

2.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the publicity surrounding arrests by the States of Jersey Police

Would the Minister outline what policies, if any, are in place covering the publicity that the States of Jersey Police give to arrests?

Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John (Assistant Minister for Home Affairs - rapporteur):

Any publicity relating to arrests made by the States of Jersey Police follows best practice and the guidance set out by the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The guidance is that generally people under investigation should not be named but they can and will, with certain exceptions, be identified once they have been charged. This approach balances the principles of open justice with the rights of the individual to privacy, a fair trial and damaged reputation of the individual if no charge is made against them. For similar reasons, people who are under arrest should also not be named.

2.6.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Assistant Minister confirm whether arresting people at 6.30 a.m. and whether taking away files in front of television cameras from their workplace later in the day is compatible with the policy which he has outlined?

The Deputy of St. John:

As I say, Sir, the question was referring to particularly the names of individuals. The case that the Deputy is referring to, I am afraid we do our utmost to control output to the media but in this instance clearly the media had some information the police did not.

2.6.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Assistant Minister who himself, Sir, is an expert in public relations and in, no doubt, wheedling out appropriate information, confirm whether or not there are regular leaks occurring from police headquarters for the various arrests occurring?

The Deputy of St. John:

I can confirm that I am not aware of any leaks in the police regarding this particular issue.

2.6.3 The Deputy of St. Martin:

Could I ask the Assistant Minister if there are no leaks coming about, can he explain why there seemed to be television cameras in the early hours of the morning when arrests are being made and also outside staff's workplace?

The Deputy of St. John:

All I can say is the media moves in mysterious ways. We have strict policies on release of information and as far as I am aware they are followed.

2.6.4 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I wonder if the Assistant Minister in dealing with these mysteries could tell us what procedures he intends to put in place to ensure that there is not a repetition?

The Deputy of St. John:

I will assure the Deputy and the House that I will have his allegations thoroughly investigated and if there is any indication that such leaks are occurring, action will be taken.

2.6.5 The Deputy of St. Martin:

The Assistant Minister mentioned about the guidelines of the U.K. Association of Chief Police Officers (A.C.P.O.). Would the Assistant Minister not accept that we are in Jersey and the news of people getting arrested at 6.00 a.m. in the morning soon moves around the Island? Does he not

think really, with the greatest respect to the way in which the arrests are being made, that due consideration could be considered that this is Jersey and we do not necessarily need to just follow what is going on in the U.K., particularly when these are long historical cases? It would be quite easy for the people who are under question to come in of their own free will or made at some reasonable time so it does not attract undue attention.

The Deputy of St. John:

That is exactly the intention, but if the Deputy's suggestion is that we are not to follow best practice then I am concerned about his approach. We do follow best practice. The police follow A.C.P.O. best practice and we regard that as a good standing to stand by. I cannot quite understand what the Deputy is getting at but he [Members: Oh!] is quite correct that we are a small jurisdiction and we must handle things in a manner appropriate to a small jurisdiction and that is what we endeavour to do.

2.6.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Assistant Minister confirm that the recent potential arrest where there appears to have been a very public difference of opinion or approach between the Honorary and the States Police, is in keeping with the guidelines issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers?

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, Sir.

2.6.7 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Could the Assistant Minister advise us whether the best practice that he refers to includes sending out a press release to the global media when a Centenier recently refused to charge a suspect?

The Deputy of St. John:

That press release was not just about that particular action. It was about the arrest and the release of somebody and, yes, that is normal practice. We were asked by the media who take an interest in this case to distribute any press releases to them, and a short press release was issued about the fact that they had been released.