

2.5 Deputy M. Tadier of the Chief Minister regarding the impact of recent revelations that high profile U.K. celebrities may have abused children in States of Jersey care homes on the Historical Redress Scheme and the Committee of Inquiry:

Will the Chief Minister explain what impact, if any, the recent revelations of high profile U.K. celebrities who may have abused children in States of Jersey care homes will have on the Historical Redress Scheme and the forthcoming proposals for a committee of inquiry into historic child abuse in the Island?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

In relation to the Historic Redress Scheme, any claims against celebrities will be dealt with in the same manner as any other claim. As such, in the event that any new claims are submitted as a result of the recent allegations, the late admission of those claims into the scheme will be considered on a case by case basis.

2.5.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Will the Chief Minister clarify when he says they will be dealt with in the same manner as any other claim in the Redress Scheme, currently under our Redress Scheme the States of Jersey are not responsible for any guests or celebrities or otherwise that were brought into the home in good faith or otherwise and then proceeded to abuse children in the care. Can the Chief Minister confirm whether that is the case?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

We had quite a lengthy debate with regard to the Historic Redress Scheme at the last sitting and we quite clearly said then that there may be cases which did not necessarily fit into the confines of the scheme but they were to be brought back to the Council of Ministers by the scheme's lawyers and to be considered for inclusion. So any that might not - as I issued and said at the last States sitting - Members should be approaching the scheme's lawyers and they, in due course, will be considered. As I said then - and I am not aware of any change - no claim to date has been excluded from the scheme.

2.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can the Minister clarify that he is essentially saying that he clearly stated last time that there is no certainty whatsoever? What I understand he is saying now is that claims may be brought back but there is nothing within the current Redress Scheme to say that they should be getting compensation if they were abused by outsiders, but that they will be considered on a case by case basis? Will the Minister also confirm that it is premature to talk about how many cases have been dealt with because only 10 per cent of cases in the Redress Scheme have been fully dealt with and we are still waiting on 90 per cent to be settled?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

It is very difficult for me to stand up and talk about individual claims. I am not dealing with the scheme on a day by day basis and that is as it should be. It is being dealt with by the scheme's lawyers, so I cannot and I think it would be wrong for me to comment on any particular individual claimant, whether an individual had visited the home or abuse had taken place outside of the home, dependent on the victim and in whose care they can rightly be considered to have been. So I am not sure that I can help the Deputy in any more detailed way than that.

2.5.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier:

I hope you will not say that this is too wide of the mark but given that we have had perhaps unfortunate comments about damaging Jersey's reputation by one of the Chief Minister's assistants, given that I know that there are going to be some new revelations coming out on a major American channel fairly soon and this issue with Jimmy Savile has gone round the world and is going to escalate even further, would it not be better for the Chief Minister to make a

statement to protect Jersey's reputation regarding those issues that Deputy Tadier has touched on? Just so that people can know that this is all in hand and it is being taken seriously which I am sure he is.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The Redress Scheme is processing claims and the Council of Ministers has been quite clear about that. I believe that it is a good and fair scheme and we have said that if cases come forward after that closing date, then they will be dealt with on a case by case basis. The Council of Ministers has asked for the scheme lawyers to come back to the Council of Ministers if there are cases which do not necessarily on first sight sit comfortably within the scheme. I believe that that is a fair process and enhances Jersey's international profile and shows that we are dealing with these cases fairly. The previous Chief Minister and I have reiterated a public apology to those who were abused while they were in the care of the States and I believe also that that shows that we are a responsible jurisdiction and take our responsibilities seriously. I will be shortly coming forward with terms of reference for this Assembly quite rightly to consider with regard to a Committee of Inquiry and Members know that there will be a person from the United Kingdom in the Island on Thursday giving a second rethink on potential terms of reference for that Committee of Inquiry. So I believe that we are playing our part and that we are acting responsibly and if other allegations come forward in due course, they will be dealt with appropriately as well.

2.5.4 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Just to go back to the question, there has been no public statement as such because Jersey was already mentioned again last night in the TV programme and it is going to be mentioned again at present about the Jimmy Savile connections to Jersey.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think, Chief Minister, the question is will you be making a public statement about the allegations of Mr. Savile's connection with Jersey?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I do not intend to at this point. Of course, I will be coming forward with terms of reference for a Committee of Inquiry, which I would expect to deal with individuals and particular circumstances. As I have said, individuals that feel they are entitled to compensation and redress can make application to the scheme. Allegations which require a police investigation should be passed to the police and, as the Deputy I am sure knows, the States of Jersey Police are working with the Metropolitan Police as part of their review and I think that is also the right thing to do.

[10:15]

2.5.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:

Can the Chief Minister just clarify that? Is he saying quite definitely that the States of Jersey Police are working with the Met. and providing them with information?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Yes, that is indeed my understanding.

2.5.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

It is really the second part of the question which I think needs to be addressed. It was understood when the Committee of Inquiry was to be brought in, it was on the basis or it certainly was the case that all of the prosecutions that were to be made would have been made and there were no live prosecutions. It now seems that the current revelations in the U.K. are going to open up potential further prosecutions within the Island. Would the Chief Minister comment on whether this is an issue and whether or not the Committee of Inquiry can run parallel to any further new

revelations and new evidence that have come out with regard to the likes of Savile and Bramble and others?

The Deputy Bailiff:

The question is not about prosecutions, which is not a matter for the Chief Minister, but is a question about whether the Committee of Inquiry will cover this issue, is it?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Clearly, Sir, I am not trying to get into the area of the courts but clearly there is an issue because it was understood - and we have been briefed in States Members briefings and I suspect the Chief Minister knows where I am coming from with this question - that there is an issue about having a Committee of Inquiry while there are potentially still live and new prosecutions going on.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I fear to answer that question because you are better versed in the court system than I am. The Deputy makes a very good point about a Committee of Inquiry being in place when there are potential prosecutions or ongoing prosecutions although I fail to see how, with regard to the allegations around Mr. Savile, he being deceased, I am not sure quite what form the prosecutions would take in that instance. However, I should say I feel - and Members will point the finger directly back at me - that we have waited a long time for the Committee of Inquiry and I hope that once we have had the second briefing later this week, we can come forward and make the positive decision to start that inquiry but we will have to be mindful, as the Deputy says, of any possible future cases coming forward.