

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY: RESIGNATION OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL (P.68/2012) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 10th September 2012
by the Council of Ministers

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers opposes this Proposition and the proposed Amendment to it.

The Council of Ministers recognises the importance of the role of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in acting as an independent watchdog overseeing how the Island's public finances are spent. Ministers regret that the former CAG felt the need to resign from his role following the publication of his Report.

Ministers are of the view that it is unlikely that a Committee of Inquiry would resolve disputes of fact between individuals. The end result would be the production of a report into a report, which would be of little benefit. It would continue the politicisation of the office of the CAG, the avoidance of which appears to be the main reason why he resigned in the first place. Such politicisation could put off new candidates.

Sufficient and sizeable information is already in the public domain. Given this, it is natural that States Members would have formed a view on these issues, thus undermining the objectivity and independence of the proposed Committee of Inquiry.

The Chief Minister and the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee are currently recruiting for a new Comptroller and Auditor General. The Council of Ministers believes that it is important that the role of the CAG remains independent to ensure good governance, and that it is not a politicised role.

Financial and manpower implications

The proposition recognises that there would be manpower and cost implications of some £30,000. Ministers are not aware of the basis on which this figure is arrived at, and are of the view that a review of these issues is not good use of public funds.

The Council of Ministers urges Members not to support this Proposition.

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]

The Council of Ministers apologises for the late delivery of these comments. The Council clearly has to give these matters full consideration, and this was difficult to secure earlier as its first meeting following the summer recess was not until Thursday 6th September 2012.