

3.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Chief Minister regarding the number of apprenticeships currently offered within the States:

How many apprenticeships, if any, are currently offered within the States? Will the number be increased given the economic climate and if so, when and by how many?

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

There are 3 craft apprentices currently employed in the Transport and Technical Services Department. It is the intention of that department to maintain this number of apprentices in order to maintain its own internal manpower succession plans. I very much support the view that in the current economic climate the States should employ more apprentices, and I can advise the Assembly that this matter is being actively considered by the Skills Jersey Executive in connection with the proposed economic stimulus plan along with other measures for assisting those seeking to find work and helping young people and graduates and those seeking to up-skill and change career. However, that consideration is still at an early stage and I do not, at present, have any greater detail.

3.5.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chief Minister not acknowledge, given the very large workforce, given the successful apprenticeship and indeed secretarial training scheme that used to operate in the States, 3 apprentices in T.T.S. is a very dismal record?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I think the question highlights the fact that there are other means of delivering additional training and that is very much to the forefront of both the States Employment Board and the Skills Executive. Apprenticeships are one aspect of that but training - in-house training, on-the-job training - in a variety of roles is provided by the States and long may that continue.

3.5.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Given that it has taken 3 years to put the Skills Executive together, one might have thought that they could have immediately got on with creating fresh apprenticeships in this time of hardship. Does the Chief Minister not so agree?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I am sure that the Skills Executive are working as hard as they can to ensure that a proper apprentice programme is put in place along with other opportunities such as I have mentioned.

3.5.3 Senator A. Breckon:

I wonder if the Chief Minister could say whether he is aware of a scheme that was operated by the States years ago? It was called, I think, Skills and Trade Training for a variety of crafts and office skills where employers and the States trained young people and returnees in surplus of their requirements. The idea was to skill them to do jobs. I wonder, in the current economic climate, if the Chief Minister would consider reintroducing such a scheme with the Skills Executive or anybody else?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I must say, I have only the vaguest recollection of such a programme but I am more than happy to recommend to the Skills Executive that it should be resurrected and re-examined and, if appropriate, brought back into life.

3.5.4 The Deputy of St. John:

Given that retraining is one of the areas that the Chief Minister has mentioned, can it be right to retrain somebody in his late 50s as an electrician, which takes 4 or 5 years to train that person, only to find that, within a year of being fully trained, he will be retiring from the States. When the person is already a highly qualified tradesman, i.e. as a motor mechanic, would the skills not have been better used and the finances better used in training a much younger person?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I think, on the contrary, there is a danger that we regard anyone over the age of 50 as being on the scrapheap or potentially on the way downhill. I believe there is a lot more that we could do to stimulate and encourage employers as well as employees to continue to train and retrain staff and keep them in employment longer than currently happens.

3.5.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chief Minister promise to carry out a survey, finding out what apprenticeship training is occurring or departments would wish to occur because 3 only sponsored by T.T.S. does really seem abysmal? Secondly, would he carry out a survey, based on anecdotal information I have heard, on the assumption that people seeking a change of career or, like plumbers, a U-turn, do indeed have opportunities in the States. I think he will find the picture is not as rosy as he is perhaps portraying.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Yes, I am more than happy to arrange for a survey to be carried out but I very much hope that it could be carried out on some sort of statistically reliable basis rather than just anecdotal. If that can be achieved then I am happy that that be implemented.