

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

THURSDAY, 15th JUNE 2006

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

WELCOME HIS EXCELLENCY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL A.P. RIDGWAY, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, C.B., C.B.E.

The Bailiff:

Members will know that we have convened this morning to extend a very warm welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and to Mrs. Ridgway in the Bailiff's Gallery above. I call upon the senior Member to address the Assembly.

Senator S. Syvret:

Sir. It is an honour for me on behalf of all members of the Assembly to welcome His Excellency General Ridgway on his first visit to this House as Lieutenant Governor, and to extend an equally warm welcome to Mrs. Ridgway and members of their family present in the gallery today. I express to them our good wishes at the start of what we all hope will be a very enjoyable and fulfilling period for our new Lieutenant Governor. There is something especially appropriate in the coincidence that the personal representative of the Monarch in Jersey should take his seat in the Assembly this morning, the very day which has been designated a national day of thanksgiving for the 80th birthday of Her Majesty The Queen. His Excellency is, of course, the personal representative of Her Majesty in the Island and he has, therefore, a special status here. This speech by the Father of the House has sometimes been thought of as an occasion to welcome a new Lieutenant Governor to our Assembly. It might be more accurate, however, to say that we are welcoming His Excellency into our Assembly this morning. Under the new States of Jersey Law which came into force fully last year, His Excellency remains not a guest of the House but a Member with the right to address the Assembly which he is shortly to exercise. Mention is sometimes made on these occasions of one of the more unusual details of this Chamber: the respective heights of the seats on which you, Sir, and His Excellency sit. I am not going to explore that theme in any detail for 2 reasons. The first is that His Excellency has a very distinguished background in military intelligence so I think it may be taken for granted that he has noticed it already; the second, Sir, is that you will probably want to reinforce its significance by telling him the full story yourself on another occasion. What is, in a sense, even more interesting - and I mean this entirely without disrespect - is that His Excellency should have a seat at all. I would like to reflect for a few moments on the fact that the Assembly of the States of Jersey includes His Excellency as a Member, defined along with the Bailiff, Crown Officers, Dean, 12 Senators, 12 Connetables and 29 Deputies. It is interesting that changes which took place in this House in 1856 and 1948 - when Deputies and then Senators were introduced - involved recognising the importance of the democratic principle in the modern world. Our system of government, which has evolved over centuries, has been modernised in various ways to recognise the rights of Islanders on polling day. And many members present today have spent much time recently in debate about how that democratic principle should find best expression in the new arrangements for Ministerial government. One might ask, in an increasingly complex democratic structure, what role of The Queen's unelected representative? Certainly, the Lieutenant-Governor's duties have changed beyond description since the time when the Warden was appointed by the King to defend the Island in the 13th. Then 'defence' was a serious business. For instance, Philippe d'Aubigny, appointed by King John, led a force to attack Sark to secure it in combat for the King, capturing scores of prisoners in the process. Later he put a grisly end to the turncoat monk Eustace, slaying him on the latter's own ship. Sir, I do not think anyone who saw the photograph in the *Jersey Evening Post* two weeks ago of His Excellency on what looked like the field of battle would doubt that he has the professional credentials to fill the shoes of Philippe d'Aubigny. But these days it is unlikely that a

Lieutenant-Governor will have to worry much about the defence of the Island -and, I am pleased to say, even less likely that he will be required to undertake hand-to-hand combat on behalf of the Sovereign. He will, however, be required to do something else very important which is not unconnected with that historic role. The Warden was appointed to protect the interests of the King; the Islanders gave the King and his representative their loyalty. In return, the King afforded the Island privileges which were confirmed over the centuries. It is upon those privileges that the Royal Court, where His Excellency took his historic oath yesterday, and this Assembly are founded. There have been times when those privileges have been subjected to what one might euphemistically call 'examination'. During the Commonwealth the Island was invited by Cromwell to send representatives to Parliament. If Jersey had done so it would have changed for ever our relationship with the wider world. But nothing came of it. Instead, our democracy developed and adapted, as did our relations with what was to become the government of the United Kingdom. It is the Crown that guarantees the Island its status in the modern world as a Crown Dependency. That status underlies what the States of Jersey Law describes as '[our] autonomous capacity in domestic affairs' and '[our] increasing need to participate in matters of international affairs'. This is why the personal representative of the Monarch has a place in the Assembly. The route that communications take from the States through the Bailiff and the Lieutenant Governor to the U.K. government via the Department for Constitutional Affairs is formal recognition of this special relationship - a relationship which distinguishes it from any part of the U.K. In this communication process, the Governor plays his part in ensuring that the Island's views are properly understood. His Excellency also has an important role, with the Bailiff and the Chief Minister, in the arrangements for visits to the Island by Ambassadors and representatives of foreign governments, something which is becoming increasingly significant to Jersey as it plays a more prominent part on the international stage. It is for these reasons that I can welcome His Excellency as a Member of the Assembly this morning. I know that he has already expressed an interest in attending debates on a regular basis, and I hope I have made clear the symbolism of his presence. However, in case he is eagerly looking forward his contribution to the first such debate, I should say that - by another unwritten constitutional convention - the next opportunity he will have to speak after this morning will be in 5 years' time when he is about to leave. Sir, it is rather more than 2 months since Sir John Cheshire and Lady Cheshire left the Island. I described them as a 'hard act to follow'. Should His Excellency feel slightly daunted by that act, he might gain comfort from the fact that 5 years ago the then Senator Pierre Horsfall described Sir John's predecessor, General Sir Michael Wilkes, in exactly the same way. Such sentiments are a reflection of the contribution to Jersey that those who have held this office have made not only on formal occasions but, just as importantly, in their dealings with the many individuals and organisations that make up the social fabric of our Island. I am sure that it will not be long before His Excellency and Mrs. Ridgway experience for themselves the warmth of the reception that the Island as a whole will offer. For the moment, however, it falls to me on behalf of the Assembly to say how very pleased we are to welcome them and I ask all Members to join me in the traditional way. **[Approbation]**

His Excellency Lieutenant-General A.P. Ridgway, C.B., C.B.E., Lieutenant Governor:

Mr. Bailiff, Senator Syvret, Members of the States, Ladies and Gentlemen. I must first thank Senator Syvret for his warm words of greeting to my wife and me; we have very much appreciated the warmth of the welcome that we have received since our arrival in the Island a week ago today. My thanks also go to the States as a whole for inviting our children to be with us today on this very special occasion. I feel that I should assure the Senator firstly that I recognise the unusual position that I occupy as an unelected member of this democratically elected Assembly. However, as Senator Syvret pointed out, the constitutional arrangements in the Island are themselves unusual and the relationship with the Crown, and hence with the Sovereign's representative are a reflection of these arrangements. What seems important to me at this early stage, less than 24 hours into my

term of office, is that to fulfil my role as part of the communication process between this Assembly and the U.K. Government I need to have a good understanding of the issues of concern to the States Assembly. Consequently I see my attendance at Sittings of the States as a vital part of my role and I very much look forward to partaking in your debates as a Member of this Assembly, albeit in a silent capacity. The need to develop an understanding of the issues that the States Assembly is addressing seems particularly important at this time. From a reading of your Draft Strategic Plan it is clear that you have a rich agenda of important issues to get to grips with and I believe it is much to the credit of the States that some of these difficult issues are being confronted rather than ignored. I note too that your agenda includes the strengthening of Jersey's international personality and a review of the constitutional relationship. These are clearly issues which reflect the changing nature of the World in which we live and which will inevitably be of great interest to Her Majesty and the U.K. Government. Senator Syvret drew attention to the changing nature of the Lieutenant Governor's duties with rather less attention placed on defence of the Islands these days. However, I do believe it is important not to take for granted the peaceful nature of life in this beautiful Island. In Her Majesty's last Christmas broadcast she drew attention to the man-made and natural disasters that can bring devastation to unsuspecting communities and reminded us that this world is not always an easy or safe place in which to live but, as she remarked, it is the only place we have. It is already clear to me that the people of Jersey do not take their good fortune for granted and I was most impressed to learn of the Island's response to the Tsunami disaster, for instance, in which I believe Jersey was, per capita, the most generous of all contributors worldwide to the relief effort. May I also offer a word of congratulations to the States on the way that they have handled the recent constitutional developments and specifically the move to Ministerial government? I followed the formation of your Council of Ministers with great interest. At the time I was also closely tracking the formation of President Karzai's new government in Kabul. There was much disquiet in Whitehall when the new Meshrano Jirga, or lower house of their parliament, decided not to vote on the cabinet as a whole but to elect each cabinet member individually. It was felt that this would inevitably lead to inter-factional fighting with little prospect of achieving an effective government quickly, if ever. At a briefing of the Secretary of State for Defence and the Chiefs of Staff I was able to draw on your experience here in the States and assure them that it is possible to adopt this procedure successfully provided that there is a willingness amongst the members to succeed. I do not know how often, over the years, World War 2 apart, that Jersey has featured in intelligence briefings in London: I suspect seldom and the Members of this Assembly were probably unaware that they were being used as a model for the formation of a Government thousands of miles away in the war-ravaged capital of Afghanistan. I will conclude by reflecting on elements of the oath that I took yesterday at my swearing-in at the Royal Court. I note that I have been charged with doing all within my power to protect the Island's castles. I would merely observe that having read and heard of the wonderful work undertaken over several years to restore Mont Orgueil to its former glory that I can report to Her Majesty that this responsibility is in very safe hands. I also note that I am charged with opposing all Traitors, Murderers, Thieves, Ruffians, Mutineers and Rebels. Well this is an area where I do have some relevant recent experience - my 3 years as Chief of Defence Intelligence exposed me to a whole raft of all these categories of villain, and that was just in Whitehall. Mr. Bailiff thank you for doing me the honour of convening this Special Sitting of the States: I know that it will be some 5 years before I address you in this forum again and I hope and pray that the intervening years will be peaceful and prosperous for you all and for the people that you represent. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Well I am sure that His Excellency may be reassured that none of the categories to be found in Whitehall are to be found in this Assembly. The Assembly now stands adjourned and I invite all Members, and indeed all those in the public gallery, to join His Excellency and Mrs. Ridgway for coffee in Church House.