

4.13 Deputy T.M. Pitman of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the investigation into ‘Operation Blast’:

I have just noticed, I think there is a word missing from this question so I do apologise to the Minister for that. Will the Minister advise the Assembly whether, in the course of the investigation into Operation Blast, both the former Chief Minister and the current Chief Executive to the Council of Ministers received reports into the background of States Members, including any allegations or record of criminal activity, and if so under what authority?

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

I am grateful to Deputy Pitman to indicate that there are some words missing from this question because that is what I suspected and I will try and answer the question which I think he is trying to ask me, which I think is the question as to what has been discovered as a result of the investigation into Operation Blast as far as the former Chief Minister and the current Chief Executive are concerned. If I am not answering the right question then I apologise and will try again. The answer to that is that I cannot answer that at present **[Laughter]** because it is covered by strict confidentiality while the disciplinary process continues. However, in trying to be helpful I can however say that the report deals with the issue as to whether or not these 2 people were involved in the setting up of Operation Blast, and the issue as to whether they were involved in any other matter which may be related in some way to Operation Blast, but I cannot reveal what the report says at this stage.

4.13.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I thank the Minister for his answering the right question, in not answering it if you like. Could the Minister then at least confirm for the Assembly when will he finally be in a position to provide the comprehensive information to the States that I think he realises we all need?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

As I said earlier today, in July, sometime in July of this year, sometime next month in fact.

4.13.2 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

In a similar vein, when the investigation is complete will the Minister be permitting these files to be shown to States Members, if not the media?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

These are exactly the sorts of issues that I am currently taking advice on and considering. The situation is different, I now have in fact 4 different reports which may potentially come into the public domain in some form or another, not 3, and I am considering what I can do with these, how much information I can put out and in what form. There are different considerations which apply to each of these 4 different reports, which means I cannot give a global answer. I want to consider the matter clearly and come to the right decisions as to what is correct. There are 4 reports in addition to the interim report of the Metropolitan, that is 5 if we count in that one.

4.13.3 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I would refer the Minister to the answer given to my question, written question number 11, and I note that the Operation Blast to date has cost £262,390, and I also note that that has been funded from the Historical Abuse Inquiry. Can I ask why this

particular Operation Blast is being funded by the Historical Abuse Inquiry when they do not seem to be linked?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

That may well be correct. The fact is that Home Affairs does not have that spare money in order to be able to carry the cost of these investigations and they have been funded centrally by an 11.8 request effectively, but that should be made clear in the current 11.8 request. So it is 11.8?

4.13.4 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am a little bit confused. Again it seems ... whom would the Minister seek of consent for to obtain this money? Does the Minister need to apply to whoever is looking after the Historical Abuse cash account for this money? Because it seems that over £260,000 has been spent when we could have had a review undertaken by Deputy Higgins for far less than that. What evaluation was carried out before we entered into this investigation by Wiltshire? It seems a complete waste of money.

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

This particular investigation we are talking about here, which is Haven 2, is not just an investigation in relation to the role of the Chief Officer of Police, it also involves an investigation in relation to other officers. Even if I had not decided that I wanted to have an investigation in relation to the role of Chief Officer of Police there would have been a need for a disciplinary investigation in relation to exactly the same matters. Therefore, it could not have been covered by any other project such as that of Deputy Higgins for that very reason.

4.13.5 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I believe the second reason that the Chief of Police was suspended was to do with the issues surrounding Operation Blast. If other officers within the Minister's portfolio or without his portfolio have also been involved in similar ways, will they be suspended and are they suspended?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

Without revealing too much in the way of details, the reports indicate that different officers are involved to different degrees and that some of the officers who were involved have in fact now left the force, including one who appears to have been involved at the most highest level. Though consideration has been given, not by myself of course because that is not my role, but by the Acting Chief Officer as to whether other officers should be suspended and a decision has been made that that is not necessary. There are no other suspended officers but I say there are different levels of involvement of different officers.

4.13.6 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I hope I am not stretching this too far but could the Minister advise if my understanding is correct? If the former Chief Minister and the Chief Executive Officer were found to be involved in receiving such information this has no legal basis? However, the position of Minister for Home Affairs would enable this Minister or any Minister to initiate such investigation into States Members' backgrounds.

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I do not think I have quite understood the question, could I have some clarification of that? I just did not understand it.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Yes sorry, Minister, the crux of it, is there a clause within your own role as Minister for Home Affairs that you could investigate the backgrounds of States Members?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I understand the question now. The question I have been asked is could I seek such information from the police in relation to misbehaviour of other States Members. I would not do that; I would not consider that proper. That would be, in my view, a misuse of my position as Minister for Home Affairs.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

But can you? Can he, Sir?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

Could I? Well, I would have to ask the Acting Chief Officer of Police and he might well then advise me that it was not proper that I be asking him, but I would not ask him in the first place. **[Laughter]**

The Deputy Bailiff:

Very well, on that constructive conclusion to that question we come to the last question.