

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

MONDAY, 9th MAY 2011

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

66TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF JERSEY

The Bailiff:

On this very special day marking the day when the Island was liberated by The King's forces it gives me great pleasure to welcome Her Majesty's personal representative His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor. **[Approbation]** I invite Senator Le Main to address the Assembly.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It is with enormous pride that I make this speech today, 66 years to the day after the Liberation of the people of Jersey from occupation by an enemy of the Crown. Even though I was only a child then, I still have many memories of those difficult days of the Occupation and it is on occasions like this that these memories come flooding back. For example, I well remember the Battalions of 14/16 year old boy soldiers marching down the road to their camp at Green Farm, St Martin, with some of the German soldiers crying and sobbing as they had been forced to join up. During the last days of the Occupation, these soldiers were also starving and could be found collecting nettles and part rotten swedes from the cattle fodder heaps to make soup. Another vivid recollection was of red hot shrapnel falling around us and an American bomber crashing in the field at Les Routeurs, Five Oaks. Equally scaring was when I was sitting in the horse van at Highbury, St Martin, and the anti-aircraft guns at La Preference Children's Home started blazing away at the British planes overhead. The horse bolted up the field with me screaming and my father desperately chasing the horse and van. However, the greatest memories I have are of the events surrounding our Liberation on 8th/9th May 1945 when I was a pupil at Mrs. Ahier's private school at Springside, Faldouet in St. Martin. I had been sent there for a year so that I could improve my English - because we spoke predominantly Jersey French at home - some might think that Mrs. Ahier's tuition made little difference! I well remember, as if it was yesterday, the children at Springside School scrambling in the school grounds and gardens for chocolates and sweets which the Americans had dropped from their aircraft. What an exciting memory. As to the actual Liberation day of 9th May 1945, my parents had taken Eileen, my baby sister, and I into Town in our horse and cart. My mother had stayed with Eileen outside the Pomme d'Or Hotel whilst I was taken by my father to the end of the Albert Quay. And so when the first Tommy landed my Dad picked me up and placed me in the Tommy's arms. What a memory - this was a great moment for Dad. He was so very proud - ever since that day he never ever bought anything unless it had been manufactured in Great Britain. He was that grateful and patriotic. I have so many memories of the Occupation some of which I would rather forget! Now 66 years later, I look back with horror at the huge loss of life and the extreme bravery of so many men and women who sacrificed themselves for their country and for our freedom - in the case of those from Jersey, all of them had been volunteers. I recall too not only those who fought for our freedom but those frightened Jersey people who were forcibly removed from their homes, relatives and friends here in Jersey and were, sent to Germany, to suffer unbelievable horrors and deprivation and hardship many miles from their homes in this small Island of ours. Finally and importantly I remember those brave people of Jersey who, in small ways and large, actively resisted the oppressor's commands and diktats and, as a consequence, were deported to prison camps on mainland Europe, with some perishing in the most appalling conditions in the horrors of the concentration camps. Also those wonderful families in England who took the Jersey evacuees into their homes, they need our grateful thanks. All deserve our admiration and thanks for keeping the flame of freedom still burning. In those dark days the persecution of the Jewish people and minorities by the Nazis was an appalling crime against humanity. Since then Europe and Jersey has moved on and is now a much more tolerant place — although we still have to guard against discrimination and intolerance. Since the Liberation, this beloved Island of ours has been able to

progress and is now a far better place in which to work, live and visit. I well remember, when I was at school just after the Occupation, how we, as a Roman Catholic family, like others of the same faith, were discriminated against in our daily lives. We had to have our school religious instruction out of school hours, my parents, who owned their own farm, were amongst the Roman Catholics never invited to join the honorary parochial system, police, roads committees or Parish administration, etc., simply because of our faith. People married within their faiths. Even as a teenager, as a farmer's son, I did not, in the early days, join the Young Farmers Club because Roman Catholics just did not join this special group. Thank goodness all that has now changed! In the last 33 years that I have been a member of this esteemed Assembly I'd like to think that I have played my part in making sure that racial and religious discrimination has been outlawed and are now things of the past. However, it is vital that we remain vigilant because these evils still flare-up now and again and so the authorities need to continue to take this matter very seriously. I feel sure that all members here today will continue to play their part in making Jersey a caring and non-discriminatory society for all those who choose to make Jersey their home. Since the Occupation, Jersey has developed into a modern democracy and now plays its part in the world's social and business affairs. Whilst no society is perfect, nevertheless we are extremely fortunate when we consider the rest of the world and especially those countries which are currently afflicted by war, with their people at the mercy of despots, corruption, tyranny and violation of their human rights. And, of course, there are those countries which have been unfortunate in suffering huge natural disasters which have caused so much misery and heartache to their populations. I am therefore delighted that Jersey plays its part in setting an example by its willingness to work and trade respectfully and honestly, our desire to accept changes to improve our world and, importantly, our continued efforts to support those in need in third world countries through the work of our highly respected Jersey Overseas Aid Commission. I have for many years been involved in the work of Jersey Overseas Aid as a Committee member and by visiting the work that is funded and undertaken in third world countries to alleviate the conditions of ordinary people in real despair. Only a week or so ago I heard the Chairman of a minority Jersey political group calling to stop Overseas Aid so that the money is retained here in Jersey, to even think of doing such a thing would be unthinkable and disgraceful. It is vital that we, in our relative affluence, continue to provide this assistance to not only our elderly and pensioners and to those in need here in Jersey but also to those in third world countries who continue to suffer from extreme poverty, wars and natural disasters, and thereby continuing to provide help and hope to those in need. And today I would also like to, personally, on behalf of this Assembly, give our grateful thanks to those thousands of ordinary Jersey people who, on a daily basis, work for and donate to local, national and international charities. Through their love, dedication and efforts they raise millions of pounds every year for good causes. Finally, I just could not end without mentioning His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, General Andrew Ridgway, and his beloved wife who sadly are coming to the end of their 5-year term here in Jersey. Sir, I know that I speak for very many Jersey people when I say that we will truly miss you both. **[Approbation]** We know that you and your delightful wife have been a marvellous ambassador and friend to Jersey and your impartiality and commitment have been far beyond the call of duty during a very difficult time. You are the embodiment of the link that unites this Island to the Crown, a link that sustained many local Jersey people through those dark days of the Occupation. Many thanks for maintaining and enhancing that link in all that you have done and may I, on behalf of this Assembly, wish you both a very happy retirement and continued health and happiness. We will certainly miss you! **[Approbation]** After the traumas of the Occupation, Jersey has developed into a wonderful place in which to live, work and raise families. We have become a modern, caring democracy and can pride ourselves in being an example to all those other countries in undemocratic conflict. I am confident that, strengthened by our own experiences of tyranny and oppression during the Occupation, we will continue to work towards a better world for all and we can all be left to live in peace. May God bless Her Majesty the Queen, our Duke, and may God bless everyone here in Jersey! **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much Senator. Well now I invite members after this meeting to gather in the Royal Square for the procession down to Liberation Square. I declare this meeting closed and the States will reconvene on 17th May.

ADJOURNMENT

[10:51]