

SOCIAL SECURITY REGISTRATION CARDS: PROOF OF IDENTITY

**Lodged au Greffe on 4th July 2000
by Senator P.V.F. Le Claire**



STATES OF JERSEY

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PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -

- (a) to agree, in principle, that any person applying for a social security registration card should be required to produce to the Employment and Social Security Committee a passport, national identity card or other evidence of identity before being issued with a registration card;
- (b) to charge the Employment and Social Security Committee to prepare and present to the States the necessary legislation to implement the change as soon as practicable.

SENATOR P.V.F. LE CLAIRE

Report

There can be no doubt that one of the more common critiques of the way in which we manage governmental affairs for and on behalf of the Island is the manner in which the Employment and Social Security Department issues social security registration cards.

There have been a number of cases that have highlighted the manner in which they are incorrectly used and obtained. With no way to prove a continuous term of contribution, it becomes a problem for the Parishes to pick up or sort out, proving a waste of time and money for most concerned. I understand that the Employment and Social Security Department has even had a Michael Mouse registered at one time.

The first time I heard that there was some reason behind all of this nonsense was shortly before I began to stand for Government office. A foreign worker boasted to me how easy it was to avoid tax and to milk the system by having a number of jobs, together with a number of cards. In fact, I was encouraged to do the same by the individual, who said that lots of his friends and people he knew currently did the same. I was not happy. I asked some questions of him to try to understand why, in a place that has such a high standard of living, with such a low tax rate, he felt it necessary to do this. The reason that he gave was that no contributions have to be made if you work for less than eight hours per week; and he said "If the Government is so stupid as to let us get away with it, why shouldn't we do it, besides we work hard for our money!" The fact that he had several jobs made me realise that it was possible to avoid tax in this way and he was indeed working hard for his money - with little regard for other people's. If hundreds of people, as he claimed, avoided tax in this way by receiving employment with a number of cards, then there is obviously a cost to the remainder of the community.

The average man and woman who contribute in their taxes to the ever-increasing amount of money that is needed to maintain the social security budget, but also in their weekly pay, must be and are justified in their complaints about those who abuse the system. It is perhaps incredible that in the year 2000 I find I am having to commit my time to this fundamental issue of "Good Government". It is only now, after several hours of research and meetings with, officials in the Employment and Social Security Department that I find I am able to justify to the House that we introduce this immediately. In the words of a leaflet that was prominently displayed in the office of an official at the Department it is time that we "Take Fraud Seriously". There can be no doubt that where something is being used incorrectly as a means to an illegal end issued by the Government, that we have a duty to the electorate and to the critics of our Island, to show that we mean business, but only one kind - well-run, well-regulated and well-governed.