

2.13 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding employees on work permits and the overall immigration total:

Further to the information in the *Customs and Immigration Services Annual Report 2010* that 178 work permits were issued in 2010 for non-E.U. (European Union) citizens to work in the finance, medical and legal sectors, will the Chief Minister state whether the Strategic Plan aim of capping inward migration at 150 heads of household is being achieved and confirm whether these employees on work permits are counted in the overall immigration total?

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

The 2009 Strategic Plan committed to a maximum inward migration target of an average of plus 150 heads of household over 3 years and we expect this to be achieved. For example, the economic downturn has led to a reduction in the number of unqualified persons in the local workforce. The net change in persons on work permits is included in the count of resident population. I stress the word “net” because there is an inflow and outflow of people amounting to several thousands each year and, while 178 may have come in, the report does not identify how many left. Recent trends in migration figures suggest a reduction in net inflow due to the state of the economy. These figures, however, will be confirmed or otherwise when the census results are published later this year or early next year.

2.13.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister know what length of permits are issued to these highly-qualified workers and, secondly, can he assure the House that the combination of the number of J-cats ((j) category licences) permitted in 2010 along with these work-permit individuals from non-E.U. countries is under the 150 target for heads of household?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

No. I do not know the length of any permits. It is a matter which Customs and Immigration will do on an individual basis. As far as the statistics on J-cats are concerned that, of course, is published regularly by the States and we can see the trends on that and the number of (j) category licences being issued has been quite static over recent years. So I do not think that the figures raised by the Deputy are a matter of significant concern.

2.13.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is it the fact that the figures that he refers to, which have been static for J-cats, are around the 150 mark?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The figures are published and they are as published.

2.13.3 The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can the Chief Minister explain how the process works in relation to work permits so that they do come under the constraints of the population policy? If they are being done by a different department to the Immigration Department, then how can they be brought into the wider picture at the Migration Advisory Group and so on? So how does it work that these work permits are taken into account in terms of the broader picture of immigration control?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Because a person who has a work permit is, nonetheless, an employee and the manpower figures give details of the total of all employees, whether employees on work permits or employees with other qualifications. So the information is quite clearly collected in the normal course of collection of manpower details.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

No, but at the point of entry?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Not at the point of entry; at the point of employment.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Do you have a final supplementary, Deputy Southern?

2.13.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

These figures have been deliberately chosen to examine the private-sector professionals for these work permits. We are not talking here about the inflow of unskilled workers in and out of the Island. Can the Minister assure the House now that the target at 150 heads of household is being kept at this present time and is not exceeded by 178 work permits in this particular example?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I can certainly assure Members that, on the basis of the information to date, the average of 150 over a 3-year period will be achieved. The 178 figure which he speaks about, as I said earlier, is clearly counterbalanced by the number of people leaving, which may well be more than 178. The outcome will be known at the end of the 3-year period.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We now come to question 15, which the Deputy of St. Mary will ask of the Chief Minister.