

Bill Dodwell can't face both ways at once

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The [Mail published some interesting, but limited data](#) on Sunday suggesting the lack of information on which companies registered on the FTSE 100 do and do not disclose the tax they pay in the UK, and how much of the tax those who do make declaration do pay here (about £1 in every £7, it transpires).

Now I admit I spoke to the Mail about this research, and am quoted in the article, but that's not what interests me. What does is this quote:

Bill Dodwell, head of tax policy at accountant Deloitte, said the research showed raw figures didn't tell the full story. 'Unless you have some explanation [around each tax bill] you can't tell what's going on,' he said.

Now that's fascinating because you see what Bill is saying is that because we don't know in which country the companies really make their profit, and also in which country they really pay their tax, and we don't have a tax note for each country, we shouldn't be commenting on the tax a company pays. Or to put it another way, what Bill Dodwell is saying is that unless and until we have [country-by-country reporting](#) for multinational corporations we won't really understand their tax data.

But now let's look at what Bill Dodwell told the Public Accounts Committee on 31 January:

Q213 Ian Swales MP: Do you think that global-we are now into the vision part- companies should have to report their turnover, profits and tax in each country in their reports?

Bill Dodwell: No, we do not support that.

Q214 Ian Swales MP: Why would you not support that?

Bill Dodwell: Really for the reasons that I think many of the chief executives and chairman of FTSE 100 companies have covered in their replies to, I think, Stephen McPartland. Essentially, they are pointing out the huge cost of it, the

complexity and, in some cases, the commercial confidentiality, but I do think it is possible to reach a better system.

So, Bill Dodwell says that we can't understand tax in multinational corporation's accounts without country-by-country reporting but at the same time opposes us having country-by-country reporting. Now why would that be Bill? Could it be that secrecy suits Deloitte's profit making opportunities in the many tax havens in which you have an operation really rather well?

Just asking.