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3.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Education regarding consultation on plans to reduce Newly Qualified Teachers' salaries: [9697]

Will the Minister advise what consultation and negotiations, if any, have taken place with teachers and their representatives in the last month over plans to reduce Newly Qualified Teachers' salaries, and will he state whether the profession has been supportive of those plans?

Deputy R.G. Bryans of St. Helier (The Minister for Education):

I think Members will remember that with regard to negotiations I, as a Minister, do not play any part in those negotiations. Those negotiations will be with the States Employment Board, with union officials and with senior colleagues, senior officers, of the department. Since the Assembly last met we have had no formal negotiations and no formal conversations. We do meet regularly with the unions. Last time we met was just after the last Assembly and they voiced concerns quite robustly. Since that point I have met informally with teachers both on-Island and off-Island. All but one of the teachers on-Island said they understand what I was trying to do. For the teachers off-Island, they said they were really surprised at the level of pay that we were paying.

3.1.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for the answer which is basically a no, but I am sure negotiations will happen in due course. Will he answer perhaps again the second part of the question? Is the profession in Jersey supportive of the plans that the Minister is putting forward, does he think?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

Like I said, I have met with some teachers. It has only been a short while. It has only been 3 weeks since the Assembly last met. Obviously we had a half term during that period. So I have not met with that many teachers but, like I say, all of the ones that I have met, except one, who did equally voice his concerns similar to that of the union, said they understood what I was trying to do.

3.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Does the Minister not consider that such an issue as our pay rate scales of Jersey teachers are a matter of some urgency in order to be settled so that bodies can move on to discuss the restructuring of the profession in Jersey?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

Yes, I understand the Deputy is concerned about urgency but, as I say, this is out of my hands now. This will be with the States Employment Board. They have their own timetable with regard to these negotiations. Again it will be with officers and it will be with union members.

3.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

What would the Minister say to the daughter of one of my constituents who recently left a relatively high paid job, certainly higher than that of a new qualified teacher or even an existing teacher, to retrain as a teacher to come back to Jersey only to find out that perhaps in 2 years' time her starting salary will be reduced by some £8,000? Does the Minister think that the reality for many of these students needs to form part of the negotiations that will be ongoing between both his department and the States Employment Board?

Deputy R.G. Bryans:

I think if this particular student were to come back she would still be delighted at the consideration. The amount that we will be paying would be considerably more than inner city London, more than Guernsey. If she was an N.Q.T. (newly qualified teacher) staying in the U.K. (United Kingdom) she would be on an income considerably less.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Sir, I believe again the Minister has misled the House.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Sorry, you must mean presumably unintentionally misled the House, which is what I assume you would mean, but the Minister's answer is the Minister's answer. It can be dealt with in questions later on, but it cannot be dealt with in this way.