

STATES OF JERSEY



CONNÉTABLES: VOLUNTARY RE-ELECTION IN 2005 (P.3/2005) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 1st February 2005
by the Connétable of St. Martin

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Connétables are mindful that the States has recently debated, at length, changes to the composition of the States Assembly but that none of the proposals found favour. The continuing debate as to the future composition of the States Assembly is unsettling and unproductive, particularly with the advent of ministerial government later in 2005. The Connétables consider that, having regard to the perceived economic benefits of a stable system of government in the Island, further debate should be curtailed to allow the new ministerial system to be introduced, and any future changes to the Connétables' election date considered for introduction after 2 or 3 years.

Nevertheless, the Comité des Connétables wishes to point out that it wrote to the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2001, following the publication of the Report of the Review Panel on the Machinery of Government in Jersey, supporting, in principle, the election of the Connétables on a single day.

The membership of the Comité des Connétables has changed since 2001, and not all Connétables are currently persuaded that the perceived view of stable government in the Island will be bolstered by a single election day. A single election day for all Connétables may appear to be in the interests of democracy but it is important that any change is given due consideration and is not merely a 'knee-jerk' reaction to other propositions such as P.221/2004 'Senatorial Elections 2005'.

The Comité wishes to draw attention to the particular practical difficulties that have to be overcome prior to determining a single election day for all Connétables. These include –

- considerable law drafting work required;
- requirement for another officer of the Parish to oversee the election in place of the Connétable (it has been agreed that the senior Procureur du Bien Public will act in place of the Connétable in municipal matters but the law to give effect to this is still awaited);
- each of the Connétables has been elected by his parishioners for a 3-year term of office and any change to the election date should not result in a shortening of that term but should be introduced with effect from a future date.