

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 9th MAY 2017

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The Roll was called and the Dean led the Assembly in Prayer.

72ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF JERSEY

The Bailiff:

First of all, on behalf of you all, I would like to take the opportunity of welcoming His Excellency and Lady Dalton to their first Liberation Day **[Approbation]**. I am also very pleased to welcome, today, Lucie Lawrie and her brother, Oliver George, who are the great-grandchildren of Louisa Gould, who sheltered a Russian prisoner and died in Ravensbrück concentration camp, as a direct result of helping another mother's son **[Approbation]**. May I also ask Members to join me in welcoming the Naval Attaché to the Russian Embassy, Captain Igor Elkin, and the First Secretary to the Embassy to the Republic of Belarus, Kirill Zentsov, who will be attending the Liberation Day ceremony in Liberation Square and later, of course, at the slave workers' service at the crematorium **[Approbation]**. And finally, although not directly here, a welcome in spirit to all those in Liberation Square and Weighbridge Place, who are seeing a transmission of this Assembly's meeting **[Approbation]**. Senator Routier.

Senator P.F. Routier:

Thank you for inviting me to speak this Liberation Day. It is a real honour and a privilege on this important day for our Island community. It is also a pleasure to welcome His Excellency, our new Lieutenant-Governor, and Lady Dalton to their first Liberation Day. I am sure that today's commemorations and celebrations will impress on Her Majesty's representative how much Islanders value our special day. In many countries around our world there are refugees, evacuees, displaced and occupied people. The turmoil of pain of being separated from family, friends and home is very real today, just as it was in 1940. The life-changing decisions that people make in difficult and uncertain circumstances affect not only their lives, but also the generations that follow them. My parents would never have dreamt that part of their Occupation story would have been told in this Assembly, today. Like many young people in Jersey, in 1940, my parents were concerned about the advancing German army. They decided to register their intention to leave their Island home and evacuate, so they queued for a ticket for the boat. However, when they told their parents of their plans, they were left in no doubt, by their elders, that they did not approve of them leaving the Island together, because they were not married. So, Ray Routier and Pat Bardon decided that if they were to catch the boat, with their parents' blessing, they needed to get married. The following day, during their lunch hours, on 20 June 1940, they went to St. Mary and St. Peter's church in Vauxhall Street, where they joined other young couples and found someone who was prepared to witness their marriage. However, there was another twist to the turn of events. The tremendous uncertainty that existed in the days leading up to the arrival of the occupying forces, just a few days later, meant that although they had registered to catch the boat, they eventually did not leave. Instead, they got dressed in their wedding clothes and went to the photographer's studio to record their special day. My father was employed at the *Evening Post*, as it was known then. He worked there, not only in the printing works, but also as caretaker of the building on the corner of Bath Street and Charles Street. One of his duties was to ensure that the clock on the corner, at the top of the building, kept the correct time. Now, whenever I see that clock I think of my parents. When my father was alive, he would tell me, with a glint in his eye, about the times German officers would give them the details of announcements to be printed in the *Evening Post*. All the printers agreed that if there were any mistakes in the officers' copy, that they would not correct them. There were also occasions when they placed coded messages in the paper for Islanders to read. Although the German officers were regularly in the building, listening to English radio broadcasts, my parents, at great risk, had hidden a speaker that they had connected to the officers'

radio. When the officers thought they had heard a radio somewhere else in the building, they would turn theirs off to try and find out where it was. Fortunately, the hidden speaker was never discovered. If the officers had only looked behind the face of the clock at the top of the building, my parents would have been in real trouble. Living in town brought its challenges when food was in short supply. However, my parents were fortunate enough to know a farmer, out of town, who would let them have some vegetables. My mum and dad used to use their bicycles to go to the farm. Mum was very nervous when cycling past German soldiers, so she would get off her bicycle whenever she approached the sentry. She would walk past and wait until she was clear – well clear – before she started to cycle again. When mum and dad returned to their flat at the *Evening Post*, with their country produce, they would boil up whatever they had in a large pan, using the gas that was supposed to be used for the printing press. There was a time when the cooking pot boiled over and leaked through to the print room below, leaving a stain on the high ceiling. My father was worried when the workers came in the following day, and the officers, that the offending mark would be found, but fortunately it was never spotted. Like many of my generation, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our parents and everyone who lived during the war years, whether they remained in occupied Jersey, were evacuated, or in the armed forces, or even deported. There were great acts of bravery and sacrifice made during the Occupation by so many. Not only dealing with the daily living under the jackboot, but also those selfless Islanders who protected, helped and fed slaved and forced workers and also Jews. When we think about the extreme views of the Nazi regime in the lead-up to World War 2, we should remember that 70,273 people, with a disability, across Europe, were identified and eliminated. The regime considered they were unfit, a burden on society and their lives were of no value. Thankfully, today, people with a disability show how much they can and do contribute to our lives. They are rightly valued and play a real part in our community [**Approbation**]. During the years of occupation, Islanders not only had their liberty taken away, they also experienced extreme and harsh conditions. There were shortages of things we would today consider normal and essential. Food, especially was particularly difficult to find during the latter part of the Occupation; not only for our own community, but also the occupying forces, and the slave workers. People were, literally, starving. Our Island owes an enormous debt of gratitude to the Red Cross, who brought much needed supplies of food and essentials to our starving community on the SS Vega. When we see the work that the Red Cross, and other aid agencies, need to do in today's troubled world, we should not forget what they did for our Island in our time of need and show our appreciation by supporting their ongoing humanitarian work today. It can be difficult for anyone, who did not live through the Occupation, to fully appreciate the emotions and choices that people had to make. Those who left the Island before the occupying forces arrived, whether to join the armed forces, or to move to an unfamiliar area of the U.K., they all played their part. For them, not knowing how their family and friends were faring in occupied Jersey, must have been a hard burden to bear. Every year that passes since our Island's liberation, there are, unfortunately, fewer and fewer people, like my parents, who were in Jersey and, perhaps, outside the Pomme d'Or Hotel on the first Liberation Day. Today, we gather in Liberation Square, to show our respect and give thanks to each and every one who lived in Jersey, during the Occupation; and also to those, who were waiting to come back to rebuild their Island home. It is so encouraging to know that the young people of our Island learn about the Occupation at school and are sharing the commemoration and celebrations today. I feel sure that our Liberation Day, our national day, is in safe hands and the strong message of tolerance, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace will ring out clear for many years to come. Thank you [**Approbation**].

The Bailiff:

The States now stand adjourned until 9.30 on 23 May.

ADJOURNMENT

[10:49]