

4.9 Senator S.C. Ferguson of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the compulsory micro-chipping of all dogs in Jersey:

Following reports that the United Kingdom proposes the compulsory micro-chipping of all dogs by January 2016 and failure to micro-chip a dog will constitute a criminal offence, will the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 be updated to bring Jersey into line with the U.K.?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs):

In February 2011, my former Assistant Minister, Deputy Hilton, did a great deal of work in relation to this area after an approach from, I think, Deputy Power and from the J.S.P.C.A. (Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and one of the ideas that came out was indeed precisely this, of micro-chipping individual dogs, presumably in conjunction with the licensing of dogs. We then referred that and other issues on to the Comité des Connétables for their view, because the Comité des Connétables clearly would have responsibilities in this area, particularly in the licensing. A very strong view came back from them that they were not in favour of us moving in this direction. Now, in the light of the fact that there has been substantial changes on the Comité des Connétables, I am perfectly happy and I promptly will ask my current Assistant Minister - although he does not know I was going to say this - to pick up the issue and run with it, go back to the J.S.P.C.A., see if the circumstances have changed and then go back to the Comité des Connétables again, the membership of which has substantially changed.

4.9.1 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Now that the pet passport scheme has been rescinded, is the Minister aware that puppy farms have now moved to Eastern Europe, where the various often fatal diseases such as rabies and sundry zoonotic diseases - I can describe those to Members in the coffee room afterwards, Sir ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

I cannot even spell it as well.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

It gets better. Yes, but these diseases are endemic and are entering the U.K. and hence will be able to enter Jersey on forged documents. Now, normal precautions would suggest that in order to help prevent this, micro-chipping of dogs will enable proper identification of the origin of the dogs and the ownership. Does the Minister not agree?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I think this is a different question, if I may say so, because the original question is primarily about identification of stray dogs. This is more a question in relation to importation controls in relation to dogs and, frankly, I am not prepared or briefed in relation to that area, but it is a very different question. I did omit to say in answer to the previous question that one of the reasons why the Comité des Connétables were not in favour was because there was already a requirement by law that any dog that is on the road or other public place has a collar with its name on it. So I reserve my opinion on the question, because I am simply not prepared to answer it.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Senator, I am wondering whether, in the light of the Minister's assurance that he is going to raise the matter again with the J.S.C.P.A. and the Comité des Connétables whether, that does not answer your questions adequately, and we can return to it later.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, Sir. As I say, we have ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

We have a very full list of questions today. Very well, we come to ...

Deputy S. Power:

I was hoping to ask the Minister a question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The Minister has said that he is going to be looking into the matter. He is going to ask his Assistant to look into it with the Comité des Connétables and I would have thought that that means we are not going to get anywhere today.