

#### **4.7 The Connétable of St. John of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding power outages over the last 5 years:**

Will the Minister advise how many power outages have occurred over the last 5 years and can he explain whether, given the millions of pounds spent on upgrading the turbines at La Collette to give resilience, an uninterrupted power supply is possible and if not, why not?

##### **Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):**

I am grateful for the Connétable's question on a matter of great public interest. This was the third all-Island fault in the last 5 years. In September 2011, a problem on the French network was the cause and in September 2012, the failure of a large component on the J.E.C.'s (Jersey Electricity Company) network combined with the previous permanent failure of the EDF1 cable to France resulted in a power outage across the Island. J.E.C.'s reliability over the last decade, they inform me that with the exception of 2012 was on average 3 to 4 times better than that of the U.K. In 2013 following the investment of the additional on-Island generation, Jersey Electricity reported a supply reliability of around 6 times that of the U.K. Of course, I am sure the Connétable will understand that J.E.C. cannot guarantee 100 per cent of supply at all times in all circumstances. No public utility would be able to do this because of the prohibitive costs of effectively running 2 electricity generation systems. J.E.C. work to a U.K. standard adapted to reflect that Jersey is an Island community. J.E.C. always advise that customers should assess their own risks and put in place their own mitigation in the form of, where there are particularly sensitive data centres activity, U.P.S. (Uninterruptable Power Supply) and other standby generation.

##### **4.7.1 The Connétable of St. John:**

Will the Minister concede that the Island finance industry is totally reliant on a trouble-free electric supply and can the Minister give figures of the cost to the Island in lost business for every hour the industry is shut down and tell Members what action he is taking to look at an alternative source if that is required to give the finance industry and our emergency services folk, hospital, *et cetera* - which I am aware the hospital and airport do have backups - but can he give us an assurance on where he is going to get this extra supply from in the not too distant future?

##### **Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

The first thing is I am not going to do it. We appoint a board and the J.E.C. to do it. I do understand ...

##### **The Connétable of St. John:**

Do not hide behind boards.

##### **Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

I do understand what the Connétable is saying and the Chief Executive of the J.E.C. was on the media straightaway and I think they handled what was a very difficult situation well, and the Managing Director has been very clear that their number one priority when there is a power outage is to direct ... and the diesel generating capacities which they have put an extra £1 million in, which is the Rolls-Royce engine fast backup moving straight in, protected most of the data centres and others. Certainly I arrived in Jersey on the morning back of the power outage and the airport had their backup generators. Everything was working. I have not been alerted of any data centre power outages that certainly have backup generators that last for an hour, and the J.E.C. get that power back as a first priority into the data centres dealing with the sensitive issues of financial services. The Connétable is absolutely right when he says

that power supply and guarantees are important. At the end of the day, the improvement with the third cable is going to solve most of these issues. The J.E.C. have worked hard. I think they have done the best that they possibly could in a difficult circumstance and that situation is going to be improved by that investment of the third interconnector which is going to solve the problem. That is what they have certainly told me.

#### **4.7.2 The Connétable of St. John:**

Supplementary. The Minister mentioned the Chief Executive's comments on the radio but within his comments, because I was listening in at 7.10 a.m. that morning, and he mentioned also that the telephone system was back on within half an hour but that, in fact, was incorrect. Will the Minister please take that up with Telecoms because in our own Parish, we had no electricity for up to 3 hours but we had no telephone for 3 hours other than people who would have mobiles that were connected some other ways they got through, but in general there were no communications and that was of concern and is of concern when we have got a number of elderly people in isolated areas in the Island. Will he please get that corrected?

#### **Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

The Connétable has asked me questions previously about J.T. (Jersey Telecom) issues which when I have investigated them, they have turned out to be not quite as reported and I mean no disrespect to the Connétable for his information.

#### **The Connétable of St. John:**

That was recorded on BBC at 7.10 a.m. on 28th January so the Minister only has to look at the recording.

#### **Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

As it happens, I was with J.T. and the Board last night until about 9.00 p.m. in my office dealing with other issues on questions without notice today holding them to account as the Connétable would want me to do and, in that conversation, they said that they delivered telecommunications services back to their customers to a large extent that were effectively uninterrupted but if the Connétable has a specific example, of course I will take it up with J.T. But I understood that they responded extremely well to the power outage and their backup facilities work very well but if there is an isolated case, I will answer it.

#### **4.7.3 The Connétable of St. John:**

Yes, I have a specific one. The Parish Hall at St. John with all our computer systems were down obviously with no electricity and so were all the lines into the Parish Hall so that was witnessed by all the people who came and went into the Parish Hall that day, so that is a specific one that the Minister can take up. Will he take it up?

#### **Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

Again, I do not think necessarily I will ever please the Connétable because he started the question, did he not, with the question about sensitive financial services institutions and them being the highest priority. Now, as much as I like the Parish Hall at St. John, I do not know whether or not there is a sensitive international trading platform with quantitative trading. I know the Connétable has got well versed with financial trading but I am not quite sure what he is doing at the Parish Hall. Of course this is well understood by both J.T. and the J.E.C. Huge efforts are made to get power back and to get telecommunications back on board and I will say investment in infrastructure matters. In a day after tides have taken down seawalls the investment in infrastructure in sea defences has meant that Jersey is in a much better position today. We will be saying the same things about our power supply when the J.E.C.

investment and the third interconnector and the backup generation capacity and fibre have been delivered to telecommunications. Infrastructure investment matters and is happening.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

I am pleased to see the Minister is backing me on infrastructure improvement.