

4.9 The Connétable of St. John of the Minister for Social Security regarding his definition of a “proper” job:

Will the Minister explain what his definition of a “proper” job is and, given that society needs people to work in all areas of employment, will he confirm that he values the tremendous work undertaken by blue collar workers such as road sweepers and cleaners across the Island?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley (The Minister for Social Security):

I am grateful to the Connétable for giving me this opportunity to clarify my position as recently reported in the local press. First, I am very happy to confirm that I fully recognise the valuable work undertaken by blue collar workers throughout the Island, including road sweepers and cleaners and many others. I believe that all work experience, both paid and unpaid, makes an important contribution towards getting an unemployed person back into a permanent paid position. This is what I regard as a proper job. I am also pleased to have this opportunity to publicly record my support for the initiative taken by the Chief Minister to set up the back to work programme. Close co-operation between the Chief Minister’s Department, Economic Development, Treasury and Resources, Education and Social Security within the last week has already achieved significant progress towards a comprehensive package of measures designed to support local people back into proper jobs.

4.9.1 The Connétable of St. John:

Given the Minister’s comments, does the Minister consider that blue collar workers, such as plumbers and drainlayers, and the like, are not proper jobs?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

I think I have made it clear that the choice of the word “proper” also means real. It is an expression that I have noticed used in other questions to Ministers. We are talking about real jobs, permanent jobs and that is, I am sure, what all Members would like to see our work force back into permanent work.

4.9.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In his efforts to create real jobs for the unemployed, along with his Ministerial colleagues, will the Minister assure Members that he will, at the earliest possible opportunity, talk to representatives of employees in the trade unions in order to seek their co-operation with whatever scheme that he develops?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

I agree with the Deputy, that we need to talk to all groups, including employee representative groups, and this is something that I will make sure happens.

4.9.3 The Connétable of St. John:

Within the scheme of things, does the Minister consider there are any jobs he considers as non-jobs?

Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

I am not quite sure what the Connétable is trying to get me to say with that question. I think he may be referring to jobs which are unpaid, voluntary-type jobs, and as I said in my answer to the question, there is a value in doing voluntary work. I am not in favour of compulsory voluntary work, but there is certainly a benefit to people who perhaps have never had a job, to get up and do a voluntary job. Part of the back-to-work programme is to bring in schemes that would give people the ability to do some voluntary work, which will benefit them in their search for permanent employment.