

2015.10.05

3.9 Deputy M. Tadier of the Chief Minister regarding the commemoration of ‘Reform Day’ to mark the anniversary of the events in Jersey of 28th September 1769:

Just when I thought we had forgotten about the events of 1769. Further to the decision of the States on 19th November 2012 that the 28th September should be recognised annually by the States of Jersey as “Reform Day” to mark the anniversary of the events in Jersey of 28th September 1769, can the Chief Minister explain whether the day was marked by the States this year and what plans there are in the future to mark this anniversary?

Senator A.K.F. Green (Deputy Chief Minister - rapporteur):

As with all good questions, the Deputy knows the answer to this. The States Assembly agreed in November 2012 that 28th September should be recognised as “Reform Day” to mark events that took place in 1769. The Assembly voted against 4 of the accompanying paragraphs of the proposition, while a further paragraph was withdrawn. This means that the Assembly agreed to recognise the occasion, without agreeing any proposals as to how this should be achieved. I am not aware of any formal events that took place this year or any future plans to mark the anniversary, but it is open to Members to suggest, or for anyone in our community to suggest, how that day might be celebrated in the future.

3.9.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

It sounds remarkably like the M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan) that we are about to vote on. We are going to vote on something we have absolutely no idea how we are going to deliver on it with all the monies being made available. But perhaps that is an argument for later on. The point remains that the States are very good at making in principle decisions and it was a close fought vote. I think it was 21 to 19 from memory; the Deputy at the time was not there, which is probably a good thing, he can remain neutral now. But the point is, it was recognised as being an important day in Jersey’s history. We are going to have a significant anniversary coming up in 2019, which gives us sufficient time to prepare. Does the Deputy Chief Minister acknowledge that it is an important day, it was recognised by the States and there should be something, even if it is done at no cost, where the day could be remembered, either by one of those in power, be it in the Chief Minister’s Department or, in the alternative, the Head of the Assembly?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I think we have, but while we agreed - and I was fortunate that day, I was having a hernia operation, so I did not have to go through that debate [**Laughter**] - that we should mark it, they did not agree any budget or any allocation of any resources to do it. That is the difficulty. If the Deputy has an idea on how we might do this, I would be happy to listen to it.

3.9.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can I ask the Assistant Minister whether he feels that it is right that we should acknowledge a major date on the step towards democracy in this Island and that not to do so would be almost to say that democracy is not important?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

It is open for Members to bring ideas forward, but at this time I would not be, myself, supporting the expenditure on things that are not absolutely essential.

3.9.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I do not know who is talking about expenditure. It does not take money, for example, for the Chief Minister to say: "By the way, today is Reform Day"; perhaps it is the name he does not like. Incidentally, this was established a long time before the party of Reform or even the economic reforms that the Council of Ministers are putting through. It is a generic word which gets used. The point is it really is incumbent on the Chief Minister, I would have thought, as the leader of this Assembly and certainly the leader of the Government, to do something that was asked of him when he himself was in the Assembly. So I would simply ask if the Deputy Chief Minister would take the message back that a decision has been made. It does not need to cost anything, it simply needs a bit of goodwill, and there should be joined-up working with other Ministers, in particular the Minister for Education, so that this important event can be taught in our schools and it can be referred to perhaps with a press release, which does not really cost anything. If it really comes to that, I would be happy to draft the press release and send it on behalf of the Chief Minister if the Comms Unit is that overstretched.

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I will take on board the comments that the Deputy has made and I will discuss it with the Chief Minister.