

3.8 Deputy T.M. Pitman of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding allegations surrounding the leak of confidential information relating to the historic abuse inquiry.

Following recent comments made in evidence to Scrutiny Sub-Panel and in the Assembly alleging that confidential information relating to the historic abuse inquiry have twice been leaked to a *Daily Mail* journalist, what measures, if any, will the Minister be discussing with the new Chief Officer of the States of Jersey Police to ensure that police inquiries cannot be undermined in this way in the future?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs):

It has been known for some time that the former Superintendent, who was the Senior Investigating Officer in the Haut de la Garenne investigation, provided confidential information not only to the local press but also to a *Daily Mail* reporter in connection with that officer's criticism of the way in which the investigation at Haut de la Garenne had been handled by the former Deputy Chief Officer and Senior Investigating Officer. I have previously publicly criticised the actions of the former Superintendent in so doing. However, even more concerning in my view is the link between the former Deputy Chief Officer himself and a reporter from the *News of the World*, some details of which are revealed today in my answer to written question 5. It is in my view totally unacceptable that a *News of the World* reporter, who subsequently wrote an utterly scurrilous and destructive article [Approbation] based apparently upon information provided by States of Jersey Police Officers, should have been entertained in London together with other officers involved in the criminal investigation at public expense by the then Deputy Chief Officer. There will always be a risk of criminal investigations being prejudiced if police officers behave improperly. [Approbation]

3.8.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Could the Minister answer the question? What is he going to do to try and stop it happening or shall I just move to the next, the supplementary?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I do not know what I can do to take effective action to stop maverick police officers acting in an improper way.

3.8.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Given that the first leak is alleged to have come from a former Assistant Minister for Health at the time when I suppose Senator Shenton would have been Minister for Health rather than originating within the police, how will he be working with his ministerial colleagues to ensure future investigations are not put at risk?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I am sorry I am going to ask the Deputy to repeat the first part of the question because I did not hear it.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

The first alleged leak has allegedly originated from within the Health Department and the former Assistant Minister for Health rather than the police themselves so how will the Minister, if he can, be working with his colleagues in other departments to try and make sure that does not happen?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I am aware that an allegation has been made by one witness to the Scrutiny Sub-Panel to the effect of such a leak. I have to say that I have not understood the precise nature of what was leaked or what was allegedly leaked in that way but, of course, I would also say that as a matter of course in relation to confidential matters, that States Members also should not be involved in leaking such information to the press.

3.8.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I wonder if the Minister would join with me in the abhorrence of the shocking allegations that have been coming out recently regarding the position of News International and whether or not any research has been undertaken in respect of the recent historic abuse inquiry, particularly in respect of the victims to ensure that their phones were not hacked in any way?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think, Deputy, that does not relate at all to the question, which was about undermining of police inquiries in the future. Can you reformulate your question in such a way that it is linked to the first question?

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Would the Minister agree that as well as the confidential information that is required to ensure justice is carried out, it is also imperative that not only the confidential information is not leaked to the media but also the confidential telephone and privacies of the abused are also not undermined by the media?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I absolutely agree with that. What has been revealed in the U.K. in relation to the practices of the *News of the World* is utterly disgraceful.

3.8.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I was trying to elicit an answer from the Minister in respect of ensuring that the privacies of the abused have also been protected and I have asked if he would at least undertake to investigate whether or not there has been any transgression of those abused.

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

If there was any issue which gave rise to a criminal investigation, that, of course, would be an operational matter to be considered by the States of Jersey Police and not for me to give directions.