

## **2.16 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier of the Chief Minister regarding the total number of public sector posts lost in C.S.R. Stage 1:**

Will the Minister detail for Members by department and by job title the total number of public sector posts that will be lost in the C.S.R. (Comprehensive Spending Review) Stage 1 through voluntary redundancy and the non-replacement of posts through retirement or when vacated, and indicate whether these losses will be classified as efficiency savings or reductions or cessation of service?

### **The Bailiff:**

Are you really wanting the Chief Minister to read out the list?

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

I would just like him to answer the question about categorisation of them. If he has such a list, I hope he produces it in writing, rather than read everything out.

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

I am not prepared to give details of voluntary redundancies approved by job title, because of reason of confidentiality. But I would refer the Deputy to numbers of departments contained in my response to a written question from Deputy Higgins for today's sitting. I am just trying to find that one, but I am sure Members can find that among their bundle of answers; number 26. I am not able to give details of posts lost through natural turnover as this is a highly fluid and tenuous situation. All departments are being asked to carefully decide whether it is necessary to replace a departing member of staff. Every opportunity is being taken to redeploy staff into key posts where appropriate. Members will have noticed the reduction in the number of States job vacancies which are being advertised in the *Jersey Evening Post* over recent months. Had this been a written question rather than an oral question I could have given detailed figures, which show that the number of local jobs advertised has fallen from just under 60 in January to just under 20 in October and continues to fall. In nearly every case voluntary redundancies and non-replacement of leavers could be classified as efficiency savings rather than reduction or cessation of service. We are seeking to avoid the impact on frontline services.

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

The total number of job losses is, I believe, the critical figure. The Chief Minister has just refused, I think, to give those figures. Will he undertake to research those figures? In particular, it is important to know whether there are reductions in services taking place. For example, the E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture) figure, given in response to question 26, says that 7 voluntary redundancies were agreed. I believe it is important to know whether any of those were frontline teachers. Will he undertake some research as to what he is proposing and what is happening is about reductions of service or efficiency saving?

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

It is always quite difficult to distinguish between what is a reduction in level of service and what is efficiency. It may well be that one or more of that 7 contained in the Education, Sport and Culture number refers to teachers. That may well be because of the differences in class sizes, class structuring arrangements. There are a whole variety of reasons. I think the important thing for the Deputy and Members to understand is that before any of these voluntary redundancies were accepted they were rigorously examined under strict criteria to see their suitability. Only under those circumstances were the applications for voluntary redundancy approved.

**2.16.2 Deputy A.E. Jeune:**

Could the Chief Minister assist Members in how we will be able to identify in the future where new jobs are created when we do not know which jobs went? Therefore it would be possible to change the job title and reincarnate the position. Thank you.

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

As I say, applications for voluntary redundancy are only accepted on the basis that the job is no longer required. If the job is replaced by a totally different job that is a matter of clear-cut acceptability, if the matter is just a re-badging of an existing job that is not what would be accepted in voluntary redundancy and should not happen. How one can monitor that in the future is very difficult when we have something like 6,000 States employees. Certainly I understand that Deputy's concerns. I am sure that in looking at future job advertisements we will want to ensure that the arrangements are not a replication of one job with another. I would point out, in further elaboration, that of course when that post goes under voluntary redundancy, the funding for the department also goes. So if they were to try to reinstate the post they would have to do that with no additional funding. They might find that difficult.

[11:15]

**2.16.3 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Will the Chief Minister agree that the Corporate Management Board minutes for the reviews of these applications should be published? They are supposed to be published anyway, but we can never get access to them. Secondly, does he also accept that looking at the numbers from the department, it appears that in some departments, especially the smaller ones, there does appear to be a morale problem, judging by the number of people wanting to go?

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

Firstly, can I correct the misapprehension? The review was not done by the Corporate Management Board, it was done by a group of senior officers. It was then reviewed by senior Ministers and further reviewed by a panel of non-Ministers. As far as the morale in the services is concerned, I believe that we should always be striving for good morale. In the applications there were a number of applications for voluntary redundancy. As Members can see, the majority of applications were refused. Of the 282 applications received only 73 were accepted in this first round.

**2.16.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Just to follow up, would the Chief Minister then not accept that his written answer to me where it says applications referred to the Corporate Management Board is highly misleading?

**The Bailiff:**

Is incorrect.

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

No. The applications were put forward to the Corporate Management Board, but as the answer says the panel, consisting of the Deputy Chief Executive, the Acting Treasurer and the H.R. (Human Resources) Director, discussed the applications put forward to the Corporate Management Board. The sentence in that answer is perfectly clear to me.

**2.16.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Are you prepared to release the minutes of those meetings?

**The Bailiff:**

I am sorry. You have had 2 questions, Deputy.

**2.16.6 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I am struggling with this. The Chief Minister has given us 2 versions. The first is, in nearly every case - and I quote him - these can be classified as efficiency savings and not cuts in services. Then he said it is quite difficult to distinguish between what is a reduction of service and an efficiency saving. I would like him to tell us which one it is and, secondly, specifically with reference to housing, we were billed as a mean, lean department and they have just shed 5 posts out of, I believe, 30.

**The Bailiff:**

That is covering 2 completely different topics, Deputy.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Can he possible explain this?

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

One has to appreciate that the applications for voluntary redundancy are put in and accepted on the basis that the service is no longer required or can be delivered in a better way. It may well be that the service is no longer required and that would then be a cut in service, or it could well be that the service can be delivered in a more efficient way or it could be a combination of both. In my answer I am not trying to be obtuse or trying to suggest giving 2 different answers, the fact is it is not a clear-cut one or the other.

**2.16.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Chief Minister accept that the high ratio of applications to redundancies accepted 4:1 or thereabouts is in some part due to the incentive over the potential for non-voluntary redundancy? Will he accept that in future, from next year, since the terms of voluntary redundancy and non-voluntary redundancy are going to be identical, such demand will not occur in future?

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

I accept that demand for voluntary redundancy is inevitably being driven by the terms on which voluntary redundancy is offered. The terms currently offered are extremely generous and that may well account for the relatively large number of applications in this case. So I agree with the Deputy that if one lowers the terms for redundancy it may well be that the number of applications would be reduced.

**2.16.8 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Final supplementary if I may, just for clarification. Will he seek to build-in some incentive into the voluntary redundancy scheme he proposes for 2011 in order that he should achieve some voluntary redundancies and not have to resort to compulsory redundancies?

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

That is a matter which the States Employment Board has already considered.

**The Bailiff:**

Very well. Then we come to the next question which Deputy Trevor Pitman will ask of the Minister for Treasury and Resources.