

STATES OF JERSEY



QUESTIONS IN THE STATES: CONNÉTABLES AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Lodged au Greffe on 18th June 2010
by Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to agree that the current rules in Standing Order 9 on who may ask, and be asked, a question should be amended so that questions may also be asked of –
 - (i) any Connétable in connection with a matter relating to his or her parish;
 - (ii) the political leader, or a representative, of any registered political party in connection with a matter relating to that political party;
- (b) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary amendments to Standing Orders to give effect to the proposals.

DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

The desire to question a Connétable and hold them responsible will from time to time, prove to be desirable. It could be argued that the place for those questions are in Parish Assemblies. Having recently taken that proposal to a Parish Assembly in St. Helier I was unable to argue that this should occur. The rate payers and one Procureur argued strongly that the place for States type question time should be in the States.

It is also peculiar that the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables who is not appointed by the States answers the questions at present for all Connétables. How is it possible to hold him accountable for the actions of another even if we would wish to do that, there is no mechanism to do so.

It is also a strange set of affairs that the Chairman, who is not elected by the States, has a seat at the Council of Ministers meetings. This, of course, ensures that the Parishes are kept in the loop from an information perspective but it does endear them all to the Council and vice versa in my view, giving them some noticeable degree of importance over other members.

Political parties are they accountable?

I believe that the current situation in Jersey requires us to consider if political parties should be accountable and transparent. A debate about this might prove that this amendment is desirable. I am not convinced that the current ability of parties to influence is duly accountable or transparent enough to.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications arising from this proposition.