

2018.06.26

Senator S.C. Ferguson of the Minister for External Relations regarding the attendance by non-ministerial bodies at ministerial Brexit meetings: [OQ.71/2018]

Will the Minister advise whether non-ministerial bodies have been invited to ministerial Brexit meetings and, if so, will he explain why?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Minister for External Relations):

I have asked the Deputy of St. Martin to act as my adviser on matters of the rural economy and Brexit, an area in which he has significant experience and specialist knowledge. It is in that capacity that I have asked him to attend the Brexit Ministerial Group meeting.

8.1.1 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

If I reformulate the question: will the Minister advise whether non-ministerial people have been invited to ministerial Brexit meetings and will he explain why?

The Bailiff:

Are you suggesting the Deputy of St. Martin is not a person?

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Sir.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I would have thought the supplementary question was narrowing the question rather than broadening it, but we will perhaps argue about that after this question time. The only other people attending the Brexit Ministerial Group meeting are officials.

[11:15]

8.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I might have missed it the first time, so if I have completely the wrong end of the stick then please tell me, or somebody, but did the Chief Minister say that a non-Minister in this Assembly is attending ministerial meetings? The former Chief Minister. It will take a while to get used to that. But surely that is completely unacceptable and goes against the very theory and practice of having a dual role in the separation between the Executive and the Non-Executive, is that not the case?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Absolutely not. The new Chief Minister made it absolutely clear in his pitch for the job that he wanted a new way of working and he wanted inclusion, as I said throughout the election campaign. We have a choice. I believe it is the right choice to use all of the talents across this Assembly for the benefit of Jersey and inviting the Deputy of St. Martin to do that is absolutely that. He will not and does not have a vote, will not be making decisions, but will be advising and supporting. No different from the model that I used when we were implementing the Independent Care Inquiry recommendations.

8.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Sorry, I think there is, so supplementary if I may; I think there is a key difference there. That panel was set up by this Assembly specifically for one purpose and it was agreed that it needed cross-bench support. Can we now expect to see Ministers attending Scrutiny reviews as part of the Scrutiny Panel when they go away on U.K. fact-finding missions; is this balance between Scrutiny and

the Executive now going to be completely blurred and what mandate does the Minister and indeed the Chief Minister think that they have in order to take this unprecedented step?

The Bailiff:

The Minister cannot answer for the Chief Minister and I am not sure that really falls within his ambit of his authority but to the extent it does ...

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I would like to correct the Deputy, when he suggested there were 2 panels set up. There was the Scrutiny sub-panel to review the implementation of the Care Inquiry recommendations and there was also the Chief Ministerial Advisory Panel and therefore this is not a new way of working. I think it is an appropriate way of working into the future.

8.1.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Given the fact that the U.K. have apparently advised us that we are free to negotiate our own agreement for the fishing industry, what is the Minister proposing in order to support the industry and, given that he has already got non-ministerial representatives on this committee, why is the Fishing Association representative not present?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The first part of that question I am not sure is directly relevant because it is about people attending the Brexit Ministerial Group meeting. The Deputy of St. Martin is advising me and, as such, is attending that meeting. When it comes to liaising with the Fisheries Association that is something that the Deputy of St. Martin has previously done and I would be expecting him, in co-ordination with the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture to be continuing that liaising and consultation and feeding back to the Brexit Ministerial Group as appropriate. If there are issues whereby they might wish to attend in due course for particular issues then of course I am open to that suggestion.