

3.7 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding a recent 'spam attack' on Jersey Mail:

Further to a media report on 21st March 2013, regarding a spam attack on Jersey Mail, is Jersey Mail wholly or partly owned by Jersey Post and who do the Information Services Directors report to?

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

I am advised that Jersey Mail is a free email service wholly-owned by Jersey Post. Responsibility for this service sits with Jersey Post, Director of Information and Computer Technology, who reports directly to the Chief Executive of Jersey Post.

3.7.1 The Connétable of St. John:

Can Members be told how many of these satellite companies are held by Jersey Post, their names and who the directors are, and whether they are 100 per cent or a lesser percentage owned or divided into shareholdings with other parties? Please give a breakdown.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not think that Jersey Mail is a company. I think it is a business unit within Jersey Post. If I have got that wrong, then I will correct that later, but that is my understanding. Indeed, I would refer the Connétable to the annual report and accounts by Jersey Post, which are published and laid before the Assembly which set out most of the wholly-owned and partly-owned subsidiaries of Jersey Post and again if any of them are not, then I will correct that. Jersey Post, the Board of Directors, makes decisions in the best interests of the company. Sometimes they will have subsidiary companies as some other utilities do for specific purposes and specific businesses but that is I think set out in their annual report and accounts.

3.7.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

We have the example of Jersey Telecom and the Gigabyte project. Does the Minister not think that this continual answer, inferred today that he is not responsible is getting to ridiculous extremes and that we need to review the whole relationship of these utilities to the States and what public accountability means?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Deputy Le Hérissier is one of those Members who enjoys asking me questions about utilities and I enjoy answering them, but we are setting up organisations for better accountability and better focus. Yes, the Minister for Treasury and Resources is the shareholder and I regard my responsibilities and take them extremely seriously with the Treasurer and, indeed, with my Assistant Minister we have set up strengthened arrangements for utilities. We have memoranda of understanding, no surprises policies, regular briefings, and there is a good interchange with the wholly-owned subsidiaries of the States of Jersey, and these will be further strengthened by Harbours and Airports, by the housing organisation. I have got no doubt that public ownership and national ownership means something. They are not independent trusts; they are not independent organisations and they effectively ultimately play the tune that is the strategic objectives of the Island so I do not understand what the Deputy says. If his issue is policy as opposed to implementation, these boards are there to implement and no, we should not politicise implementation. We should appoint people and let them get on with their jobs.

3.7.3 The Connétable of St. John:

I understand where the Minister is coming from but like Deputy Le Hérissier, I have got some concerns, given in the past I have put questions in relation to the Jersey Electricity Company and they have a number of these satellite companies, and I have asked for details via the Minister in the past of these satellite companies, and he has refused to give any of the details quoting that because it is only a percentage shareholding, we cannot get to the bottom of where our money is

being invested. Would the Minister please answer, would he now become open with us and allow us to know where our money is invested and what percentage of our money is invested in these satellite companies held within some of our quangos?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Connétable protesteth a little too much I think. The J.E.C. (Jersey Electric Company) is a publicly quoted company. It has a level of transparency in terms of its affairs and in terms of its quarterly reporting and its annual report, which surpasses even that which we require of the wholly-owned subsidiaries. It is simply not correct to say that the Minister has not told the Connétable what the subsidiaries of Jersey Electric Company are. That is just simply not right. There are accounts which are laid before the Stock Exchange, laid before markets, which set out all of the wholly-owned subsidiaries, the partly-owned subsidiaries, the shareholdings of it, the boards of directors, *et cetera*. It is simply not correct and I think, with respect, this is way outside the question that was regarding a spam attack on Jersey Mail's postal email system.

3.7.4 The Connétable of St. John:

The Minister is trying to hide yet again from answering a question that has come out of the reply he gave me. All I want to do is to be able to drill down into some of these companies, and make sure we are getting value for money, and yet the Minister is only willing to keep all this information to himself. We are elected; we are responsible to the people of this Island. The Minister is responsible to answer questions in this Chamber. Is that not correct through the Chair, Sir?

The Bailiff:

He is responsible for answering questions for matters for which he has responsibility.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Deputy Le Hérissier and the Connétable are getting most excited. Perhaps I will lend the good Connétable my iPad so he can look at the published report and accounts by the Jersey Electric Company and he can do his own research. He does not need to spend valuable time in this Assembly asking me questions about subsidiaries of the J.E.C. when they are already published, they are already online and they are there for not only him but the whole world to see.