

2.5 Deputy K.C. Lewis of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the cost of clothing a child:

Given that during the debate on my amendment to P.169/2007 the Minister stated that the cost of clothing a child is £150 per year, would he inform Members how this figure was reached?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I am pleased to be able to answer this question since my comments 2 weeks ago appear to have been misunderstood by some people. When I spoke 2 weeks ago in replying to that amendment I chose my words carefully. What I said was, and I quote: "According to the Jersey Household Expenditure Survey the average household spends about £150 per annum on children's clothing." Those figures were produced independently by the Statistics Unit based on surveys of over 1,000 local households. However, I must point out they do not include children's footwear which was not analysed separately. I have subsequently asked the Statistics Unit and they estimate that children's footwear would have added a further £50 to that total. The major problem is this is the average of all households, including those without children, so that while statistically correct it is not the average spend on clothing per child. The best indication of this is to look at the spend by household type and where there is a couple with one or more children the total average spend on clothing is about £411 per annum. On the other hand, the average figure and the spend of people on low incomes will be less than that. I have to say, in conclusion, that even on £500 per annum the effect of G.S.T. at 3 per cent would be an additional 30 pence per week. I would remind Members that the increases in child tax allowance and the increases in income tax exemption thresholds, together with the further relief that we are going to give, proposed for those neither eligible for income support or liable for tax will be of far greater benefit.

2.5.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Minister not concede in the light of his revelation, and his very careful use of words, that the way we are putting statistics forward is capable of being considerably misleading?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

No, the statistics speak for themselves. How Members interpret them is up to them. **[Laughter]**

2.5.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Does he not think it is Monty Pythonesque to give an average based on families, in part, with no children?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I was merely making a point, and I made my point very clearly, and that is what the household expenditure said was the average for all people, for all families. I have elaborated on that, Sir, but the point at issue was that there are better ways of dealing with G.S.T. on children's clothing.

2.5.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Minister suggested that how people interpret figures is not the question. Surely it is how Ministers present the figures which is the vital point.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The figures are not presented by me. They are presented by the Statistics Unit. They are presented to all Members independently.