

**19<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**3.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding the Chief Minister's support for all Ministers:**

Given that the Council of Ministers gave its unequivocal support for the Minister for Transport and Technical Services in its recent comments on P.129/2013, that is a vote of censure, would the Chief Minister advise whether such support applies to all his Ministers and if not, which ones does he not support?

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

I asked the Deputy of St. Martin to withdraw his vote of no confidence in the Minister for Planning and Environment. I did that because of the information that has come to light that Ministers need to appropriately consider. It is therefore not appropriate for me to discuss these matters publicly at this time.

**3.7.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

It would seem to me that judging from the rather extraordinary wording of the email that we received last night that the no confidence proposition is being controlled or even instigated by the Council of Ministers. Would the Chief Minister confirm this because there does seem to be some curious business going on here?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

The no confidence vote, which has been withdrawn, is quite clear. It emanates from the individual that lodged it and the 3 of us which signed it. What I am trying to do, and I hope that Members recognise it, is to endeavour to make a system which is not fit for purpose work.

**3.7.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:**

Given that the vote of censure referred to by the questioner received no seconder and was a waste of States time to say nothing of officer time and any impact on the Member concerned, would the Minister consider asking the Privileges and Procedures Committee to change the bar for the votes of censure propositions so that they have to have the same number of signatories as a vote of no confidence?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

There are lots of changes that need to be made and that is one that sounds perfectly reasonable but perhaps in the interests of the points that the Connétable made in his opening of that question, I would be quite happy to sit down and move to the next question.

**The Bailiff:**

Well, I do not think you will be able to quite yet. [Laughter]

**3.7.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Would the Chief Minister not concede that the persons who brought forward the vote brought it forward on a certain set of evidence and does it not seem strange that we should not be discussing it on the evidence they brought forward? Surely it is up to the Chief Minister or the Council to put their evidence in the pot so that we can then judge it in the whole?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

If the Deputy has read his email or listened to my opening answer, I think he will find that is exactly what I am doing.

**3.7.4 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:**

The Chief Minister's response and email have been fairly vague. Can he tell us what information has come to light or, if not, the nature of that information?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

No, I cannot. It would not be right until I have met with the Minister concerned and other Ministers as well.

**3.7.5 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Will the Chief Minister clarify that the real reason behind the letter that has been going round that he could not get enough signatures and this aborted vote of no confidence all arises from the Minister's refusal to bend the knee over Plémont?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I was not one of the signatories to the letter so I cannot say whether that influenced their decision, but it was not included as far as I can recall in the rationale included in the main body of the letter itself.

**3.7.6 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Would the Chief Minister acknowledge that the Minister is not the one that he was landed with but the one that was nominated by the Chief Minister for the position as Minister for Planning and Environment and given that he issued comments in advance in support of his Minister for Transport and Technical Services when he was facing a vote of censure, now we had a much more serious vote of no confidence and the Chief Minister did not even lodge any comments. Will he explain why that is the case, given that he could not possibly have known that the individual bringing the vote of no confidence would withdraw it?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

In answer to the first part of the question, yes, I did and this Assembly approved the appointment of the current Minister and Ministers serve with the confidence of this Assembly so one could argue that the question itself is slightly superfluous. It does not matter whether Ministers have my confidence as such because it is this Assembly that appoints them. That is the problem with the current system which needs to be changed. The vote of no confidence has been withdrawn. There seems little value in lodging comments on a proposition which is now withdrawn.

**3.7.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

The report accompanying my censure motion of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services contained several examples of technical failure but the report accompanying the no confidence motion against the Minister for Planning and Environment is critical of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services, not the Minister for Planning and Environment. Therefore it deals solely with the asbestos issue and we know that the asbestos issue is not the fault of the Minister for Planning and Environment. Therefore could the Chief Minister explain why he gave his unconditional support for the Minister for Transport and Technical Services but appears unable to do so for his Minister for Planning and Environment?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I do not agree with the Deputy's reading of the report of the Deputy of St. Martin and that the signatories to that report raised many issues. Nor do I agree that the Minister for Transport and Technical Services or his department is at fault with regard to the asbestos issue. Yesterday afternoon, I had the great pleasure of visiting 2 bits of T.T.S. industrial infrastructure. I was very impressed with those pieces of unseen infrastructure that work for the benefit of this Island week in and week out and I was very impressed with those employees that I met and their commitment to delivering those services for Jersey. Perhaps it is time that some Members of this Assembly, rather than criticising our staff, got out, spoke to them, saw the good work that they were doing and gave them their support [**Approbation**] because those staff that I saw yesterday, it is a privilege for me to be able to stand up here this morning and support them.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Does the Chief Minister also support the Environment staff and will he be taking any visits to the Environment Department?

**The Bailiff:**

Deputy I had not allowed you to ask yet another question. I had called on Deputy Baudains as to the final question.