

**2.10 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of the Chief Minister regarding the policy pertaining to the residency status of new European Union accession country citizens working in the Island:**

Following my question on 1st April 2008, would the Chief Minister advise whether the period of time that the new European Union accession country citizens work on the Island under a permit scheme will count towards the 5-year residency requirement for open employment and, if not, would he outline the current accepted policy, please?

**Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):**

Unless they qualify through a relationship with a locally qualified person or by obtaining housing qualifications, a person must be ordinarily resident during the whole of the period of 5 years immediately preceding the start of the engagement in order to be locally qualified for regulation of undertaking purposes. This could include time spent on a work permit.

**2.10.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

So that is quite a statement really. It might slip past most Members' attention that what the Chief Minister is now saying is that people that have been ordinarily resident who could be on a work permit will be able to, within a 5-year period, access the ordinary jobs that most people in Jersey have been protected from and for over the last few years. This means that the vast majority of people who have come from Poland, who have been ordinarily resident for that period of time, will now be able to access the jobs in all sectors of the Island's economy. Does the Chief Minister know how many people we are speaking about and at what point this year - because I believe it is in a matter of weeks - that those people will be able to have free rein to Island employment opportunities?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

This is not an issue about Polish people or any other nationality. This is an issue about people who are unqualified irrespective of where they may come from and, of course, the controls are as the controls have been now for many years, and the controls are the licenses given to businesses to employ a proportion of their workforce from non-residentially qualified people. Currently, the total number of non-locally qualified positions which are licensed represents 14 per cent of the total number of jobs licensed. There is no change here. There is no additional risk to locally qualified people, to local people seeking jobs. This is as it has been now for some considerable time.

**2.10.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

I am sorry, I cannot agree with the Chief Minister. Does he not accept the fact, and I am sorry I indicated the Polish in particular, but there are a number, a large number of Polish people who have brought excellent benefits to the Island, nevertheless, a large number of people from the accession countries will very soon in the next coming weeks be able to access all forms of employment in all sectors of the Island's economy and will be able to compete at all levels. What other implications will they have? We have already been told by the Housing Minister he is not going to accept that policy. He is probably going to have to rethink that now. What other issues will there be in relation to social security that the Chief Minister is now saying: "If they have 5-year residency to work in any sector, they can then have the same rights in other sectors as well"?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

As I have said, nothing has changed, so the Deputy has not got his facts quite right about certain members of the non-qualified community, and it is something I would be happy to discuss with him later, but the position has not changed and the law is as it has been for some time and there is nothing new, and nor is there any additional threat as I have already mentioned currently to that that has existed now for many years.

**2.10.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

In his original answer, the Minister mentioned that the period under a permit could be taken into account. Would he outline how this discretion is assessed by the people who make that decision?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

I think I said in my answer that it is quite simple, that anyone who should be considered locally qualified has to be here for the whole of the period of 5 years immediately prior to being so registered so qualified, and that is a matter of monitoring basically.

**2.10.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Is it not a fact that for the whole period of the time that the people from the accession countries have been accessing work permits that their continued residency, albeit a day or so while they renewed those permits, has occurred in Jersey? Their belongings never left the Island from the day they came. They had to go away to renew their permit but in not physically leaving within their property other than just to renew the permit, we are now talking about 7 to 8, possibly 10,000 extra people able to access the local workforce. I will happily meet with the Chief Minister but is he not concerned, as I am, that this represents a significant challenge in addition to the challenges the ordinary people in Jersey are now going to have to face?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

I do not, and I have already made that clear. I would also point out that the figures quoted by the Deputy are wildly inaccurate and they are well over double the real figure. I do not know where he gets his figures from but, again, I am quite happy to discuss this with him and provide him with any further information he may request.