

MEETINGS OF THE STATES: RESTRICTION OF THE LENGTH OF QUESTION TIME

**Lodged au Greffe on 28th May 2002
by Deputy A.J. Layzell of St. Brelade**



STATES OF JERSEY

STATES GREFFE

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PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -

- (a) to agree that for a trial period ending at the end of July 2002 -
 - (i) the time allowed for the asking and answering of oral questions at each meeting of the States shall not exceed 45 minutes;
 - (ii) any questions listed on the Order Paper that are not answered orally during the said 45 minutes period shall be answered by way of a written answer only; and
 - (iii) questions shall be listed on the Order Paper in the strict chronological order in which notice of them has been given to the Greffier of the States in accordance with Standing Order No. 12(4);
- (b) to suspend Standing Orders Nos. 12 and 14, as required, to give effect to the above proposals during the trial period.

DEPUTY A.J. LAZELL OF ST. BRELADE

Report

I have thought for some time that questions occupy a disproportionate amount of every meeting of the States. The discussion of Public Business rarely starts before 11.30 a.m. At one recent Sitting, questions continued until 12.15 p.m. I have no desire to constrain the rights of individual members (although I query whether questioning the President of the Agriculture and Fisheries Committee how often a standby generator at the States Farm has been used serves the public interest) but it is clear that, if the States are to make time to debate issues of major importance, they will have to limit the time given to questions.

I am proposing that Question Time be restricted to forty-five minutes. As questions are usually started by 09.45 a.m. they would be stopped at 10.30 a.m. Those questions unanswered would be answered by way of a written answer placed in the public domain. This situation would be an experiment until the end of July 2002, allowing the States to give due prominence, and time, to the debates on Housing Strategy, the Population and the Island Plan.

This proposition has no implications for the financial or manpower resources of the States.