

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

THURSDAY, 9th MAY 2019

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[10:31]

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

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

Welcome to you all, both in the States Assembly and those who are watching and listening to this sitting of the States in Liberation Square. In particular, on this special day, I am pleased to welcome, on behalf of Members, Her Majesty's personal representative, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor. **[Approbation]**

1.2 Welcome to New Jersey delegates

I know that Members will also wish to recognise a number of distinguished visitors, who are sitting in the gallery upstairs and those of you who are watching and listening in Liberation Square will, I hope, join in to that welcome, because many of our guests are already down in the Square with you. May I start with the New Jersey delegation, 3 members of which are here in the different galleries in the Chamber: Mr. Reed Gusciora, the Mayor of Trenton, Assemblyman Gordon Johnson and Assemblyman Gary Schaer and Mrs. Schaer. **[Approbation]**

1.3 Welcome to Channel Island Cross-Parliamentary Group representatives

Next, I am very pleased to welcome the Channel Island Cross-Parliamentary Group representatives of the Parliament in Westminster. Most of that delegation are in Liberation Square already, but we have, in the gallery, the leader of the parliamentary group, the Right Honourable Andrew Rosindell M.P. (Member of Parliament). **[Approbation]**

1.4 Welcome to Brigadier J. Fraser and Commander S. Heneghan

Jersey's connections with the Royal Navy are very important to us, demonstrated by the commitment of this Chamber, the States, to HMS Iron Duke, and we are also delighted to have with us Brigadier Jock Fraser, the Western Naval *Attaché* and Commander Steve Heneghan. **[Approbation]**

1.5 Welcome to Mr. D. Sudas, Senior Counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus

Finally, I welcome on Members' behalf Mr. Dmitry Sudas, the Senior Counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus. **[Approbation]** At this formal sitting of the States on Liberation Day, I now call on the Deputy of Grouville.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

2. The Deputy of Grouville made a statement on the occasion of the 74th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Island

2.1 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

I am greatly honoured to have been invited to make this year's Liberation Day speech. This not only marks 74 years of our liberation from German occupation, but it is almost exactly 100 years since this Chamber passed a proposition giving women in Jersey the vote. I stand here today acutely aware

that the freedoms my children rightly take for granted, freedom from occupation and fascism, but also freedom for women to be represented and to represent were fought for, paid for and sometimes died for, within our living memory. I am aware, too, as Jersey's Minister for International Development, that these liberties are still denied to millions of people across the world. So, I ask you that today, as we remember with thanks and pride all those who played a part in our liberation from Nazi tyranny, that you think of 2 other things as well. First, keep in mind the fortitude and courage of this Island's women. The mothers, grandmothers, sisters and daughters, whose bravery and nerve kept things going throughout the war. Second, I ask you to spare a thought for the millions of women and men still living through war and oppression and in need of outside assistance, just as we were 74 years ago. This is a day for reflection and memory, so let me share a few. Now, this may surprise some people, especially my children, but I was not actually around in the war. I was not born until 15 years after it ended. As a Jersey girl, both my parents and grandparents all started the war in our beautiful Island. But their experiences were, however, very different. My maternal grandfather had come to Jersey from Denmark with his parents when he was 2 and it was after one Bouley Bay Hill Climb in the 1930s that Poppa Jensen met a beautiful young woman from up north, in Trinity, Doris Fossey. They were soon married and their 2 girls - Carmen and Anna - my mother and her sister, who are sitting in the public gallery today. When war broke out, many young men, including my gran's brothers, signed up to fight. My grandfather, though, was stopped, because he had not been naturalised and still held a Danish passport. Worst still, it became apparent that if he stayed in Jersey, he would be deported to a concentration camp. Panic set in, they packed a few belongings and left Jersey in one of our last boats out of the Island and made their way to London. Poppa put his engineering skills to good use, making aircraft parts and servicing British aircraft, to help keep the Royal Air Force flying throughout the war. My gran, a farm girl, had never left Jersey before, so found living in London, in the blitz, quite exciting really, as did my mother and her sister. They remember strapping their gas mask to their school satchels, waving to British planes overhead and spending almost every night sheltering from German bombers, as they slept in the London Underground. Poppa gave sleeping in the Underground a go, once, or twice, but preferred to take his chances above ground, claiming that the double shifting at the factory was better than listening to cackling women and the clicking of their knitting needles that prevented any chance of a good night's sleep on the train platform. In the morning, as families emerged from the station, there was always a certain amount of trepidation of what awaited them up top. One morning, they discovered that their house had been bombed and they had lost everything. My mother, typical of the women of her generation, does not dwell on the fear, or the hardship. Although she does, particularly, remember the terror of the doodlebugs in 1944, hearing their engines cut out and having to, literally, run for it. But she recalls the hilarity of finding their oven blown across the road with one of my grandmother's cakes still intact inside it. Meanwhile, in Jersey, my father, Henry Labey, was a young boy, living on our farm in Grouville. When the Island was occupied, hundreds were evacuated, or left to fight. Some, like my uncle, were put in prison. In his case, for having been found with one of the forbidden crystal radio sets in the house. The prison got so full, over the 5 years, that there was a waiting list to get in. The country people were generally better off than most townfolk, because they could grow food, albeit under the watchful eye of the Germans, who kept a very rigorous inventory of all crops and livestock in the Island. Farms would often receive random inspections, when family members would be expected to try and muffle the unofficial pig and scoop up and stash the unofficial chickens. The women were particularly resourceful and creative. They would come home with prams to glean from fields, collect firewood and use whatever they could to try and feed their families. Clothes were repaired until they finally fell apart and new ones fashioned from the sitting room curtains. As I have seen women in modern times do in refugee camps and war-torn countries, they try their best to maintain the illusion of a normal life for their children. Until June 1944, supplies had been coming in from France to feed both the Islanders and the German garrison. But, after D-Day this stopped and people literally began to starve. Jersey people were starving, German soldiers were starving,

Russian slave workers were starving. The Russians would frequently turn up on our farm, from the quarry in Queen's Valley, to be given a cup of soup; unofficial soup.

[10:45]

Salvation for the Jersey people came in the form of Red Cross parcels brought in by the SS Vega, who brought lifesaving supplies, donated by the people of Canada and New Zealand. As we look back on these extraordinary events, what can we conclude? On this, Jersey's happiest and most important day, I want to leave you with a suggestion. I hope that, as one of the only places on British soil to have received humanitarian aid, we will never forget the relief and jubilation that liberation brought to the Islanders on 9th May 1945. So, let us ensure that this memory genuinely lives on for future generations, by ensuring that the sentiments mean something. Liberation is not just flag waving and fly passes and speeches. Nor is it something that happened to granny 74 years ago. We, who know the value of liberation, should surely be its greatest champions. Today, Jersey brings some of this freedom, this liberation from poverty and squalor and injustice to hundreds of thousands of people in developing countries. So, on this 74th anniversary of our deliverance, as memories fade and the eyes that witnessed the occupation grow dimmer, as we celebrate our freedom, let us commit ourselves to making the word 'liberation' mean something to our children, as well. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

May I call for the adjournment?

The Bailiff:

The adjournment is called for and the States now stand adjourned until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 21st May.

ADJOURNMENT

[10:47]