

SOCIAL AFFAIRS PANEL

Review of Centeniers Role in the Magistrates Court

THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2006

Panel:

Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin - Chairman
Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence
Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity
Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier
Mr. C. Ahier (Scrutiny Officer)

Witnesses:

Centenier T. Reed of St. Lawrence
Connétable G. Fisher of St. Lawrence

Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin:

Can I welcome you and say good morning and thank you for coming. I am Deputy Bob Hill, and the rest of my panel will introduce themselves to you. I think you know of them, so could I start off with Deirdre.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

Good morning. I am Deputy Mezbourian of St. Lawrence, and obviously we know each other very well.

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity:

Morning. I am Deputy Anne Pryke, Trinity.

Mr. C. Ahier:

Charlie Ahier, Scrutiny Officer.

Centenier T. Reed of St. Lawrence:

Good morning.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I know you probably feel a bit nervous to start off with, so what we are going to do is quite relaxed. We want to be as informal as we can. We have prepared a set of questions we would like to go through. You were warned beforehand there was privilege attached to this, so no need to go over that. You have asked if you can come along, Mr. Fisher, to hold someone's hand, to use that expression in a nice way. I will read this out, so if you do feel you want to say anything during the course of the morning, you will be covered by privilege. It is important you fully understand the conditions under which you are

appearing at this hearing. You will find a printed copy of the statement I am about to read to you on the table in front of you: "The panel's proceedings are covered by parliamentary privilege through Article 34 of the States of Jersey Law 2005, and as a result you are protected from being sued or prosecuted for anything said during this hearing, although this privilege should obviously not be abused." Proceedings are being recorded and transcriptions will be made available on the Scrutiny website. I will kick off this first question and ask you the simple question: what made you decide to stand for election of the Centenier?

Centenier T. Reed:

Well, it was a matter of a £10,000 fine for the parish at that point in time. I had gradually been getting involved with the parish through my daughters, who had been involved with Miss St. Lawrence, and they had been in different parish things. I had met Geoffrey socially beforehand, and he approached me and asked if I would consider being a Centenier. I read through all of the different leaflets and things that I had been given at that time, and I thought I had a few things on my side which would help me do the job until maybe somebody else might like to do it, when my 3 years expires. I had time on my hands. I am honest. I have a very strong sense of fair play, and I like to help people, and I felt those were the sort of qualities a Centenier needed and that I would try my hardest to fulfil the position until those 3 years were up.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Thank you very much. When were you sworn in, so we know how long you have been in the --

Centenier T. Reed:

27th May 2005.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I ought to have made it clear we asked the Centeniers of Comité of Chef de Police if they would like to suggest someone who was fairly new to the service and someone who is experienced in the service, so the reason you are here is not because we have selected you or picked out you in particular. It was suggested you come, and I should have said that before we started. I will just make it clear you are here by invitation. The reason you are here is because you were suggested by the Chef de Police.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, I understood, as I was the last person.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Maybe, Deirdre, you would like to go on from there?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes, thank you for making that clear, Bob, because I was going to say the same thing when it was my turn to speak. I said at the beginning we know each other. For the record, I would like it to be shown that Centenier Reed and I have known each other for about 30 years.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I was a Vingtenier when the Centenier was elected to the St. Lawrence Honorary Police, and we are also next-door neighbours. Having said that, I can confirm that before the Centenier decided to stand for the role in St. Lawrence, I am aware she did undertake some consultation with members of the St. Lawrence Honorary Police and certainly with the Centeniers at the time; that she did indeed approach me and my husband, who is also a Vingtenier. We were able to give her some background to the service and the way it works in St. Lawrence because we had that experience and knowledge. So that should be made clear for the record. As one of the parishioners of St. Lawrence, I am indeed very grateful to the Centenier for deciding to stand and represent the parish in that role because it did, as you say, save the parish from facing a fine in the Royal Court of £10,000.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I think Mr. Fisher would like to come in.

Connétable G.W. Fisher of St. Lawrence:

Yes. If I could just add to that, when I first spoke to Centenier Reed, I gave her a paper that had been prepared by a former Centenier on the duties and role of a Centenier, particularly in the Parish of St. Lawrence. That Centenier could not continue, but he had been a Centenier until a few months before anyway and I think the Deputy Minister knows who I am referring to. So, she did have a written specification, if you like, of what the role involved, particularly in St. Lawrence.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you do that as a matter of course for every Centenier who comes to St. Lawrence because I think you have had 3 or 4 come in one batch?

Connétable G.W. Fisher:

Yes. This particular paper was prepared in anticipation of the first recruitment of the 4 Centeniers.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Okay. Thank you. I will just continue. We, as the Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel, are conducting a review into the role of the Centenier in the Magistrate's Court, and that is as a result of the report by Professor Rutherford, which recommended the role be removed, be taken away. The reasons given for

the Home Affairs Department, we understand, not following that recommendation were cost factors and that the role, if it was removed from the Magistrate's Court, would affect the honorary system. I believe you have copies of the terms of reference in front of you, to which we are working, and you will see from the third bullet point that one of our terms of reference is to examine the system of training and assessment provided to Centeniers for their work in the Magistrate's Court. Which leads me into the next question. When were you sworn in?

Centenier T. Reed:

I was sworn in on 27th May.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That was the date you were sworn in, not elected?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. That was the date I was sworn in.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Following that, when did you present your first case in the Magistrate's Court?

Centenier T. Reed:

Probably a few months before I presented my first case. The first case was just a very simple speeding one, and really that is all I have dealt with since I have been presenting cases. I tend to just do those because I feel comfortable with them at the moment. If I do have to do anything other than that, I would always seek advice before I would attempt to do anything other than that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What training did you receive prior to presenting your first case, which, as you say, was a few months after you were sworn in?

Centenier T. Reed:

I had not received any formal training at that point. Our Chef de Police had done a small role play where he showed me how to present the cases, which worked very well. In some ways, it helped more than some of the training we have had since because it was one-to-one.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Did you visit the court prior to presenting a case, to see for yourself?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. I had visited the court.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You were able to do that?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You just referred, Centenier, to training you had after you presented your first case, having received, prior to that, one-to-one training in a role-play situation with the Chef. Would you describe the training you received after you presented your first case?

Centenier T. Reed:

We started the actual Centenier training and court training, it was 31st October, I think. So it was quite a way into it. We did that every week for 6 weeks, so we had 6 weeks continual training, which was very helpful. But because there were numerous people there, you do not get the individual.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Centenier, was that training specifically for presentation of cases in court, or was it training for the Centenier's role as a whole?

Centenier T. Reed:

There was a small amount of training for Centenier's work, the Parish Hall Inquiries, which went on to being in the court, and we had the legal advisers there as well, showing us the jurisdiction, bail applications and things like that. We did a little bit of role-play in the courtroom at that time as well, to give more of a feel.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So, having been presenting cases in court for maybe just over a year, during which obviously you have gained a lot of experience, on reflection, what is your view of the training you were given to present those cases?

Centenier T. Reed:

I think it would have been nice to have had training earlier, but obviously these things have to be all sorted out, and a lot of work has to go into these things. Centeniers are coming in and out all of the time, so they cannot just have a continual training going. There has to be specific times, and if you happen to join at an inappropriate time, you just have to use your common sense and try your hardest and keep going.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Could I just come in there and ask was it just Centeniers on the course, or was it a course run for COs and Vingteniers?

Centenier T. Reed:

That particular course was just for Centeniers, yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

It was 5 months after you --

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. We had had a previous course, John De La Haye's foundation course, which was Centeniers, Vingteniers, COs. Everybody could come to that course.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

When was that? Your first time you had any training was the 6 weeks training was 5 months after you were sworn in? Did you go to the John De La Haye before that, did you?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. That was a day before I started my first duty week, which was the following Wednesday after I was sworn in. So, yes, I had had training quite soon after I joined, but not specifically for Centenier or court work. In fact, in John De La Haye's training, there is no Centenier work really at all. It covers the broad spectrum of policing but not Parish Hall Inquiries.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

So the training you received on 31st October was specific to the role of Centenier and also includes some identical material?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Are we finished on 5?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Could I just say something? There was something that crossed my mind during Centenier Reed's presentation, and that was the fact that Centeniers are coming and going all the time. I do not know if you are aware - I know Deputy Mezbourian is aware - but because of the difficulties we have recruiting so many Centeniers all at one time, not only in St. Lawrence but also in St. John, and I think St. Helier

has that same problem, we have been looking at taking for the States a proposition to amend the period of service of Centeniers so that in a parish with 4 Centeniers, like St. Lawrence, we would end up having a Centenier finishing a term of office every 9 months. So, we would want to have one every 9 months. Therefore, there would also be a common election day across the Island for Centeniers. So, on fixed dates, every 9 months, you would have elections for Centeniers, which would make it easier, I suspect, to hold courses because then you would not have Centeniers coming and going at odd times. They would all be arriving as Centeniers together for their training. So, I think that would probably be an improvement as well for the training side of it.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

What Tania had to say earlier on about the fact she was conscious about the £10,000 fine, do you think it is right that parishes should have that fine hanging over them?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

You would have to ask the Court that. I think it is not a pleasant situation to be in, and I personally think it is the worst part of my role, having to find a number of Centeniers all at the same time because you go to bed at night dreaming about Centeniers. You wake up in the morning thinking about Centeniers. You live the whole day thinking about Centeniers, and you have to approach, literally, as I have found, hundreds of people. I mean, one does not approach just anybody. One approaches people who you think would be suitable. I got to the point where I had exhausted all the people who I knew directly, and having advertised in our parish magazine, et cetera., et cetera., I called the Committee of Paroisielle(?) together and asked them to do exactly the same thing that I had done and identify people they thought suitable who would then be able to talk to me about the role, and we would see whether it was a sensible thing for them to go forward or not; so an uncomfortable time. We want to avoid that in the future, and what is going before the States, if it is approved, will avoid that because it will mean you do not end up, as we did, with 4 relatively inexperienced Centeniers. You will end up with one Centenier with a minimum of 27 months experience, one with 18 months, one with 9 months and a new one. Potentially that is the worst situation we would have, and you would only be looking for one Centenier at a time. You would know that, well in advance, you were looking for one Centenier in 9 months' time. If the existing one is prepared to stand again, then you know that 9 months in advance, and it makes life a lot easier.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

The question I asked was do you think it is fair that parishioners should be liable to a fine?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Well, I do not. The reason, as I understand it, is because Centeniers are so important in the court process that we are talking about, and if we do not have Centeniers, we do not have a court process. That is why it is important, and the court orders the election, and it is contempt of court if nobody is elected. You

are given 3 goes. An election is ordered, as we went through several times, although we have managed on the third time, every time, to find somebody, but you had to go through the process 3 times, as a maximum, and then you get fined if you do not find somebody the third time.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Anne, were you going to say something?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes. I just want to follow up with you, Constable, before we go back to Centenier Reed. Was that proposition initiated from the Comité des Connétables, or --

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, it is. Well, at the moment, it is being worked upon by an Honorary Police constitutional group which I chair, which is -- I am the only Connétable on it. It is made up of principally Centeniers and a couple of Vingteniers.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Right. So it has come from that level and up to the Comité des Connétables?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes. It has been approved in principle already by the Comité des Connétables and by the Comité des Chefs de Police. In fact, at the next meeting, we will be taking a draft through to the Comité des Connétables. After that, it will be lodged, I suspect, unless the committee has a problem with the detail, but I doubt it.

The Deputy of Trinity:

It sounds a very sensible proposition, really.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes. It takes a long time to formulate these things, as you know, but immediately when the problem arose I got together with the Connétable of St. John and of St. Helier, who had the same problem at the same time and said: "We really ought to try and sort this out." So that was the start of it, really.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

If you could do questions 6 and 7?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Going back to you, Centenier Reed. After hearing what the Constable said, you must be congratulated on your community spirit and getting the parish out of a potential difficult situation.

Centenier T. Reed:

Thank you. Before we go on, I would like to just put straight the court training was 24th October. My other training was 31st May. That is where I got the 31st from, which was the few days after I had been sworn in.

The Deputy of Trinity:

How often do you present cases in court?

Centenier T. Reed:

Not that often. There are not an awful lot of problems in St. Lawrence, really. We get the odd speeders. We do not have an awful lot of court work to do, so that sometimes can be a little bit of a problem because you are not getting the continuity or presenting regularly in court, and all 4 Centeniers in St. Lawrence are happy to go into court and present cases. So, it means that your opportunity to present cases does not come that often. So far I have presented mostly in front of Mr. Le Marquand, once with Mr. Picot, once with Mr. Mourant and once with Mr. Christmas. All of the Magistrates seem to have their preferred way of hearing even the charges read out because Mr. Christmas said he did not want the article numbers once in a court whereas normally the charges would be read out word for word. They all want varying degrees of information when you are reading the facts. Some like more facts than others, so that can sometimes be a little bit --

The Deputy of St. Martin:

A bit daunting?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, because you are not sure of exactly how many facts you should be reading out.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Do you present your own cases in court, the ones you have charged at Parish Hall?

Centenier T. Reed:

No. We will get files, we will have, you know, whichever month is coming up. The third Tuesday in every month is St. Lawrence court dates, and so we will just have whoever Centenier's court cases for that day. The one Centenier will go and present those cases for that day. If there is anything that you feel that you might need help with, for example, if you are not 100 per cent sure of how to deal with a bail application or jurisdiction, you would always ask a more senior Centenier from, probably, St. Helier, to accompany you. They would always take over if you get into any difficulty whatsoever or the slightest falter and they will take over.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Right. I was just thinking that I had sidetracked something. You say that you tend to get support from St. Helier?

Centenier T. Reed:

Very much from St. Helier, yes.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Rather than the legal advisers?

Centenier T. Reed:

The legal advisers will give you support as well, yes, and we have all of the numbers. They have given us all of their numbers. Robin Morris and Laurence O'Donnell in particular, we can get in touch with whenever we feel we want to.

The Deputy of Trinity:

How much time do you spend preparing for a case in court?

Centenier T. Reed:

Well, you have to make sure that you have read through the files and that everything is in order before you go to court because any inconsistencies in the paperwork, if it is picked up on, the case could just fold. It is very expensive. A morning's court can cost a fortune; if the case that you are bringing then does not come to anything. With the speeding ones, there is not really usually any problems with them. They are straightforward.

The Deputy of Trinity:

So, is it half an hour or an hour, or is it longer, just thinking of actual time-wise?

Centenier T. Reed:

With cases like that, they do not take that long to go through. You check that everything follows through, the paperwork. So, you would check the names are all right and they are all spelled correctly, that the vehicle is right and that the J numbers correspond through correctly and just various things like that that do not take an awful lot of time. With something more difficult, which I have only ever dealt with with other more experienced Centeniers, between you, you would go through it all and maybe spend a lot of time. Maybe over days you will go back to it and have another chat about it.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Can I just ask who the Centeniers are who assist you? Are they within your parish or outside the parish?

Centenier T. Reed:

Outside of the parish, but we try and help each other within the parish as well, as far as we can, but because all 4 Centeniers are relatively new together, we tend to rely more on the St. Helier Centeniers.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Centenier, going back to what you said previously about the Magistrates expecting different things from the Centeniers in court, in the way that they present.

Centenier T. Reed:

That is how I feel. That is my personal feeling, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That is how you feel it, but would you tell us what part, if any, the Magistrate plays in the court-presentation training?

Centenier T. Reed:

The Magistrate has never - not to my knowledge - taken any place in court-presentation training.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Are you aware whether he is involved with the preparation of the training?

Centenier T. Reed:

Not as far as I am aware.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Do you think it would benefit you if he were to take an active role?

Centenier T. Reed:

I think it would help if we knew exactly what was expected of us from each Magistrate, and I think it could not do any harm, and it is only going to help.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Just for the benefit of the recording, would you remind us of how many Magistrates there are?

Centenier T. Reed:

I have not been in front of all of the Magistrates, so I am not aware of all of the Magistrates that there are at the moment, only the ones that I would have presented in front of.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So you would have presented before Mr. Christmas, Mr. Le Marquand or --

Centenier T. Reed:

Mr. Mourant and Mr. Picot.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Because there are some other --

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, there are other Magistrates. I am aware there are other Magistrates. I am just not sure who they are.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You referred also to the fact, when you answered Deputy Pryke, that you would present cases for other Centeniers in your parish on the designated court date.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Could you tell us when you receive notification of cases that you have not charged but that you will be required to present?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, well, they are all in our filing cabinets. They are all put under the month that they need to go to court, and you can just have a look whenever you want before your court date.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am trying to find out how much notice you have of presenting a case that you have not charged in order to prepare for the hearing.

Centenier T. Reed:

That depends on the Chef de Police and when he decides whether he is going to present or who he might like to present the cases. Sometimes you get very little notice, and you literally just have to hope that everything is in order, and you have to look through things very, very fast. That happens, I think, with everybody, even the lawyers and the advocates. They will often have things at the last minute that they have to go through very quickly for presenting.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Do you think that would be a case for that part of the system to be improved?

Centenier T. Reed:

In an ideal world, you would like to have a lot of time so that you are 100 per cent sure on everything. I mean, that would always be best, if you can be really sure on everything, but sometimes the time just does not allow for it. Different things happen. Somebody might think they are going to be presenting a case, they might then be ill and you have to take over at the last minute. It is not always feasible for things to -- you know, the best laid plans ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I would just like to keep moving on if we could, but there are a couple of questions I would like to ask from the last 2 that Deputy Pryke has asked. About the inconsistency in court, have you reported it to anybody so something can be done to rectify the problem because if the courts do not know they are doing something wrong, they may think they are doing okay? Have you ever thought about telling anybody?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, I certainly discuss it with other Centeniers, and I am sure that the Chefs groups would be working on different things.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

But you have reported it? You have passed it --

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. I do not just keep these things to myself.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Okay. The other one, quickly, is we talked about the time required to prepare cases. We understand that some parishes have secretaries or a police secretary or someone who has a bit of time to assist the Centeniers. Do you have that in St. Lawrence?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, we do.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

So they will help you to put the papers together?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. They do the paperwork. We just check through everything. We just do the charge sheets.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Is that a full-time job or a part-time job? It is a part-time job, I assume, in St. Lawrence, yes. Do they get any training themselves as to how to put all the papers together?

Centenier T. Reed:

I am not --

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Maybe I could ask the Connétable that. Would you know?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Well, they are more experienced than I am. They have been there longer than I have, so I do not know whether they would have been trained originally, but they certainly know what they are doing, and they are very complimentary about Centenier Reed as well, I can say.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Okay. If I could just move on and look at number 8, then; it touches on what I was saying already. What sort of support do you get from the Criminal Justice Unit?

Centenier T. Reed:

The Criminal Justice Unit have always been very helpful, but occasionally mistakes are made. When you phone, they will help, as far as they can, into the inquiry that you are making that sometimes the law ... it is hard to explain. If one had somebody into a Parish Hall Inquiry, and I am not 100 per cent sure what I would like to do in that case, and I think: "Well, I should defer this case and speak to the Criminal Justice Unit about it" to find out maybe a few more details that I feel are left out, or something that the person I have been speaking to says has not been put in, and I want things verified, they will always do their best to help. Some things where we can give written cautions but we cannot fine, to me I find is very difficult because it seems difficult for somebody who might have to pay a £75 fine for speeding and then somebody who is speeding but has done over that amount, but they might have another reason, maybe another conviction within the 3 years, which means that they are doing less than that but they still have to go to court, then you have to practically either let them off completely - well, not completely, because it will still be recorded as a written caution - but monetary-wise, they then do not have to pay anything, which does not seem quite --

The Deputy of St. Martin:

So, just following on from that, it may well be a recommendation could follow that possible Centeniers might have extra power, particularly with areas like speeding, because I gather there is a criteria as to what you can fine at Parish Hall, so probably a bit more flexibility within the system would help the

Centeniers.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. Well, it is just the anomaly of going up to the 15 mile per hour over the limit and then it is either court or it is a written caution in exceptional circumstances, but sometimes that is hard. A written caution can be used for lots of things, which sometimes seems an easy way out, really.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Just following on from that, the Criminal Justice Unit, you will get called down obviously to Rouge Bouillon to charge someone. Have you had that experience at all?

Centenier T. Reed:

Once.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Did you agree with what was put before you? Did you agree with the particular charge that was going to be charged of the accused?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

You were happy with it?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, and the police have always been very helpful. Any dealing I have ever had with them, they have always been very helpful.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you want to go on to number 9, or does somebody else want to say something?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes. I have got a different question because although we are talking about presenting the case in court, what we have not mentioned, of course, is prior to you presenting your case in court, you have to make the decision to charge, although the Deputy has referred to that at police headquarters. That, of course, is generally made at the Parish Hall Inquiry, and I think we should ask you how much training did you have for the role of Centenier dealing with the Parish Hall Inquiry?

Centenier T. Reed:

Well, a lot of it is all using your common sense and your sense of justice within yourself, but you have also got the Attorney General's guidelines to go by. So, there are certain things that we have to work within anyway, that we have not got a choice of how we deal with it. We work within those guidelines that we are given.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

The actual training you received for the Parish Hall Inquiry, how did that proceed? What happened?

Centenier T. Reed:

It was a role play situation. Because although I have been very lucky; everybody I have seen has been very, very nice, but occasionally you might get awkward people coming in, so it was a little bit of role play with maybe the odd awkward person that you might have to deal with.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Who was conducting that? Was that Mr. De La Haye, or was that someone ...?

Centenier T. Reed:

No. That was within the Centeniers training group, which was at the very beginning of our Centeniers and court work training.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Who decided you were ready to conduct an inquiry?

Centenier T. Reed:

You have to feel in yourself that you are ready. You know it is one of the things you are going to have to do when you take up the position, and you know it is something that you have to do, and you do it to the best of your ability. As far as I know, I have been as fair as I can, and everybody seems to leave, even the people going to court, not too unhappy, I hope.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

When you were having your consultation before you decided to stand for election, you were told about the Parish Hall Inquiry. Were you also told you would have to present cases in court?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How do you see your role in court?

Centenier T. Reed:

Purely just to present the cases and just be there because it practically always will take all morning in court. When you go to court, you can really write off that morning. You are there for the whole morning really.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Are you of the opinion that you present cases rather than carry out the role of a prosecutor?

Centenier T. Reed:

It is a role of prosecutor because the lawyers and advocates cannot read out charges. The Centenier has to read out the charges. So, you are a prosecutor, but you are purely reading what is in front of you and going by all the facts you have got on your sheets and reading those facts out for the Magistrate to make up his mind on whatever case.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Do you remember whether, during your consultation, you were told you would be prosecuting cases in court?

Centenier T. Reed:

I knew I would be prosecuting cases in court, but I do not think anybody says that you have to do it. There will always be other Centeniers who would do it for you.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So there is an option perhaps?

Centenier T. Reed:

There is really. If I really did not want to present cases in court, I would not really have to.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Did you make an oath?

Centenier T. Reed:

I made an oath, but there are Centeniers who do not present cases in court.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you want to move on to the next one, number 9, is it?

The Deputy of Trinity:

How do you feel about the role of presenting? Do you feel comfortable in presenting it?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, as long as I feel I have read through my papers and I feel I know the facts that I am presenting, I do feel comfortable. Occasionally if I have had papers a little bit last minute, I do not feel so comfortable because I have not had a chance to look through them all properly, so there is always that little bit of doubt that comes into it.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Right. Do you feel it would affect the traditional role of the Honorary Police if the responsibility of Centeniers to present the case was given to, say, a pool of Centeniers?

Centenier T. Reed:

I personally think that it would be a good idea for Magistrates to have a choice of which Centeniers they prefer to present because, at the end of the day, if they are people who they understand, and they like the way they are presenting, they are the ones that are having to listen. I personally think there should be a pool of trained Centeniers.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Would you say a pool made up of experienced Centeniers?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, there would obviously have to be a few because of people going on holiday and people being sick. You have to take things like that into consideration, so there would have to be a fair few. There are a lot of Centeniers who are very good at presenting in court. I have listened to quite a few who are as good as any advocates or lawyers. There are always the few who are not so clear and are not so good, but things come with practice.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Can I put you on the spot now? If there was a pool of Centeniers, would you want to be one of the pool? Perhaps a bit unfair, that question.

Centenier T. Reed:

I think if I was planning on staying longer than the 3 years, I would. I would like to do the training, and I would like to be in that pool, but I think as I am only staying for the 3 years and then I am going, I think it would not be fair to even try.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I was going to ask the Centenier why she is saying she is going to leave after 3 years and allow her to perhaps explain it could be for personal reasons rather than the fact she is not enjoying the role.

Centenier T. Reed:

No. It is definitely personal reasons, yes. My husband is retiring.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We do not need to know --

Centenier T. Reed:

No, no. Definitely.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I would like to go back to the training, if I may, and ask you whether you were able to refuse to attend the training.

Centenier T. Reed:

Certain people did not attend any training, so it was optional whether you go to the training.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

In your opinion, do you think it would be better if it was obligatory?

Centenier T. Reed:

It would be very hard to make it obligatory because people go on holidays, and people have to fit in things with their duties. It would be practically impossible to find time for training where everybody can attend.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Do you think it is detrimental for people to not attend that training?

Centenier T. Reed:

I think it is definitely helpful to attend it, and, you know, you are going to definitely lose out on lots of knowledge and lots of getting to know other officers within the Honorary Police as well by not attending.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

From your time that you have spent in the Magistrate's Court, would you be able to hazard a guess from their presentation of the cases, as to which Centeniers have received training and which have not?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

That is a difficult one, is it not, if you do not know?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

It is a purely --

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, you probably would not be able to tell because some people can just naturally present things better than others anyway.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Horses for courses. You were going to ask part (b) of that question. If it was made into a pool, maybe the pool could be extended to people who were not legal advisers or dedicated case workers if it was not Honorary Police.

Centenier T. Reed:

That would be costly, if the legal advisers were got involved.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Okay. You would say it would not be a good idea because of cost?

Centenier T. Reed:

I think it would be very costly.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

You do not have any idea of the cost?

Centenier T. Reed:

It is a lot, I am sure.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

How much is a lot?

Centenier T. Reed:

I do not know. I really have no idea but I know that is --

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We will leave that for somebody else possibly.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. It will be a lot.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Okay. Can we just ask how do you see the weakness and strengths of the presentation at court? I think we have more or less covered that. Obviously, the more training one gets, the more confident one gets at doing it.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. I think it all comes with experience, really. The more you go, the more confident you get and the better you will deal with things.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Possibly if I could just look at 12 and 13 together: how much of your time is taken up -- can I be personal and ask do you work or are you at home all day?

Centenier T. Reed:

No, I do not work, and that was one of the things that made me feel that I should give up 3 years of my time (...overspeaking)

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Unless you can persuade her to stay longer, yes. Has the role reached your expectations? Are you enjoying what you are doing?

Centenier T. Reed:

I do enjoy it. I enjoy helping people. We have lots of phone calls, and people really appreciate when you can give them a bit of advice. We maybe have access to telephone numbers that other people would not know how to get in touch with certain places. We can help people a lot, and they are very appreciative to it.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

So, you are getting a tremendous amount of job satisfaction out of it?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Which is good, yes. If you do not want to ask anything else, we will move on to number 14, okay?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Would you describe the duties as onerous? You are on call 24 hours a day for 7 days a week during

your duty week.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes. If you get a telephone call at 3.00 a.m. over a party and then you maybe get woken up again at 7.00 a.m. with somebody losing their dog maybe, or some other phone call, you get a bit tired. Occasionally you might worry about a decision. Once you have made a decision, obviously you hope it is the right decision, so you might be lacking a bit of sleep but you still have to take calls, and you still have to go out if needed. If there is an accident, you will go and attend. Usually, a States of Jersey policeman will attend, if the accident is very bad, and we will just purely do traffic duty in that instance, but minor accidents you will go and you will deal with yourself. You will deal with the traffic. You will take the notes and deal with the accident yourself.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Can you delegate some of those responsibilities? If you get maybe a dog lost, could you send maybe a Vingtenier down to have a look at it? Has it got to be the Centenier?

Centenier T. Reed:

You can definitely delegate, but the problem, sometimes, is a lot of officers work. So, when you are the only one not working, you find you are doing a lot of the things yourself.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you think there are any ways in which it could be improved? If one should take on that responsibility, you accept the fact you are going to have to be inconvenienced at some time or other? It is just part of the job.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, you accept that fact, and may I add that the Vingteniers and COs, if they can help, they certainly do help, and some have given me tremendous help over the year or so that I have been in.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How do you think the role of Centenier would be affected should the ability to present cases in court be taken away?

Centenier T. Reed:

Well, I think there are going to be a lot of Centeniers who would maybe then start just feeling like car-park attendants or sort of general dogsbodies rather than playing an important role. I think it might take a bit of respect away from the Centeniers' role, if that was taken away.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Of course if that role was taken away, then the power to charge would also need to be removed because Centeniers present cases as a consequence of having the power to charge. So, if that were to go, how would you view its impact on the honorary system?

Centenier T. Reed:

I am sure it would impact greatly on the honorary system.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Can I just come in because we have a paradox as well. If, indeed, Centeniers had a pool, and you said before that you would rather not go to court if you had the opportunity of someone else doing it. I mean, it is a task that --

Centenier T. Reed:

Oh, I quite enjoy it.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

You quite enjoy it, but you understand there are some who do not, and for all sorts of reasons; maybe just tied up at work. But if, indeed, a pool of Centeniers was set up, that of course would affect the status of the Centenier as well, would it not?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, it would. Yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

So, it is something to consider. Whilst a pool may be seen to be possibly a logical outcome, or a solution, it would have its drawbacks as well because you may well end up that those who are not part of the pool may end up feeling like car-park attendants.

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, but I think probably whatever gets done, somebody will be upset, and it is going to affect somebody, whatever way things go.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Could you say also, at the moment, and possibly we have had this from Mr. Fisher, it is difficult to recruit Centeniers and it may well be to the detriment if they are feeling they have got to give up their time going to court. Whereas if they could devote their time to being -- I just like to think of Centeniers as a bit more than a car-park attendant. I think Centeniers have got quite an important role in the actual policing of it. You may be able to devote more time to policing rather than devoting the time to court.

Centenier T. Reed:

I think that the Centeniers who are good in court enjoy their court work, and a lot of the St. Helier Centeniers do purely court work. They do not do a lot of other general policing. That would impact St. Helier immensely.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

It begs the question. I note, Mr. Fisher, you have got some comment to make.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Well, I was only going to comment, you have almost answered the point I was going to make, in that perhaps St. Helier is different to other parishes, and we have a St. Helier Centenier in the room at the moment. My understanding is that they basically do court work and very little, relatively, in the way of police work. I was just going to ask, I presume you are interviewing a St. Helier Centenier because all Centeniers across the Island are not absolutely identical. You are, later on, right, because the Centenier is in the room?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes, the Centenier is in the room.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

He is next.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Well, he will be able to give you --

The Deputy of St. Martin:

If you recall, when we started out, we made it clear that we ask for the 2 spectrums of it, because we are more than aware --

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

He is also someone who does help greatly in court other Centeniers from other parishes, and I would love to have him in the St. Lawrence Honorary Police because he lives in St. Lawrence, and he knows that already so ... **[Laughter]**

The Deputy of St. Martin:

But it is a question. We are not here to give a view, we are here to ask the questions and hear what you have to say.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

The only point I am making is I think you ought to understand the St. Helier perspective because it is probably somewhat different to the other parishes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We do. Indeed, we had Mr. Marcault(?) the other day and he did make us well aware of the wide spectrums there are from what we call the “quieter” parishes to the busier parishes, and the gap is very wide. That was one of the problems really of finding out how the 2 can come together. Would we like to move on to number 16?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Before you joined the Honorary Police, were you involved in parish activities to allow you to be familiar with parishioners who you come across now in your role as Centenier?

Centenier T. Reed:

No, not really. Not very much; not until my daughters got me involved through the Battle of Flowers.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Would you subscribe to the view that the Centeniers in a country parish usually are well known to their parishioners, and not only well known to them but known by ...?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, and that would be an ideal situation, if somebody had the time who knew an awful lot about the parish and was very well known within the parish, if they had the time to fulfil the role of Centenier, that would be an ideal situation, but it is not always possible.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How well known do you think you are now, as a Centenier, in the parish?

Centenier T. Reed:

I do not really know. I do not really know. Probably a few people might recognise me more, but hopefully not too many people from St. Lawrence have to come to the inquiries to recognise me.

[Laughter]

The Deputy of Trinity:

A law-abiding parish.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What difference do you think it would have made to your role as Centenier had you progressed through the ranks?

Centenier T. Reed:

I think it probably would have helped because I would have slowly got more knowledge on the parish. Although I have lived in the parish for over 20 years, I just always knew where I was going, so it is amazing how I knew very little really of different road names and things, but you quickly learn. When you have to learn, you do, and if I had gone through the system, I would have started with that knowledge as a Centenier rather than having to build up that knowledge from the starting point of Centenier.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Presumably as far as the Parish Hall Inquiry is concerned, you would have had more experience because you would have sat in on inquiries, had you been a CO or a Vingtenier?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So, you would have been aware of the procedures?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Just to go back to the question I was asking before about your training for the Parish Hall Inquiry, were you able to sit in on inquiries when you were sworn in?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, I did. I sat in on several inquiries before I started doing the inquiries myself.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Could I just come in there? This is hearsay really. It is not my own experience or view, but the Centenier who drew up the paperwork which I mentioned earlier about describing the role of Centenier in the parish did make the point that being a CO or a Vingtenier did not repay you for being a Centenier, certainly as far as court work is concerned anyway. Obviously, within the Parish Hall Inquiry, Vingteniers and Centeniers do sit in on Parish Hall Inquiries, so there would be an element of the Centenier's role. However, the court side of it is totally new, even if you have been a CO or a Vingtenier.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We know about the common view or familiar set here. The Constable knows everyone in the parish. Everybody knows the Constable. The Centeniers, the value or the strength of the honorary system is because they know their parishioners, but in reality, it is not quite as easy as it would be because even if you have lived in a parish for 20 years, it is difficult. The only way you would get to know that is by knocking on the doors and saying: "Hello, I am your Centenier. I am your Constables Officer." Has that ever happened? Have you ever done that?

Deputy T. Reed:

No.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do you think that might a good way of maybe fostering good relations within the parish?

Centenier T. Reed:

It would be a good way of people getting to know you. I would have a lot of doors to knock on.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Perhaps if we could possibly ask Anne to look at the last 2, could we tie them up together?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Yes. Just very briefly just to tie things up. Centenier Lamy from St. Peter produced a report from his trip to Nottingham. Were you aware that he had produced a report?

Centenier T. Reed:

Yes, I was aware and I have read it and in the report it will say how much money is being saved by Centeniers, I am sure, although I do not remember the figures.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Were you interviewed as part of the report?

Centenier T. Reed:

I was not interviewed as part of that report.

The Deputy of Trinity:

Were you aware that any others were?

Centenier T. Reed:

The Centeniers Training Group did interview all 56, 57 Centeniers and I was interviewed within that report internally.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Sorry, I did not quite hear it. You were given what?

Centenier T. Reed:

All of the Centeniers were interviewed by the Honorary Police Training, the Centeniers Training Group.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

When was that?

Centenier T. Reed:

I do not remember exactly when that was. It was a few months ago.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

What in particular was it about? About your role as a Centenier or a role in court or what was it?

Centenier T. Reed:

It was our role as a Centenier, our role in court, our role in general from how we felt about everything really.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Can you recall who asked you the questions? You said it was the Centeniers.

Centenier T. Reed:

Centenier Scaife.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

That is fine. Did he forward any suggestions at all about the way the system could be improved or your comments, et cetera?

Centenier T. Reed:

I gave my point of view on everything and told him exactly how I felt about everything that I had experienced since I started.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We have done very well. We thought an hour and we have done well. I think we have concluded the set questions we have prepared and the supplementaries that comes from there. Are there any things that you think we ought to have asked you that we did not that you would like us to ask you?

Centenier T. Reed:

No, not that I can think of.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We would like to thank you both for your time and I know that certainly Deidre has already complimented you on your service to the parish. I am sure all parishes are looking for people like yourself. Thank you.

Centenier T. Reed:

Thank you.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you, and I think I would just like to say that we will be sending you a copy of the report that we are going to produce following our completion of our review. Presumably the Constable will get one anyway as a result of being a States' Member, but you will be able to see our conclusions and whether we will be making any recommendations following the review. I would just like to thank you for coming and speaking so clearly and well to us.

Centenier T. Reed:

Thank you. I was worried that I was not speaking very clearly.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Well done.