

2.6 The Connétable of St. John of the Chief Minister regarding an advertisement placed in the Jersey Evening Post on 5th December 2012 concerning a public meeting to discuss Plémont:

Who authorised the advertisement placed in the *Jersey Evening Post* on 5th December 2012 concerning a public meeting to discuss Plémont and why was authority given for taxpayers' money to be spent in this way?

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

The proposition before the States Assembly was lodged by me, as Chief Minister. I approved the placing of the advert in the *Jersey Evening Post* last week regarding a public meeting to discuss the Plémont proposal. I did so because I believe that the public should have the opportunity to express their views on this matter before the debate and therefore, in my opinion, it was an appropriate use of public funds.

2.6.1 The Connétable of St. John:

In the Members' book of interest, I understand that the Chief Minister is a member of the National Trust. That being the case, is it right that the Chief Minister should spend public money in an association that he is a member of, and he may be able to confirm or otherwise that he is still a member, but it is in the book of Members' interest. Therefore, why has he not declared an interest, given that he is answering a question on this at the moment?

The Bailiff:

You have not asked anything about the National Trust, Connétable.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

My interest is rightly and appropriately declared and the Connétable is right to bring that to people's attention today. I was going to declare the interest during the debate but it has already been declared.

2.6.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

One thing that has not been clear to me and obviously I do not want to touch on the forthcoming debate, is the proposition on behalf of the Council of Ministers or is it a private Members' proposition?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

It is a Chief Minister's proposition. It was debated by the Council of Ministers and, as I have said previously, the Council of Ministers was representative of public opinion when we debated this proposition and it was felt and decided that it would be better if I brought it as Chief Minister and therefore it is a departmental proposition. In actual fact, what it does is try to answer some of the questions that previous Assemblies have asked previous Chief Ministers to do with regard to Plémont and I hope that either later today or more likely tomorrow, we will make that decision and I have believed for a long time that it is right that...

The Bailiff:

I think you have answered the question.

2.6.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Do we understand that the Council of Ministers were unanimous on this or not?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I think I carefully said that the Council of Ministers were reflective of public opinion.

2.6.4 The Connétable of St. John:

Given that this was a standalone proposition, why did the Chief Minister not bring it in his own name? Could it be because he wanted the public of Jersey to pick up all of these additional bills?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Not at all. Perhaps if I could just touch on that issue. I held a Parish meeting in the Parish of St. Ouen and it was other Members of this Assembly who felt and asked that we have an Island-wide meeting that any member of the public could come to. I acceded to that request because I thought it was the right thing to do. Obviously, the St. Ouen's costs were met by the Parish and I am grateful to them for that, but I do not think it was acceptable to ask the Parish of St. Helier to have met the costs but it was right for it to have come from normal taxpayer costs.