

### **3.10 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Chairman of the Privileges and Procedures Committee regarding a ban on the use of all electronic devices in the Chamber:**

Would the chairman inform Members whether his committee has any plans to extend the ban on the use of mobile telephones in the Chamber to include all devices, such as BlackBerries and so on, and if not, why not?

### **Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier (Chairman, Privileges and Procedures Committee):**

The committee is in the process of establishing a sub-committee to review Standing Orders and the internal procedures of the States. As part of its work programme, the sub-committee will review the use of electronic devices in the States Chamber. All States Members have been invited to express an interest in joining the sub-committee and once that work has been done, the consultation process will take place where Members will be able to submit their views on this and other matters for consideration.

#### **3.10.1 Connétable J. Gallichan of St. Mary:**

I am sure the chairman is aware that the previous P.P.C. had lodged a proposition concerning the use of electronic devices in the Chamber. The work, I contend, has already been done and the consultation already undertaken. In this age of trying to limit the use of paper and improve efficiency, will the chairman undertake to re-lodge that proposition sooner rather than later so that we can all move forward into the 21st century?

#### **The Connétable of St. Helier:**

If the Members of the States are eager to get their hands on BlackBerries and even laptops, if the amendment lodged by the former Deputy de Sousa were to be re-lodged, then clearly the committee would want to move forward with that. The committee's current thinking is that all of these matters need to be looked at in the round rather than having a succession of debates on individual matters.

#### **3.10.2 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:**

I note the terminology of the question which refers to a ban on the use of mobile telephones in the Chamber and I would like to ask the chairman to confirm whether or not there is indeed a ban on the use of these devices in the Chamber and if so, what has been done to enforce it as I am aware that many Members spend a great deal of time using these devices within the Chamber. It seems to me they are not paying attention to what is going on during the course of the sitting.

#### **The Connétable of St. Helier:**

Yes, there clearly are Standing Orders that relate to the use of these devices in the States and, as we all know, Members whose phones go off are subject to a fine. That is the situation at the present time. I suppose a blind eye has been turned to the use of such devices. I agree with the Constable. I think this matter does need to be sorted out and I agree with the questioner to the extent that I think we need to cover all such devices, not simply the ones that are currently being able to be used at the moment.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

I just remind Members before questions go on for too much longer, the Standing Order says: “Before entering the Chamber, a Member of the States must switch off any mobile telephone and every other electronic device he or she has with him or her that would be likely to disturb the proceedings of the States.” In other words, there are 2 parts to the order. The ban does not prevent the use of mobile telephones and other electronic devices of themselves. What the ban does is say they must not disturb the proceedings of the States.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Can I ask a point of order in that case because it seems to me that because we have so many fines, mobile phones are very likely to disturb the proceedings of the States and therefore nobody should be allowed to bring in mobile phones under that order.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Under that Standing Order, the way it is dealt with at the moment is that a fine is imposed if the machine goes off.

**3.10.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Following on from your intervention there, I suppose most people think it is the ringing of phones that annoys people but I find it very distracting to watch someone playing with their BlackBerry. So would the chairman consider revisiting my proposition that I brought about 2 years ago and consider that as a way forward?

**The Connétable of St. Helier:**

I am not quite sure what the proposition is that the Deputy is referring to but I am sure he has received an invitation to join this sub-committee and perhaps he will bring his experience and his initiatives to bear in that way.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I will; it will be great not to be excluded.

**3.10.4 The Connétable of St. Mary:**

As you yourself have reminded Members of the actual wording of the Standing Order, the point that we have to deal with is surely the fact that a ruling was made by the previous President of the Assembly when another Member flouted the direction of the Chair. Surely it is not just a reading of Standing Orders that is necessary. We have a particular instance where something needs to be investigated and I still contend that the work has already been done.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Is that a question?

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Yes, does the chairman not share this belief?

**The Connétable of St. Helier:**

I agree a lot of work has been done on it. It has been supplied to me by the committee clerk, for which I am grateful, and I commend the work done by the previous P.P.C. under its chairman in this regard. I think this matter can be dealt with quickly and certainly the work of the sub-committee is not intended to take very long.

[11:00]

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I have to raise another point of order. Can I ask the Constable of St. Mary to name the person she is referring to who flouted that particular order because that ...

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

That is not a point of order.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Yes, because if it is directed at me, I would like to repudiate that because I certainly did not flout any direction of the Chair on that occasion.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

The world did not know who it was referring to.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I would be happy to debate that with the Constable.

**3.10.5 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

I am grateful to the chairman for his answers and if I may take a similar vein to the Constable of St. Lawrence. Does the chairman agree with me that Members should be paying full attention in this Assembly to the business at hand and not sending text messages or playing electronic games, which seems to be the habit now with the increased use of BlackBerries?

**The Connétable of St. Helier:**

I do not think any Member would support the playing of electronic games during a States session. However, I do think that Members are capable of doing more things than one. They are capable of listening to a debate at the same time as sending possibly an urgent message to their department or a constituent. So I personally do not agree with him, but it is a matter for the States and my views really are not that important.