

5.14 The Deputy of St. John of the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables regarding the new standardised rates form for all the Island Parishes:

The question will be answered, I understand, by the Vice-Chair. Further to the introduction of the new standardised rate forms for all the Island Parishes, would the Chairman explain where in the country Parishes we find “streets”, why there appear to be mistakes on the form sent to households when the Parishes hold up-to-date records or files on every property, and would he inform Members whether this is a precursor to an all-Island rate, and if so give details?

[11:00]

Connétable J.L.S. Gallichan of Trinity (Vice-Chairman of the Comité des Connétables - rapporteur):

As you realise, there are 3 questions here and I will answer them in rotation. A standardised rates form has been used by all the Parishes for many years. So far as I am aware there is no reference to “street” in the annual returns which have recently been sent out to owners of land. However, all annual returns show correspondence address of the owner and the address of the land owned by that person. As the word “rue” can be translated to street it follows that all Parishes will have roads which can be described as streets, for example, Rue de la Mare Ballam, St. John. **[Laughter]** Secondly, the annual returns sent for 2011 contain for the first time a summary of attributes of domestic property. This information previously declared to the Parishes, and while every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the data, there have been some examples of other areas in the data originally returned to their Parish, or entered on the rates system. The 2011 annual returns provide an opportunity for owners to correct and update where required the information held. On the third question, there is already an Island-wide rate which is set for domestic and non-domestic property and collected by the Parishes on behalf of the States. There are no plans for any other Island-wide rate.

5.14.1 The Deputy of St. John:

Can I correct the Minister, sorry the assistant chairman or vice-chair? I see on the form “off-street parking”, that is what it says. I see on every one of my properties which I have a number across the Island from every Parish, they are all well declared, you can see them in the Members’ register. I see that there is the same error on every one, right across the board. This is a universal form which is not compatible, and will the vice-chair confirm that this was passed by the Committee of Constables before being sent out, and were all 12 Constables happy with something that could go out with such errors on. They give you the types of properties, apartments, bungalows, detached or bedsitters, garage, linked, *et cetera*, semi-detached, it does not mention a house which is 2-storeys and every one of them misses out the point, number of floors. On every one of them it has got zero, and it if is a house you have got one more than one floor. So, there are a lot of errors on this form, and is the Committee of Connétables happy that they are sending out misleading information to the public?

The Connétable of Trinity:

There is not really a great deal of answer to that question. I think the Deputy might employ someone to do his forms for him. Could I just say, I would just like to point out to the Deputy this is a new form that has been sent out with attributes. In some Parishes off-street parking, as you should know in St. Helier, is part of an attribute. I do not understand where the Deputy is coming from. Off-street parking is a

legitimate attribute to the people who live in St. Helier. I would say if you talk to the parishioners in St. Helier parking has become a nightmare, so off-street parking I would have thought was a great attribute. As for many mistakes, if the Deputy will consider that 30,000 annual returns have been sent out by the staff of the Parishes to some 54,000 separate pieces of land maybe he could then realise it is possible maybe to get the occasional mistake, but the idea of the form is for the owner of that property to rectify the mistakes. Once that is rectified, next year we will have a new system and hopefully the following year in 2012, the Deputy will have a form with his numerous properties, which I know he owns, all correctly laid out and all he will have to do is sign his name at the bottom of that form saying all these attributes are correct.

5.14.2 The Deputy of St. John:

On a point of order, will the chairman accept that this has been produced as one-form-fits-all and is unacceptable?

The Connétable of Trinity:

The Deputy has his views. I have a different one.

5.14.3 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Would the vice-chairman take the opportunity of thanking the dozens of rates assessors throughout the Parishes that carry out their work on a volunteer basis [Approval] and the efficiency of the rates collection system?

The Connétable of Trinity:

With pleasure, I will do that.

5.14.4 The Deputy of St. John:

As a former Chairman of rates assessors [Laughter] and sat on the Island Ratings Committee over and above the Parish Committee, I would not be at all happy if I had to send this out to my parishioners if I was still that chairman. Will the chairman agree to talk it over with the rates assessors?

The Connétable of Trinity:

It seems that the Deputy is deciding I need a promotion. I am quite happy with the job I have got at the moment. No, I disagree with the Deputy. I am afraid this is one we will not agree on today.