some debate, but if it is the former?

Senator J.L. Perchard:

Could I help, Sir, by perhaps being more specific: did P.P.C., Sir, consider not having a States debate and taking the 2 options for a referendum straightaway?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

It will have to be a decision of the States to take it to referendum, Sir. We cannot take it directly ourselves.

6.2 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I wonder if the Chairman could comment on the following: he believes, I think, that the future makeup of this Assembly should be based upon Constables and constituencies. If he believes that, then why is his Committee not progressing an improvement in the way in which constituency seats for Deputies are allocated for next year's election, rather than waiting for 2011?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Could I refer the Senator to our Projet, which I think explains all the situations.

6.3 Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:

Electors in my constituency, No. 3 St. Helier, are currently able to vote for one Constable, 4 Deputies and 6 Senators. Under the proposals put forward by the Chairman, in future it appears they will only be able to vote for one Constable and 6 Deputies. That constitutes a change in directly elected representatives of 11 falling to 7. Would the Chairman explain to me how this has improved voter choice for my constituents, and how it has improved democratic accountability?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I think, really, this is a matter for the debate on our proposition, and not for me to answer questions at this stage.

6.4 Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Clement:

A supplementary to Senator Ozouf's question. I note that the Committee is now proposing electoral reform from 2011. Could the Chairman please explain what has happened to those 3 years where we were assured any proposition would be changed from 2008? Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I realise, Sir, that our Projet was only on the Members' desks at 9.30 a.m. this morning and they obviously have not had the chance to read it, and I would draw their attention to my statement, which I asked them to read first.

6.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérrissier:

Will the Members of the much-strengthened St. Clement caucus on the Committee be seeking to discipline their dissident Member [Laughter].

6.6 Connétable K.P. Vibert of St. Ouen:

I do not know whether it was a clerical error, but the President of P.P.C. did go on a little bit further than what was on the paper in front of us. I believe that he called for the Connétables to maybe withdraw P.54. I would point out to him that, like all other Members, the Comité des Connétables have not had time since 9.30 a.m. this morning to consider what is on our desk, and at this moment I have no intention of withdrawing it.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Can I respond to that, Sir, because I did not ask the Constables to withdraw, I asked them to postpone the debate.

6.7 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf

I have briefly read the report, but the Chairman in his statement said that there were only 2 workable solutions. Could he summarise the reason why an option is not that we keep the Constables, keep the Island-wide vote and reform the constituencies of Deputies?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I would again ask you to read it in more depth, Sir.