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5 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding the net 1,500 licensed and registered inward migrants recorded by the Statistics Unit for 2015: [9529]

Can the Chief Minister give a breakdown by economic sector of the net 1,500 licensed and registered inward migrants recorded by the Statistics Unit for 2015?

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

The population figures are based on the labour market survey, which, of course, was published in April, and reported record employment growth. Of course, we only have to look at the events of last week to understand the importance of this strong economic performance. The sectors which grew most, taken from the labour market survey were: financial services, 420-plus; construction, 320-plus; private health, education and other services, 560-plus; hotels, restaurants and bars, 170-plus. Many of these businesses approach Government asking in real and urgent need for our support. As Members are aware, all of businesses in this position and many Members have supported these businesses in requesting licences, and I think with good reason.

3.5.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Chief Minister accept that letting so many registered workers into the Island is likely to be a drain on the economy?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I do not want to get personal in the Assembly, but if memory serves, the questioner himself supported registered licences quite strongly for various businesses in his constituency. Is he now saying that he was incorrect to do that and is he suggesting ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Would the Minister mind telling Members when I said that.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

... that when the Ministers ...

The Bailiff:

I am sorry ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Would the Chief Minister mind saying when I said that exactly.

The Bailiff:

Deputy ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

He is putting words in my mouth, Sir. They are lies.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, please sit down.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

It is not true.

The Bailiff:

Then you have an opportunity to come back afterwards. Let the Chief Minister finish his response.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

This is the difficulty that we have with this debate. I do not want to point to elsewhere in the world where they have had a yah-boo - to quote somebody else's phrase - debate about immigration. But let us at least be frank with each other. When Members of this Assembly go to the H.A.W.A.G. group and support licences for registered staff members, what they are doing is increasing the inward migration into our community. Those Ministers have got a very difficult job. They say no week-in week-out to businesses who make a strong case. Sometimes supported by Members of this Assembly, who are now criticising those Ministers for delivering on what businesses want. Of course it has got to be done carefully. Of course it has got to be balanced. But our economy is working well and again some of those Members criticised us. They said the economy was going to the dogs. They said that we would not see growth again. They have been proven wrong. Let us have a reasonable debate about this and not just a polarised one. **[Approbation]**

3.5.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

It comes back to the point, I think we all appreciate this is a nuanced debate and hopefully that is what we can continue to have. But the bottom line is that the Minister is celebrating the fact that they are issuing 1,500 licences and registered permits. That is not to say that is the total inward migration, of course, because there may be people here who do not fit into those categories. If that figure is so good **[Interruption]** ... if that is, that is fine. But, if we are looking at a figure of 1,500 per year and the Ministers are celebrating that universally, why not simply change the boundary from 325 to 1,500 so that we can have this every year?

The Bailiff:

This is the last question I shall allow which does not address the subject matter, which is the breakdown by economic sector. Chief Minister, will you answer it please?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am sorry if I have led people astray. We are going slightly off question. The Deputy makes a good point. Senator Routier has already alluded to it. There are other questions this morning about trying to have that nuanced, reasonable argument about what is going to be appropriate in the future. Another Member criticised Senator Routier for mentioning the ageing demographic. I have put her mind at rest, she is not the ageing demographic. It is my generation which is the ageing demographic. We are making decisions today to deal with future problems. We are not prepared to put them off into the future. We want to address them today so that they do not become issues in the longer term, and we need to have that debate that the Deputy is asking for, so that we can make an informed decision in this Assembly and, as Senator Routier said, the timetable for that is spring of next year.

3.5.3 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

We have been told that 460 additional registered licences were issued last year. Can the Minister tell me what account does he take of the people who are already registered each year, who are falling into the entitled-to-work category? What account do they take of that when they are issuing additional registered licences?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I think that is where Deputy Southern was chastising the Minister for his numbers because, of course, they are not just the numbers of licences that the Housing and Work Group have issued to

businesses. But you have also got people moving from the under 5 years to the 5 years every year. I understand, or they will have to check with Statistics, that that is in the order of 600 every year as well. So, all of those numbers go in. You have got people coming in and then leaving. You have got a flow - Statistics will tell you exactly - of several thousand people coming into our community and several thousand leaving and then you get this net figure, which they published last year.

3.5.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chief Minister agree to publish not only the breakdown by sector, which he announced earlier, but also the additional material that was announced by his Assistant Minister today, which should have been put into the report from the Statistics Department, and would he say why was not these extra temporary grounds, *et cetera*?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The figures that I referred to were in the labour market survey. The States Statistics Unit, intelligent people that they are, from the labour market report in April they had already calculated - before they saw the official figures from a statistical point of view - what the net inward migration would be. They are in the public domain. The numbers that Senator Routier referred to, of course, it would not be right to put Government figures in with an independent report's figures directly, but I see no reason why the overall numbers that have been referred to cannot be put in the public domain and we will issue those to Members as soon as possible.