

STATES OF JERSEY



ELECTION CAMPAIGN PERIOD: RESTRICTIONS

Lodged au Greffe on 21st October 2011
by Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to agree that –
 - (i) the period between the nomination meetings for the ordinary elections for Senator, Connétable and Deputy and the election day should be no longer than 4 weeks;
 - (ii) the States Assembly should not meet in the period between the said nomination meetings and the election day;
 - (iii) Standing Orders should be amended to provide that no propositions can be lodged ‘au Greffe’ during the period between the said nomination meetings and the election day;
- (b) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary legislation to give effect to the proposals.

DEPUTY R.G. LE HÉRISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR

REPORT

Introduction

Perhaps because of the newness of the election format there seem to be some loose ends and unresolved issues that need urgent attention.

I think it is totally wrong that members are putting forward propositions in the period when all pro-active political work should cease and government should be confined to 'routine' administration. These propositions could be construed as giving political advantage to current members and, quite preposterously, result in members approving or rejecting such legislation who may well not be in the new House. A similar restriction must apply to the work of the Executive so that, for example, new initiatives and propositions are not promoted in this period of 'purdah'.

I have spoken to a few members who are perplexed at the long gap between nominations and the election itself. The current rule is that there must be a 3 week break in States Sittings in order to minimise disruption to political business. I have nevertheless been advised that a 3 week gap between nomination meetings and the election could be too short to allow ballot papers to be printed in time for postal voting to be completed satisfactorily. I am therefore proposing a 4 week campaign to ensure a short, sharp campaign. Otherwise, conditions like poster and hustings fatigue can easily set in. During the 4 week election campaign period there would be no States meetings.

Proposal

My proposal is simple. I would ask the House to task the new Privileges and Procedures Committee [PPC] with bringing forward proposals which give effect to my recommendations.

Financial and manpower implications

This should be part of the normal workload of PPC; some Law Drafting time will be needed, and much time will be saved of the House by not debating legislative proposals in the run-up to the new Session.