

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY: ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE R.N.L.I. AND THE JERSEY GOVERNMENT WHICH LED TO THE REMOVAL OF THE ALL WEATHER LIFEBOAT (P.36/2018) – SECOND AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 27th February 2018
by Senator Sir P.M. Bailhache

STATES GREFFE

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PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (a) –

For the words “leading to the formation of the J.L.A., in order to investigate the actions taken by the R.N.L.I. and the Jersey Government which led to the removal of the All Weather Lifeboat”, substitute the words “surrounding the breakdown of the relationship between the former crew of the St. Helier Lifeboat Station and the R.N.L.I. and leading to the formation of the J.L.A.”.

SENATOR SIR P.M. BAILHACHE

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

- (a) to agree that a Committee of Inquiry should be established in accordance with Standing Order 146 to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the breakdown of the relationship between the former crew of the St. Helier Lifeboat Station and the R.N.L.I. and leading to the formation of the J.L.A.; and
- (b) to request the Chief Minister to take the necessary steps to select a suitable Chairman and members to undertake the Inquiry and to bring forward to the States for approval the necessary proposition relating to their appointment and the approval of detailed terms of reference for the Inquiry.

REPORT

Many of the circumstances surrounding the unfortunate breakdown of the relationship between the former crew of the St. Helier Lifeboat Station and the R.N.L.I. are shrouded in a mist of uncertainty. It is understood that a complaint was made against the former coxswain which led to his suspension by the R.N.L.I. That suspension was followed by a walk-out by the crew in support of the coxswain. It is not publicly known exactly what allegation(s) were made against the coxswain, nor by whom they were made. The involvement, if any, of personnel employed by Ports of Jersey Ltd. is unclear.

It is known that an investigation was undertaken by the R.N.L.I. and that a report was later received which led, directly or indirectly, to the reinstatement of the coxswain. The report which apparently exonerated the coxswain has been made available only in a heavily redacted form, making it impossible to understand exactly what went wrong. The R.N.L.I. asserts that it is prevented by data protection rules, or for some other reason, from releasing the full report. This is highly unsatisfactory, because a knowledge of the cause of the coxswain's suspension, and of the conduct of all the relevant parties, is the only way in which an informed judgement can be reached as to the merits of each party's stance.

The prospect of **two** all-weather lifeboats operating in Jersey's coastal waters is absurd. There is a need only for one. Either the aspirations of the newly formed Jersey Lifeboat Association should not be supported, or the R.N.L.I. should be requested to assign its local assets and responsibilities to the new association. We need to know exactly what happened, and what went wrong, so that a fair and sensible judgement can be made as to what is in the long-term interests of Jersey and her sea-farers.

My amendment should ensure that all the relevant circumstances are investigated and placed in the public domain.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no additional financial or manpower implications for the States arising from the adoption of this amendment.