

2018.07.10

3.18 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding the availability of data to assess people's ability to meet the Minimum Income Standard: [OQ. 99/2018]

Given reports in the U.K. that, despite an increase in the U.K. national minimum wage, in excess of inflation, the ability of workers on low hourly rates to meet the minimum income standard has worsened over the past year, will the Chief Minister advise whether up-to-date data exist for similar analyses to be made in respect of low-earning Jersey households and, if so, will he undertake to instigate such analyses?

The Connétable of St. John (Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur):

The question I found a little confusing, because it is difficult to determine where he talks about the U.K. and where he talks about Jersey. But, I thank him for his question and I believe this information should be available from the Minister for Social Security who, as I believe, delegated this responsibility to her Assistant Minister.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well I think the answer is you have already had the information, but you are perfectly entitled to ask a supplementary, Deputy.

3.18.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

This is news to me that I have been delegated for any responsibility, whatsoever. I have been wandering around saying I do not have a job yet. So, I will repeat the question, and I do believe it is appropriately directed at the Chief Minister. Does the Minister believe we have up-to-date information on the relative position of Jersey in respect of the U.K.? For example, we have a minimum wage now, which is below that in the U.K., does he still accept the at-least 6 year-old figure that the cost of living in Jersey is 20 per cent higher than in the U.K. on average? What data does he have about relative low income in Jersey at the moment?

The Connétable of St. John:

Good policy requires good data and our income and expenditure information is too old to tell us just how lower-income households are managing in recent years. I accept this position and the Council will be looking to improve those statistical figures.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may?

The Deputy Bailiff:

You have a final supplementary, I think you have already asked a supplementary, Deputy. I think you have a final one coming up ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Well I have a final supplementary, have I not?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Sorry?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

If nobody else wants to ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, you certainly have another one. I am just looking to see if anyone else wants to ask a question before you. Final supplementary, then.

3.18.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I was ahead of myself. In the response to the written question 19, submitted by me, the response says that a source of funding has not been identified for a fresh income distribution examination survey. Will he press the Minister to do so, at the earliest possible opportunity, so we can find out exactly where we are in terms of relative low income on this Island?

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes, I will press the Chief Minister.