

2019.11.12

10 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chair of the States Employment Board regarding the provision in the Government Plan for pay inflation: (OQ.283/2019)

This question has been largely answered by a previous question, but what funds are available to the States Employment Board from the Government Plan for pay inflation and when does the Chair anticipate opening new talks on pay and conditions with States employee representatives?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (Chair, States Employment Board):

As the Deputy rightly confirms, the first part of this question is pretty well as I replied to Deputy Ward's earlier question, which is Oral Question 278, or number 6 on the Order Paper. For clarification, obviously any amount is a provision, not a target, I should always stress, as it always depends on what the circumstances are that we are facing at the time. I can confirm that the States Employment Board has asked officers to develop a pay strategy for 2021 and beyond. That will be presented in quarter one 2020 and, subject to States Employment Board approval, negotiations are, therefore, likely to take place later in 2020.

3.10.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

As part of the reordering of the government services, many staff have been asked to reapply for their own jobs at lower rates. How many staff have been asked to do this?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I am afraid I did not anticipate that as a follow-on question from this particular oral question. What I shall do is go away and seek the information and return that to the Member and Members in due course.

[10:45]

3.10.2 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Will the Chair of S.E.B. assure the Assembly that pay negotiations for 2022 will begin in late 2021 and not be left until after the election, as was the case in 2018 when members of the previous S.E.B. knew that they were not standing for election?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

That is a way away, so I shall give my best endeavours to achieve the dates the Deputy is referring to. I make the point that where we are now is hopefully, for most people, or most pay groups, 2020 is resolved and we will be negotiating in 2020 for 2021. Subject to how that goes and the length of time that comes up for settlements, I would hope we can achieve what the Deputy is talking about, but I can never promise quite that kind of answer.

3.10.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can the Chief Minister assure this Assembly that strict deadlines will be kept to during those negotiations? Can I ask the Chief Minister whether those negotiations will take place with individual pay groups, or as a collective approach, as has happened in the past?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

The issue around deadlines is always tricky, because it requires 2 parties in any negotiations to meet those deadlines. As far as I am aware, the States Employment Board and its negotiating officers will always try to endeavour to be as timely as possible. In terms of the other matter, I would say that

my understanding is there is not unanimous support among the pay groups for the strategy that the Deputy has outlined. Therefore, I cannot give that commitment either.

3.10.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

As Chair of the S.E.B., will the Chief Minister do his utmost to avoid the situation where imposition of a pay award is the end result and not genuine and open negotiation with the representatives of our employees?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

We always try to avoid implementation and we always prefer to arrive at an agreed settlement. That is the basic principles. We cannot always guarantee the outcome. That obviously depends on the details of any arrangements that are being negotiated at the time and whether they are acceptable to either, or both sides.