

## **2.15 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of the Comité des Connétables regarding the integrity of the electoral rolls:**

Is the chairman aware of any concerns surrounding the integrity of the electoral rolls and will he agree to conduct an investigation to include interviews with all Parishes and their officials regarding any operational difficulties experienced and the level of list anomalies with a view to recommending changes to the way the current system operates, if necessary?

### **Connétable K.P. Vibert of St. Ouen (Chairman, Comité des Connétables):**

Yes, I am aware of the concerns regarding the accurate preparation of the electoral register but I am also absolutely confident that the integrity of the register has not, in any way, been compromised. The problem has been with the identification of some addresses using the Jersey Land and Property Index but the Parishes, the Planning Department and the company which supports the software are aware of the problems experienced and the Parishes have resolved all the issues before the registers were published. While every system needs continual updating I do not believe there is a need for an investigation as suggested by the questioner. Nevertheless, the Comité des Connétables gives an assurance that it will continue to monitor the system and effect any changes necessary. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all Parish officials who have been involved with the production of the electoral register. I am confident that they have done an excellent job of work in ensuring that the 61,897 electors registered to vote in the forthcoming elections are on the correct electoral register for the Parish and districts concerned. I am pleased to report that the number of electors in the forthcoming elections shows an increase of just over 12 per cent on the number registered for 2008. I very much hope that the turnout will show a similar, if not better, improvement.

### **2.15.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

All is well with democracy in Jersey. I have no qualms whatsoever with the integrity of the people conducting the work in the Parishes. I am, however, disappointed that the chairman is not willing to look into investigating and interviewing Parish officials who have expressed concerns about the system, the way that it is operating and the anomalies that are occurring. These things and these issues are affecting the time and the manner in which candidates are accessing, or able to access, the electoral rolls after the nomination meetings. I would implore the chairman, once more, to reconsider my request to conduct an investigation - not an external one, an internal one - with his Connétables, to interview the Parish officials to ensure they have heard all of these people rather than just running the bunting up the flag and saying everything is all right, it will go away.

### **The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

The Deputy may not be aware that these officials meet on a regular basis to identify any problems and so they are all very well aware of what the problem is. The problem has been dealt with and work is in progress to ensure that that problem does not occur in the future.

### **2.15.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

There have been instances where those, for example in my Parish and I am also aware in St. Helier, have filled in forms, they are eligible to vote and for some reason they have not been put on the register. Will the chairman explain what the link is between

the Jersey Land and Property Index and the problems which he said were identified either early on or continuing into the latter part of the registration process?

**The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

Yes, the Land and Property Index is the vehicle which has been employed to identify the correct addresses for the people wishing to register. It would appear that the Land and Property Index does have some anomalies inside it. There are some addresses which do not come out as a correct addresses. Now, these have been identified by the Parish staff at the time of putting into the computer and those addresses have had to be filled in manually. Now, we are in consultation with the Land and Property Index, the Planning Department who administer it, and the software company who have produced the software. We are in discussions with them how this can be overcome for the future.

**2.15.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Supplementary. What is the recourse for individuals in a situation who feel that they have filled in the correct form, they do not appear on the register. Presumably it is up to the Constable's discretion as to whether they can be put on. If that is the case, I believe that is the case under the Election Law, and if that is the case when a Constable is facing a contested election who would it be that makes the decision as to whether, if an administrative error has occurred, whether those individuals can and should be put on the electoral register before the 16th or 19th October?

**The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

It is my understanding that the Jurats who are to act as recording officers for the elections will have the ability to take on people who do not appear on the register at the time of coming to vote, if sufficient proof is provided that they have filled in the paperwork.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

My question has been addressed.

**2.15.4 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

Like Deputy Le Claire, maybe it is only a problem that happens to the Parish staff at the Town Hall, and maybe it is because they have the majority of the voters.

[16.45]

But since the system changed from 2005, 2008, and the last electoral roll, the street order is not worth the paper it is written on, to me. I might as well go around and rewrite it again. This is from the officials down at the Town Hall, so I really do hope that the Constables can get together and not: "I am okay in a small country Parish"; we need this, Island-wide, sorted out. It is not sorted in St. Helier and it is not clear for more than anyone else.

**The Bailiff:**

So the question, Deputy Martin, was?

**Deputy J.A. Martin:**

He said the answer was no, he would not have a review, and I would ask him to reconsider the review, internally.

**The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

I did also say in my answer, which the Deputy obviously did not hear, that the Connétables continually review the system and these problems have been identified, and the Connétables are in the process of making sure that they do not occur in the future.

**The Bailiff:**

Senator Breckon, then the final question from Deputy Le Claire.

**2.15.5 Senator A. Breckon:**

In the original question you talked about operational difficulties experienced and the level of anomalies. I wonder if the Comité des Connétables would note any problems candidates may have, and receive perhaps representation after, and seek funding from P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee), because I am aware already of people living in the same address who are not together on certain registers. So, there are anomalies which perhaps the Constable has made light of.

**The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

Certainly, I hope that any candidates, any States Members and any member of the public who has a problem would take the opportunity of writing into the Comité des Connétables so that all these issues can be addressed.

**2.15.6 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Sir, would the chairman of the Comité des Connétables report back to the Comité des Connétables that I am not satisfied with the answers that they have given me and that I am going to be referring my request to the Electoral Commission. If we have a single electoral list that has identified problems in 2005, and we are told in 2005 those problems are fixed, why are we sitting here listening to the same answers in 2011, that these problems have been fixed and there is no need for an investigation? Will the chairman, with the greatest of respect - I wish him the very, very best for his personal retirement and the work he has done - but going back to the chairman of the Comité des Connétables, I do not mean to be disrespectful, but this has caused significant concern among not only the staff but also the candidates, and the Electoral Commission, I am afraid, will have to be referred the work if the Comité des Connétables is not willing to undertake it.

**The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

One of the principal concerns raised by the staff at St. Helier to me was the large amount of registrations we could deliver at 12.00 on Monday 5th.

**2.15.7 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

That is not the issue. A supplementary, would he at least acknowledge that I have asked him to report back to the Comité des Connétables and I am going to be referring this to the Electoral Commission?

**The Connétable of St. Ouen:**

The Deputy is totally at liberty to talk to whoever he wishes about it.