

**QUESTION TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY
COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 13th MAY 2003,
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

Question

- (i) Will the President inform members of the measures to be taken by the Committee which will enable it to restrict the growth in its 2004 budget to only £100,000?
- (ii) Does the President accept that, given the intrinsic nature of the Committee's sphere of activity, any reduction of services will inevitably lead to an increase in hardship for those dependent on benefit?

Answer

- (i) No, I cannot inform members at the present time, as the Committee is still considering the outcomes of the Decision Conference process and the impact on its' 2004 budget which is, in fact, an increase of only £65,000.

However, so that members are fully aware of the measures we have been asked to implement and are currently considering, the outcome of the Decision Conference was to give inflation growth for Supplementation and Health Insurance Exemption and cut expenditure by –

- (a) introducing an income bar for the Christmas Bonus;
 - (b) containing the current subsidy rates on the Dental, Optical and Chiropody Scheme for the over 65's;
 - (c) achieving administrative savings on non native welfare;
 - (d) introducing a new criteria for Disabled Transport Allowance, which would effectively exclude those in residential homes; and,
 - (e) freezing non-native welfare and non contributory benefits at 2003 levels.
- (ii) Not entirely because there is always the possibility of targeting and administering benefits more effectively. However, I would accept that some of these expenditure cuts, which did not receive a high enough priority in the Decision Conference, would certainly have an impact on the less well off. It is for this reason that the Employment and Social Security Committee is looking at ways of lessening the impact before coming to the States with specific proposals as may be required under any relevant legislation. The Committee will do all it can to protect those on the lowest incomes.