

4.11 Deputy G.C. Baudains of the Chief Minister regarding proposals to assist the unemployed find work:

Can the Chief Minister, with regard to proposals he recently announced to assist the unemployed to find work, assure Members that this will not create more jobs in the public sector and that the employment opportunities will be restricted to local employees and local companies paying Jersey tax?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

The aim of the proposals is to increase the employment of Islanders both now and in the future, providing a growth in the range and number of job and career opportunities wherever possible, increasing our self-sufficiency and local grown talent. The focus will be on employment in the private sector where part of this growth will be delivered through economic growth. However there are many more opportunities to reduce our reliance upon future immigration to fill jobs and thereby maximise local employment levels. In the long term, such opportunities exist in the public sector, not growing the public sector but increasing the number of opportunities for locals. The States could deliver many opportunities for our young people through apprenticeships, other trainee schemes and work experience opportunities providing that this is done so within the framework of workforce succession planning. Expansion to successful schemes, such as Advance to Work in the enhanced work zone is vital if we are to address unemployment effectively and support will be targeted specifically at Islanders with more than 5 years' residence.

4.11.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister agree that one way to encourage people to take on more employees is to have a social security contributions holiday and, if so, will he not create such a holiday for companies which already pay no Jersey tax?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

We are indeed looking at social security contribution holidays and other incentive payments to employers. If we were to take the premise, which the Deputy has just presented, as the only opportunity for such incentives we would then simply limit those incentives to basically the finance industry and the utility companies, but we must be much broader than that. We must look at every industry and see whether there are opportunities for future employment and employment growth.

4.11.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Chief Minister confirm that it is not really a question of giving an assurance one way or the other about creating jobs or otherwise in the public sector. Rather it is about treating them on a case by case basis and whether jobs are needed and whether they create value; and that is how they should be judged, not ideologically about whether or not to increase or decrease the public sector:

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I hope that I indicated that in my initial answer. There are certainly opportunities within the public sector for increasing and, to some extent, displacing so that opportunities are created for people who are already in our community.

4.11.3 Deputy J.A. Martin:

I think it is just an emphasis on what the Minister said re the original question. Would the Minister not agree it is not about creating more jobs but, as I said - and a lot of people did say in their manifestos - the States should lead by example and we have a great infrastructure, we have great worth of experience for electricians, plumbers, and even if we only train them these people, local youngsters, or people who have been here more than 5 years, can then go out and we will have enough home grown talent on the Island.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I could not have put it better myself. In the industry that I come from we train people in their professional examinations recognising that those individuals will go out and work for competitor firms. But it is the right thing to do to ensure locally grown, locally trained talent is available across our community. It is something that we, as a States, have been lax on. It is something that we have not been doing appropriately but in the medium and long term it is something that we absolutely must do.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Baudains, do you wish a final question?

Deputy G.C. Baudains:

No, thank you, Sir, I thought I made it clear that I ...

The Bailiff:

Sometimes Members change their mind after other supplementaries.