

4.3 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier of the Minister for Social Security regarding the introduction of protection for Jersey employees from redundancy through insolvency:

Will the Minister inform Members what plans, if any, he has to introduce protection for Jersey employees from redundancy through insolvency and if so in what timescale his plans can be introduced?

Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Clement (The Minister for Social Security):

Members will be aware that redundancy provisions within the current employment legislation have already been drafted and I am planning to lodge these provisions at the next States meeting. Advice received from the Employment Forum which was accepted by the previous Minister for Social Security was that the setting up of an insolvency fund was a complex matter, particularly in terms of the funding and administration of such a scheme. Rather than hold up the introduction of redundancy legislation the matter of insolvency will be treated as a separate project following the introduction of legislation relating to redundancy and business transfers. Given the current economic situation and the possibility that there may be additional redundancies in Jersey due to the insolvency of the employer my department is now preparing advice on any practical means by which an insolvency fund could be introduced in the near future. It would be foolish of me to commit to timescales today. I can however assure all Members that this matter has been given the highest priority and as soon as I am able to come forward with firm details regarding an insolvency fund and in what timescales that it can be set up I will make a statement to the Assembly.

4.3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Can the Minister at least in order to have a S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) answer - and the T in smart stands for timed - can he at least give some indication as to whether or not there will be a package in place this year?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I am aware that the Deputy would like to draw me on a timescale. I cannot and I am not in a position to give him a timescale. I can reassure him, as I said to him yesterday in a Scrutiny hearing, that this is one of my priorities for the year. My department have already started work on it. I have already chased them and I am expecting them to come forward with proposals in short order. My aim at the moment is to do this as quickly as possible, but we must bear in mind some of the complexities that the Employment Forum raised when they first made the recommendation and therefore I cannot be drawn at this stage on a timescale.

4.3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, again? Surely given the size and scale of emergency packages being knocked together to help businesses, to help building on the Island, the Minister for Social Security can surely come up with something in short order to cover issues that will affect employees of redundancy through insolvency in the very near future? He surely must see this as his prime duty in the present economic circumstances?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Exactly, as I have just been saying.