

Tuesday, 26 January 2010

Scrutiny - En désastre

The Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel was supposed to assemble today (25th January) at 9.30 am for a meeting open to the public.

Your ace Jersey Voice reporter was duly sitting outside Le Capelain Room at 9.20 am waiting for the excitement to commence. He was still sitting there at 11.00am.

The meeting had not started because the Panel Chair, Deputy Mike Higgins was “out of the Island” and neither Deputy Wimberley nor Macon had turned up so the meeting was inquorate with only Deputies Labey and Shona Pitman being present together with the several scrutiny staff.

Then, all of a sudden at 11.00 precisely Deputy Wimberley rushed through one set of double corridor doors whilst Senators Maclean and Routier and their 4 hefty civil servant body guards crashed through the other.

Now the Panel’s second scheduled meeting of the day could proceed under Deputy Labey’s chairmanship - and they kept talking politely and pleasantly together until 1.15pm.

Nothing too challenging, of course, and no raised voices.

Minister Maclean did venture to suggest that Deputy Higgins should be present and that this was rather a depleted Panel for the first meeting of the year. But Deputy Labey softly countered that it was in fact the re-scheduled meeting from December that had been cancelled at short notice by the Minister. So still love all - no points scored and so it went on - even when the Minister announced that his Economic Development Department had scrapped the BAGS fishing quotas law and so the Scrutinizers might as well throw their BAGS Report - which had taken 3 months intensive research to produce - into the sea because it was scrap too.

And so it went on with the Minister outlining a programme of legislation that would soon hit the States and it was obvious to everybody present - except the 3 Scrutinizing Deputies - that there was no way on earth that it could all be properly scrutinized by this team within the projected deadlines.

Out came the diaries and year planners - but what a shame that nobody knew when Deputy Higgins would return to Jersey or even where Deputy Macon was. “He just said that something had come up” was the last word that very morning from the people’s representative for St Saviour No 1.....If only.

After the Ministerial team had left and the meeting appeared to have re-started with the usual discussions about next week’s agenda, your Team Voice reporter dared to ask at 1.35 pm what had happened to the 9.30 am meeting and where were we now on the agenda?

This had an ominously familiar ring to it (refer to our report of a previous fiasco with this Panel on 24th November 2009 “[Screw Scrutiny](#)”) and true to form Deputy Shona Pitman immediately jumped up and launched into a verbal tirade and threatened to have your ace reporter removed for interrupting the proceedings, by the States security staff!

We only asked!!!! Even Wimberley looked shocked but he offered no support to your ace reporter.....

At 1.40 pm Deputy Pitman left the room and since the Panel was inquorate again, the meeting slowly terminated itself. Nobody formally closed it or announced that it had ended until your Team Voice reporter asked.

Once again, this Scrutiny Panel has demonstrated its contempt for the voting and paying public besides a shambolic attitude towards government business. It cares not a fig if scheduled public meetings take place or not and whilst the Scrutiny Committee and PPC have agreed all sorts of petty rules to constrain bloggers and public participation - nobody seems to care if our so called "elected representatives" fail to turn up to meetings at all or how they conduct themselves.

And, of course there is nobody to complain to.

Following this meeting your Team Voice reporter met with the Greffier, Michael DE La Haye and he confirmed that there are virtually no rules laid down for the conduct of Scrutiny Panel members. He could only suggest that we write to PPS and/or Ben Shenton the Chair of the Chairmen's Committee.....

A week or so ago, Team Voice interviewed Deputy Roy Le Herissier on related Scrutiny matters and we have posted our discussion (below) in 2 parts.

So it goes on and on and on.....