

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
BY SENATOR J.L. PERCHARD
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st DECEMBER 2009**

Question

“Following consideration of these matters at the Committee’s meeting of 20th November 2009, will the Chairman undertake to bring to the States for debate proposals to –

- (a) limit the number of propositions an individual member can lodge for debate in a given period (such as a maximum of 3 per parliamentary session);
- (b) limit the length of speeches a member can make during a States debate;

and if not, what action, if any, will the Privileges and Procedures Committee be taking?”

Answer

The Committee considered both of these matters at its meeting of 20th November 2009. It was noted that States meetings were getting longer and an increasing amount of business needed to be dealt with. Consequently ministerial, scrutiny and constituency work was being squeezed into a shorter window of time.

The Committee established a States Business Organisation sub-group to look at ways to improve efficiency. Its review will cover all areas of the States business, including:

- Minimum lodging periods, in particular the two week lodging period;
- Length of speeches;
- Length of debates;
- Programming and timetabling of public business;
- The number of propositions and amendments being lodged for debate;
- Members’ ability to give full and effective consideration and responses to propositions and amendments;
- The possible introduction of a mechanism for gauging support before lodging propositions;
- Content of speeches, repetition, interruptions;
- The order of business on States days.

The sub-group will hold a series of hearings, scheduled to take place between 11th and 15th January 2010, and all States members were invited by letter last week to make submissions detailing how the efficiency of States sittings could be improved. Any members who have not yet accepted this invitation may do so by e-mailing the Greffier or the Committee Clerk to arrange a convenient date and time.

Meanwhile, the Chairman will be working with the Greffier more pro-actively to order business more effectively in accordance with Standing Order 31(3). A standard format for reports supporting draft legislation will also be developed to ensure that members have a satisfactory level of information available to them for consideration in advance of the debate. This should enable debates to be further streamlined.