

2.13 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Economic Development regarding telephone 'scams'::

What action, if any, is the Minister able to take to stop telephone scams?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (Minister for Economic Development):

First of all public awareness is the greatest weapon in dealing with such fraudsters. To paraphrase our own marketing campaign I advise the public to always think twice before imparting private information to unknown callers. The U.K. has a number of regulatory and industry approaches for the prevention and elimination of telephone fraud and these approaches apply to Jersey. Internationally, industry anti-fraud bodies help to identify and stop telephone scams. Locally, Jersey Telecom monitors its network for evidence of telephone fraud and acts upon the advice and recommendations of regulatory and industry forums. Unwanted calls and scam advice is provided on the website and J.T. (Jersey Telecom) discuss individuals concerns on their helpline. These scams do not originate from Jersey. The police recognise that this is a global problem but are not in a position to investigate such cases. However, the police do highlight current scams and provide practical security advice to protect Islanders. If an Islander has lost any monies the police will make further investigations. Scams mutate and the public must be cautious, reporting them is very important and helps to protect those yet to be targeted.

2.13.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister - other than promotional educational material and calls from unknown people, for example, employed by estate agents - say whether any technological answers exist as for example happened with the latest scam from the country of Belize, which was broadcast through the *Evening Post*? We were told to take precautions through that route.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

There are issues and there are difficulties in dealing particularly with international calls. That presents the biggest challenge. There are, however, a number of U.K. regulatory approaches which help the matter. The premium rate numbers, for example, are regulated by an organisation called Payphone Plus. There is another group called T.U.F.F., which is the Telecommunications U.K. Fraud Forum. I should add that the premium rate service is also regulated and monitored and has the powers to fine if they manage to track down the necessary perpetrators of such fraud.

2.13.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I must say I was not terribly impressed with the Minister's answer regarding steps that are taken. I have a constituent who has suffered as a result of one of these telephone scams and talking to the police and telecoms has been most unsatisfactory. Would he review the actual measures that these bodies are taking and report in a written report to States Members about what they do and whether these measures are effective? Basically will you produce a written report after investigating how effective these bodies are?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I am disappointed the Deputy was not satisfied with my answer, I thought my answer was quite comprehensive in terms of the detail of ways in which we are dealing with this difficult problem. If the Deputy would like me to provide some written detail on

the success or otherwise of the measures taken, I would ask him first of all to let me have in writing the exact information that he would like and I will do my very best to ensure that such information is provided in writing and, indeed, circulated to other Members if they would so desire.

2.13.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Just to clarify, the Minister or J.T. does not have any technological means in order to stop this, is that correct, yes or no?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

The easiest way to stop such matters is the call blocking service which Jersey Telecoms have. I would add, as I mentioned a moment ago, the difficulty there is with international calls. That particularly service does not always work with international calls for various technical reasons. But that is a first step and I would recommend anybody who is concerned to put the call blocking in place on their telephone. They can get advice from Jersey Telecom in order to do so.

The Bailiff:

Very well, we come next to question 17 which Deputy Lewis will ask of the Minister for Economic Development. Deputy.