2020.02.04

1 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin of the Chair of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding the research undertaken during the drafting of 'Electoral Reform 2020' (P.126/2019): (OQ.34/2020)

In the absence of a bibliography to accompany Electoral Reform 2020 (P.126/2020), will the Chair explain what research – as opposed to consultation – was used by the Privileges and Procedures Committee for the development of this Proposition?

Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee)

The principal document that was used was the final report of the C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) E.O.M. (Electoral Observers Mission) to Jersey and its findings and recommendations. Recommendation 1 of which points us towards the work carried out by the Electoral Commission of 2012, 2013. That then took us to the very expert paper by Dr Alan Renwick who also, of course, revisited Clothier and some of the 100-plus Propositions on electoral reform that have come before the Assembly in the last 20 years and I, myself, in the small hours, revisited Hansard and many of the debates that were held.

4.1.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

I asked this question because the Proposition seemed to be lacking in detail. It kept referring to consultation and it would have been very useful for all of us if we had seen the ...

The Bailiff:

Is this a supplemental question, rather than a point made in response?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Why were we not given a fuller bibliography?

Deputy R. Labey:

I have never seen a bibliography on a Bill before the Assembly. It is possible that they have existed, but I think in the Report to the Proposition, it is very comprehensive and it does explain where our source material is. But the principal document, of course, the principal response that is represented by P.126 and P.46 before it, is to the recommendations - 18 of them - of the C.P.A. E.O.M.

4.1.2 Senator L.J. Farnham:

I just wondered if the Deputy could remind the Assembly of exactly how many people outside of the Parish, or roadshows that were conducted, the Committee engaged with in this Proposition?

Deputy R. Labey:

Alongside the election reform explained roadshows in the Parishes, we undertook extensive market research, as it were, by commissioning 4insight to do the full package; the quantitative survey which surveyed over 600 people. Once that had been turned into a representative sample it was 500-plus. We also did the full package of qualitative market research with 6 sessions of focus groups, 8 of each, one person was ill, but that was 47 people.

4.1.3 Connétable C.H. Taylor of St. John:

I did not catch the name in the response to the first question, but the Deputy referred to somebody who had done a report. I assume that that report will be published and why has it not been published, because we have not seen it?

Deputy R. Labey:

That is odd, because the Comité des Connétables' report into P.126 uses extracts from Dr. Alan Renwick's report. **[Approbation]** It does so in a very selective way. For example, Dr. Alan Renwick publishes 2 graphs on malapportionment ...

The Bailiff:

I wonder, Deputy, if that is straying into the substance of what you might want to say on a later occasion, but not an answer to the question posed.

Deputy R. Labey:

I was going to let them off the hook with that one, Sir, but I will bear it in mind.

4.1.4 The Connétable of St. John:

While the Comité des Connétables have had it and I have seen it, I was just wondering how widely circulated it had been with the other documentation to all Members of this Assembly.

Deputy R. Labey:

It is in the public domain.

4.1.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

The Chairman referred to the very good research from Dr. Alan Renwick, provided to the not independent Electoral Care Commission. He also found that, within his research, that there should be ... there was a recommendation that an alternative voting system be used, a preferential voting system; A.V. (alternative vote) in single seat constituencies and single transferable votes in multi-seat constituencies. Why has this recommendation not been put forward by the Privileges and Procedures Committee.?

Deputy R. Labey:

Because it was not part of the E.O.M. report but I do think it would be natural to follow on from whatever happens today in the Electoral Reform debate to consider, especially S.T.V. (single transferable vote) in multi-seat constituencies.

4.1.6 Senator S.Y. Mézec:

Is the Chairman struck by the consistency that can clearly be observed in all of the research plus independent advice which has been given to various Privileges and Procedures Committees over the years that shows that Jersey's electoral system does suffer from extreme malapportionment and how does his version for electoral reform deal with that issue?

[9:45]

Deputy R. Labey:

Voter engagement in Jersey is among nearly the worst in the world. We have severe malapportionment. The facts are there. They are stark. We have known them for a long time and the situation is getting worse.

4.1.7 Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Too many questions. Did the Sub-Committee of the P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) take professional advice in the interpretation of the Venice Commission's clauses, in particular paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2?

Deputy R. Labey:

Yes, we did.