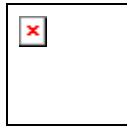


**COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY: PIONEER COACHES LTD.,
TOWN 'HOPPA BUS' SERVICE**

**Lodged au Greffe on 3rd October 2000
by Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour**



STATES OF JERSEY

STATES GREFFE

180

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Price code: A

PROPOSITION

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

in accordance with Article 30 of the States of Jersey Law 1966, as amended, to approve the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry to investigate fully the circumstances surrounding the reduction in the subsidy granted to Pioneer Coaches Limited by the Public Services Committee to operate the 'Hoppa Bus' in July 2000 which led to the withdrawal of the service by the company, and to report back to the States with such recommendations (if any) as the Committee considers to be appropriate.

DEPUTY R.G. LE HERISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR

Report

The circumstances that surrounded the retraction, in July 2000, of part of the subsidy granted to Pioneer Coaches, leading to that operator withdrawing from the town bus service, led to considerable concern both among States members and the public.

On the one hand, and given the statements of the then President of the Public Services Committee, it would be simple and straightforward to class what happened as the product of inexperience. It would, in these circumstances, seem churlish to ask for the full weight of a Committee of Inquiry.

However, this episode drew attention to several disturbing matters such as -

- the apparent ability of monopolies to unduly influence government decision-making;
- the problems of negotiating under duress;
- the allegations that secondary picketing would occur if the desired result was not obtained by Jersey Bus and its workforce;
- the workings of the Committee in this context;
- the relationships between the President, the Committee and senior civil servants;
- the role (or absence of role) of senior politicians.

I would argue that this range of issues, and the somewhat confused sequence of events, were such that fundamental questions were raised in the minds of the public and members as to the credibility of government.

There is considerable concern as to the lack of accountability in government in Jersey. Although it is “after the event”, this is an opportunity, if approved by the States, to be seen to be accountable and also to learn.

“.....it is a mistake to suppose (we) succeed through success; we much oftener succeed through failure.” (Samuel Smiles)