

2.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Housing regarding sale of States housing stock homes to tenants:

Further to reports that up to 800 housing stock homes could be sold to tenants under a shared equity scheme, would the Minister assure Members that long-term tenants who are unable to purchase their homes will not be forced to relocate?

Senator T.J. Le Main (The Minister for Housing):

Yes, I can.

2.1.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

If tenants can afford to buy their homes through a mortgage or a shared equity scheme then I would say the very best of luck to them. As much as I appreciate the need to save money and the Minister's good intentions to maintain existing housing stocks, some of these tenants whose homes will be sold and who may not be able to purchase their homes are long-term tenants. I can assure Members that unless you have money once you are past the age of 50 an interview with a mortgage company will be an extremely short one. Will the Minister undertake to preserve the rights of tenants? Thank you, Sir.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am going to do everything I can to preserve the rights of all these people that we are dealing with and they will be dealt with in the kind of manner that I would want my family to be dealt with.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I thank the Minister for his replies.

2.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Will the Minister expand his answer, from the definition of long-term tenants, that all tenants who are offered their houses and express a wish not to buy and not to move will not be subject to any eviction?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

There will be certain instances where people have not complied or are not currently complying with the terms of their tenancy. There will be people that have been extremely short-term tenants in specific properties that may wish to be sold. This property plan intends to deal with those in a sympathetic manner over a period of 10 years and everybody, as I say, will be treated in a sympathetic manner. Hopefully, at the end of the day, any arrangements will be done jointly between the tenant and the landlord.

2.1.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In the absence of a categorical confirmation that no tenant will be evicted will the Minister expand on which tenants and which types of tenants may be subject to eviction?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It is not the intention of the Housing Department to evict any tenants - any tenants - from property they currently occupy. Hopefully, over a period of 10 years, if this Assembly approves the property plan over a period of 10 years - and maybe longer - then the issues will be dealt in the normal manner on moving people when their families grow and leave home or they have to downsize. But no one - but no one - will be asked to vacate against their wishes the property they currently occupy.

2.1.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour:

Could the Minister inform us whether there are principles and regulations governing this situation or whether ultimately it depends upon his kindness? Thank you, Sir.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am not really sure I understand that question. If he could elaborate on it please?

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Just to rephrase, when faced with such a situation is the Minister able to go to various rules and precedents by which to handle this or does he simply sit in the office and take personal pleadings from individuals and then make his decision?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, Sir, I have categorically said that if there are any tenants - any clients of ours - that feel or want to be represented by any Member of this Assembly then I will work with that Member to resolve any issues otherwise. As I say, I reiterate I would treat every tenant and every resident in the same manner I would wish to want to treat them as if it was my mother in that accommodation.

2.1.5 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin:

The Minister has just said that no tenants will be evicted. How does he reconcile that statement with the statement which has appeared in the media that the 10 people who are living in the high value properties will be evicted?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

If the Deputy of St. Martin believes the media he must be the only one in this Assembly that does so. Quite honestly, the high value properties where we know there are some very, very long-term family tenancies, the Deputy very well knows I have invited him only this week to get a hold of the family to see whether he would like to come and talk to some of these families with me. I am due to meet 2 of these tenancies on Tuesday to give them the assurances that I have been promising this Assembly. They will not be evicted and that is the categoric assurance I give.

2.1.6 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren of St. Saviour:

Can the Minister confirm that he has already told some States' tenants that they will have to move?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

If the Deputy would like to give me the names of those tenants I will investigate but I cannot recollect having spoken to any tenants saying they are going to have to move.

2.1.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Senator's answers are confusing. For clarification purposes, he has said that it is not his intention to evict anybody under his sale of houses scheme but he has listed some short-term tenants who might be evicted. Will the Minister give a categoric assurance that he will not be evicting any tenants under his housing sales scheme?

Senator T.J. Le Main: Yes