

2018.09.11

16 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding the impact of income inequality: [OQ.121/2018].

Given that the report of the I.P.P.R. (Institute for Public Policy Research Commission Prosperity and Justice, a Plan for a New Economy) has suggested that, in the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the widening gulf between the rich and the poor has damaged our nation's sense of itself, will the Chief Minister state whether it is his assessment that this also applies to Jersey? If so, what measures will he take to put fairness at the heart of the economy?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

I will say I have not had the opportunity to read in detail the report referred to, although I do note that there is a connection with Jersey already, because one of the authors is the head of the Jersey Financial Services Commission, albeit wearing a different hat. The Deputy may be pleased - he may be surprised - that I broadly speaking agree with him. We do need to strengthen our sense of identity as an Island community. We need to make sure that Islanders of different backgrounds and cultures do not feel left behind. We know that people are very concerned about how much it costs to live in Jersey and they are also concerned about high levels of immigration. The Council of Ministers will be lodging the Strategic Policy early next month. This whole issue around communities and sustainable economy will also be at the heart of our proposals. Thank you.

4.16.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I would not request that he reads the entire 250 pages of the report, but that he does pay attention to the 10 key points indicated in there, and particularly the chapter which talks about securing good pay, good jobs and good lives. What will he do specifically about security of employment?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

That is a very interesting jump. Security of employment is covered under the existing legislation that we have. I am going to be very careful, because we know that we have organisational change going ahead and we know we need to cut our cloth accordingly. Therefore, I am not going to make any further promises compared to the system in place. If there are specific issues we need to discuss in detail, I am always happy to discuss them.

4.16.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Allied to the question of fairness in the economy and people having an equal opportunity, will the Chief Minister in his policy documents be furthering social mobility to encourage people to give opportunity for people to get ahead? A lot of people have found that they are poorer and they do not have the same opportunities to get ahead in life. What measures will the Chief Minister be bringing forward to try and improve people's life chances of getting ahead?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Again, I will try to give a short answer to a complicated question. I am sure we will be reading the Strategic Policy Document when it is released, but in short it is all about those things that we already know about: about education, about mental health improvements and it is about improving the standard of living. Those are all in that document.

4.16.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

As a final supplementary, would the Chief Minister refer to the insecurity of jobs in Jersey and bring forward a specific piece of work referring to people on zero hours contracts who, according to the

report, should have the right to a regular contract if regular hours are being worked? Will he act on that recommendation from the I.P.P.R.?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I will look at the recommendation and consider it. I will not promise to act on something until I fully understand it, but I will look at it, Sir.