

5.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding changes to public sector terms and conditions.

What progress, if any, has the States Employment Board made in identifying the changes to public sector terms and conditions required to deliver the target of £14 million of savings?

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

The States Employment Relations team is still making proposals that will be the subject of a consultation with employees and their Trade Union representatives in line with the timescales I outlined in my written response to question 32 today.

5.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does that mean that these proposals will not be ready for inclusion in the Annual Business Plan in 2012 and will he be presenting an Annual Business Plan which is inadequate in this sense?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I refer the Deputy to my written answer when I said that it would be wrong to anticipate the outcome of negotiations prior to them being concluded.

5.2.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Does the Chief Minister not find this disappointing considering that there was a requirement to look into the terms and conditions and prepare a report some - I think it is nearly 3 years ago in the Annual Business Plan?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The objective of my Employment Board is to ensure that we have harmonious employer relations and that takes all the parties to get together and discuss things and try to reach a consensual agreement. That does not happen immediately or overnight.

5.2.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

No, but it does happen more quickly than 3 years, surely and is the Chief Minister looking at the pension provisions at the same time as the overall terms and conditions?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The current arrangements and the target of £40 million was only set last year. As far as the pension arrangements are concerned, while they are being looked at, it would be wrong to try and mix that considerable piece of work with another considerable piece of work on terms and conditions so they are separate pieces of work.

5.2.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour:

Would the Minister state whether the work that has been done embraces the notion that if there are to be cutbacks, they cannot just be across the board? For example, if there were to be cutbacks of 3 per cent in salary, they have to be higher at the higher levels in order to achieve a proper impact. Would he accept that this is the principle he is applying or is he just applying one figure across the board, thus resulting in disproportionate impacts?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The question and the arrangements are about terms and conditions, not about rates of pay.

5.2.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour:

I think the principle still applies. Would he say in reviewing terms and conditions he is applying that principle?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Yes because there are different terms and conditions applying to different pay groups so clearly there will be different approaches to each of them.

5.2.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept that terms and conditions are intrinsically linked to pay rates and that there are no concrete proposals drawn up yet to appear in the Annual Business Plan, nor indeed to be put before the population of the Island before the elections when some of these Ministers will have a policy that will not be exposed to public decision-making?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I am not going to commit to any particular timeline on the negotiations. They will take their place and I hope that those negotiations and discussions will be harmonious and not fettered by any constraints of that nature.

5.2.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Chief Minister not accept that it would have been better to have co-ordinated his pay policy and conditions policy in line with the schedule for the Annual Business Plan this year so that he had something concrete to bring to the House in a month's time?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The pay policy and the pay envelope is already known to States Members. How it is going to be achieved is a matter of ongoing discussion.