

3.6 Deputy T.M. Pitman of the Chief Minister regarding the involvement of the C.M.B. in discussions relating to the dismissal of the Minister for Health and Social Services in July 2007:

Did a meeting led by the Chief Executive take place after the C.M.B. (Corporate Management Board) meeting on 25th July 2007 to discuss matters relating to then Minister for Health and Social Services, and if so who was present at the meeting? Was the possible removal from office of the then Minister discussed, and if so would the Chief Minister suspend all those present from their duties pending a full investigation into the matter?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Chief Minister):

The Chief Executive has confirmed that there was a meeting of some chief officers following a meeting of the Corporate Management Board on 25th July 2007 to discuss the impact, which the then Minister for Health and Social Services' criticism of Social Services staff was having on staff morale. Those present at the meeting were the Chief Executive, the Chief Officer of Police, the Director of Human Resources, the Chief Officer of Education, Sport and Culture and the Chief Officer of Health and Social Services. The Chief Police Officer did not attend the entire meeting. The Chief Executive confirmed that at no time was there discussed at this meeting the possible removal of the then Minister from office.

[11:30]

3.6.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I have a copy of the file note from the Chief of Police on my desk. Could the Chief Minister just clarify, the States C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer) stands effectively accused by the Island's most senior police officer with what he concluded was a lead involvement in an attempt to remove a Minister from office regardless of the rights and wrongs of what that Minister did? How can this not result in suspension as a neutral act while this is investigated, particularly given that the C.E.O. was later to play a major part and a contentious part in the suspension of the Chief of Police?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I have to be fully careful here because I am not sure whether this file note may have any relevance to the investigation that is currently underway and I maybe urge caution in answering this but say merely that I believe that any reference to a file note, which may be contained in some blog or other source should be treated with the appropriate level of certainty.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

It is a copy of the file note; it is not in some blog.

The Bailiff:

Sorry, what is your question, Deputy? Deputy what is your question? Deputy, this is question time, were you asking a question? Deputy, I am speaking to you, please stand up when I am speaking to you.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I was not aware you were talking to me, Sir, apologies.

The Bailiff:

Well I am not sure who else I was talking to, but anyway ...

3.6.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I was just quite shocked at the dismissive nature that everything comes from a blog; it is a proper file note so perhaps my question would be, would the Chief Minister perhaps now take that more seriously?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I will treat it to the extent that I need to treat it at this stage, with the appropriate level of seriousness, yes.

3.6.3 The Deputy of St. Martin:

We have heard the positions of certain people who were kept behind, will the Minister explain as to why the majority or the whole of the Corporate Management Board were not asked to discuss this particular issue?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I made it clear that the purpose of the meeting was the effect of criticism on staff morale. The meeting was directed at those officers directly concerned with staff morale.

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

Just following on from Deputy Pitman's question, first of all has the Chief Minister seen the file note, which the Chief of Police recorded at police headquarters after his meeting with the Chief Management Board? Has he seen this first of all and, secondly, if he has not, if he takes a copy of it will he please act on it? Because it does seem to indicate there was far more to that meeting than meets the eye.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I have not seen the original file note, I have seen a copy of it and as I have previously said it will be treated with the appropriate level of seriousness.

3.6.5 Deputy S. Pitman:

I would like to refer to that file note on 25th July from the former Chief Officer and he does say coming back from that meeting: "I was left with the clear impression that they were attempting to draw me [that was the C.M.B.] in my capacity as the Chief of Police into a Civil Service-led attempt to remove a Minister from office." I add there that the Chief Executive was also there. Bearing that in mind - and the Chief Executive was also involved in the organisation of Operation Blast and he burnt the notes of the meeting that was held in the Chief Officer's suspension - surely the Chief Minister should be taking some leadership and looking into these issues of the Chief Executive? He should be taking them very seriously.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The file note in question and contents of it may form a matter of the disciplinary investigation. I do not feel inclined at this stage to make any comment on the content of that file note.

3.6.6 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

If, as the Chief Minister alleges, the meeting was held in respect of staff morale, why was the Chief of Police not requested to leave the meeting? Why was it a matter of his own choice to leave the meeting? Secondly, were any notes taken of the meeting?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The decision of the Chief of Police to attend or not attend is a matter for the person concerned and not for me. To the best of my knowledge no notes of the meeting were taken; it was an informal meeting.

3.6.7 The Deputy of St. Mary:

The question will be what is the Chief Minister saying was not discussed? I just want to refer to the file note. The discussion was led by B.O. (Bill Ogley), who we know is the Chief Executive Officer, who disclosed: "The Child Protection Committee will this afternoon be discussing a vote of no confidence in the Minister ... Attempts were made by the C.E.O. to draw me into this. I was told that my people were part of the Island's arrangements and I should show collective support by opposing the criticisms of the Minister." Could the Chief Minister tell us what was not being discussed?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I do not think I can. I do not believe it is appropriate to speculate on the content of that file note, as I say, while there is still a disciplinary process ongoing.

3.6.8 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I stand to be corrected, but I believe I heard the Chief Minister imply that this could not be looked at because there was an inquiry into the suspension of the Chief Officer. Could he just clarify how the 2 are in any way related? How can that stop him taking action to investigate allegations against another senior civil servant?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

My comment was that the content of the file note might form part of an ongoing disciplinary investigation.