

2.9 The Deputy of St. Martin of the Chairman of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel regarding advice intended to be sought from H.M. Attorney General:

In a written answer tabled on 19th June 2004, the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel's Vice-Chairman stated the former Panel had agreed to meet the Attorney General privately but its intention was not to discuss the Cooper opinion. If that was the case, will the Chairman explain what advice it intended to seek from the Attorney General and advise whether the meeting has now taken place?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence (The Chairman of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel):

In answer to the second part of the question, a final minuted private and confidential meeting between the Panel and H.M. Attorney General took place on Wednesday, 13th June 2007. As for the first part, the Deputy will be aware that at a private meeting held on 4th June 2007 the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel gave consideration to meeting with the Attorney General. Following a suggestion from their advisor, Deputy Hill, as Chairman of the Panel at that time, telephoned and spoke to the Attorney General. The Panel subsequently understood from Deputy Hill that the Attorney General had asked for a private and confidential meeting with them. The emphasis of the Panel's meeting of 4th June shifted then. Consideration of the Attorney General's request for a meeting with them took precedence over their own earlier consideration to meet with him. The Panel agreed by a majority to meet with the Attorney General and soon afterwards the Panel meeting of 4th June ended, following Deputy Hill's resignation as Panel Chairman on 6th June, arrangements were confirmed for a formal meeting with the Attorney General. Correspondence for those arrangements established that the meeting would cover procedure and identify whether there were any process issues to consider.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, I am sorry but your time expired now, in fact rather more than time expired. Do you have a supplementary?

2.9.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

The Chairman will recall that at her request the particular meeting on 4th June was recorded and could I ask will the Chairman confirm that recording does make it clear that the meeting was going to be private, confidential and for States' Members only and there was no mention whatsoever of that particular meeting being minuted or formal? As such, it was unprecedented for that former Panel. Would the Chairman now agree that obviously subsequent to that meeting that they have now had a change of mind and now as a result of that change of mind has now met and had a formal meeting, whereas the other one was to be totally informal and unminuted?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I do not believe that is correct, Sir.

2.9.2 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Would the Chairman of the Panel agree with me that this is a complete waste of States' time and ask that Deputy Hill, through the Chair, lets it go?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am not sure whether a response is needed to that question, Sir.

The Bailiff:

This is question time...

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

In that case, Sir, probably, yes. [Laughter]

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Would you allow a supplementary, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary.

2.9.3 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I think Deputy Mezbourian and I know full well that at the end of the day they are probably of the misunderstanding about the meeting. I know in my own heart the meeting was to be not minuted and informal. Will the Chairman agree that if she checks the recording that my understanding of the meeting will be accurate?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am surprised that the Deputy feels that I would come here this morning not having listened to the recording of the meeting and I distinctly remember when I listened again to that recording that the Panel was unclear from what the Deputy told us as to the reasons that the Attorney General had asked to meet us. However, I also remember distinctly hearing myself question whether it was to be a formal minuted meeting with officers present. As far as I was concerned by asking that question I was making it clear that that would be my understanding of it.