

3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Social Security regarding savings from the 2014 Income Support budget:

Has the Minister shared the means by which he plans to deliver £3 million of additional savings from his 2014 income support budget with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and if so, does he have that Minister's agreement yet and if not, when will he do so?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley (The Minister for Social Security):

Within the Medium-Term Financial Plan, I committed the department to deliver £3 million of additional savings from tax-funded expenditure. This was agreed by the Council of Ministers, including the Minister for Treasury and Resources, and approved by this Assembly. I intend to make a formal statement to the Assembly on my proposals for the £3 million of savings in the New Year. Prior to this, I will be sharing the proposals with my Scrutiny Panel for their comment. I did not need the specific approval of the Minister for Treasury and Resources. The Minister for Treasury and Resources will want confirmation that the savings will be delivered which I am confident they will.

3.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister believe that it is good practice to keep policy secret from this House until after the date when it should be in place? Is there a precedent for this and does the Minister believe that it is good Ministerial practice?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

I am not hiding anything. It is policy under development and until I have the final decisions, I am not prepared to share it with this House or the public.

3.2.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

In order to meet his £3 million of additional savings, would the Minister consider extending the 1 per cent long-term health tax to those earning over £125,000?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

With respect, that has absolutely nothing to do with this question because the Long-Term Care Fund is being paid out of a new charge and not out of tax-funded benefits.

3.2.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

What word of comfort does the Minister have for those people who are dependent on income support to survive and what assurance can he give that their survival is not threatened by this secret policy which he refuses to reveal before it needs to be in place?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

I can assure people listening who may be on income support that I will deal with this matter in the most sensible and appropriate way so as not to create problems for their finances.