

2.2 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence of the Chief Minister regarding statistical records of additional people taking up residence in the Island consequential upon the States employing (j) category staff:

Would the Chief Minister advise Members what records are kept, if any, of the number of additional people taking up residence in the Island, be that spouse and partner and/or children, consequential to the States employing J Category staff?

Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):

As outlined in the Appointments Commission Recruitment guidelines, all appointments to the States of Jersey are made on the basis of fair and open competition. For this reason, the details required from an applicant to a post are only those which are needed to ensure that the person's competence and experience will be fairly assessed against agreed criteria relevant to the post. Therefore, no data is obtained or recorded regarding any family members that may take up residence in the Island as a consequence of employing (j) Category staff. Following agreement in principle in June 2005 by the States to the Migration Policy, a population office has been established which is responsible for the development of policies which will include the creation of a population register that will enable the future monitoring and regulation of the total residence population.

2.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Is the Minister aware that sometime ago, I think the 2001 Census produced a figure of 1.8 dependants per (j) Category employee on the Island? Is that figure still valid, does he know?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I cannot give a precise answer to that but I will establish the answer to it. I think the States should record that, of course, the vast majority of (j) Category employees taken on by the States are, in fact, teachers and nurses; essential frontline staff.

2.2.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister expand on the total number of (j) cats. that are now being employed in the Island since the change of policy from fixed term (j) cats. to permanent (j) cats?

Senator F.H. Walker:

No, Sir, I cannot but again, I will get that information.

2.2.3 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

It seems to me that in the Chief Minister's response, it is quite correct that we employ (j) Category staff on the basis of fair and open competition but to me, Sir, that does not preclude - having appointed someone as (j) category - the fact that we could then make inquiries as to how many additional people are being brought into the Island as a response of that appointment and I wonder whether the Chief Minister would comment on that.

Senator F.H. Walker:

Even that is fraught with some difficulty because I am afraid the Human Rights Legislation kicks-in here and there could be, I am advised, some difficulty in that respect but I think what the House should take comfort from here is the second part of my answer relating to the population register and the fact that when that is in place, then of course, it will be possible to know the exact number of people in Jersey and in what capacity they are living in the Island.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am not sure from the Chief Minister's answer whether he was telling the House categorically that it is not possible to record, having appointed a (j) category employee, the dependants who would

come to the Island as a result of that appointment and I wonder whether the Chief Minister can clarify for me whether he is stating that categorically because of Human Rights?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I am not stating that categorically this morning and I have to say that as a result of the question asked by the Deputy, I am instituting some further inquiries of my own to establish what exactly is possible and what is not possible and I myself do not have a 100 per cent clear picture of that at this particular time.

2.2.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

May I ask the Chief Minister a question in relation to the amounts of people from (j) category appointments that are left in place in the Island after they cease to become employed by the States. I wonder, perhaps not having that answer today, whether or not the Chief Minister might get back to us on the impacts of using the (j) category licence in respect of the people who are no longer employed by those departments remaining in the Island and perhaps remaining in positions and households and houses and buildings, flats, et cetera, that might have an overall impact. I wonder if he could get back to us on that situation?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Yes, Sir, I will get back on that but, of course, we should remember that all (j) category employees both in the public and the private sector have to be approved under the Regulation of Undertakings legislation which controls the numbers very strictly indeed. We also have to remember the importance of (j) category employees to the Island - not just the public sector but to the economy - and I am sure Members will recall, because I am aware there is concern about house prices and house availability, the answer I gave to earlier questions at a previous sitting where the Statistics Department state quite clearly and strongly that it is not the (j) category employees who are driving up the price of houses in Jersey, it is demand from local people which is doing that. The number of (j) category houses in the economy is very small indeed.

2.2.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Would the Chief Minister state which Human Rights considerations preclude the keeping of such records at present that will not preclude the keeping of such records when we have a population register?

Senator F.H. Walker:

As the Deputy is well aware, the population register has been subject - and the proposal for the Population Register has been subject - to stringent review against the Human Rights Legislation and when the proposal comes forward to establish the population register, it will be fully compliant with the Human Rights legislation.

2.2.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Picking up on the Chief Minister's comment about local people driving-up prices, does he, therefore, not accept the contention of the Jersey Association of Architects that it is the slowness or indeed, the denial of the Planning Applications Panel to applications which is stoking-up demand?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I have no knowledge of that question. That is a question for the Planning Minister. I have seen the article. I have no further information on it. I would be extremely surprised, to say the least, if that turned out to be the case.