

20.10.06

11 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Social Security regarding the minimum wage (OQ.260/2020)

Will the Minister provide Members with details of the proposed review of how the minimum wage is agreed?

Deputy J.A. Martin (The Minister for Social Security):

I have not announced a review of how the minimum wage is agreed.

3.11.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

When will she announce that review?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

Nothing has changed since the debate in here and the Written Questions on 261. It is still not the time to go out and consult because the way businesses are. So as I say, we are where we are.

3.11.2 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given the in-committee debate that we undertook in recovery, and there was so much talk of a living wage, can I ask the Minister whether she will be promoting a living wage beyond that of a minimum wage in order to move our society forward?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

I did listen to the in-committee debate and I was thinking somebody else might propose that. At the moment I am not proposing anything but the minimum wage.

3.11.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Minister whether she would - and encourage the Council of Ministers to - support the move to a living wage on this Island in order to give more control to those working over their lives?

The Bailiff:

Minister, I will allow that question because it seems to flow from the one that went before but could I remind Members that this is not a general question period for the Minister for Social Security and the question is really focused on the minimum wage and the review of the minimum wage, and moving into other forms of wage calculation I think is outside the general parameters of the question. I will allow this particular supplemental but no other questions that are not related to the minimum wage.

Deputy J.A. Martin:

The answer to the Deputy is there are many other considerations to be taken into account, especially with what we have just gone through and where the economy is. That is all I can answer at the moment. As you say, it was not the question I was prepared to answer.

3.11.4 Deputy K.F. Morel:

In the recent debate on the minimum wage I said that COVID-19 was the reason we needed a rise in the minimum wage. Given those are my views, will the Minister commit to undertaking a review of the minimum wage in the near future in order to ensure that Islanders who are paid the very least have a level of wage that they are capable of living on in this Island?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

It was established in the debate I do have to go out and ask the Employment Forum to consult. I am still not convinced that it is a good time. I want the consultation to be about the economy as it is today, about the workers, and when I and Chief Minister feel that it is a good time to go out that is what we will do.

3.11.5 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Under what precise conditions would the Minister consider it is right to ask the Employment Forum to undertake its review?

Deputy J.A. Martin:

I want a good consultation, I want the employers and the employees to have 100 per cent commitment to do the review, to reply to the review, and I am certainly not sure we are quite there yet. So I am sorry I cannot give the Deputy a time but I do discuss this probably every other week at Social Security and you will know when we go out because we ask the Employment Forum to do the review.

Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:

It is a question for the Minister for Home Affairs.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, this is questions with notice and not questions at large.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I am sorry, I have been out of communication for the whole of the morning trying to get connected. I am sorry I have come in at the wrong time, I thought we had moved on.

The Bailiff:

There is no opportunity on the Order Paper for questions to the Minister for Home Affairs in any event because of course the hour of questions does not apply now because we have gone past the end of September when it did apply. So there will be no opportunity for a question to assist you in that respect.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

It is a great pity, Sir, he is going to escape again.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

May I just take the opportunity to inform the Minister that denial is not just a river.