

### **3.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Education regarding proposed reductions in pay for newly-qualified teachers: [9560]**

What contribution will cutting £11,000 per annum from the pay of newly qualified teachers make towards ensuring that education is a priority in the Medium Term Financial Plan, as Ministers have stated?

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

Thank you to the Deputy for allowing me to articulate this particular answer. First of all there is no proposal to cut N.Q.T.s' (newly qualified teachers) pay by £11,000. That figure was reported in error by the media when the M.T.F.P. was lodged. The proposal - and it still is only a proposal - is to reduce the starting salary of our new teachers possibly by up to £8,000. But not in areas or subjects where it is difficult to recruit. I must stress that any variations to the terms and conditions, including pay, of States employees are subject to formal negotiations and processes with our unions. Education remains a key priority in the M.T.F.P. We are receiving nearly £11 million in extra revenue funding and major capital investments at a time when States finances are under unprecedented pressure. We have also had to carefully prioritise all our expenditure across the department. The adjustment to teachers' pay scales is part of the process of redirecting all spending to where it is needed most and has the greatest impact on students. We currently have an over-supply of primary school N.Q.T.s but shortages in other areas, so it makes sense to focus the funding where it can have the biggest impact, and that is in attracting specialists to the Island. As an example, it could be used to attract more maths specialists to the Island.

[9:45]

#### **3.1.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I do concede to the Minister that the quote was "could" drop the salary by but I have checked with the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* and the quote is correct inasmuch as if we drop to the London rates it will be an £8,000 drop. If we drop to the rest of the country it will be an £11,000 drop. The Minister is no doubt aware that there is sometimes difficulty recruiting good quality staff encouraging local people to come back to the Island to teach and, indeed, encouraging people from the U.K. (United Kingdom). With the people retiring in the future there could be a ripple effect of a shortage of staff going through. Does the Minister not agree?

#### **Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

I agree there could be a ripple effect if that were indeed the problem but Jersey N.Q.T.s can currently start on £33,564 but in the past 4 years they have all started on the higher level of £38,000 because they have Honours degrees. The U.K. average for a maintained school is £22,000 to £25,000 and it was highlighted for me yesterday. I was out yesterday evening with 2 gentlemen from Newcastle University who have helped us recruit 4 new science teachers who will be starting in September. As we got into the cab the cab driver said to me - they who are the fonts of all knowledge: "I think you are doing the right thing" and I said: "How do you know that?" He said: "I have 2 daughters who are primary school teachers. One in the U.K. who receives somewhere between £22,000 to £23,000 and one here in Jersey who receives £38,000."

#### **3.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister for Education explain why he has not insisted that formal negotiations have taken place or should take place with the representatives of the teachers? Why has that not happened?

#### **Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

That is happening. We have spoken to the unions quite a lot on this subject and we are still in those negotiations. Those negotiations will happen between the States Employment Board and the unions but the unions are fully aware of what we have considered.

**3.1.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Would the Minister for Education care to consider his answer? Has there been any formal negotiations on salary scales for new qualified teachers yet?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

Formal, no. But we already have had those conversations.

**3.1.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier:**

The States of Jersey's own Strategic Plan says that one of their priorities in education is to raise standards. Is the Minister honestly telling us and the public of Jersey that we can expect to raise standards by cutting so drastically the salaries of the people who are meant to be delivering this?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

I think I have already illustrated what we are trying to do is reframe the problem and look at the situation that we have. We have an oversupply of primary school teachers but we are concerned about the situation with secondary school teachers. So this will give us the opportunity, if it were necessary - and again why we were having the meeting yesterday, with the 2 gentlemen from Newcastle University - to increase some of the salaries for secondary school teachers should that be necessary.

**3.1.5 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

In an earlier question he said that this was still just a proposal but we have seen in the M.T.F.P. we have been given the figures. So the question is: what on earth will we actually be voting on in September if it seems that what we have in front of us is just figures out of nothing and does not represent anything because the Minister changes his mind all the time?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

I am not sure that I do change my mind all the time. These are just proposals. Anything that is in the Medium Term Financial Plan is exactly that.

**3.1.6 Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. John:**

One of the Minister's main aims is raising standards throughout this term. There is data accessible with regards to efficiency index, which states that class sizes and teachers' pay are the most important elements to the outcome of standards or potential for children. Could the Minister explain how this particular proposal will affect the potential and standards of children in Jersey?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

Once again I do not think it does. These proposals are for newly qualified teachers. They do not affect the teachers already in this situation. They are simply the new teachers that will come on the Island. We have had discussions right across the board with union members and we will... as the Deputy said, these are not formal discussions at this point in time, that will take place with the States Employment Board. But as far as we are concerned, with regard to the education that our teachers provide and will provide in the future is first class.

**3.1.7 The Deputy of St. John:**

On the basis of the Minister's answer, can I ask then why it is that it is only newly qualified teachers that are being looked at in terms of reducing newly appointed in terms of pay but this is not being subjected anywhere else across his department or across the States?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

That is not strictly true. We have looked at other areas of cost-cutting, which the Deputy quite knows through her role in Scrutiny. But in this particular case we felt that it was unduly warranted that we pay particular attention to this, as I have already illustrated. If you are a newly qualified doctor in the U.K. you would start out on a starting salary of £23,000. We are currently paying newly qualified teachers coming on this Island £38,000. It is out of kilter with what expectations are.

**3.1.8 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

If we are going to make comparisons with the U.K. can we talk about living costs in Jersey and, in particular, housing costs? Does the Minister agree that, to put this in context, £11,000 a year is basically your rent for the year if you cannot buy in Jersey or if you do not otherwise own? Certainly that is probably easily enough to cover your mortgage if you are in a position to buy. Does the Minister not agree that this has serious implications for social mobility in our Island and it is just another nail in the coffin including a more divided society?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

No, I do not agree. Just to go back to what I originally said right at the beginning. This is not £11,000. It is up to £8,000. If we are paying newly qualified teachers £38,000 that would take us down to £30,000, which is still above the London rate and takes into account the sort of figures that he is suggesting.

**3.1.9 Deputy M. Tadier:**

What research has the Minister been doing into the impact of such proposals? I know the Minister says these are just proposals but they are proposals the Minister is putting forward himself with the backing of the Council of Ministers, which he can reasonably expect to get passed in this Assembly. Even if it is £8,000 a year, does the Minister not accept that no cost benefit analysis has been done, in particular what message this sends out to the wider national and international community about Jersey being open for business or not having enough money in the pot to pay its teachers a decent living wage?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

No, I do not agree. There is another consideration that relates to one of the reasons for doing this. That is that we have spoken to head teachers, in particular, and they told me that there is little financial incentive for young teachers to take on extra responsibilities in school because they gain relatively little extra pay for doing so, so we are focusing our money on where it is needed most.

**3.1.10 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:**

Could the Minister remind the Assembly what one of the most pressing concerns was in the teachers' survey?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

Sorry, I would have to ask the Deputy what she is referring to.

**Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:**

I wanted to just remind the Minister that workload is one of the biggest concerns of teachers and when young graduates are looking to choose a career why should they choose a career where they are working 60, 70 hours a week for even less money over a career perhaps in our finance industry which does pay quite generously?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

The finance industry, again, a new graduate in the finance industry would get around £25,000, so we are still working on the situation. I am glad the Deputy raised the teachers' survey because there is a particular point that we are working on quite closely again with the unions, which is to resolve some of the issues with regard to overwork, because it is a particular concern of mine, the amount of stress that they are put under at this point in time. I see that as a separate issue.

**3.1.11 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

The Minister has mentioned several times in his replies "over-supply". Are we to get into a bidding war now? Are we going to go out to tender with newly qualified teachers? Where will this end? Surely it is only natural justice that all newly qualified teachers should be paid the same rate as present?

**Deputy R.G. Bryans:**

That is not true. The U.K. has adopted a principle of where there have been gaps in their demands - so with maths and science - they have always paid extra to supply.