

2.7 Deputy J.A. Martin of the Deputy Chief Minister regarding whether any of increased 700 locally qualified people in employment in the private sector in December 2005 represented new jobs:

During question time on 12th September 2006 the Chief Minister stated that figures produced by the Statistics Unit showed that there had been an increase of 700 locally qualified people in employment in the private sector in December 2005 compared to 2004. Would the Chief Minister's Deputy advise Members whether the data he referred to includes details of how many, if any, of these represent new jobs? Thank you, Sir.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (Deputy Chief Minister):

The short answer is no. The overall increase in locally qualified people in work published by the Statistics Unit is made up of different components and represents the net change of vacancies being filled, existing companies expanding and taking on more staff and new businesses setting-up. While the actual number of new jobs is very hard to measure - and thus I cannot provide a figure - a key point is that 700 more locally qualified people were in work in December 2005 than a year earlier. Clearly some of these will be in new jobs but by no means all of them. The other key point to mention is, in the same period, the number of non-qualified people in employment fell by 60.

2.7.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

I am very disappointed with the Minister's answer because he says it is business expanding and new jobs and I had to direct this question, Sir, to the Chief Minister because the new Immigration Department is under them. But surely, through the regulation - there are undertakings with a bit of "ooh, ah" also working in this office - they should know how many more licences were produced and how many jobs were taken up. I need an answer because if it is 700 we are already 200, Sir, over the intended growth under the new immigration policy and this is not good enough. Thank you, Sir.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I think the Deputy is in danger of using statistics for figures for which they were not intended to be used. The figures that she refers to - and the report she refers to - deals with a number of people in employment. If the Deputy wants to have details of the number of licences granted under the Regulation of Undertakings Law then I should direct her to a different report that has been issued for that purpose, Sir, which is under the direction of the Population Office and the Economic Development Minister. But the important thing is that this report deals with people in employment; not job creation.

2.7.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Deputy Chief Minister aware that the R.U. (Regulation of Undertakings) figures are merely requests for locally qualified and non-locally qualified positions but are not automatically filled and, therefore, are relatively meaningless as a snapshot of what the economy is doing?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Yes, I am pleased that the Regulation Undertakings office grants licences which do not necessarily result in jobs being filled. I think it is by Members using a

combination of the number of licences granted and the number of people in employment that they can get a general picture of the employment trends and the populations within the Island. It is not an exact science and one cannot try to use these figures to try to make them exact.

2.7.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Sir, which leads to my supplementary, Sir. Does not the Deputy Chief Minister not think - together with me who thinks - that it is absurd we have all of these statistics and measurements and departments collating figures with actual numbers being generated and reports being circulated into the media, et cetera, giving rough ... I beg your pardon, Sir. You asked me to be precise and I will try to shorten my question. Is it not time that we had a better understanding of how many people in this Island are in work? Real individuals. A better understanding of jobs that have been created - real jobs - those that are being occupied; and a better understanding of those that are unemployed? Is it not time that this Council of Ministers gets together a system that is easily and recognisably workable and understandable?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I can certainly share with the Deputy the need to have good statistical information available on which to make informed decisions, and I believe that we have good statistical information in respect of the number of people in employment, and that is the report which the Deputy referred to in his initial question which showed a further 700 people in employment. What is not appropriate though is to try to use that information and try to extrapolate it to the number of jobs being created. Statistics are very good, Sir, if they are not misused. The more statistics we have, the less likelihood there is of them used for the wrong purposes. So, I would certainly endorse further statistics being available, Sir, and perhaps less misinformation as a result.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Deputy.

2.7.4 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Given that this time last year we never had 700, or nowhere near 700 people unemployed, does this Minister know where these 700 people have come from then in the new jobs? Thank you. Or not new jobs. Thank you, Sir.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I think we have heard in answer to a previous question that the number of people registered as looking for work does not necessarily reflect the total number of people unemployed. But also I think there may be some people who are doing more than one job, Sir. I think it is dangerous to read into statistics more than they say and I would caution any Member against doing such a thing.