

4.8 Deputy J.H. Young of the Chief Minister regarding the adoption of recommendations for the major reform of the top-level executive management structure of all States departments:

Will the Chief Minister inform the Assembly whether the Council of Ministers has adopted its H.R. (Human Resources) Officer's recommendation for the major reform of the top level executive management structure of all States departments and if so, whether the required political and legal authority is in place to enable implementation of these reforms and if not, what action he proposes to gain that authority?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

Far be it from me to suggest the imposition of a fine but I do wonder whether the director of Locate Jersey Now, who seems to be leaving, might consider that as his phone went off earlier. The reform programme is progressing very well with the focus on e-government, service redesign, and workforce modernisation. Over recent months, I have been encouraged by the engagement that has taken place with the trade unions and real progress is being made, something we have not seen before in the public sector in Jersey. It is only through working with staff and the trade unions that long-term sustainable progress will be made. I do not rule out future changes to structures but if they are to be considered, it will be with full open dialogue.

4.8.1 Deputy J.H. Young:

The Chief Minister has referred to real progress which is very encouraging but could he tell us whether that real progress will be dealing with the issue of what was referred to 9 years ago in a report unanimously approved by this Assembly of chronic departmentalism and barriers which prevented working across all States departments? Could he confirm that this real progress is really going to address this?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

It is already being made. I think even the most cynical among us would accept that cross-departmental working is happening more today than it has in the past. Virtually every Ministerial major programme that is being considered by Ministers has sitting right at the top of a Ministerial or political oversight group ensuring that there is joined-up thinking right across the departments. That does not mean that we cannot do more and that we should not, in due course, consider any legal or legislative changes which might need to be made to encourage further working. That is one of the reasons why I have been a supporter of giving more ability to the Chief Minister to be able to ensure joined-up working right at the Ministerial level as well.

[10:30]

4.8.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I think I might get a first here. I am hoping I can get some agreement with the Chief Minister, but maybe not. Does the Chief Minister agree that the H.R. Officer's assessment and recommendations for reform go to the crux of the matter, i.e., that contrary to the regular portrayal of us having a bloated, inefficient, too expensive public service, civil service, *per se*, that the real problem has been that we have too many chiefs paid too much and duplicating the work of others?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

No. As I said in my opening answer, sometimes these things happen quietly through engagement and negotiation and that is where we are today. This morning, I cannot praise highly enough the work that staff have been undertaking with union representatives to get to the point that we are today. They are fully engaged in a way in which they have not been before [**Approbation**] and I, as head of this Government, am grateful for the work that is being

undertaken in that regard. Can changes be made? Can we work more efficiently? Can we be more co-ordinated in our approach? There are lots of areas of work which we need to continue to develop but people are working. Staff see the need to change and to engage. If we look at the Social Security Department, if we look at the Health and Social Services Department, day in and day out they are rolling out service re-design, following the Lean model and they are seeing transformation to the service that they are providing to this community and that is exactly as it should be.

4.8.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

A supplementary, Sir? Going by the answer, is the Chief Minister saying that he thinks our public sector, which is small, is bloated, inefficient and the problem is that we have too many Indians? Because that was the impression that I got from his answer.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Perhaps I was a little long-winded because I do not think I said that at all. The Deputy was not listening very closely to what I was saying. I was saying the reverse. I was saying that I am grateful for the work that staff and union representatives are doing in developing a new, modernised and fit for purpose public service. I am congratulating those Members who are involved in that process. Does that mean there should not be change? It does not. There should be change and we are all working to deliver that change. Perhaps any Members who remain sceptical would take up the Minister for Economic Development's invitation to hear about the further detail of the work that is being undertaken tomorrow lunchtime.

4.8.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chief Minister assure Members that he will stay fixed to the principle of negotiating changes in terms and conditions and not resort to imposing changes as he did with the pay claim?:

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy and I have argued across this Assembly about the difficult circumstances surrounding the 3-year pay deal and he knows the history of how we have arrived where we are today when the States Employment Board, supported by a mandate from this Assembly, implemented the pay deal in the way that we did. He knows that I, the Minister leading reform, and the Council of Ministers are committed to negotiating, to consulting with staff and with trade union representatives and he knows that we are in a better place than we have been in that regard for a number of years and I am very grateful for all those who are taking part in that process.

4.8.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

But will he answer the question and assure Members that he will not, in this case of terms and conditions, resort to imposing a solution?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

As I said before, we have not imposed anything. We implemented the pay deal under the mandate given by this Assembly. We are in the course of negotiation. We are in the course of consultation and it would not be right for me to predetermine the outcome here this morning.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So that is a no, then?

4.8.6 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Culture change has always been a stumbling block in the States of Jersey. Does the Chief Minister not believe that the ability to implement reform will depend on the ability for the public sector employees at all levels being able to speak openly and freely without fear of reprisal?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Yes.

4.8.7 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

Would the Chief Minister tell the House whether he agrees with the comments of the soon-to-depart Chief Officer of Human Resources?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

If I knew exactly what those comments were, then I might be able to agree or not agree. We all in this Assembly, I hope, will accept that sometimes when things are said to the media, they might be portrayed in a particular manner and sometimes when reading the headlines, it does not often bear too much resemblance to the comments that were made and reported by those reporters.

4.8.8 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

Sir, I wonder if I could have a supplementary for that masterful Sir Humphrey answer?
[Laughter]

The Bailiff:

It was an answer to a pretty Sir Humphrey-like question. [Laughter] [Approbation]

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:

I wonder if he could be my Sir Humphrey. Could the Chief Minister say whether he feels that the comments that the Chief Officer of Human Resources made were correct or not correct?

The Bailiff:

That is exactly the same question you have already asked. [Laughter] And it is out of order anyway because Standing Orders do not permit that. Very well, final question. Deputy Young?

4.8.9 Deputy J.H. Young:

I will try to avoid a similar trap. Given the fact that the report adopted by this Assembly 9 years ago on reform identified the need to remove the barriers that exist to prevent breaking down the silos, could the Chief Minister confirm that the barriers that exist at the top level of the executive structure of the Civil Service, the chiefs, is what is going to be addressed, not the attack on the Indians?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I quite clearly answered this question in my opening answer to the Deputy's supplementary. Lots of good work is already being undertaken. One the critical issues that we have to address - as the Deputy knows because he was on the sub-committee bringing forward the machinery of government recommendations - is to create a more joined-up or collegiate ability of the Council of Ministers and the Chief Minister to act more like an Executive and work together and remove the departmental silos at that level. That will then bring together the departments as well. That is the issue that we need to address. That is the issue that States Members accepted was there at the last States sitting when they had the in Committee debate. I hope it is one that States Members are going to approve when the legislative changes are brought forward later this year.