

2019.10.08

14 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Chairman of the States Employment Board regarding the provision of facility time within the public sector: (OQ.238/2019)

Is it the Chair's assessment that the provision of facility time is equitable across trade union representatives and unions; and will he explain what allowance is made in existing policy to ensure this aspect of staff support is recognised and maintained?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

The Connétable of St. Ouen is taking this one.

The Connétable of St. Ouen (Vice-Chairman, States Employment Board - *rapporteur*):

Firstly, if I can thank the Deputy for allowing me to answer this question; I appreciate it. Yes, the States Employment Board tasks officers to ensure that trade union officials are given sufficient paid time away from their normal responsibilities to fulfil their union roles. Officers also work with departments and unions, to ensure facility time is equitable across all trade union representatives and unions. This is important, because of S.E.B.'s commitment to support the unions in their work of representing their members to us. By way of example, my officers are currently working reviewing facility time in respect of the 2 teaching unions under a process agreed by both unions at regional level, which is currently running under the auspices of the Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service.

4.14.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Assistant Minister whether the joint framework agreement, which was up for review in July 2018 - and I am referring to appendix 4, section 2 and in particular section 2.4 - whether that is still in force, which identifies level 1 to 3 facility time ranging from 0.5 full-time equivalent to 0.2 full-time equivalent? Is that the basis upon which these discussions are taking place, or has that agreement been annulled?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Unfortunately, I do not have an encyclopaedic memory and the Deputy has quoted a lot of subsections, so the answer is: I have not a clue, but I will get back to him with a formal response on that point, which I will circulate to the rest of the Assembly.

4.14.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Could the Minister - I am forgetting my words today - ensure that one particular union, as was reported, which has no facility time and the person representing them seems to be at the whim of their management in school, which is obviously difficult for that management and, therefore, are not able to represent their members fully and will be missing meetings that will be really important in the representation of their members?

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I am glad the Deputy raised that issue, because that particular official has been quite vocal in the *Jersey Evening Post* about his lack of facility time and I would remind the Assembly that that official represents the National Education Union, who are very active in the dispute that we had to discuss with them. Clearly, he was present at meetings, which took place in working hours and clearly must have had facility time to do that. I can categorically assure the Deputy that wherever possible and where operational reasons allow, union members will be allowed facility time to attend meetings and if those meetings are arranged at times where it is not possible for union members to be

present, we would do our very best to rearrange those meetings, so that union members can be present.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

A point of order, it is not that official, because that official is no longer the official in the union. It has changed and I was trying to point out it is the new official that is not getting facility time at all to represent their members and could the Assistant Minister look into that and get back to us?

The Bailiff:

I am sure you will look into that, Minister.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

I am happy to get back to the Deputy, but I will just reassure the Deputy that, wherever humanly possible, union members are given facility time to attend meetings about union matters which involve the S.E.B.