

In Search of the "Fair Society"

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I yield to no-one in my distaste for the "bully boy" antics of many trade union leaders – but find rare agreement with Ms Moffatt in her criticism of our government's waste and poor management. On the other hand, I suspect her protestations of trying to work with government to achieve improved standards of public service are bluster.

We should remember that Ms Moffatt's responsibilities are to her members, though her public statements sometimes sound as if she considers herself the "voice of the people". She is not – and there is a major difference between her rhetoric and reality. She is employed to look after her members' interests – something she (and her father) have done very successfully in recent years, with her members now generally very well rewarded for their work, compared with both the private sector and crucially, our vulnerable elderly who may have only an old age state pension to support themselves, and with heavy dependence on the provision of welfare services.

In the current economic circumstances of austerity and financial constraints, and the need for more stringent management processes in government, trade union leaders would gain considerable public kudos were they to stand back from the confrontational and threatening posture with which we are very familiar, and remember that we are all citizens of this small island community. In particular those working in the public service would do well to focus on (one assumes) serving the public. In the current environment, that means accepting a "no pay increase" diktat so that government can maintain as many services as possible (which also protects employment numbers) rather than taking from the limited budgets available, with an inevitable reduction in the services then possible. We strive for a "fair society", where all are given respect and the opportunity to look forward to a dignified old age. Whilst the threat of strikes and arbitration may well succeed in gaining a "pay grab", it will be at the expense of a fairer society...