

2018.06.26

**Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding the reduction of income inequality:
[OQ.82/2018]**

Is it the Chief Minister's policy to reduce income inequality across all sectors of the economy and, if so, what measures does he have under consideration in order to do so?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

The Council of Ministers has started to develop its common strategic policy, but it is already clear that Ministers are concerned about social inclusion. We want all Islanders to benefit from economic growth and our children obviously to have the best start in life. We are also all concerned about the cost of housing. I am keen to work with States Members on those issues as the Council develops the new strategic policy.

10.13.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Chief Minister consider that in order to attempt to reduce income inequality he must first have a measure of income inequality?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

What I have said, and the Assistant Minister will know, and I have committed to, we want to understand the interactions between income support, income tax, obviously taking out the supplementation, disregards and all those types of things, and so to an extent that will then feed into the definitions that the Assistant Minister is seeking. I know he is going to come back at me with another supplementary.

10.13.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

If you are going to do something about income inequality you must first be able to measure income inequality, is that not the case?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Yes, and that is the point; we do need to get the measures I was talking about in place to do something.

10.13.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Thank you. In that case, why does the Chief Minister in answer 11(b) admit that the funding for an Income Distribution Survey earlier than anticipated has not yet been identified? If he wants to do something about income inequality, will he first arrange to measure it so he knows what the starting point is and find the funding for a new Income Distribution Survey? Will he do so?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Yes, I believe that is the second part of 11(b) which says: "The current Council is clear that policy-making requires a strong evidential basis", which is what I was referring to and: "We will be discussing with the Chief Statistician the earliest possible running of the survey and reviewing the budget allocation of the States Treasury." That is an intention; that is not necessarily a commitment at this stage, but it is an intention.

The Bailiff:

A final supplementary? No? Are we done? We are done.

Deputy R. Ward:

I do not know why, but we received a letter on 22nd June answering this after the question was lodged and, although I was going to ask the question, the supplementary I had in mind has already been answered by the Minister, so I do not see the need to proceed with the question any longer. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Withdrawn, thank you.