

## **2.9 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the impartiality of the Verita enquiry:**

Given that on 30th June 2009 the Minister stated that: "That accommodation for Verita will no longer be available on Health and Social Services Department premises and interviews will also take place away from Health and Social Services Department", will the Minister assure Members that no interviews have taken place on Health and Social Services Department premises and Verita personnel have not held meetings with any of the department's senior management team either on or off the Health Department's premises?

### **The Deputy of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):**

Verita is conducting independent confidential interviews and, therefore, I am not party to their schedule. I am unaware of whom Verita may have met, when they may have met and where these interviews may have taken place as Verita have made all the arrangements. I am assured by Verita that since Morier House became available no formal interviews have taken place on Health and Social Services premises, even with members of the senior management team. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Greffier and his staff on my behalf and the staff of Verita for their assistance in making this possible. This does not mean that Verita have not been on Health and Social Services premises. They have been accorded a tour of the hospital and theatres and have met with administrative staff about the collection of documentation. The consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist appointed by Verita have also spent time in the departments, and time reviewing patients' records which cannot leave the hospital.

### **2.9.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

I thank the Minister for almost getting around at the end. First we were told there is nothing and now we are told there is something. Can the Minister assure me that the Verita people, at no time, have ever held meetings in the office of the Medical Director on the fourth floor and used his premises or used his office to conduct interviews with other medical staff on the premises and also could the Minister assure us that the people who showed Verita people around were not members of the senior management team?

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

As I said, no formal interviews have taken place in Health and Social Services Department buildings. The teams of Verita have obviously wanted to see the hospitals, theatres and have been around the hospital so they have got some view of that, but also very important is they needed to collect documentation and they needed to know exactly what they needed to collect. Also they needed to have access to patients' records and that means that those records cannot be taken out of the building. As I say, the consultant obstetrician spent time in the department looking at those patients' records, I trust by himself, I would have thought.

### **2.9.2 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Can I again press the Minister? Can I ask the Minister to make inquiries and maybe she could come back to the House with a full answer to the question because I think there is a concern that the offices of the Medical Director have been used? So, could I ask the Minister to come back with the full answer to that, please?

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

I have done a full answer. I am assured by Verita that since Morier House has been available, all formal interviews have taken place there. They have obviously needed documentation and needed access to patient records which cannot go off the premises, and I would expect that they needed to sit somewhere in an office.

### **2.9.3 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

Can the Minister, while we are on the subject of Verita, please tell us where we are now with the inquiry, how much longer it is expected to go on as the House rejected the proposition by Senator Syvret to have an inquiry into this? Can she let us know where we are now, please?

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

Certainly. I had a letter from Verita last month and I emailed States Members regarding it, that since the debate in July where we extended the terms of reference they have had more formal interviews with, I understand, some States Members and other members of Health and Social Services staff or whatever - because I am not a party to who they meet - and this has extended the review by another month. The draft report will be out by the end of October.

### **2.9.4 Senator S. Syvret:**

Could I ask the Minister to, in fact, take notice of the questions put by the Deputy of St. Martin and, in fact, return to the House with the full information? For example, when the Verita team were shown around the hospital, the theatres, and so on, were those tours conducted by senior management members of Health and Social Services? What interface, what interaction, had Verita been having with the senior management team of Health and Social Services? It is crucially important that we get the factual information concerning this because this Assembly was misled on several occasions in months gone by when it was asserted to us that the senior management team had had no involvement whatsoever in drawing up the terms of reference with Verita, but in fact it transpired that they had.

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

The external expert has spent a day in the Obstetrics and the Gynaecological Department with the doctors and nurses while he was looking around the department theatres, *et cetera*. To repeat, no formal interviews have taken on any Health and Social Services Department premises.

### **2.9.5 Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

I wonder if the Minister would be able to tell us whether the alteration of the terms of reference led to a renegotiation of the terms and payment of the contract with Verita?

### **The Deputy of Trinity:**

Yes, unfortunately it has and the amount now I have been quoted is £497,000.

### **The Bailiff:**

Final question, Deputy of St. Martin, if you wish one.

### **The Deputy of St. Martin:**

No, I do not think I would get an answer anyway. Thank you.