

2.3 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier of the Minister for Social Security regarding the phasing-out of Income Support protection payments in October 2008:

Will the Minister please advise the Assembly when he will be informing those who are receiving income support, how much they will receive when the department starts to phase-out protection payments in October?

Senator P.F. Routier (The Minister for Social Security):

As planned, in July.

2.3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In the *Guide to Transitional Benefits* recently published by his department, he refers to the sum of £22.5 million to allocate to transition funding, and talks about 4 groups of people for whom that transition funding will be phased-out over the coming zero to 4 years. Can he state how many people at this stage will be losing all of their transition allowance in October of this year? How many?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I am unable to give the Deputy that answer. All the information with regard to transition is being collated during this month and I will be reporting to the States at the next sitting, giving a full breakdown of transition arrangements which will come into place.

2.3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In that case, Sir, if he cannot do that, can he state to the House how he can possibly have produced an estimate of £22.5 million for the overall transition protection with various percentages of reduction come October onwards, without knowing how many people are going to be affected and by what degree? He surely cannot have calculated the £22.5 million without knowing. Can he reveal what he knows?

Senator P.F. Routier:

We have a budget of £22.5 million to allocate to transition. We will be assessing each individual groups of people and their needs and we will be making a decision about transition and I will be making an announcement about that at our next sitting.

2.3.3 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Is the Minister confident that the new low income support system is meeting the needs of the well-off, particularly in the urban areas, and will he undertake when he reports back to the States to give a detailed account of how much care and back-up the Parishes are continuing to provide to those people who feel that they are not receiving what they require from income support?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I am not sure whether I heard the Constable correctly.

The Bailiff:

I think you mean the less well-off, I think, rather than the well-off?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Sorry, Sir, yes. [Laughter]

Senator P.F. Routier:

I hope so, Sir. The income support system is bedding-down, I believe, very successfully. We are getting a lot of good reports and thanks from a number of people about how the income support system is supporting them. If the Constable has any indication where he feels it is not doing what it is hoped to do, I would hope that he would come and mention it to me.

2.3.4 Deputy J.A. Martin:

The Minister said July. I have concerns; is it going to be the first week? I really am concerned it is going to be after our last sitting and many Ministers and States Members are going to be away all of August. Can he confirm it will be very early on because my memory was May? When people received their first letter, Sir, they were told they would be updated in May to what they would be receiving or losing in October. Now we have moved to July. I think it is a very small... if it is late July, if we need to change anything it is leaving it very, very late.

Senator P.F. Routier:

As I mentioned earlier, I will be making a statement to the States at our next sitting about how transition will be working. We will be informing people in a phased period over July because we cannot do it all in one hit as there are 8,000 households to... well, there are not 8,000 people in transition but the number of people in transition will need to be written to individually so that cannot be just done automatically in one hit. But it will be done as soon as we possibly can. But States Members will be aware of what is happening with transition at our next sitting.

2.3.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Minister seems to indicate that he is not sure that the £22.5 million will be sufficient to cover transition because he cannot relate it to the table of those whose transition support is getting phased-out on table 2, is that the case? Does he know whether the £22.5 million is an accurate and sufficient figure?

Senator P.F. Routier:

The £22.5 million is the money I have available and it will be sufficient to meet the needs of the planned transition?

2.3.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Supplementary to that, Sir. In that case, he must now be able to fill in figures from his table because he must have made the calculations. Why can the Minister not reveal how many people by what degree are going to be affected come October?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I will be making that statement at our next sitting.

2.3.7 Deputy J.A. Martin

On transition, nobody is supposed to be any worse off. I have had a few reports since the supposed up-rated G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax) rates that because some people are getting more than they will be getting after transition cut-off that their rate has been upgraded but that no more money has gone in the bank. Can the Minister confirm if this is correct or not?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I am unable to confirm one way or the other. I would need to have a look at the detail of that.

Deputy J.A. Martin:

If the Minister could let me know later; in the coffee room would do.

Senator P.F. Routier:

We will meet in the coffee room later.

The Bailiff:

I think if the Minister is going to be asked to give information he should give it rather more widely than in the coffee room. **[Laughter]**

Deputy J.A. Martin:

Sorry, Sir. I was being a bit flippant. No, please, if he could come back to the House when he is... I have had a few people report this since G.S.T. and obviously I cannot understand why because we were all told people will be protected and if they add a certain amount before the rises all of their money should have gone up by 3 per cent - I know not the rental part.

Senator P.F. Routier:

If the Deputy gives me the exact detail of what she has been shown I will obviously look into it.