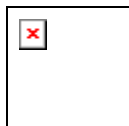


**TELEVISION LICENCE FEES: REBATE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 11th April 2000  
by Senator C. Stein**

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**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

180

2000

P.53

Price code: A

## **PROPOSITION**

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -**

- (a) to agree, in principle, that senior citizens aged 65 years and over, resident in Jersey and living in domestic accommodation, should receive a 50 per cent rebate on the cost of the television licence fee;
- (b) to charge the Finance and Economics Committee, in consultation with the appropriate Committees, to make arrangements to finance the scheme and for the administrative procedures necessary for the rebate to be effective from 1st November 2000.

SENATOR C. STEIN

Note: The Finance and Economics Committee's comments are to follow.

## Report

At the last meeting of the previous States, Senator R.J. Shenton withdrew his projet (P.180/99) on rebate for senior citizens because, during the debate, Senator F.H. Walker made a pledge to come back to the new States with a proposition at the earliest opportunity in January to achieve some of Senator Shenton's objectives.

Instead, Senator Walker, as President of the Finance and Economics Committee, made a statement in the Assembly on 18th January 2000 in which he stated that he wanted to wait until full information on the United Kingdom approach was available, which it now is.

In his reply to my question on 7th March 2000, the President of the Finance and Economics Committee proposed more delay and "passed the buck" to Employment and Social Security. This simply is not in line with his pledges in December.

In the meantime, many senior citizens are living in the hope of seeing a reduction in their licence fee as they, in particular, depend much on television as a social and recreational means and in many cases as a relief from loneliness. Should we rely on following the United Kingdom's budget discussion? I believe that we make our own. Last December the Assembly was quite prepared to support the proposals if it was not for the Postal Committee to implement them.

There is a suggestion that we should use means testing. In so many cases where the States undertake means testing, large numbers of people never get any benefits although they also find it difficult to make ends meet. Our pensioners feel that they are part of their Island, which is said and proved to be doing so well. The administration of means testing will require significant manpower and financial resources.

We cannot ignore the fact that television is, in particular for the senior citizens, the main social entertainment. I believe that the support should be for the 65s and over, as it is at that age when their income reduces drastically.

As Senator Walker said during the December debate, the minimum cost for those aged 65 and over would be £425,000. As pensioners are entitled to their pensions and other benefits at the age of 65, this television licence benefit should do the same.