

2015.07.14

**4.14 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding the number of public sector workers who have applied for ‘release’ from employment:**

Will the Chief Minister inform Members how many public sector workers have applied for “release” from employment and state what proportion of applicants are senior, experienced staff and advise whether those staff will be replaced by cheaper, less experienced, junior or trainee staff?

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

There have been 329 applicants for the voluntary release scheme, 83 of those applicants earn £43,000 per year or more. Departments are now preparing business cases to determine the appropriateness and affordability of approving the applications.

**4.14.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

What plans are there to replace or eliminate jobs among those 329? Could the Minister repeat a little slower his first line because I did not follow it, it was just a stream of syllables.

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I do endeavour to get my answers in in the allotted time. [Laughter] They were in English and I apologise if I am rather too fast for the Deputy.

**Deputy G.P. Southern:**

That will be the day. [Laughter]

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

Three hundred and twenty-nine applications, 83 of those applications earn more than £43,000 per year so the Deputy must not have listened to the final paragraph either because in there I said that businesses cases were being prepared to show where the saving was, to show how that work would be undertaken differently and those cases will determine the appropriateness and, of course, the affordability of any approval of any individual application.

**4.14.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Is it still the Minister’s intention to save, I believe the figure is lately, £20 million through this voluntary release scheme and, if so, will he ensure that when it comes to looking at the Medium-Term Financial Plan we have sufficient information on this aspect of de-staffing the public sector to be able to judge whether the figures produced in the Medium-Term Financial Plan are being met or otherwise?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I may have misheard the Deputy but I think he was confusing the amount of money allocated to facilitate voluntary redundancies, which is £20 million, rather than the targeted saving. Perhaps it might be an apt lesson that Members might want to ask me fewer questions in the future so we can all stay with it. So it is £20 million that we are putting aside to facilitate the voluntary releases and, as we say, they have to show that they have made savings, the payback period has to be 2 years or less and the critically important thing is a reorganisation of the service to ensure that positions do not need to be refilled into the future. The Deputy insists on talking only about one element of the Medium-Term Financial Plan so at the time that we are reprioritising and going through a redundancy process, the extra money spent in Health and Education is going to be employing more people. So there will be a balance there and we are quite clear about that.