

2014.09.09

**3.6 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John of the Chairman, Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding receipts for purchases under members' I.T. allowance:**

Could the Chairman of Privileges and Procedures Committee advise the Assembly how many of the Members who claimed the I.T. (information technology) allowance provided receipts documenting expenses?

**Deputy J.M. Maçon (Chairman, Privileges and Procedures Committee):**

None of the Members who claimed the I.T. allowance provided receipts as they were not required to do so, as explained in my letter to Members dated 3rd January 2014.

**3.6.1 Connétable of St. John:**

So the written question that I also submitted at the same time as this one, on the expenses to Members, has not been fully answered. The Chairman is hiding behind a law ... sorry, he is hiding behind a decision of the States of 2004 which in fact does not cover that particular question of who were the people who received and have claimed the allowance. That allowance was ... the answer he has given was the incorrect answer because this additional £600 that was put aside was not covered by that. This is a decision that was made by his committee, and, therefore, will he tell us, of his committee, how many of themselves have claimed the allowance? Or probably still, those who have not claimed it.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

I am unable to answer that question, (1) because we do have a States decision that advises us not to do so, and secondly, I do not know. Thank you.

**3.6.2 Connétable of St. John:**

For the Chairman himself not to know who has claimed and who has not claimed, I am concerned. If States money is being given to Members, I would expect the Chairman of the Committee to be aware of those who have received it, apart from who they are. But to tell this Chamber he does not know who, on his own Committee, have taken advantage of this is showing this Assembly in a very poor light on how they look after States money. Would he agree?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

The question is, do you think you should know?

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

It is not my responsibility as Chairman of Privileges and Procedures Committee to be aware of the financial situation of other Members of this Assembly. There is a record, of course, kept in the Greffe but it is not my responsibility ... who are independent of P.P.C., it is not my responsibility to rifle through and ascertain what Members are claiming or not claiming. Thank you.

**3.6.3 The Connétable of St. Mary:**

It is my understanding that this £600 allowance was more or less a reworking of the previously existing I.T. provision which was given centrally. If that allowance is now to be withdrawn, is the Chairman concerned that the public may have difficulty in accessing some States Members? Because this was originally set up, as I understand it, to provide a basic infrastructure to ensure that all Members were contactable by the public.

[10:30]

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

In the written question, I think we explained that Members still receive support from the I.T. Department. The Constable is quite right to point out that this allocation money was always for ... went to assist States Members with various I.T. things. However, with the prompting of Jersey Telecom changing their billing system and therefore withdrawing how they accounted for and billed for States Members' internet service, and also with the demands of not being able to keep up with the hardware that States Members were attempting to use, after referring this issue first of all to the Remuneration Board, who did not make a decision within the deadline, the committee, then had to make a decision on behalf of Members. It is a concern in the decision that the Remuneration Board have made. It is something which I will have to be writing to them about. They will be making greater considerations on this in the future. But at the same time in their latest report they do point out that they feel that there is enough in the way of a remuneration package in order to cover I.T. expenses and I would encourage Members, if they have not have the opportunity, to read that latest report from the States Members Remuneration Board.

**3.6.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Would the Chairman not agree that the benefit that has been derived from moving the States to be a more I.T. friendly body, albeit at an uneven speed at times, has been absolutely unquantifiable and is probably much in excess of £600? In other words, we have all gained from moving to a much more supported, much more training on I.T., and that the issue of the £600 pales in comparison with the advances that have been made.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

In our written question we point out that not all Members have claimed the amount that would be available to them but I completely agree with the Deputy's observation that the efficiencies that moving to an I.T.-friendly working Assembly, as we progress there, does create more efficiencies and a greater cost saving than not moving that way. Thank you.

**3.6.5 Connétable of St. John:**

As the Chairman seems reluctant to answer any of my questions, did the Chairman himself ... well, every Member has an expense allowance. Of his expense allowance of approximately £4,000, was that not sufficient that he had to dip into the additional £600, and did he claim within that £600 over and above his expenses?

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

As I have made it quite clear I will not be discussing Members' or my individual financial situation. [Approbation]