

3.4 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier of the Chief Minister regarding negotiations with teachers' representatives:

Given that the terms and conditions of Jersey's teachers have fallen significantly behind that of their U.K. (United Kingdom) counterparts, and highly damaging potential industrial action is now likely as a result, what steps, if any, will the Chief Minister, in his capacity as Chairman of the States Employment Board, be taking to reach a compromise and rectify this?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Chief Minister):

Firstly, I challenge the statement that Jersey's teachers' terms and conditions have significantly fallen behind those of their U.K. counterparts. There are terms and conditions, like pay, where we are ahead of the U.K.; there are others where the U.K. is ahead of us. In terms of actions to try to resolve the current dispute, senior officers of the States Employment Board and Education, Sport and Culture Department met with the Teachers' Panel and U.K. trade union officials on 20th May 2010 to discuss conditions of service and by all accounts a very constructive meeting was held. In addition, I have agreed to meet with the full-time officials of the trade unions concerned to review all the factors in the dispute and it is hoped that this meeting will take place very soon.

Deputy S. Pitman:

I would suggest that the Chief Minister has not had constructive meetings with the Teachers' Union if he still questions terms and conditions have fallen behind the U.K. I would like to ... sorry, I have forgotten what I was going to ask.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

I will come back to you. Deputy Southern.

3.4.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister aware that in terms of non-contact protected time, lunch duties and particularly pension rights, Jersey's teachers have fallen seriously behind the U.K. and that this will eventually lead to problems with recruitment? Is he also aware that while superficial progress was made on items which contained absolutely no cost, no progress was made in resolving the substantial differences between the positions of the teachers and S.E.B. (State Employment Board)?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Firstly, I would say that there is no evidence at the moment of any recruitment difficulties. I did say that there were cases where Jersey was behind the U.K. and others where Jersey was ahead of the U.K. I would also question the remark made by the Deputy that no progress was made at the recent meeting with the Teachers' Panel and U.K. officials. I believe a very constructive meeting was held and that was the view that I understood was also expressed by those officials who were there.

3.4.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chief Minister return to the House with details of how many non-specialists are teaching specialist subjects like maths and science in our secondary schools before he makes statements that there are no recruitment problems?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

That is a question probably better directed to the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture who would have a better knowledge of who is teaching what subject, where and for how long.

The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):

Any final questions, Deputy Southern?

3.4.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Yes. What initiatives is the Minister prepared to take in order to find a resolution to this dispute before 11th June and certainly before 17th June when he has been given notice that teachers intend to strike?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Initiatives or discussions remain ongoing, as I have said. I am to meet the Teachers' Union representatives next week. I shall also meet with the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture and representatives of the Education Department as to what initiatives I might take. We will just have to wait and see the results of ongoing discussions. The situation, as I say, remains open. The Deputy earlier suggested that there were various matters which we do not know costs. Those are being discussed and many of them I believe are being accepted but that remains an ongoing discussion which I will be pleased to participate in.