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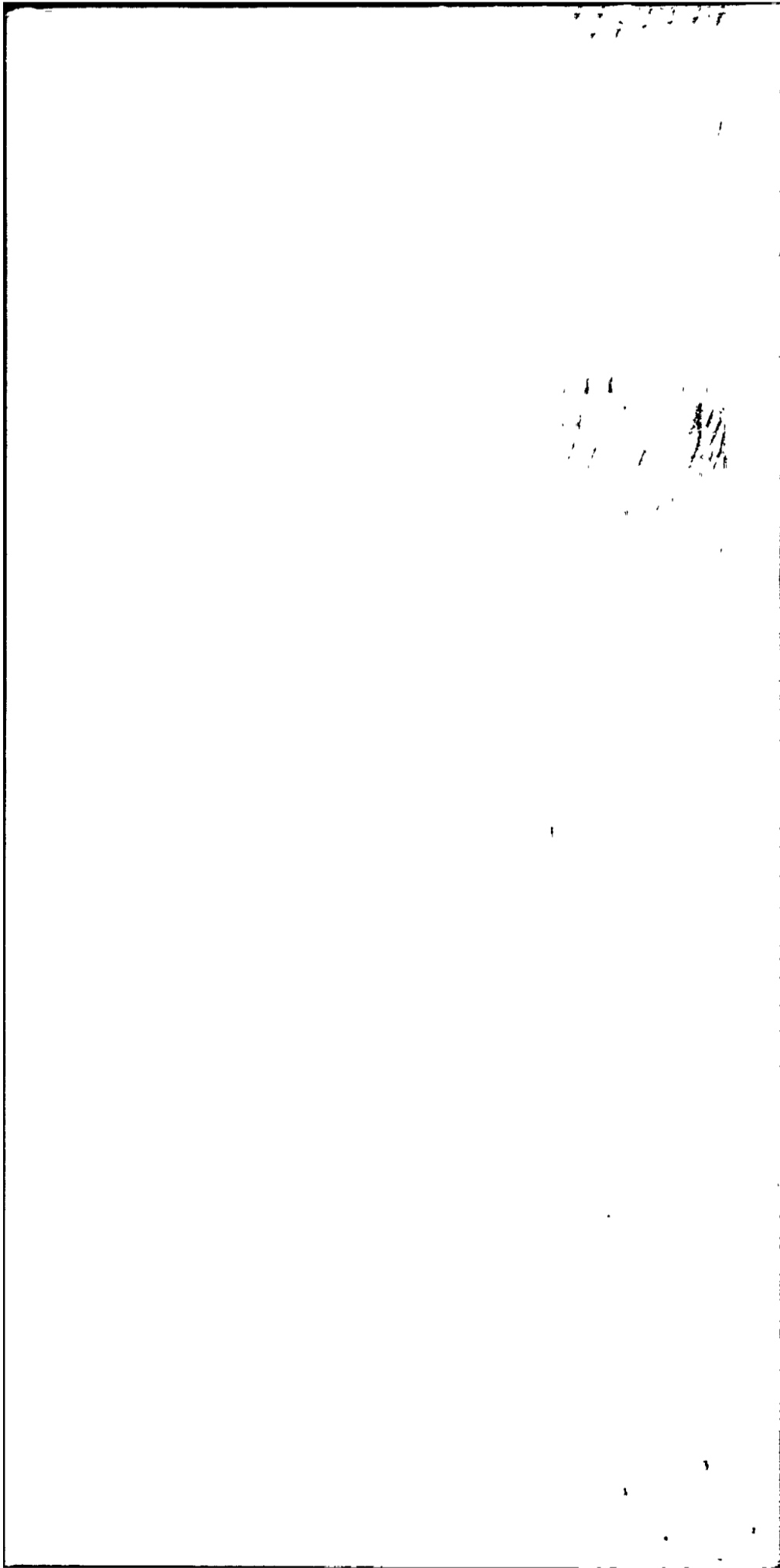
POL00114516



House of Commons



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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Paula Vennells,
Managing Director,
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LONDON
EC1V 9HQ

POST OFFICE LTD.

22 DEC 2011

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

pv 1337

21st December 2011.

Dear Ms Vennells,

Horizon System.

I refer to your letter in response to my parliamentary questions on the above and note what you say. Unfortunately in the course of your lengthy response you do not give specific answers to the questions which I raised.

In response to my question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (1) how many (a) prosecutions and (b) investigations of postmasters instigated by Post Office Ltd as a result of apparent financial irregularities on the Horizon computer system have subsequently been abandoned; [77794]

You say that "no cases have been abandoned for reason of any doubt about that system". That was not what I asked. My question was to ascertain how many prosecutions or investigations had arisen because discrepancies had been found on the Horizon system, and how many of these were subsequently not followed through for whatever reason.

I am that Post Office limited would have such figures and I would be obliged if you would let me have them.

In response to my question:

(2) how many complaints Post Office Ltd has received from subpostmasters concerning difficulties with the Horizon computer system in each of the last five years; [77795]

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again no actual figures are given. Whilst I note what you say about various avenues of complaint I would have thought that any organisation installing such a vast, and expensive, system would keep a clear log of complaints and difficulties that sub postmasters experience, if for no other reason to ascertain whether there are any patterns of difficulty that need to be addressed. Surely your IT department, or installer would have such records? Again I would like the figures and nature of the complaints. That information would also answer my specific question on operational faults since, yet again, no real information has been given on this.

I note the points that you make regarding the "letters before action" from Shoosmiths, which presumably are part of English legal proceedings but I did not ask about legal action merely about the nature and frequency of complaints about the system.

However, on consideration, I would now ask in addition for details of how much Post Office limited has spent to date on legal costs and external technical advice in relation to proceedings where a subpostmaster has made allegations against the Horizon system.

I look forward to hearing from you with the information requested.

Yours sincerely,

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