

2.6 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the staff at Indigo Lighthouse:

Will the Minister advise how many of the 222 staff at Indigo Lighthouse are locally qualified and how many will be eligible to claim income support if they are made redundant?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Economic Development):

All staff currently employed by Indigo Lighthouse, including the 222 to which the Deputy refers, are locally qualified. Therefore, all staff would pass the residency test for income support. However, as income support is a means tested benefit the number eligible will be dependent on individual's household circumstances.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am pleased to get a categorical answer from the Minister because I had asked in the past about how many staff were employed at other companies which were unqualified and I was told that there were 22 per cent across the whole employment sector which were non-qualified. So, presumably, there must be higher amounts in other companies. I thank the Minister for that answer and I will keep on pushing to find out some more specific information.

The Bailiff:

That does not sound like a question, Deputy.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am just thanking the Minister for his helpfulness. It is rare so make the most of it.

2.6.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In conversation with the Minister for Social Security, has the Minister derived any estimate for the total cost of these 220 workers should they all be made redundant?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

Not at this stage for the reasons that I stated. Each individual circumstance is different. We do not know at this stage. The Social Security Department will be working closely with the H.R. (Human Resources) Department at Indigo Lighthouse but I should stress to Members that none of the staff have been made redundant at this stage; they have simply been put on notice. The company is acting responsibly and indeed protecting its position should the legal challenge that is currently underway fail.