

## **5. Questions to Ministers Without Notice - The Chief Minister**

### **5.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Many Members, as I have, received a letter from an airline captain today outlining the issue of the United Kingdom's Treasury Office trying to introduce rules for their company for them to pay tax. Would the Chief Minister comment upon this issue and outline what steps he intends to take in communicating with the United Kingdom authorities that Jersey residents should be paying Jersey residents' tax, not the United Kingdom's tax.

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

I too have been aware of that correspondence and at the same time, of course, we have a limited double taxation arrangement with the United Kingdom as the Minister for Treasury and Resources alluded to earlier this afternoon. I will continue to take steps to see what can be done to improve on that detail in the future but I would point out that any resident of Jersey and any resident of the U.K. is obliged to comply with the laws of that country. If it turns out that the pilot in question is employed by a U.K. company based in the U.K., then clearly there are repercussions for that which may have an impact on the impact of a double taxation agreement.

[17:00]

### **5.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Following his assertion on 6th July that there had already been significant consultation with employee representatives over proposed redundancies and service cuts contained in the comprehensive spending review, will the Chief Minister agree to produce for Members a list of such meetings with dates and the representatives so consulted?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

If it was going to be helpful to Members, certainly I can produce a list of those dates and meetings. What is important is that they do exist and they are ongoing and I think if I am going to have to detail every meeting that we hold with every employee group and who was there, it is going to be time-consuming and not the best use of States resources.

#### **5.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Is the Chief Minister saying there were no notes made at such consultation or is he referring merely to briefings when the cuts were announced?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

No, I am talking about both briefing meetings and more substantive meetings but I thought the Deputy was asking for those who were present.

### **5.3 The Deputy of St. John:**

Given that the Minister is in charge of the States Employment Board, will the Minister undertake to increase the number of apprentices across the board within all departments? Given that T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) only employs some 7 apprentices with a workforce of somewhere in the region of 500, will he take it upon himself to boost in all areas the number of apprenticeship schemes that can be put in place?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Quite recently, the States have set up a Skills Executive aimed at raising the skill levels of people in the Island in a variety of ways, including apprenticeships. If as a result of that there is a need for a greater number of apprenticeships within the public sector, then certainly the States Employment Board will make a contribution in that respect. But there is no point in just creating apprenticeships for the sake of doing so. They have to be meaningful and there has to be an end

result. To do that in isolation is wrong but to do it as part of a Skills Programme is certainly something we will look at.

### **5.3.1 The Deputy of St. John:**

Following up on that, given that the States employ some 7,000-odd employees of which, shall we say, 50 percent or thereabouts are manual workers, to have such a small number of apprentices in one large department is of concern to me. If this is repeated across all areas where manual workers are involved ... I think the Minister gave the Members a rather shoddy reply because apprenticeships are very important for the well-being of this Island in the future. Will the Minister agree we do not wish to be employing people from off-Island when people could be trained to do the work from on-Island?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I fully agree with the Deputy that we should endeavour to maintain and maximise the skill level of all our local residents. Apprenticeships will be one way of doing that but only one way. There are a variety of other ways and that is why I think it is important that the Deputy focuses on the Skills Executive rather than one particular tool.

### **5.4 Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

With regard to the Chief Minister's role in the States Employment Board, does he acknowledge that the Disciplinary Code for the Chief of Police was woefully inadequate and will he give the support to the Minister for Home Affairs in bringing a revised Code to this Assembly before the appointment of a new Chief Officer of Police?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I am aware of the views that the Minister for Home Affairs has about the Disciplinary Code and I have to say I share some of those views myself. I am happy to work with the Minister for Home Affairs, should he require that, with the States Employment Board in order to improve on that prior to the appointment of a Chief Executive but as the Minister for Home Affairs referred to in his own questions a short time ago, that also requires a possible review of the Police Force (Jersey) Law.

### **5.5 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

About the Comprehensive Spending Review: we heard earlier the Minister for Home Affairs say how unhappy he was about the proposal for straight percentage cuts across all departments and the question was basically shoved into the Chief Minister's lap, so I am going to ask why, as of what led to the 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 5 per cent cuts proposal for the next 3 years and how that was arrived at and how that has metamorphosed into we hear £20 million, £30 million and £40 million across the next 3 years. Can the Chief Minister shed light on this process of evolution?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Yes, I can, and I think, in fact, that the Deputy himself was party to one of the very early meetings we held in the Town Hall at which we discussed the future need for spending cuts and balancing budgets and, in fact, it was working the other way round. We ascertained that over the next 3 years, we needed, as a government, to find savings of £50 million per year and with how that could be achieved. Now, £50 million a year in round terms is about 10 per cent of our discretionary spends and we agreed that mathematically you could split that across each department, 3 per cent or 3.333 per cent each year for 3 years purely unilaterally. That process has been refined to a suggestion of 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 5 per cent roughly over those 3 years or numerical targets of £12 million, £25 million and £50 million. How that is arrived at and allocated between departments is a matter for ongoing discussion with the Ministers but, in the initial stages, each department has been asked to find cuts of those proportions.

### **5.5.1 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

If I may ask a supplementary. The Chief Minister said that there was an ascertained need for savings of £50 million. It is still not clear how the split between cuts and tax increases was arrived at within the Council of Ministers. I would like him to point us Members to the record of those discussions within the C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) and the briefings and reports which accompanied them and, furthermore, as it evolved into actual money amounts and not 2 per cent, 3 per cent, 5 per cent, how that change occurred because we are completely in the dark as to how this process evolves.

#### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I am going to be pressed to give concise answers to questions of this magnitude but, by and large, there was discussion not only of Council of Ministers but in consultation with States Members because I have endeavoured throughout this process to engage States Members in the consultation of the broader picture. The broader picture is that there is a total deficit been forecast of up to £100 million by 2013. That can be resolved, as the Deputy said, by taxation or by reductions in spending or a combination of both and it is that balance between the need to reduce spending or increase taxes which is for all Members to consider. The Council of Ministers' view is that we should not be looking at tax increases before making sure that we have explored fully every avenue of cutting spending and reducing costs, probably £50 million over that 3-year period.

### **5.6 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I wanted to ask the Chief Minister whether a civil servant who was a suspect in an ongoing inquiry would be automatically suspended and if it depends on the nature of the reason for which he has been suspended. Could he elucidate what factors would be taken into consideration as to any possible suspension?

#### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

Sorry, I do not quite understand the question.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

What factors would you take into consideration in deciding whether or not to suspend a senior civil servant? Was that ...

#### **Deputy M. Tadier:**

A civil servant who was a suspect in an ongoing investigation.

#### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I am not sure if the Deputy means an ongoing criminal investigation. If there is an ongoing criminal investigation, that would normally be a matter for suspension if that activity was likely to be prejudicial to the activities of the department or the ongoing arrangements. I do not think it is realistic to give a *carte blanche* ruling for every particular reason for suspension. Suspensions are done when they are necessary in order to protect the person or the people with whom he or she might be coming into contact to avoid such activities as a recurrence of that event. I think it has to be a matter of what the support is and any particular facts for the particular circumstances.

### **5.7 Deputy C.H. Egré of St. Peter:**

Regretfully, on a couple of occasions, I have asked the Chief Minister's office for information on the background to some of the emergency planning exercises. Sadly, I was given an assurance, I think, at the last question time that this would be dealt with. It has not, I have had no communication. Could we just chase this up, please?

#### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I can only apologise to the Deputy. After the last meeting, I emailed either that day or the following day to ask for that information to be provided to the Deputy and I am disappointed that it has not happened.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

If there are no other questions for the Chief Minister, then ... Deputy Tadier.

**5.8 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I will chance one thing as an opportunity. Seeing as the report that we have received into Operation Blast does suggest that, in all probability, the former Chief Minister and the current Chief Executive Officer did... or were aware of the possible illegal files being held on States Members, will the Chief Minister be considering suspension of the Chief Executive Officer for the States on that basis?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I am not sure how the Deputy interprets the report in that light. The report is quite clear to me that the Chief Minister and the Chief Executive were, on the balance of probabilities, not aware of the existence of those files.

**5.9 Senator B.E. Shenton:**

I notice no one else wanted to ask a question. I notice the Chief Minister is wearing sandals today. Does he consider himself to be a fashion trend setter? **[Laughter]**

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

No. **[Laughter]**

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

I think that is a suitable moment to bring question time for Questions Without Notice to the Chief Minister to an end.