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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: JDP/AP/lt

Mr Norman Lamb
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET



Date: 20 August 2012

Dear Norman,

You are on record as saying that JFSA victims (people effected by apparent glitches in the Post Office accounting software) need to be happy with the forensic accountants needed to look into it.

Could I urge you to stick to your guns on this as potentially some very serious injustices have been done, In the case of one of my own constituents the imputation of serious dishonesty deprived a sub post mistress of her livelihood and good name. Major errors in the Crown Post Offices picked up recently show how this may happen but this by itself is little consolation and no vindication of those treated shabbily by the post office.

Yours Sincerely

GRO

Dr John Pugh MP

Lamb

NEWS

'Wrongly accused' sub postmasters hope external probe will clear them

P.O. finally agrees to independent investigation into postmasters' claims they were wrongly accused of fraud

SUB-POSTMASTERS accused of theft and fraud have forced the Post Office to bring in external accountants to review their cases, focusing on alleged faults in the computer system used in all branches.

The decision was made by the Post Office after its management team met with MPs last month to look into the cases of 10 sub-postmasters accused of wrong-doing.

The group were stripped of their contracts after allegations of theft, fraud and false accounting, while some were sent to prison in cases dating back five years.

However, the sub-postmasters have always denied these allegations and claim the missing money is the fault of severe deficiencies in the Horizon computer system used by the Post Office.

An internal Post Office memo sent in September



2008 appears to back up these claims as it shows that its own crown offices – which are run by itself and not by sub-postmasters – have made losses of £2.2 million in one year alone.

The Post Office has refused to publish figures on apparent losses at sub-post branches.

The 10 sub-postmasters whose cases will be looked into say they have been forced to pay back thousands that they didn't take.

They are part of a wider group of around 100 sub-postmasters who are considering suing Post Office Ltd over alleged faults in its Horizon computer system.

One former Post Office employee, Seema Misra, ran a branch in Surrey and was jailed for four months after being convicted in 2010 of stealing nearly £75,000.

She said she hoped the investigation would clear her name: "I'm no thief, I

never was. I haven't taken a single penny from the Post Office. I put money in the Post Office. I haven't taken any of their money. I want to get my name cleared."

Nevertheless, the Post Office denies any problems exist in its computer and accounting systems.

A spokesman said: "The Post Office continues to have absolute confidence in the robustness and integrity of its branch accounting processes."

IRRELEVANT

Campaigners blame problem on 'faults' in the Post Office's Horizon computer system

ALAN Bates, founder of action group Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance, has welcomed the investigation into alleged faults in the Post Office's Horizon computer systems.

Mr. Bates formed the alliance after having his contract terminated by the Post Office in 2003, for what he calls "making a fuss" about the Horizon system.

He said: "Ever since it has been installed, it has been nothing but

trouble and has caused enormous upset and hardship to people across the whole of the country.

"We don't think it's accurate. We think there are flaws in the system.

"Fortunately, now, it looks like the Post Office are going to look into some parts of it, though not the whole issue. At least it's a start."

Mr. Bates says he had highlighted faults about the system ever since it was first introduced.



He recounts one occasion when his till showed he was more than £5,000 'short', only to find through a search of his till receipts that the same sum of money

had appeared as duplicate transactions.

"This had come about because of a software upgrade they had installed that week," said Mr Bates.

