

4.9 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding an investigation into threatening letters sent to a number of individuals linked to the case involving the former Deputies Pitman:

Given the police have stated that a forensic investigation has failed to identify who is behind the threatening letters sent to a number of individuals linked to the case involving the former Deputies Pitman, can the Minister clarify whether anyone was interviewed and whether or not D.N.A. (deoxyribonucleic acid) testing was undertaken?

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

All 4 recipients of letters, who are referred to as victims, were spoken to by the police. Forensic examinations were conducted on the letters, including both fingerprint and D.N.A. testing. These lines of inquiry were inconclusive and failed to identify those responsible for sending the letters. No persons have been interviewed under caution in relation to this investigation.

4.9.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister accept that this was a serious incident with only 2 corollaries? The first is that the Pitmans themselves sent the threatening letters, which must be unacceptable, or the alternative, which I probably favour but is obviously speculation, that somebody else sent the letters probably to try and make it look like 2 sitting States Members were sending threatening letters. Does the Minister accept that this is a very serious situation to be in and has implications for our Assembly and the safety of our Members and their reputations? Is the Minister satisfied that the process was conducive to achieving some kind of satisfactory outcome for all those concerned?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

The Deputy has asked me to speculate on the possible different ways in which this might have arisen. In fact, I can think of at least one further way, which of course would be if there was some third party who somehow thought, by sending these letters, they were supporting the former Deputies, but there are probably a whole host of other scenarios which might arise. I am not going to speculate on that. As far as the investigative process is concerned, on the face of it, it appears to me to have been fully appropriate.

4.9.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Would the Minister not accept that it is rather strange that a document, namely a threatening letter that was supposed to be threatening their lives, was not acted on immediately by some of the parties and, in fact, the letters were passed around a number of members of the lawyer's firm, thereby putting multiple fingerprints and thus muddying the evidence?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

That is not within my knowledge.

4.9.3 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

In a previous answer the Minister told Members that nobody was spoken to under caution. Was anybody spoken to at all in relation to this alleged offence?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I think that is why I started off by saying that the victims had been spoken to.

4.9.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

It is not clear who the victims were in this case. Could the Minister identify whether he means recipients? There will be parties in this who perceive themselves to be victims without necessarily being perceived as that by the Minister. That is why I asked for clarification.

[11:00]

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I thought I defined that most carefully because I started off by saying “all 4 recipients of letters” and then referred to them later as “victims”.