

2.10 Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the adoption of an 'opt-in' service for access to over-18 sites by Jersey Telecom:

What, if anything, is the Minister, as representative of the shareholder, doing to ensure that Jersey Telecom adopts the opt-in service for access to over-18 sites?

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

I recognise that this is a very important issue for parents. I am not a parent myself but I am a godfather and uncle, and I recognise how important this is for people with young children. This is really a global industry issue. At the local level, it is currently up to each mobile operator to act and put safeguards in place themselves. I am pleased to see that the J.C.R.A. is, however, taking an active role and as I understand, they held meetings with all the operators on this subject last week. As far as J.T. is concerned, it is, of course, for the board to make decisions and to work with the interested parties and the J.C.R.A. to ensure appropriate protection. I have asked J.T. to continue to work with the J.C.R.A. and other operators, parents and the Education Department, to ensure that this important matter is dealt with. I would commend, if I may, and I will send this around, this very helpful booklet that is produced by J.T. which informs parents of what they can do to safeguard their children.

2.10.1 Deputy R.J. Rondel:

I thank the Minister for that comprehensive answer but does the Minister agree that we do have a duty as Government to protect our children as far as is possible? What further steps could he possibly take to ensure that J.T. continues to play their part in this process?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I fully accept and I believe that public ownership does mean that one can ask the publicly-owned company to do things that perhaps we would not. We must not put them in an uncompetitive situation. This is clearly an issue which is going to be resolved by other agencies elsewhere and there is going to be the technology to do so. I note that TalkTalk in the United Kingdom is the first operator to identify such technology that can be put into place. There are questions about whether or not it is good enough but I will certainly encourage J.T. to continue to comply with the best standards and the best technology that is available. I will also liaise with my colleague, the Minister for Economic Development, with his responsibilities at the J.C.R.A. to ensure these standards. But I would also say that having examined this issue as a result of the Deputy's question, I think that this is really an important educational issue for parents. Parents can put in place safeguards on their children's phones and on their home computers to safeguard them against inappropriate access to sites which, of course, we all know are dreadful. It is really a parent's issue and that is why we should be, I think, promoting this leaflet to all parents in the Island and perhaps that is an issue that we can communicate with Education too.

2.10.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I am pleased to see my colleague here has been investigating a really important and serious issue. As someone who has worked in Education, I am well aware that young people are far more adept and clued up on circumventing any safeguards than most of us adults. I just heard the Minister say he would be working with the Minister for Economic Development. Can he reiterate that he would also include his colleague, the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, because when I was there, the Youth Service certainly led the way in this field locally so I think that would be really helpful?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I thought I said that but I absolutely agree. It is an issue of education and, indeed, at Parish Hall levels and every level, I think that we can all raise awareness of what parents and grandparents

can do, and what godfathers and uncles can do, in order to safeguard their children when they are accessing the internet.

Deputy R.J. Rondel:

The reason why I put that question forward was that it arose from a very informative day by the Health Department. It was unfortunate that there were not that many States Members there, but it was extremely useful and extremely important, and I thank them for that. I thank the Minister for his reply.