

2.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Chairman of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding measures to achieve greater voter turnout:

What measures, if any, does the Committee intend to promote to achieve greater voter turnout?

Connétable D.F. Gray of St. Clement (Chairman of the Privileges and Procedures Committee):

Deputy Le Hérissier is very aware that as a former President of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) there is no magic formula that will increase voter turnout. The present Committee is nevertheless committed to look at measures that might achieve that objective. We have already stated in our first consultative paper - P.97/2006 - that we were extremely concerned with the current low turnout in elections for the States. It was felt that the general election of all States Members on one day would, over a relatively short period, raise awareness and interest. The previous Committee did run a campaign, firstly to encourage registration, and immediately afterwards to encourage those who had registered to vote. Although this did achieve an increase in those registered which also saw more people going to cast their vote, it did not increase the percentage of the electorate voting. I would hope that P.P.C. would run a similar campaign next year with better results. The former Committee also made it easier to cast a vote by post and it is our intention to improve this further when we lodge a proposition later this year. Online voting has been suggested in the past and it might be a way forward in the future. The system has been introduced in the U.K. (United Kingdom) but doubts have been raised over security and the possibility of fraud. It is possibly too soon to go along this path but one that should be kept under review. I would like to see greater voter turnout but I am not convinced that this can be achieved by tinkering. What is needed is a major issue or issues that engage the public and make them determined to impose their will on the Assembly by voting in Members who support them. Fortunately that is outside the Committee's remit.

2.4.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chairman acknowledge that reform is needed of the rolling register which seems to be rolling to an end at the end of every year as opposed to rolling ever onwards as was, I thought, the original intention?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I think that really is a question - because that is not really in our province - to the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables.

2.4.2 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would the Chairman agree with me that there are very clear concerns about abuse potentially with postal voting and not only on-line retailing? Will he commit to bringing this to this Assembly to further strengthen safeguards against postal voting? Would he also consider 2 other things and that is...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Let him just deal with one question.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Yes, I would agree that it is essential that postal voting is safeguarded and that it is properly conducted.

2.4.3 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Secondly, Sir, would he agree with me also that one thing that might be considered in terms of engaging the public and informing them of their right to vote would be the issuing of a poll card

prior to each Senatorial election and each Deputorial election, giving a clear statement of where they can vote, what they can vote for and what times for voting stations, *et cetera*?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Yes, I fully support that, Sir. I think a polling card is an essential part of the election process.

2.4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Chairman not agree that the maintenance of an accurate register is of vital importance to all electoral matters on the Island?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Yes, I do agree, Sir.

2.4.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

The Chairman said that he did not want to tinker and he wanted, I presume, to bring a much livelier political life. Is one of the proposals he is looking at - and they now seem to be flooding in by the day - the direct election of the Chief Minister as a way of focusing attention upon policy and clear policy differences? Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

No, the Committee is not considering the direct election by the electorate of the Chief Minister.

2.4.6 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am delighted to hear the Chairman agreeing on polling cards. Would he also agree with me on the requirement potentially also of all candidates to issue a statement of the reasons why they wish to seek election - and that to be publicly funded by P.P.C. or this Assembly - in terms of communicating what candidates' policies are in turn that people may be informed about their choice?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

The Committee is certainly considering a pre-postal distribution of leaflets from each candidate.