

STATES OF JERSEY

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PUBLIC ELECTIONS: REDUCTION IN VOTING AGE TO 16

**Lodged au Greffe on 5th December 2006
by Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to agree that the age at which a person should be entitled to have his or her name included on the electoral register for the purposes of voting in public elections should be reduced from 18 to 16; and
- (b) to charge the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary amendments to the Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 to give effect to this proposal.

DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

“There is something a little embarrassing about the sight of politicians chasing the teen market, but there is no reason to think 16 year olds would vote with any less seriousness than their parents, even if they do lack a full understanding of the realities of adult life.”

(Taken from a newspaper quote from the website VOTES AT 16 CAMPAIGN a cross party organization in the U.K. on Political voting rights for all elections.)

Their website can be found at this internet address –

<http://www.votesat16.org.uk/>

In the U.K., the long-awaited report of the POWER Commission the report into the solutions, to the dwindling turn-outs in Britain has just been published – and it backs lowering the voting age to 16.

The POWER Commission was independent of all parties and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a charity which takes a close interest in democracy. The Commission was chaired by Baroness Helena Kennedy.

In recommending a lower voting age, the Commission says that the move will help to connect young people with democracy. The Commission stresses that there is not a lack of interest in politics, simply a lack of faith that ordinary people have the power to change things.

Their press release read –

“After eighteen months of investigation, the final report of *Power* is a devastating critique of the state of formal democracy in Britain. Many of us actively support campaigns such as Greenpeace or the Countryside Alliance. And millions more take part in charity or community work. But political parties and elections have been a growing turn-off for years. The cause is not apathy. The problem is that we don't feel we have real influence over the decisions made in our name. The need for a solution is urgent. And that solution is radical. Nothing less than a major programme of reform to give power back to the people of Britain ...”

The power report can be downloaded here –

http://www.powerinquiry.org/report/documents/PowertothePeople_002.pdf

More information is included in the Appendix to this report

My proposal makes a very simple change by reducing the age from 18 to 16. It would be very simple for PPC to promote the amendment to the Law– it is just a case of changing one figure. The decision to do so however may be another matter altogether.

What is the situation in Jersey at Present?

The present position, under the Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 is that a person has to be 18 to register to vote, in addition to meeting the residency requirements. Once a person is registered they can vote in all public elections (e.g. Senators, Deputies, Connétables, Centeniers and Procureurs du Bien Public).

Here is the relevant Article from the Public Elections (Jersey) Law 2002 –

“5 Entitlement to be registered

(1) A person is entitled on a particular day to have his or her name included on the electoral register for

an electoral district if on that day –

- (a) the person is at least 18 years old;
 - (b) the person is ordinarily resident in that district; and
 - (c) the person has been –
 - (i) ordinarily resident in Jersey for a period of at least 2 years up to and including that day, or
 - (ii) ordinarily resident in Jersey for a period of at least 6 months up to and including that day, as well as having been ordinarily resident in Jersey at any time for an additional period of, or for additional periods that total, at least 5 years.
- (2) A person is not entitled to have his or her name included on the electoral registers for more than one electoral district at the one time.”

The Isle of Man

The issue about reducing the age of voting to 16 has been around for some time now and is one that I have been supportive of for many years. The recent elections in the Isle of Man were heavily reported in the U.K. television news, which reported very favourably on their initiative, demonstrates that the need for progression in this area is considered by many to be due.

The debate for the consideration of the reduction in age to 16 took place in the House of Keys on 7th February 2006. Most interestingly the final vote was approved overwhelmingly with only 4 voting against the amendment and one against the amended article. The transcripts are included in the Appendix.

Votes for Women in the Isle of Man

The Isle of Man became the first country in the world to give women the vote in national elections. In 1881 the right to vote was extended to unmarried women and widows who owned property, and as a result 700 women received the vote, comprising about 10% of the Manx electorate. In England women had to wait until 1918 for the right to vote, and until 1928 for all women to be eligible to vote.

The original right to vote had been extended to a limited proportion of the Island's population and calls continued to be made for a greater number to be eligible to vote. In the 1870s, out of a population of 53,000, only 4,333 were eligible to vote in elections.

The Election Bill, introduced in 1880, proposed to give the vote to every male person of full age who was not subject to any legal incapacity. Members of the Manchester National Society for Women's Suffrage reasoned that by merely deleting the word male, women would also receive the vote.

The Society organised a series of well attended meetings on the Island to publicise the issue of 'Votes for Women' and attracted coverage in Manx and English newspapers. The campaign met with substantial support on the Island, both in the papers and amongst women unhappy with paying taxes and rates but having no political representation.

The Election Bill went before the Keys on the 5th November 1880, still with the words 'male persons' in the Bill. But following comments by the Speaker, Sir John Stenhouse Goldie-Taubman, it was proposed to remove the word 'male', thereby entitling females to vote.

It was the view of many members of the Keys that justice, taxation and representation go together. The majority of the Keys was supportive and voted 16 to 3 to pass the Bill. Practically the same result for the reduction in age to 16 some 126 years on.

The Jersey Experience

The same position on women voting in Jersey isn't 100% straightforward. The first time women were included was in 1919 but there were very strict criteria to meet for them to be included on the electoral register. Having said that, quite tight restrictions applied to men as well (they had to be ratepayers, etc.). The extension to all men and women only really came in 1945 after the Liberation. The information from Deputy Le Hérissier's book "**The development of the government of Jersey 1771-1972**" under the heading **Extension of Representative Principle** – proves most enlightening on the lack of a desire to progress the rights of man and woman in this Island by the States until such time, and upon reflection most would agree is Dickensian.

“Extension of Representative Principle

There was only one change in the system of representation – the introduction of Deputies in 1854. They became the only members of the States who were elected solely to serve in the States, and to be regularly answerable to the electorate. The Deputies joined the Constables and Rectors as parish representatives for they were elected by parish constituencies similar to those which elected Constables, and although they did not share the heavy administrative burden of the Constable, most attained office only after a long period of honorary service in their parish. Thus, the parishes developed as electoral units with no major concessions to the principle of equal constituency representation. For example, in 1854 St. Helier contained over half the Island’s population but was only able to elect three out of fourteen Deputies.³ This appeared to be another instance where the rural interest became more entrenched at the expense of St. Helier, whose representatives became increasingly identified with the commercial interest.

In 1907 the position was modified as a result of the creation of three more Deputyships for St. Helier⁴ In 1912 attempts were made to widen the franchise, by some States members who sought the inclusion on the voting list of all persons over twenty, irrespective of whether or not they were rate-payers.⁵ Significantly, the initiative for such reforms came from Deputies of St. Helier.

The First World War convinced large numbers of Jersey servicemen that they were entitled to certain fundamental social and political rights. Political organisations developed as a response to this pressure. The Jersey Franchise Association campaigned both before and after the war solely for an extension of the franchise; the Jersey Political Association, formed in 1918, sought not only an extension but direct political representation in the States.⁶ The Island was affected also by the suffragette campaigning which had taken place in England and, in 1918, the States set up a committee to inquire into the civil and political rights of women.⁷

3 ‘Loi sur l’augmentation du nombre des membres des Etats’.
R. des L., T. II (1879) p.82 Art. 2.

4 ‘Loi augmentant le nombre des Députés de la Paroisse de St. Helier’. R. des L. T.V., (1935) p.139.

5 See, for example, the J.E.P. 23.1.1912. ‘The States receive a franchise petition’. J.E.P. 2.2.1912 (S.R.)
Also, see reports of meeting of the Jersey Franchise Association J.E.P. 4.2.1912. J.E.P. 6.2.1912.

6 Report of public meeting of the Jersey Political Association.
J.E.P. 6.12.1918.

7 J.E.P. (S.R.) 24.9.1918. Setting up of a committee of inquiry by the States regarding the political and civil rights of women.
In their report, the Committee recommended that all political offices, except in the honorary police, should be open to women and that they should be given the vote in all elections. ‘Acte-Rapport du Comité nommé pour faire l’étude de la question des droits politiques et civils des Femmes’. R. – 1., 1919.

The electoral bill which appeared in 1919 was largely concerned with extending the franchise to women, other than rate-payers. Under the 'Loi sur les Droits Electoraux', the vote was given to wives whose husbands were on the rate list, to women over thirty who paid a rental or its equivalent of ten pounds or over, and to active members of the local Militia.¹ A further law was passed in 1919 which enabled single women over twenty to exercise the vote in parochial elections. An amendment to a major law which would give the vote to all persons over twenty years of age was defeated by eighteen votes to thirteen.² The parochial electorate was increased only by a small number as a result of these reforms. Overall, the franchise was still dependent largely upon the ownership or rental of property – the exception to this principle, the vote given to active members of the Militia, became less important as the numbers in the Militia fell, followed by its disbanding in 1928. Further attempts to extend the franchise in the inter-war period failed.³

1. 'Loi sur les Droits Electoraux'. R. Mollet, 'Chronology of Jersey'. p.89. 12.7.1919. S.J., 1954.
 2. J.E.P. (S.R.) 15.5.1919.
 3. For example, an 'Electoral Rights Bill' was presented to the States in 1926; in 1927 the Committee responsible resigned after the defeat of Article 1. No more is heard of the Bill after 1930 – although some parts had been accepted by the States.
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In understanding how much has changed since the vote for women was introduced, one must place oneself within the learning context that the average 16 year old then had progressed through, compared to the average student of today or even, 20 years ago. As an insight to life just 20 years ago in Jersey, about when I was in my second year of education at secondary school, at that time the entire school was delighted to learn that computer education was to be given to students. The school had procured a computer and we were thrilled at the new possibilities that could open up from that. We were very disappointed to learn during school assembly that the lessons would not be extended to people who were already past the first year, as it was not at that time expected that computers would play that much of a role in our lives in the future. This meant that 5 of the other years at that school received no computer education whatsoever. My education progressed through 4 more years at that school with everyone else under me learning computers. What a total lack of foresight on behalf of the decision-makers and Policy creators at that time. I certainly hope that the States would give credit where credit is due to our youth in Jersey today, who have consistently demonstrated higher academic achievements than their U.K. counterparts in their secondary education examinations, and give them the right to vote at 16.

If one looks at the world today one might be forgiven for thinking the world has gone mad. War ravages many countries and its legacy far outstrips the demand for Overseas Aid that is supplied by developed countries even if one looks at the Natural catastrophes which pale in comparison to the demands that are driven by Countries at war. Wars and Politics touch upon our every day lives to such an extent that they are considered by all ages. Jersey is no stranger to war and nor are its inhabitants. The young men and women from Jersey, who serve and have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces at 16 will be well aware of this. Jersey is also no stranger to Overseas Aid and where it is possible for us to help developing countries or those suffering from natural catastrophes our community shines by its example. Why not then when we encourage our communities to travel to foreign lands to build schools and re-build infrastructure should we not have the ability to tell people if they enquire, what a progressive society we have? One with a fully functioning participative voting community from the age of 16. One where we could hold our heads high and say we empower our youth to have a real say in our affairs. After all how many 16 year olds would choose to harvest from wheat rather than from war? The youth today can begin a career in many fields from weapons manufacturers to Oxfam, so why should they be able to participate in such far-ranging industries as these from – arms industry to the alms industries – yet be denied a vote? The parallels I give here are dramatic but then why should they not be, they're real.

I fully expect to have to counter some bigoted arguments from ageists and many who would question the rights of many to vote in our elections at all, because I have tabled this proposition and I expect the old trump card of 'not until we do it can it be sensible' will also be played, but they are all transparent and very predictable. The old systems of elections by ballot box are under serious scrutiny at this time. Surely a progressive democracy should be looking to empower the real stakeholders of the future as to how they wish to be heard and more importantly

by whom they would wish to be represented.

An opportunity to educate and increase the numbers of people who vote

I am convinced that giving the right to vote to young people over the age of 16 will create great interest and debate not only at the ages above 16 who currently cannot vote but also amongst those who in 2 years' time will become 16 and therefore eligible. Therefore if we were to introduce them to voting next year we will effectively be generating real interest, with effectively 3 or even 4 years of Island youth who will at the next election be entitled to participate in our new form of government for the first time. This must surely enhance the understanding, if nothing else, of our system amongst our community. I do appreciate that depending upon the candidates and the issues at that time it may not necessarily have any effect on the overall percentage of people who vote but it might do a great deal to increase the numbers of people who at a younger age take up their right to choose to do so or not. After all, do not the numbers of none participating registered voters not in themselves tell us something of value? It could be argued that a poor turn out implies dissatisfaction within the electorate, or it could identify changes and problems that need to be made or corrected with our system of government. Increasing the potential catchments age effectively of such a large number of young people in our political process can in my view only be beneficial in the long term, whilst in the short term it will pose us with a few healthy challenges.

This change will result in a great deal of discussion and reflection, not only amongst the youth and the educators but also amongst parents. This will help the community as a whole to better understand Jersey's political structure and its various roles. The peer pressure effect will also do much to challenge the understanding of parents in relation to our Island government. There are many people in Jersey who through being of foreign origin or lack of education in politics whilst they were at school have no understanding or very little of our system of government. It is a strange and foreign system to many which has left them, in some cases, not knowing the difference between a Senator and a Centenier.

Education on politics in Jersey

I have discussed the current issue of education of politics in Jersey with the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture – Senator Mike Vibert – and he and his Department together with the teachers should be congratulated for their current initiatives. It is now practice in all primary schools in Jersey for the children to take part in elections for school councils. The Parochial system of Politics is also part of the curriculum and in the secondary schools there are also the well-known Youth Assemblies which take place in the States Chamber with some of our sitting States Members. Also I have been informed that visits to schools by politicians occur at present, to educate the secondary children on a first person basis. The Minister I am told has yet to consider the issue of the reduction in age comprehensively, but it is my hope that the youth of the Island and the parents that can vote at this time are shown how much of a progressive Minister he and indeed his Assistant Ministers Deputy John Benjamin Fox and Deputy Carolyn Fiona Labey are. The facts as stated in the Isle of Man debate are true for Jersey as they are relevant. When for example one can enlist in Her Majesty's Armed Forces at the age of 16 one must question the wisdom of any politician who would deny these servicemen and women the right to choose who governs them. To encourage a greater degree of involvement, pride and a real genuine sense of ownership in this Island we call home, there is no other legitimate stance to take in my view than to support the rights of 16 and 17 year olds to vote.

In Jersey in particular we have consistently demonstrated and evidenced that the young are up for the challenges and rights and responsibilities that voting bestows. Next year will be the 10th Youth Assembly. We usually have between 50 and 60 young people and the 6 schools/colleges with a sixth-form are usually represented (Hautlieu, de la Salle, Beaulieu, JCG, Victoria College and Highlands).

I am convinced that the range of topics and issues demonstrates not only an understanding but an appetite for politics with even BBC Radio Jersey covering the event by broadcasting the event. A letter to members about it, last year's Order Paper and Minutes and Minutes from 2005 and 2004 details can be found in the Appendix.

Financial and manpower implications

I do not think the change would have any significant financial or manpower implications. More people would

register to vote. The Statistics Unit might have an idea of how many people are estimated to become eligible at the next Senatorial Elections to vote but I hesitate to ask them until the issue has surfaced at least. They would presumably in any event be living for the most part in households where there are already other voters so it would just be a case of adding another name to the registration form. The Parishes would have to enter a few more names onto the electoral roll but I can't see there would be any real additional financial or manpower implications and if there were they would be for the parishes not the States. I hope that the Connétables embrace the opportunity of increasing the amount of people who are eligible to participate in elections in Jersey and will seek funds as required by the method they choose appropriate in this regard.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE CONFERENCE

Saturday 6th May 2006

Speech by David Cameron, M.P., Leader of the Conservative Party

Cameron: It's time to share power with the people

"I've enjoyed reading the report.

I've been heartened by how much of it I agree with.

And, even where I don't, there's a definite sense of wanting to achieve the same objectives by slightly different routes.

What I'd like to do today is to set out what I think the problems are with the current system.

I want to shoot down some of the myths that could lead us down blind alleys.

And, then, I'll start to set out some of the things that would improve the way we do politics in this country.

Everyone in this hall knows that public faith in our political institutions is draining away and being replaced by a progressive and debilitating alienation.

I wish I could say that this is also a universally accepted truth among politicians.

But, incredibly, there are still some people in Parliament who don't really get it.

Of course, they accept that things aren't great but there's also a sense that it's just a passing phase or a product of public annoyance with a particular government.

That's part of the Westminster disease.

You'd be amazed at the complacency that pervades the corridors of power.

Put simply, despite paying lip service to the need to re-engage the public, the political class is in denial.

I believe it's time to wake up.

According to MORI, the proportion of people trusting politicians to put the needs of the country before the needs of party halved between 1974 and 1999.

Trust in Parliament fell from 54% in 1983 to 14% in 2000.

Trust in the Civil Service has fallen from 46% to 17%.

Voting is the driving force of our parliamentary democracy.

Yet fewer and fewer people bother to vote...

...and even when they do, they think it hardly makes any difference.

To the public, Politicians all seem the same.

They break their promises.

And in any case, important decisions are often made somewhere else...

...by someone else.

Fundamentally, at both a national and local level, people feel that they have little or no control over the decisions that affect their lives.

That is an indictment of a country that likes to consider itself a beacon of democracy.

No wonder electoral turnout is down and support for fringe parties is up.

There are several bogus arguments put forward to explain why people are disengaged from politics.

One is that what we're facing is, in fact, a tide of apathy.

That somehow people are either too busy at work or too consumed by celebrity trivia to engage with civil society.

Helena Kennedy has skewered this lie masterfully. She says:

"People in Britain still volunteer; they run in marathons for charity; they hold car boot sales to raise funds for good causes; they take part in Red Nose days and wear ribbons for breast cancer or AIDS. They sit as school governors, do prison visiting, read with children who have learning difficulties. They take part in school races and run the school disco. They march against the Iraq war and in favour of the countryside. They sign petitions for extra street lights and more frequent bin collection. They send their savings to the victims of tsunamis and want to end world poverty."

Does that sound like apathy? No.

Another idea I don't buy is that politicians are too similar to each other.

That public doesn't have a real choice.

I don't accept that a large gulf between parties is a reliable indicator of political health.

I'm glad that the era of cold war confrontation and stark ideological differences is behind us.

Consensus can be a good thing.

It doesn't have to be a problem as long as - and these are important caveats - genuine differences are not concealed and people have other mechanisms for making choices.

Along with bogus analyses come bogus solutions

One of the worst of these, recently outlined in an IPPR pamphlet, is the idea of compulsory voting.

This presupposes that it's fecklessness or lack of public spirit that keeps people away

from the polling station.

It isn't.

It's the sense of powerlessness.

Voting is a right.

And not voting should never be a crime.

The state is our servant, not our master.

Compulsory voting - like compulsory ID cards - starts to reverse that relationship.

Trying to introduce compulsory voting in 21st century Britain would be like blackmailing people into attending your birthday party and then believing you were popular because so many people turned up!

One superficial idea for winning people back to politics is to change the trappings of Parliament.

But if the substance is wrong then making something more user-friendly is a waste of time.

Changing the ways that we refer to visitors to the House of Commons - not calling visitors strangers won't make a real difference.

So don't let the real reactionaries off the hook by being drawn into an irrelevant discussion about wigs and ceremonies and forms of address.

Having told you how not to re-engage the public in the political process it's now incumbent upon me to suggest how we can do it.

I've set up a Democracy Task force to examine ways of improving the system and that includes looking at the proposals put forward by the Power Inquiry.

For all of us, this is a work in progress.

I believe that there are two main components to the reform agenda.

The first is institutional.

It's about the changes we need to make to our institutions.

And the second, harder to describe but perhaps even more profound, is behavioural.

When it comes to our institutions I think the report puts it very well:

"There needs to be a re-balancing of power between the constituent elements of the political system: a shift of power away from the Executive to Parliament and from central to local government "

I agree with both of these.

Let me take each in turn.

I want to put Parliament at the centre of national life

There's a sense that power has slipped away elsewhere.

To Quangos and bureaucrats.

To Judges.

To Europe.

Anyone, in fact, other than the politicians who people can elect and hold accountable.

In future speeches I will address the issue of Europe.

Today I want to address the shift away from the legislature to the executive.

In the House of Commons we need to rebalance the power between whips and backbenchers.

More issues could be dealt with by free votes.

And standing committees should become both more powerful and more independent.

We send legislation off to be considered line by line by MPs, but give them no freedom to do so.

When it comes to law making, it's a case of too much, too quickly and with too little scrutiny.

The timetabling of bills is -quite simply - a disgrace.

Whole sections of new legislation are never even debated.

If people knew just how bad the situation is they'd be even more disillusioned with our democracy than they are already.

We must remove the power of the executive to ride roughshod over the legislature.

I believe the time has come to look at those powers exercised by Ministers under the Royal Prerogative.

In a number of important areas - going to war, agreeing international treaties...

...there's no formal mechanism for consulting the nation's elected representatives.

In other areas - like making senior appointments and re-organising government departments...

...the Prime Minister is able to do what he wants without consulting Parliament at all.

Yesterday we learnt that someone is apparently able to be given a position without having a job at all.

That has to change.

Another element of Parliament that's long overdue for reform is the House of Lords.

A strong and effective Parliament needs a strong and effective second chamber.

The current House of Lords does some things really well.

It's good at scrutiny and revision - and asking the Government to think again.

But it lacks authority and legitimacy.

In my view the Lords must have a significant elected element if it is to play a full and proper role.

The term sleaze has now become a byword for the failings of the political class.

It's ridiculous that the final, indeed often the only, arbiter of ministerial probity is the Prime Minister.

That system of self-regulation inspires little confidence.

The only way we can start to repair the damage done to the reputation of politics is to insist on genuinely independent scrutiny from top to bottom. And that must include the Ministerial code.

The second part of institutional rebalancing is to shift power from a national to a local level.

I'm talking about a system of local democracy with real muscle.

A healthy, functioning society cannot be run from Westminster and Whitehall alone.

Decisions about local matters should, wherever possible, be taken locally.

And the quality of these decisions should be judged by local voters.

We should trust the people on the ground.

They understand better than any remote bureaucrat what's right for their area.

Local people are far more likely to know what's right for their area than control freaks sitting in Whitehall.

We need a bonfire of the directives, audit systems, best value regimes, ring fencing and all of the stark paraphernalia of the Whitehall-control-freak regime that tells Local Authorities what they can and can't do.

I'm determined to reclaim the proud tradition within the Conservative Party of local rule and civic pride that stretches back to Chamberlain.

Tony Blair has encouraged limited experiments in local democracy such as directly-elected mayors.

I support that and I intend to encourage much more of it.

But the Government's credibility on this has been damaged by its relentless regionalisation.

These regional assemblies must go and the powers passed to regions must be returned to empowered local authorities.

Power should be exercised by local communities, not regional bureaucracies. And it's not just about local authorities.

I want to see new avenues of democracy.

For example in the area of policing.

The public has very little real say over how policing is conducted.

Police Authorities are relatively powerless, and they're virtually invisible to the public.

I think the time has come for directly elected police commissioners.

Instead of police chiefs answering to central government, they would be formally accountable to local communities.

One of the few proposals in the Power Inquiry report I don't agree with is the idea of moving to a system of PR.

And I say that as the leader of a party that would be a major beneficiary of such a change.

One of the reasons I'm in favour of first-past-the-post is because the link between an MP and his or her constituency is a vital one.

It's human, transparent and unambiguous.

It's one of the few aspects of the current set up that really does work in practice as well as in theory.

If politicians generally were as respected as many MPs are personally in their own constituencies we wouldn't have such a big problem.

Anything that undermines, compromises or dilutes it doesn't serve our broader objectives.

But I do recognise that there are problems with first-past-the-post.

In safe seats many people fear they do not have enough real choice about who represents them.

There's one way that parties that have big majorities in certain constituencies can remedy that deficiency.

By opening up their Parliamentary selections to participation from a much broader cross-section of the community.

That's something that we in the Conservative Party are experimenting with.

We're going to use primaries to choose more of our publicly elected officials.

We want to encourage many more voters to get involved at a much earlier stage.

Not only will that make the process more open and transparent.

I'm also convinced it will help ensure that people of a high calibre come forward.

For example, the Tory candidate for mayor of London will be chosen this way.

We have to move away from political parties acting like closed cliques.

We also need to change the way we do politics in another respect.

Let's be honest.

Politicians' behaviour is a major factor in increasing the public's sense of alienation and cynicism.

Vigorous debate is important...

...And Parliament can still do that amazingly well.

Some of the speeches in the run up to the Iraq war were brilliant and heartfelt.

And the discussion on faith schools was a first class examination of the arguments for and against.

But, often, the public sees MPs at their worst.

Point scoring.

Shouting.

Demanding resignations at a drop of a hat.

It means that when there's a real scandal, such as the one we've seen in recent days, it becomes harder to tell it apart from the more manufactured rows.

So when it comes to both organisation and behaviour politicians, as individuals, have to work hard to make politics more accessible to the public.

That's why, over the next few weeks and months, I'm going to try something different.

Instead of trotting out easy answers to familiar political problems, grouped together in their neat departmental boxes...

NHS...

Education...

Social Security...

I'll be making a series of speeches about the things that truly and profoundly affect

people's well-being:

Working life

Family life

Community life

That is how people experience life, not in neat Whitehall based boxes.

And I want to be straight with people.

I'll try to explain how important it is that we politicians, while not being limited in our aspirations for government...

...should recognise the limitations of government in addressing these deeper questions.

Politicians shouldn't pretend to be able to fix every problem by taking more and more power from citizens.

I believe that trusting people and sharing responsibility is the right way forward.

It's the best way to respond to the challenges facing us at work, in our families and in our communities, in the decades ahead.

Our vision of an empowering state, rather than the current reality of an overpowering state, offers the path to the good life that everybody seeks.

My politics is about empowering people.

Not in a vague sense of making them feel better.

I'm talking about something much more specific.

The right to make decisions about the things that affect their lives.

Society is infinitely more complex than it was a century ago.

The answer is not to attempt to control almost everything from the centre or through regional proxies.

That's an analogue solution to the problems of a digital age.

And it's doomed to failure.

I want to quote from Power to the People.

In the section entitled New Citizens.

"British society which is now better educated, more affluent, expects greater control and choice over many aspects of life, feels no deference towards those in positions of authority, and is not as bound by the traditional bonds of place, class and institution that developed during the industrial era."

Absolutely right - but there's a problem.

Voters are more sophisticated than ever before...

But the political system still takes them for fools.

Politicians offer us too many grand promises about matters that are not fully under their control.

Making people healthier...

Improving behaviour in schools....

At the same time they often dodge the big decisions on things they do control.

Reforming the pensions system...

Planning our future energy provision....

I am determined to address these twin failures.

When it comes to these things that politicians pretend they can fix on their own - school standard, safe streets, a healthy nation - we must explain our shared responsibility.

On school standards for example - yes we can put money in, reform the exam system and empower teachers - but Parents must take their responsibility to get their children to behave, including get their children to school on time, properly fed.

Saying this doesn't mean I want a nanny state.

It's about shared responsibility and it's about telling the truth.

And when it comes to the big decisions we should make - pensions, energy, the nuclear deterrent - we must do the hard long-term work and then make absolutely clear where we stand.

That's what my policy reviews are about.

They are to help prepare us for the big decisions that we must make and then be frank about those decisions.

In the 21st century, citizens, equipped with degrees and broadband connections, are the equals of those who aspire to rule them.

It's time for government to stop trying to shut the public out of decision-making?

I want to open the gates and let the people into the citadels of power.

I want to deregulate our system of government, as previous governments deregulated the economy.

My message to the political class is clear.

Stop trying to pretend we can do it all ourselves.

It's time to share power with the people."

'Delivering Power to the People'

SPEECH AT THE POWER COMMISSION CONFERENCE
by Sir Menzies Campbell, M.P., Leader of the Liberal Democrats

May 6, 2006

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

The report of the Power Commission should worry every elected representative in Britain.

Because in their report the Commission says, "We were struck by just how wide and deep is the contempt felt for formal politics in Britain."

Well, that doesn't make me feel too good, nor should it.

I can draw some small comfort from the fact that I agree with many of the sentiments and recommendations in the report.

The report describes a dysfunctional system in which disengagement has reached crisis levels.

Look at the figures:

In recent elections, one third of the electorate do not feel represented by any of the political parties at Westminster.

Less than one-in-five votes have had any impact on the outcome in 2001 and 2005.

Despite a huge effort to extend postal voting, in the 2005 election, 39% of registered voters did not vote at all.

And this at a time when voter registration is at an all time low.

It is clearly a long term problem, increasingly evident since the 1960s, and one that affects not just Britain but other developed countries.

Before assuming office, the present government recognised many of the systemic failures of our democracy and committed themselves to solutions in the form of the 1997 Labour manifesto, Charter 88, and the Cook-Maclennan agreement between Labour and the Liberal Democrats on constitutional and electoral reform.

They have implemented some of what they promised – a devolved administration for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and some reform of the House of Commons, under Robin Cook.

But the roadblocks to a revival of democratic participation remain – electoral reform, reform of the House of Lords and the renaissance of local government.

These tasks were urgent in 1997. Failure to accord them the appropriate urgency once more will invite a crisis in the legitimacy and credibility of our institutions themselves.

As the Power Commission makes plain, the British political system has remained more or less unchanged since the Second World War.

It is a nineteenth century system that ill serves our 21st century society.

21st century Britain is place of educated, intelligent and engaged citizens who want to know how they are

governed and who want to play a part.

If we are serious about fundamental constitutional and democratic reform then we must begin with the question of empowering people as citizens, not as subjects.

As the Power Commission report makes clear, 'the age of deference is over.'

The disengagement we have all witnessed in recent general elections and, more starkly, on Thursday, urgently calls for a new approach, a renewal of our democracy.

An underlying theme of the Power report was that people felt they were not trusted.

Not trusted to make decisions. Not trusted with the whole truth of government information. Patronised by a trivial media and treated more like consumers than citizens.

We need to trust the people of Britain more.

We need to give power back to the people.

We need to ensure that government has the support of the majority.

We need to plug the gap in accountability.

Apart from the institutions themselves, the style of governance has been distorted under New Labour.

The Power Commission calls the power grab by New Labour 'quiet authoritarianism', others have called it 'creeping authoritarianism'.

But the truth is that it was almost inevitable.

Without a written constitution, the institutions and the conventions of government are open to manipulation and even to being ignored by governments with large majorities.

We live in an elective dictatorship.

Parliament has become increasingly marginalised and ignored.

Ministers and Prime Minister are immune to the House of Commons.

One hundred and forty Labour MPs are in government as Ministers or PPSs; over a third of the ruling party.

Parliament is managed and not engaged.

An electoral system which sustained a two-party dichotomy is inadequate to represent the diverse politics of the 21st century.

At the next general election, a majority in the Commons could be achieved by a party without the largest number of votes, as happened in February 1974.

Turnout, already historically low, could be even lower.

Why do we even contemplate such possibilities.

People feel powerless, they feel they have no influence over those that govern them and the decisions that affect

them.

It is not only politicians who have failed but politics itself.

As the Power Report says,

“Politics has failed to bring about fundamental improvements in the lives of the disadvantaged.”

This raises the question: what is politics for?

Democracy is about giving everyone an equal say in how our collective interests are addressed and how our collective resources are spent.

Democratic power is even more unevenly distributed in the U.K. than income.

The recent report of the New Economics Foundation which assesses this problem in terms of an *‘Index of Democratic Power’* (IDP), concluded that less than 3% of U.K. voters have anything like a fair share of power.

Against this backdrop the mantra of ‘choice’ in the public services, which would treat people as consumers not citizens, appears irrelevant.

64% of voters did not want this government at all.

They did not ‘choose’ this government.

If we are serious about choice, choice must start at the ballot box.

There is a real prospect that at the next general election the abstainers will be in the majority.

The task of renewal is urgent.

The Commission’s report found that there was, “an overwhelming desire for change among the British people, but that, as yet, no clear agenda for what such a change might look like.”

It appears to me that the agenda for change is now clear, in the shape of the Commission’s recommendations.

I support them and I urge my fellow party leaders to do the same.

Let me address each of the issues identified by Power in turn.

It is comforting to hear others outside the Westminster village speaking about the need to restrain the power of the Executive.

All of the Commission’s recommendations on rebalancing power between the executive and legislative branches and between national and local government are sound.

But, in some areas the detail is thin.

The concordat is an innovative and adaptable idea to set out the competences of the different branches of government, but only as a first step to a written constitution.

Flexibility, in the hands of authoritarian governments in the future, could be readily abused.

Any constitutional settlement will require interpretation.

A job for the new Supreme Court?

Consideration of constitutional reform should include a rigorous examination of the Royal Prerogative and its unfettered use by subsequent governments.

Since before the Iraq war I have been arguing for a war powers act to require parliamentary approval for a declaration of war.

But there are other areas where the prerogative's undemocratic reach should be curtailed: such as Treaty making.

The motion for the Second Chamber of Parliament Bill which I co-sponsored in the House of Commons is an embodiment of the reforms recommended by Power for the Lords and it is the future shape of the Lords that I would like to see.

But in the light of recent events it is impossible to consider the reform of the House of Lords independently of the issue of party finance.

The honours system and the second chamber of parliament must be disentangled.

It may well be appropriate for Honours to be in the gift of the Prime Minister subject to independent audit, but appointment to the second chamber should certainly not be.

It is perhaps worth reminding the Prime Minister that in his book *'NEW BRITAIN – My Vision of a Young Country'*, published just before his 1997 election victory, Mr. Blair pledged:

“an end to hereditary peers sitting in the House of Lords as the first step to a properly directly elected second chamber, and the chance for the people to decide after the election the system by which they elect the government of the future”.

It is perverse that in evidence given to the Hansard Society individual “Constituency MPs” (of all parties) are held in relatively high regard.

They are seen to be hard-working, conscientious and people of real integrity.

And yet the Commons – the collective of all those admired individuals – is seen as under the thumb of the Prime Minister or the Party Whips and incapable of its task of holding the Government to account.

The cause of this is the widespread, and accurate, perception that the institution no longer reflects the nation.

This is hardly surprising since the present government has the support of only 21.6% of those registered to vote.

An unresponsive electoral system is at the centre of this crisis of representation and the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ in Britain.

Reviving democratic participation in Britain is essential if the institutions are to maintain legitimacy, but also, if politics is to work as it should.

The argument about the Single Transferable Vote, Alternative Vote or any other voting system is not about whether it favours one party or another.

In a liberal society it can only be about how it delivers the wishes and preferences of the whole of society, particularly the disadvantaged and marginalised, into government.

Effective representation is the only way to reconnect our government with the citizens of Britain.

To improve responsiveness further and heighten accountability we need to sever other links in the political ecosystem.

And in particular, central party control over fundraising.

If parties are limited in the amount they can raise, as suggested in the Power report, they will seek to find money in other ways.

If that money is awarded through the ballot paper, then they will have to work hard for it.

This ingenious suggestion in the report, that voters indicate which party, or none, should receive a sum of money from the taxpayer when they vote, will reinvigorate local campaigning and make parties responsive to voters.

The principle that the amount should be split between local and national parties is equally neat and tailored to invigorate local democracy.

These proposals will encourage parties to break out of the current concentration on a small number of marginal seats.

My party already has well developed policy which springs from a similar diagnosis of the problems identified by the Power Commission.

And we have come to similar conclusions.

We have been at the forefront of arguing for a written constitution, for reform of the House of Lords, more powers for Select Committees and for changes to the electoral system.

But we do not rest.

Today I am announcing a new working group on citizenship and better government.

Among other things, it will be considering the proposals contained in the report.

The idea that citizens should be able to bring legislative proposals to the House of Commons is a good one and I welcome it.

Giving citizens the right to initiate hearings and public inquiries into public bodies would do much to strengthen citizens' control over services and society as well as reducing their sense of disengagement and disenfranchisement.

The Commission found that 'People feel disenfranchised and disenchanted because they are'.

It is not for politicians or the media to explain that feeling away, it is for us to accept the problem and look for ways of redressing the balance.

Anyone calling themselves a democrat cannot fail to seek to re-embed government in society, to refresh our systems of representation and to keep pace with the times.

If government does not represent our citizens, how can it hope to serve their needs?

I cannot stress this strongly enough.

Revitalising our democracy is not a technical discussion to be had between constitutional lawyers.

If you care about social justice, if you care about improving social mobility, tackling poverty...

...then it follows that you must care about democratic reform.

Constitutional reform is one of the hardest tasks a government can face.

It requires vision and courage to take on the vested interests within one's own party and government.

But, as Jack Straw says in the report, 'democracy is about giving power to those you disagree with.'

What I would like to see is not simply a process of giving power to those the government disagrees with.

But a process of giving power back to the people.

Back where it belongs.

By reasserting the sovereignty of Parliament, devolving more power to local government and enabling citizens to hold their representatives to account.

But parties should not only speak amongst and between themselves.

All of us interested in making change happen need to engage the public in the debate and spread the word.

That is why today, I am announcing an initiative to use new technology to bring these pressing political issues to a wider audience.

In the week before the three party conferences in the autumn, the Liberal Democrats will hold a virtual conference on the Power Commission proposals.

I would like to invite everyone - with any political affiliation or none - to take part in this discussion about the POWER analysis and to take advantage of the online discussion forums which we will make available through links with our party website.

We need to show the sceptics that the task is urgent.

We need to show that failure cannot be tolerated.

It is 174 years since the Great Reform Act of 1832.

The progress that has become the mark of our democratic society since that day has stalled.

It must be reinvigorated.

ENDS

suffrage, that is to say, the right to vote, regardless of sex, race, religion or social status.

Subclause (2) provides that, upon the coming into force of the Bill, the register of electors under the Registration of Electors Act 1984 shall have effect as the register of electors under the Bill until it has been revised in accordance with the Bill.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that clause 2 do stand part of the Bill.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Bell.

Mr Bell: I beg to second, and reserve my remarks.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the motion before the House is that clause 2 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Clause 3, Hon. Member.

Mr Earnshaw: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Clause 3 deals with the entitlement to registration.

Subclauses (1) and (2) state the qualifications for inclusion in the register.

Subclause (3) provides that a person may not be registered in more than one polling district.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that clause 3 do stand part of the Bill.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Bell.

Mr Bell: I beg to second, Mr Speaker, and reserve my remarks.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Garff, Mr Rodan.

Mr Rodan: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I wish to move an amendment to clause 3 which would have the effect, in terms of this legislation, of reducing from age 18 to age 16 the acceptance of a person onto the electoral register:

Clause 3

Page 2, line 14: for '18 years' substitute '16 years'.

Of course, in doing this, one is also expressing a very important opinion, which would, no doubt, feed through into other legislation, on the legal age to vote. I believe, Mr Speaker, this is an important principle in this connection, and it is to do with the logic by which we give persons of age 16 and 17 rights in relation to the responsibilities that we give them.

We know that at age 16 people are able to leave home, they are able to marry legally, have children, they can join the armed forces; and yet they cannot vote.

I think it is also interesting, Mr Speaker, that, at the present time, we are engaged in this very place in debate in relation to equalising the age of consent at age 16 as to which sex an individual can choose to have sexual relations with; that is being equalised. These matters, I suggest, Mr Speaker, are those which the individuals concerned at age 16 and 17 might well wish to have a view upon.

In relation to the paying of tax and NI, one can, of course, make an argument on their behalf about taxation without representation.

I know, Mr Speaker, that arguments will be raised as to whether, at that particular age, people are responsible enough or mature enough to exercise such a heavy responsibility to civic society as to vote, but my response to that is there are individuals of age 16 and 17 more than mature enough to make that decision for themselves, and they are no less able to than certain individuals at age 18, certain individuals at age 28, certain individuals at age 38, and we could go on, who could be considered not fully equipped to exercise the responsibility of voting, even individuals our age, Mr Speaker.

So I think simply to say that persons at age 16 and 17 somehow are not equipped to exercise sufficient judgement to carry out that responsibility is a flawed argument.

Mr Speaker, this is an opportunity for Members to express an opinion. There is a principle at stake here. I saw this legislation as an opportunity for Members of this Hon. House to express their views.

Whatever consensus or decision the House comes to, I will be perfectly happy with, but I think it is a good opportunity, and a timely occasion, particularly in our general election year, that we give this issue a full airing, and this is the opportunity to do so, Mr Speaker.

I have pleasure in moving the amendment to clause 3 standing in my name.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would be very pleased to second.

I have to say, Mr Speaker, I do not normally trouble myself with lying awake, worrying about decisions too much. At the end of the day, you have to make a decision, come down on the information that you have at that time, and that is pretty much the end of it; but, on this occasion, I find that my head and my heart are telling me different things.

I certainly start and finish with the principle that the mover of the amendment touched on, that if people are paying tax, then they should be entitled to representation, and I think that is a fundamental principle. I also start from the very sorry position of an almost complete lack of engagement in 16, 17, 18-year-olds, and even people in their early 20s, and that is just an unfortunate fact of life. It is a reality, and it reflects poorly on us, as well, as the body politic. Maybe that is a wake-up call that we have to actually apply ourselves to remedy.

Mr Speaker, yesterday, in the light of this amendment, I asked my friends who teach in secondary schools for their views and to get a vox pop from their students. If I could just read from one of the e-mails I got in response to that, and this is from a very well respected teacher in the south of the Island, who has the confidence and the affection of all of his students, as far as I am aware. He tells me:

'Hi Quintin

I spoke to approximately 40 Year 11 and Year 12 students this morning.

Most were not interested in voting.

1. They know nothing about politics -'

Mr Cretney: Whose fault is that?

'2. They find politics is boring.

3. They are involved in other things.

4. They feel they are too young to decide.'

And I heard the aside from my colleague from Douglas

South, 'Whose fault is that?' Our fault. Our fault is who it is, nobody else, our fault. Nonetheless, that is the response that we are getting from these young students from the south.

It does go on to say,

'These are the expected responses, but there were a couple who said "Yes, I would like to vote," and "If we all had the vote, only those who were interested would vote, anyway."'

and that is true in the electorate as we stand at the moment.

There was also the interesting, and true, aside that I then asked a couple of adults, who said adults did not know enough to vote in some cases. So there is no test to qualify to vote, other than by age.

I tested that in person at Ballakermeen yesterday in their sixth form common room, and the young people that I spoke with, we will all know, are an absolute credit to the school, to society. They are intelligent, they are engaged, personable, motivated in what they do, interested in what is around them, with, sadly, almost consistently, the exception of politics. It has no relevance to them in their lives, and that, again, is our fault.

I asked the question, looking around, notwithstanding whatever age people were, if they could all vote today, what percentage of those in the room would they guess. And each of the six groups that I asked said about 20 per cent. So you could either say 80 per cent are not voting, or you could say one in five people of that young age is interested. You take your choice.

The overwhelming advice I have had from teachers and from young people, including my own daughters, is leave the age as it is; they do not feel ready, they do not feel able. So why should I go in the face of that?

I think the reason, Vainstyr Loayreyder, we should go in the face of that is because if we do not make the effort to engage it, we are not going to break the cycle that we have found ourselves in, and increasingly find ourselves in.

Not only on the Isle of Man but in other Western jurisdictions, politics is becoming alien and distant and irrelevant to young people, and we need to break that. If we can only do that with one out of five in one election, two out of five in the following election, surely they are steps in the right direction? (A Member: Hear, hear.)

Therefore, I really do take to heart the concerns, the observations and the reservations that professionals and the young people themselves have made. I accept them wholeheartedly and I think that they actually reflect a great deal of maturity to be big enough to say we do not feel competent and able. But that is our challenge, and at the moment we are failing in it.

There has to be – if this amendment is successful, and I hope it will be – an undertaking that we will commit much more wholeheartedly than we have done. We need to succeed where we have been failing in engaging young people.

So, I really do have a mixed feeling about it, but at the end of the day, we have to decide what is right, we have to decide what kind of society we want to engage in. If we are serious about having a society which involves young people and values them, if we value them as taxpayers, we should value them as voters.

If people say, 'Well, they are not mature enough. They will make votes on what is popular, what is idealistic, rather than what is pragmatic,' what is so very wrong with that? That is, again, our challenge to actually convey our message, both as individuals and as a parliament.

I would finish by saying, Mr Speaker, that I really do think, on balance, there is a lot of reservation about this, but the principle overrides the here-and-now concern, and I hope that Members will support this amendment.

I think we should be mindful of the phrase 'no taxation without representation'. That is what we are asking young people to engage in. That is how we lost America, and that is how we will lose the next generation if we do not apply ourselves, not only in lowering the age, but in actually engaging with those people who we will enfranchise.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder.

I must admit I was going to attempt to second this, because I certainly support wholeheartedly the principle that the Hon. Member for Garff is trying to achieve here. There is no question of that.

In saying that, I do have to point out, Vainstyr Loayreyder, in the vein that the Hon. Member for Rushen has just done, not being repetitive but building on what he said, to engage young people in politics, certain efforts have to be undertaken, and one of those is to examine the systems that young people are involved in during their upbringing and schooling.

There is one thing that the education system, and activities outside the education system, such as youth clubs and other activities, fail miserably in and that is to make politics interesting and to get the young people interested in what is going on about them.

There was an absolutely excellent article in *The Sunday Times* yesterday – funnily enough by Jeremy Clarkson – talking about the education system and the fact that a lot of stuff is not made interesting for the young people. If it is not interesting, it will be boring and they will not be bothered with it. That is half the problem we have here.

We have, hopefully, opened the gate for them by the amendment that is before us, which is excellent, but the trouble is they need the motivation to go through that gate. That falls fairly and squarely in two places. One is on the education system, so that they have an awareness of our political system here; not to a depth that makes them bored solid, or us bored solid sometimes, but promotes the interesting side of it, why it is important to vote, and the fact that politics affects everything. If you do not do politics, you should not have a point of view on anything, which is how the advert goes on TV, which gets the point over fairly well.

I think a lot, lot more could be done through the education system, without levelling any criticisms at any particular person, but that is a sad fact of reality. It certainly was in my schooling as I went through the Douglas schools, anyway. Nobody had heard of Tynwald or the House of Keys hardly, and if somebody had bothered to explain it, I am sure we probably would not want to, either, because of the way some of the lessons were put over.

The other point, of course, is that we ourselves and Government, the Council of Ministers, have to find ways of engaging with the young people, too, so they can see that there are people out there interested in them, there are people who do care, and not have the divide that the Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Gill, talked about.

So, there are two very key elements to this, Vainstyr Loayreyder, that would assist.

Having listened to young people and their opinions,

they are interested in things out there. Not the same issues that, perhaps, we cover here sometimes, the restructuring of Tynwald and Legislative Council and all that, which I am sure they would find thoroughly boring and a waste of time. And the change of the Governor's name, it has caught the imaginations out there about what the heck we do here.

What they are interested in is things like drugs, alcohol, the effects they are having on their social lives and their friends. They are interested in community facilities and, in the broader spectrum, they are interested in green issues and they are interested in not becoming involved in armed conflict.

It is a slightly different range of issues, but they are issues that we all should be concerned with, and these are things I think we could engage with young folk in. I think we have missed the plot totally when it comes to that. I heard an interview with young people the other day on the radio and their opinions. Between the schools and us, we have missed the target, by miles in some cases, although plenty Members in here obviously do their best for young people. I am not levelling a criticism in that way, but there is a lot more to be done.

I hope this is the start of better things to come, Vainstyr Loayreyder.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mr Cretney.

Mr Cretney: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I will be in support of this particular amendment which has been put before the House. I welcome it and thank the Hon. Member for Garff for giving us the opportunity to again have our input into this.

The last time this was spoken of in a formal sense was when we had the Representation of the People Bill before the House of Keys, and I was floating the idea about extending voting to persons of 16.

I have said it before, but I believe, from time to time, it would be nice if the House of Keys led, rather than just copying what they do across the water. (**Three Members:** Hear, hear.) It has been well discussed across the water and the Electoral Commission has said that this is something, albeit it might be in relatively small numbers to start with, by extending the facility for young people...

That goes along with a history of extension. If you go back long enough on this Island, females did not have the vote, non-property owners did not have a vote. We have made progress, 21-year-olds and then it is down to 18. I see the next logical step as to 16-year-olds.

Sometimes, some of us in here can become a little bit out of touch with young people. The Hon. Member for North Douglas just spoke about a youth club. I have been – or I was up until about a year ago – chairman of a youth club in my constituency, had been for about 18 years or so, and –

Mr Henderson: Education scrapped them.

Mr Cretney: Well, it is a good thing, because now the young people are running the youth clubs. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) The young people are running it and I have been sacked, and that is fine because they are actually having their input, which I think is a good thing. (**Mr Earnshaw:** Hear, hear.)

At the time, I was a bit disenchanted because here I was, I had put my time in; but it is excellent that young people are prepared to not only go and enjoy the facilities of the youth

club but also get involved in the administration of those things. So, I think it is good.

The other thing he spoke about was they are interested in single issues predominantly I find. That has always been the case. I was a young person once. (*Laughter*) I sat in meetings in the Sefton when we were talking about Windscale and I was... you know, Greenpeace were over here and stuff, so we were interested in the environment then. (**Mrs Hannan:** Yes?) We still are; that is an on-going issue, I guess, for many of us.

War, student protests, if you look back long enough, young people had, and continue to have, very strong opinions on those issues. Good for them, as far as I am concerned. They want to see a better future. Sometimes those kinds of things are dictated to by people on high and are not always relevant.

I see this as a natural extension to the citizenship work which has gone on in the schools in the last period of time. The GCSEs, young people learning in a kind of gentle, easy manner the principles of democracy, the reasons why it is important to be engaged, how they can influence. Politics is about life; anybody who is not interested in politics is not interested in life.

It can be boring – oh, do we know how boring it can be sometimes! (*Laughter*) But, if you are not involved and having your say then things will just remain the same, and that is not a healthy situation, is it?

There are a number of things that young people can always do. There are a number of things being considered shortly before this House about 16-year-olds. So, I think it is entirely relevant that this debate is taking place today, and I do hope that we can take a mature attitude.

Yes, it will not transform things overnight. As it has been said by other Hon. Members, there are some people who may not be mature enough to take account of everything at 30, 40, 50, 60, or whatever, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) but if they are interested, let us give them that opportunity. They are old enough to pay tax, they are old enough to enter into sexual relationships, they are old enough to join the armed forces, and so they should be old enough to vote, and we should lead and we should show it today by voting this in.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

Mrs Hannan: Thank you, Vainstyr Loayreyder.

I support the age to 16. I think it is a major step forward. I do not know about not leading, but I think it is something we should be very much aware of, that young people do have opinions and that they should be able to express them at the ballot box.

We know that from the debates that we have in this Chamber with Junior Tynwald. They are wanting to ask questions. These are 17-year-olds, granted, but they are wanting to ask questions, they are wanting to find out about what is going on, they are prepared to debate things, they are prepared to ask questions, and they are prepared to look forward to their future, their future in their country.

I think that is what we should be looking at. We should be looking at it is their country and it is their future.

They do look at us as being oldies. When you look at them and they are 15 and they are 16, yes, we are. I think almost everybody in this Hon. House would be looked on as oldies to a 15 and 16-year-old. They do have opinions, and not all of them might be the same opinion as us, but I do not believe that is any reason why they should not have the vote.

I think we should not necessarily engage just with 16-year-olds. I think we should be prepared to engage with the whole of the community. Whether they agree with us or not, it is one way of being able to discuss issues. It is being able to, in some instances... I think, in a way, it is sort of the impression that is given by such things as Mannin Line, or that little bits that appear in the paper do not really go into things in any great detail.

Therefore, it is a responsibility on politicians, I believe, whenever the opportunity is there to discuss the issues, to develop the subject, so that people actually know more about it.

I do not know how we can get the information out. The information that we have in here and in another place is so phenomenal these days compared with what it was, say, 30 or 40 years ago, the information that we have to our fingertips. I do not know how we are going to get that over to the general public; not just 16-year-olds but right the way throughout the whole of the population. In the past, life was a little bit more simple. It is even more complex now; we are looking at all sorts of things worldwide, and how we get that out to the electorate I really do not know.

When you do try to discuss issues such as this, sometimes this glazed look comes over and they do not want to know any more. 'No thank you, I do not want to know that.'

These arguments were used about 100 years ago when it came to giving women the vote, more than 100 years ago. The debates in here were many of the comments that have been made this morning. I know the Member for Rushen is supporting this, but he was saying about some of the comments he had had, and it was those sorts of issues that women could not cope with it, (A Member: Hear, hear.) women did not know. (*Laughter and interjection*)

They still had to deal with everything, and in many instances they ran businesses, but yet they could not have the vote. If they owned property they could, but say they rented a boarding house and they ran a business, they would not have a vote, unless it was a property with rates of a particular amount.

I think this is a step forward. I am not saying that every 16-year-old will come out and vote, but then every 30-year-old does not come out to vote, or every 70-year-old does not come out to vote. We sometimes say that it is the old people that... but what if we get in there first and suggest this is not just reserved for what you might call 'oldies', it is reserved for young people to express their opinion about their future.

I hope Members will support it.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

Mrs Cannell: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

It has been a very interesting and very comforting debate so far, and I also rise to my feet to support the amendment to reduce the voting age from 18 to 16 years of age.

I can remember when we last had a brief debate on this issue. The arguments at that time were that, in fact, it could distract a young person away from studies in school and exams and that sort of thing. That was the view at that time and that prevailed. As a consequence, the age was not lowered at that time.

I was interested in what the Hon. Member for Rushen had to say, the Hon. Member, Mr Gill. He had quickly run out and wanted to test the water, as it were, with both teachers and

also students. I have to say, had he visited St Ninian's, or got in touch with St Ninian's High School, he would have got a totally different reaction from the 15, 16 and 17-year-olds there, who, in a large group, came and visited this Chamber earlier on this summer, hosted by myself and by our Senior Messenger.

I have to say, what was earmarked to be a half-hour to 45-minute visit lasted well over two hours. The reason for that was this Member did not give them a lesson in history, in politics, because that is boring for young people. This Member explained the practicalities, the membership, the idiosyncrasies of political life in here, the arguments, the votes, and all of those sorts of things, which they found really very, very interesting.

They came and they sat in various Members' seats, and what I thought we would have, maybe half a dozen questions at best, was a whole multitude of questions and a great interest afterwards, which continued by way of conversation with them outside of the Chamber on their way back to school.

There is a great interest in there. They are human beings, like all of us. If you are human with young people, they will understand. There is an interest.

Most importantly, of course, is that by reducing the age to 16, I think, the best thing that could happen is that it will encourage those who stand for election to the House of Keys, including those of us who may be defending our seats later this year, to, perhaps for the first time, focus on young people's issues, policies for young people. We will engage their interest if we focus on policies for young people.

I think, therefore, it is a positive move, and I am pleased to support.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas West, Mr Delaney.

Mr Delaney: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Briefly, because it seems to me that very few people, if any, are against the amendment moved by the Hon. Member, Mr Rodan, a very worthwhile amendment, I have this observation, as the last one to face the electorate.

Me and my colleague here, we have a number of schools, senior and junior, in our constituency. When knocking on doors around those schools, I found it interesting, particularly when young people asked me what I was... I am sure they must have thought to themselves, what is a little, fat, bald man doing carrying loads of papers and going from door to door, what is he selling? (*Interjections*) That is the interest of young people. I felt, well, I will do a bit of double glazing while I am here.

A group of them stopped me outside the senior school and asked me... and, of course, you get the usual cheek, which you expect in young people, but they were genuinely interested in what I was doing. When I pointed out I was in politics, I was a representative of the people and I was going out asking people to support me to put their views forward, it became an interesting conversation.

One young man, Michael, I can remember him well, he went up in my estimation because he told me he would not vote for any us. He went straight on that. His view was that why should we take an interest if we are not allowed to take part. Michael is quite right, because I also met so many people in the area who were mature people, running families, who had never voted because they were under 18 when the last election turned around, and four years after that, they were

into their 22nd year, in a relationship and married with young kids, some of them. They had never had a vote, yet they were taxpayers, ratepayers, everything.

That brought me round to the Hon. Member for Garff's idea. I was not convinced until, Mr Speaker, it became obvious that, when you look at what we are doing here and some of the other issues this Chamber has to face, you cannot turn round and say to people, given some of the decisions we are asking them to take in law, and given their rights in law... and, as the Member for South Douglas pointed out, there are so many of them where they have to take responsibility at 16, yet the one thing which is worthwhile, to say who is running their lives, they cannot take part in.

They cannot decide the person who is going to speak on their behalf, if they can have a say in who that person should be. That is what it comes down to. They have that basic human right, if we are asking them to take all the other responsibilities, as pointed out by the Member for South Douglas.

I also must take up a point by the mover, and I do feel offended, sometimes, by this. I have said this before in this Chamber, 25 years ago. Where we have a situation where we ask people to go and put their lives on the line to defend a thing that we are supposed to be taking part in, but they are denied the right to take part in it in a practising way by voting for the person who is going to be looking after their interest, and possibly their family, when they are away off this Island putting their lives on the line, I find that quite horrible.

I really do find that the pits of the representation of the people. You cannot expect people to defend something that they are not allowed to take part in. I find that really hurtful.

Mr Speaker, I hope – and the message that seems to be coming from Members is – that the House does do this. The Member for South Douglas is right. Let us do something different for a change. I am not saying, like some Members are saying, that all these young people will come back and change the world when they do get the vote. That is not the point.

There is one reason I think it should be started off at 16: the interest in representation. I am saying this as one of the oldest Members in here, surely get them interested? If only a small percentage, half a per cent, get interested at 16, 17 or 18, they will become interested enough to stand and represent their generations at an earlier stage.

I am saying this quite clearly: the representation, sometimes – and it was when I came here – is completely out of sync with the population. You had to be 60, virtually, or retired before you had the time, because it was not paid at the time, to come in here.

The Member for Onchan, who, unfortunately, is not here today with us, he came in as a young Member. I had queries about that in my mind when he was successful in Onchan. But, in actual fact, I think now that could be expanded to give people the interest earlier so they potentially became candidates, look after the welfare of their fellow citizens earlier.

There is nothing wrong with that because, let us be honest about it – and I will put myself up – our ideas become old hat, and they become very quickly old hat. Life changes, and it changes, as the Member for Peel said, much quicker now. Things are happening. Information is happening much quicker, and younger people can grasp this quicker than my generation can.

I believe, Mr Speaker, that the House will send the

message out: we are interested in people. They may not want to take part, but a lot of them may take part. I am sure, with the right guidance, they will become better citizens of our community if they are given the right to take part in that community to the ballot box.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mrs Craine.

Mrs Craine: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I think this is a very interesting debate. As someone who was engaged in politics before I could walk out the door, I think, (*Laughter*) as a child, it certainly did not encourage me to want to come in here any earlier than I did.

I think we have got two lines of thought here this afternoon. One is the principle of allowing children – sorry, young people – of 16 to vote (**Mr Delaney:** Young people.) and the practicalities of allowing them or encouraging them to vote.

We have heard some interesting arguments about maturity. I would agree we do not have the wholesale right on maturity just because we may be 30, 40 or 50 plus. There are a good many young people who are quite capable of putting together mature thought. (**Mr Henderson:** Hear, hear.) They are out there. I have to question, are we afraid of how they might use that vote if we give it to them? (**A Member:** No.)

Yes, as the Hon. Member for Peel said, they do regard us as old fogies in here. I was quite interested to hear, on the radio, the comments of some of the young people who were interviewed. They said, 'Oh, they are all 40 or 50 in there.' (*Laughter*) I thought, gosh, yes, that is it, we have really made it now, but when you are 16 or 17, 40 or 50 is (**A Member:** Ancient!) time to put us in a home, I think. (*Laughter*) That is their view of us.

I also think that it was quite interesting on that radio programme that there should be more young people in here, but I would have to say there is nothing to stop them coming in here. As was said before, the Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Karran, came in, I think, at 25, the youngest Member ever. He has made a career of it. He engages with young people today, and I think that we all do to a certain extent; but we have, perhaps, to make a greater effort in engaging with young people.

Mr Henderson: And the Education Department.

Mrs Craine: Then we come to the practical side of things. I would have to say that I was interested in the vox pop that the Hon. Member, Mr Gill, produced for us because that illustrated my actual thoughts. On talking to young people, they would, by and large... and I think it has to be said that the ones that we have in here for Junior Tynwald are those who are possibly studying politics in the sixth form, and not the run-of-the-mill young people who are in schools who are doing other subjects. They would need assistance to be able to understand, other than they might like who they meet on the doorstep.

I do not mean to do them a disservice in saying that. I certainly would not wish to imply that. If we were to promote voting at 16, then we also have to promote an understanding for them.

Mr Henderson: Absolutely. Hear, hear.

Mrs Craine: That cannot just come alone through

education. I think that we hear, very often in here, education, education, education is the answer to everything. Yes, it possibly is; but, by gum, the curriculum is groaning with the amount of things that we are placing on it.

Again, I think that a great deal of education still needs to come from the home, (Mr Anderson: Hear, hear.) and it does not. I do think that it is regrettable that we feel that everything – life skills, politics, how to fill your Income Tax form in – all have to come from within school and that no reliance is placed on the family to actually assist and bring up their young children.

I would think about my own children, who are now all of an age to vote and are looking forward to using their vote in November. I would reflect that they have actually said to me that they would not have wanted it before. They have shown an interest in politics but...

I accept all the arguments about tax paying, going into the services, marriage and so on. I do wonder how many young people do get married at 16, though the option is open to them. How many actually take that choice? Fair enough, the choice is there.

I have a concern that we are, all the time, trying to put adult values and aspirations onto young people, and we are not giving them any opportunity just to chill out and be young people. We are trying to make them into something that we in our 40s and 50s now appreciate and understand, and we think that they should... The very next thing, if we go with this today, is we will be criticising them for not using their vote.

I have a certain resistance to this. In some ways, I am fairly easy about it, but I do wonder, is this the time now that we should be doing this? If we are going to lower the vote to 16, then I think it should be a matter of consultation with the young people who are around today, to see is that something that they would want. We are talking about engaging with them, but we have not even engaged with them as to whether this is something that they would actually want.

I do think that, not only should we consult with them, we should be prepared to prepare them as to what that vote is about and what it means, and how it is earned and how it has been earned in the past.

I support the principle, but I cannot support it in terms of practicality here and now today. In some instances, I know I have argued against myself, but my gut feeling is that this is not something that the younger people themselves would want or welcome being imposed on them at this present time.

Accepting that they would not have to use it, I do think that it is not necessarily an indication as to their maturity or otherwise whether we give it to them or not. I just think that 18 is ample time enough to become an adult.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Glenfaba, Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to thank the last Hon. Member for her contribution. That really has put a lot of balance into this debate. It is easy to support something like, this where we think we are doing a lot of good for our young people.

I would like to respond to one or two things that Mr Henderson said. I was, I suppose, inoculated against politics very early in life. I think I was involved with my first House of Keys general election when I was 12. As I grew up with somebody who was involved in politics, it put me off for several years.

I realise that a lot of our young people are very mature and have a good understanding about the world they are living in and their aspirations for that world. However, I do think we need to stop and think, and not rush into this.

I have a burning desire that our young people should know a lot more about our political system. I am very pleased that, within our new Manx curriculum that we are developing and, hopefully, launching very soon, it will give our young people a greater understanding about the world in which they live, and the Isle of Man in particular.

I heard the comments about the curriculum being packed with all sorts of things, and not enough time for citizenship, and that sort of thing. I think we are trying to redress that balance.

In relation to one or two comments that Mr Henderson made, laying much of the blame at the door of education for our young people's lack of interest, the Department has, for some years now, initiated the Junior Tynwald, which is presided over by the President. A large number of our young people in their AS and A2 stages come into this Hon. Court and learn something about the Tynwald ceremony and everything.

In fact, we actually have five secondary schools now that take part at St John's on 5th July. They are part of the ceremony before our ceremony gets under way, and they sit and witness it. I think that is a great step forward, from previous Ministers that have introduced that.

I think our task is to continue to engage our young people in the world round about them. But I am not convinced that all of our young people are ready for it by the time they are 16. My children, for example, have only become interested in their very late teens.

We have heard today that if you do not give them the opportunity, people will not vote. I think we need to put our energy into making sure those young people are ready to vote and willing to vote when they get to 18. That is the problem we have now.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I would just caution on this amendment coming before us today. I think Mrs Craine has a very good point that we need to put it out to consultation to listen to what other views from young people themselves are.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas West, Mr Shimmin.

Mr Shimmin: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am really brought to my feet by the last two speakers. The Member for Ramsey, I could agree with a number of her issues, particularly on the element of squeezing so many things into the curriculum for young people and how, at times, we make it very difficult for them to be children because there is so much going on with the number of examinations and curriculum matters.

I must speak strongly against the Minister for Education and the Member for Ramsey on the grounds that if we wait and consult with the people who are there at this stage, I can tell you what the answer will be: they have no interest at this stage.

I think it was the Member for South Douglas who made the point that it is not going to create a large increase in the number of people who will vote at the next election; but it will become an expectation that those young people who have reached that age have an ability to do it.

What it will do is reduce the percentage of people eligible to vote who turn out, but there are so many people in all of our areas, who are of a range of ages, who show no interest in politics, who do not know who we are, who do not consider what we do, and they live their lives. Good luck to them for getting on and enjoying a life without having to spend time wondering or worrying about politics.

If we are, in the future, going to be, as has been suggested, moving towards a change in the date of the general election, possibly towards September or that time, what we are looking at are those people, every five years, who have reached the school leaving age and have then already had to make some important life decisions: to stay on in education, or to go to a place of work, or some form of training. They are already thinking about their futures.

Even if it is only a small percentage of them, this election or the next election, I believe it just becomes part of our constitution that young people, once they have reached that age, then have the opportunity, if they choose, to vote like everybody else. If they do not, if either parents or the schools or society are not prepared to invest time and energy to motivate them to vote, then that is no different from a large percentage of our population who, sadly, have disengaged with us for a variety of reasons.

The issue, then, does not become engaging just with those between 16 and 18, it is across the board, because there are many, many people, who we are all aware of when we canvass, they have no interest now, in the past, or the future, to vote. I do not think that once people have reached the age of 16 we should differentiate upon them.

As much as I can understand the comments, I do believe that this is for the future. If we wait until we have consulted and got people to agree to it, then we will probably never take that decision. I think today is a useful opportunity to say, right... and if it only creates 20 or 200 young people who vote that had not previously, then we have got them at an age when, maybe, they will do that as a lifelong choice.

I welcome the opportunity and will be supportive.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: Mr Speaker, all of us realise that Government is a serious issue, a very serious issue. Our decisions have implications for the lives of everybody. It is a responsibility and it is a civic duty, voting. It is not a gimmick. It is not something to be treated light-heartedly. The vote was won over a long period of time while people gave deep consideration to the matter.

We have now got to a stage, and rightly so, where there are 18-year-olds who have the right to vote. At that point, they have left their secondary education. They are either in employment or in tertiary education. At that point, they start to take an interest, if they are going to take an interest, in the world about them, how the world is governed and how it has implications for all of them.

They really start to take those interests when they go to university or, as I say, tertiary education, because it becomes part, not so much of the courses that they are on, but of the environment which they have become used to.

If, on the other hand, they are in a workplace, they also, listening to the others in their workplace, the older people, gather from, to use a famous phrase, the hedgerows of experience and education into the ways of the world.

To think of 16-year-olds, now there may be, and there

are, some very sophisticated, highly intellectual students of 16 years of age. I have no doubt at all that they are well able to make decisions for voting. But the vast majority at that stage of 16 do not understand the serious implications of what Government is about.

Government is a serious matter. It is about health, education, it is about law and order, it is about economic success; it is about so many different things. You, if you support this, are asking 16-year-olds to give a judgement and an opinion.

You say, well, of course, they will pay tax. Well, they will only pay tax if they are in employment. Of course, they will pay tax if they have some unearned income, and many children do these days have unearned income of money left to them by grandparents in trust. (*Interjections*)

Well, it is unfortunate, but it is a fact of life today, with house prices as they are. Lawyers will tell you that many grandparents when they die leave part of their home and the value of their home or portions of their estate for the benefit of their grandchildren. The world is moving on, long on. These things are happening. These are facts of the world in which we live.

I truly think that this idea that 16-year-olds, apart from that top echelon who are intellectually sophisticated and talented, the vast majority will not be able to appreciate or understand the issues of an election. It could become a gimmick. In my view, Government and elections and representation of the people are issues far too serious to be treated in some casual way.

We have the electoral roll at the moment, those who will be 18 in the year that the electoral roll is valid will get the vote, because it is marked on the side when they become eligible. Are we going to say that, in future, those who are 15, but becoming 16 in the year that the roll is made up, should suddenly have their name on the roll to become valid for election?

It is an issue Members will decide. It is an issue which the people we represent will take notice of. I am not sure that they have been consulted. I am not sure that all those who this will have implications for have been consulted.

Like the Minister for Education and the Member for Ramsey, Mrs Craine, I urge caution, and I will be unable to support this move by a previous Minister for Education.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Middle, Mr Quayle.

Mr Quayle: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am very supportive of the move by the Hon. Member for Garff, Mr Rodan.

I have to ask myself, why are we so dismissive of the potential voters at 16, when it has already been pointed out that they are able to do all of the things that are legally able to be done, and yet the one thing they are not able to be doing is to have the principle of voting at a general election, to cast their opinion on the people who potentially will affect their lives in so many ways.

I know everybody has genuine feelings on this but I am rather surprised that we are so dismissive of a section of our people when their vote is very important. Their views are of vital importance for us to be aware of and to take note of.

I think that if we are wondering why there is a disengagement of people with the political process, then we are not going to do anything to engender that, or to rectify the problem, by effectively disenfranchising the very people that we ought

to be encouraging, at an earlier stage in their lives than has hitherto been the case.

The other thing I would say, Mr Speaker, in closing, is that I believe that young people now are more savvy, they are more clued up about world events. I acknowledge the different things that have been said during the debate, nevertheless, I do think it is an appropriate time to be able to lower the age at which they can vote from 18 to 16.

I hope people will put to one side the latter contributions and concentrate on the contributions we had earlier on in the debate which were very positive and supportive of the amendment from the Hon. Member for Garff.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Rimington.

Mr Rimington: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Just briefly, I would like to defend the views that have been put forward by the current Education Minister, Mrs Craine and Mr Cannan, but I will not be supporting them in the vote. *(Interjections)* I think they have actually put forward –

Mr Delaney: Now we wonder why the young people are disenfranchised!

Mr Rimington: – some very good words of caution in this matter. It is not an easy matter, and it is a question of balance.

For myself, I think the balance comes down in favour of voting for those people, in bringing it down to 16, in the recognition that there will be very few of that age group who will wish to take part, and it will probably be those that do take an active interest in the world around them.

There are young people of that age, and even lower, who take that active interest; but then, as has rightly been pointed out, there are people of greater ages, all the way through, who take little or no interest, who do not vote, and people who take little or no interest but do vote, which is also potentially a problem, in that you are not necessarily getting a balanced way forward.

I do not think those contributions by all three of those speakers should be dismissed or in any way denigrated, because they did make genuine points. It is a matter of balance; it is not an easy one to resolve.

I do, Mr Speaker, declare an interest. If this amendment *(Laughter)* goes through, I have got the possibility of one extra vote –

Two Members: How do you know? *(Laughter)*

Mr Rimington: – if I can put out a three-line whip. *(Laughter)* It is just a possibility.

I would imagine the majority of young people of that age will not, in reality, be that interested. Indeed, even as we get beyond 18, there is still very much a disengagement with the political process at the moment. We all know, probably, from our own knocking on doors and general research that, in fact, it is the more elderly population, or as you get older, the more likely people are to turn out and take an active interest in their Members.

The one point I would like to pick up on, which I think is worth saying, is what Mr Cannan said, it might become a gimmick. There is that danger. There is that danger, where things are put forward in a very simplistic and popular way,

and you are not getting, maybe, the depth and range of arguments around an issue, and people are voting without giving that balance and consideration.

There is that danger, but I think it is something we have to recognise and take on board. On balance, I think we should lower the age.

Two Members: Vote.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Garff, Mr Rodan, to reply to the amendment.

Mr Rodan: Mr Speaker, I would certainly like to thank Hon. Members for making this a very worthwhile debate. I think it is a debate that does great credit to this House, to have looked at this issue in such a thoughtful manner, with various opinions expressed. The debate, as it moved along, was very effective, I think, in bringing out argument and counterargument from both sides.

Essentially, picking up from the last speaker, it is a question of balance. Yes, there may be very few who will want to take part at age 16, 17, as Mr Rimington says, and the majority may not be interested, which was the very first point Mr Gill, my seconder, made. But that is not, then, a reason for not extending the franchise to 16 and 17-year-olds.

It is all the more reason, because if we engage, as a number of speakers have pointed out, people sufficiently early, we have at least a fighting chance.

If we can engage half a per cent of them, as Mr Delaney says, or 20 or 200, I think, were the figures Mr Shimmin made, but basically making the point, if we can get even a small number engaged sufficiently early, there is a prospect of, then, a lifetime of interest, and possibly a lifetime of activism, a lifetime of activism to the extent of presenting themselves as candidates.

And, yes, I will be quite upfront on the question raised by those urging caution like Mr Anderson, Mrs Craine and Mr Cannan, that there has not been a specific consultation exercise. The matters before us have been of fairly short duration. I, personally, felt that it would be wrong to let the opportunity slip. Nonetheless, the issues have been in the public domain before.

I think one could say that the Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mr Cretney, is a long-standing advocate of this issue, and he is absolutely correct to say that here is an opportunity for the House of Keys to give a lead in this subject. It has been the subject of an electoral commission in the United Kingdom, as he says, whose recommendation is that the matter be reviewed in another five years, once citizenship compulsory education has had time to feed through the school system; that was the reason. A particular political party there at the moment is all for it, but that seems to be the consensus, certainly amongst the main parties.

I would say that this is, in fact, the matter that gives us the opportunity. We are on the brink of citizenship education and civic responsibility in the schools. It is only at Key Stage 3 at the moment, but it is coming into the older groups, to the extent that the 16 and 17-year-olds of today, and in the immediate years to come, will be better placed than any 16 and 17-year-olds of the past to actually be able to evaluate the issues.

It is for that reason that I disagree with Mr Cannan when he says only at 18, when you go into tertiary education, do you really start to seriously think about these issues. I do

agree with him that the vast majority at 16 do not necessarily understand the implications, but in acknowledging that, to say that, therefore, do not give them the opportunity to engage, I think that undervalues young people.

Just as the Isle of Man pioneered in giving women the vote in the 1880s and did away, as has been said, with the property vote, and in the 1970s, reducing the age from 21 to 18, here is an opportunity for the Isle of Man again to be doing pioneering work.

I thank Hon. Members for their contributions. It would be very difficult, I think, to make comment on each one, and I think at this stage, after such an interesting and mature debate, you would not wish me to go through every contribution –

Mr Rimington: Oh, go on!

Several Members: No!

Other Members: Yes!

Mr Rodan: Well, if you insist.

Mr Henderson: We will vote for you, Steve. There is no need to.

Mr Rodan: I feel the matters of principle and practicality have been well aired. As the debate has moved along, Members have put counterargument to the various points, and I think have done it very effectively. Hon. Members will make up their own mind today.

Whichever way it goes, the important thing is the matter has been given a thorough airing and an exploration this afternoon, and I think we have done the issue justice. I think we can, by our debate this afternoon, demonstrate to young people that their interests and their values have been very much at the forefront, perhaps all too rarely, (A Member: Hear, hear.) of our thinking as legislators.

I think the way we have approached this debate at least demonstrates that issues of concern to young people, taking the form this afternoon of giving them the right to vote, nonetheless ought at least to be at the forefront of our thinking. I would hope that, however the vote goes, that will continue to be the case, and I beg to move, sir.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Earnshaw, to reply to the clause.

Mr Earnshaw: Yes, thank you Mr Speaker.

I think we can fairly describe that as a clause and a half today, or an amendment and a half. It is not often that we have a debate that lasts around about an hour over one clause. It has been a very interesting debate, and I would like to thank the mover of the amendment for tabling it today and Hon. Members for their various contributions.

It was a question that I have been looking forward to hearing the views of other Members on. We have had a host of views from both sides. I did wonder, Mr Speaker, at one point, whether we should not stand up and say we will compromise at 17. But the views have been positive.

In common with my friend, the Hon. Member for Garff, Mr Rodan, I am not going to go through them all. I would like to pick on one or two comments, though.

Firstly, the Hon. Member for South Douglas, Mr Cretney, who said politics is boring. Surely not! (Laughter)

I would also like to pick up on the comment of Mrs Craine, the Hon. Member for Ramsey, regarding consultation. I valued the comments that came from Mrs Craine; they were well considered, but regarding consultation, she is seeking that we consult with young people. I think that is valid, and consultation is a worthwhile process, but I do wonder, on some occasions, whether it is a process that we use a little bit too much, and whether we are not in danger of running into consensus government. We are here, we are elected ourselves, to make decisions, and sometimes we have to, of course, do that, and I think this may be a case in point.

Various members raised the issue of reducing the age to line it up with the age of 16 for other issues such as marriage, sexual activity, etc. Yes, I think that is a fair comment, but it does make me wonder sometimes whether we should not, perhaps, be going in the other direction with other issues. I do think that there has got to be some alignment, but whether it should be up or down is, perhaps, something that is a question.

Nevertheless, we have got to be progressive. I have heard the Hon. Member for South Douglas use this expression before about engaging with the public, and I agree with him entirely on that. We are in a situation here where we can engage with youth. We have these Tynwald visits for schools, and it sprung to my mind – I think it was the Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Gill, who was talking about the school visits, that it was keeping these people in touch with the process they had been introduced to at that point – I think the phrase ‘oaks grow out of small acorns’ comes to mind with that.

If we can build on their interest when they come for these Tynwald visits, I think it will spread. I agree with him, I think it will spread for the future.

Prior to this debate, I was sympathetic to the amendment in Mr Rodan’s name. Now, I am fairly relaxed about it. I was inclined to support it. I think that inclination has increased as the afternoon has progressed. I do wonder what real harm can it do if we adopt this, so I am prepared to support it, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the motion before the House is that clause 3 do stand part of the Bill. To that, we have an amendment in the name of the Hon. Member, Mr Rodan. All those in favour of the amendment, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

FOR	AGAINST
Mr Anderson	Mr Cannan
Mr Rodan	Mr Teare
Mr Quayle	Mrs Craine
Mr Rimington	Capt. Douglas
Mr Gill	
Mr Gawne	
Mr Houghton	
Mr Henderson	
Mr Cretney	
Mr Duggan	
Mr Braidwood	
Mrs Cannell	
Mr Shimmin	
Mr Delaney	
Mrs Hannan	
Mr Bell	
Mr Corkill	
Mr Earnshaw	
The Speaker	

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the amendment carries, with 19 votes for and 4 votes against.

I now put clause 3, as amended. All those in favour, say aye; against no. The ayes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

FOR	AGAINST
Mr Anderson	Mr Cannan
Mr Teare	
Mr Rodan	
Mr Quayle	
Mr Rimington	
Mr Gill	
Mr Gawne	
Mr Houghton	
Mr Henderson	
Mr Cretney	
Mr Duggan	
Mr Braidwood	
Mrs Cannell	
Mr Shimmin	
Mr Delaney	
Mrs Hannan	
Mr Bell	
Mrs Craine	
Mr Corkill	
Mr Earnshaw	
Capt. Douglas	
The Speaker	

The Speaker: Hon. Members, clause 3, as amended, carries, with 22 votes for and 1 vote against.

Now, Hon. Members, we move on to clause 4. Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Earnshaw.

Mr Earnshaw: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Clause 4 deals with the registration officer.

Subclause (1) provides for the appointment of a person as registration officer.

Subclause (2) specifies the functions of the registration officer.

Subclause (2) recognises that clerks of the local authorities will have local knowledge not necessarily available to the registration officer and will be invited to inspect and comment on the registers for the districts when produced.

Subclause (3) enables the registration officer to require information.

Subclause (4) makes it an offence not to comply with the requirements or to give false information.

Subclauses (3) and (4) are necessary if the registration officer is required to prepare the registers of all eligible electors. Compulsory registration as an elector does not interfere with the individual's choice to vote or not to vote.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that clause 5 do stand part of the Bill.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Bell.

Mr Bell: I beg to second, sir, and reserve my remarks.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the motion before the House is that clause 5 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Clause 6, Hon. Member.

Mr Earnshaw: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

We now move to part 2, which is the revision of registers of electors. Clause 6 deals with this revision.

Subclauses (1) and (2) provide for the revision of the register of electors on dates in each year to be specified in regulations.

Subclause (3) enables regulations to be made in respect of the revised register of electors.

Subclause (4) provides that the registration officer will place the letter 'J' against the name entered in a register of electors of any person qualified to serve as a juror.

Subclause (5) requires the registration officer to send to the coroner of each sheading, and to the Chief Registrar, a list of jurors for the sheading, in alphabetical order, and a

The following articles were taken from the Internet

Isle of Man goes to polls

By Phil Hazlewood

LONDON – Sixteen- and 17-year-olds voted for the first time in the British isles Thursday, as the Isle of Man held a landmark general election to choose members of its tiny parliament.

Electoral reform campaigners said the lowering of the voting age on the self-governing island state, off the northwest coast of England, could help tackle declining turn-outs on the British mainland.

Some 1,800 teenagers are eligible to vote for the 24 seats in the House of Keys, the main branch of the Isle of Man's bicameral parliament the Tynwald, after the self-governing island lowered the voting age from 18 this year.

The youngsters are among a 50,000-strong electorate and are now Europe's youngest voters, again blazing a trail for electoral reform for the tiny island which became the world's first country to allow women to vote in 1881.

Manx government spokesman Alistair Ramsay said that only about 700 of the 1,800 16- and 17-year-olds had registered to vote, putting the shortfall down to the late change in the law.

"We're the first country in the British isles to do this and one of the few countries in the world to go below 18. Some youngsters have got quite excited about it," he said. "I'm sure there will be interest in what happens here. It's a small experiment. It may be that the next election will be the fairer measure of how this works."

In 2004, the U.K.-wide Electoral Commission recommended the keeping the voting age on the British mainland at 18, despite the majority of responses to their consultation favouring a 16 lower limit.

Jonathan Pyke, from the youth and student wing of the Electoral Reform Society said they were watching the Manx election with interest but said it could help tackle young people's apparent apathy towards politics. Just over half of 18- to 24-year-olds did not vote in the last British general election in 2005.

"Sixteen represents that age where people have that idealism, that passion and that interest in different issues," he said. "Citizenship education (in schools) offers a fantastic opportunity to say to young people, here is your opportunity to put that interest and passion to get things done through politics and effect change."

The Isle of Man, population 78,000, is a self-governing British Crown Dependency with its own parliament, government and laws.

The Tynwald was founded by Viking settlers more than 1,000 years ago and claims to be the oldest continuous parliament in the world.

Members of the House of Keys (MHKs) are voted in at general elections every five years. New MHKs then select the new chief minister. The second chamber Legislative Council has nine members (MLCs) mostly elected by the Keys.

Although Queen Elizabeth II is head of state - or Lord of Man - and is represented in the capital by her Lieutenant Governor, the Isle of Man is not part of the United Kingdom. As a result, its people do not vote in the British general elections and therefore have no representation in the London parliament.

Election fever at primary school – Education Press Release

A PRIMARY school goes to the polls next Thursday (November 23).

On the day the Island elects its new House of Keys, Marown School, which has 162 pupils, will vote in its school

council.

Head teacher Carol Maddrell explained:

‘Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are voting to elect two representatives from each class to go forward and represent them.

‘The School Council gives children an opportunity to have a “voice” within the school and involves them in decision-making,’ Mrs. Maddrell explained.

‘It also gives the children an introduction to politics and the democratic process, which is why we are doing it the same day as the general election, to help the children understand what is happening.’



Candidates have been invited to produce posters to put up around school and prepare manifestos to help persuade their peers to vote for them. They will also be invited to present a short speech just before voting takes place.

The ballot forms will be similar to the ones used in the general election and young voters will place crosses against the candidates they wish to vote for before slotting their forms into the ballot box.

Mrs. Maddrell said:

‘This will be tied in with discussions in the classrooms about the general election and the similarities between the roles of MHKs and school council members.’

The Jersey Youth Assembly

O/R: 1275/4(10)

15th March 2006

Dear member,

JERSEY YOUTH ASSEMBLY

I am writing to inform you that the 9th Jersey Youth Assembly, organised by the local Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, will be held on the afternoon of Thursday 23rd March 2006 in the States Chamber starting at 2 p.m.

As on previous occasions the Youth Assembly will follow the format of a normal States meeting and, after the introductions, there will be a Question Time including a period of questions without notice to the Chief Minister to mirror our new procedures. Question Time will be followed by debates on a wide range of topics chosen by the young people themselves including whether euthanasia should be allowed and whether capital punishment should be introduced for certain offences against children. We are greatly encouraged by the numbers of young people wishing to take part and I am sure it will once again be a lively and interesting event.

With the exception of the questions session, only Youth Members will contribute during debates. States Members who are present to reply to questions need not remain after questions, but if they do, are respectfully requested to resist the urge to join in the debates! Space will be quite limited and there may not be many empty seats in the Chamber although there will be ample seating in the public gallery if you wish to observe the proceedings. The proceedings will once again be broadcast on BBC Radio Jersey's medium wave frequency.

After the proceedings the participants will adjourn for refreshments. Unfortunately the Old Library is being used for a court case and the only room large enough is the members' lunch room. I trust this will not cause any inconvenience to members and I would stress that members should not, in any way, feel prevented from going to and from the Computer room or Interview rooms when the young people are in the lunch room.

Yours sincerely

Michael N. de la Haye
Hon. Secretary



JERSEY YOUTH ASSEMBLY

ORDER PAPER

THURSDAY 23RD MARCH 2006

A. COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDENT

B. QUESTIONS

Written questions

Tom Coward of Victoria College will ask a question of Senator Stuart Syvret, the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the Island's preparations against an outbreak of Bird Flu.

Chloe Mattock of Jersey College for Girls will ask a question of Deputy Ben Fox, the Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding future funding of university degrees.

Megan De Ste Croix of Jersey College for Girls will ask a question of Senator Stuart Syvret, the Minister for Health and Social Services concerning the funding of the Brook Advisory Centre.

Gemma Gouyette of Beaulieu Convent School will ask a question of Deputy Ben Fox, the Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the teaching of French as a compulsory GCSE subject.

Questions to the Chief Minister

Students are invited to pose questions without notice for 15 minutes to Senator Frank Walker, Chief Minister.

C. PUBLIC BUSINESS

The legalisation of Cannabis.

Tom Le Cocq, De La Salle College

Parental consent should be granted before an abortion is performed on anyone under 16.

Frances Littler, Beaulieu Convent School

The introduction of compulsory voting in local elections.

Emily Raper, Hautlieu

The legalisation of Euthanasia in Jersey.

Emma Voak, Jersey College for Girls

The worst cases of child molestation should be considered a capital offence.

Ross McCall, Victoria College

JERSEY YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2006

The YOUTH ASSEMBLY convened on 23rd March 2006 at 2 p.m. in the States Chamber, under the Presidency of Senator L. Norman of the Executive Committee Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Jersey Branch.

CONSTITUTION

Youth Assembly Members present (52)

Chloe Mattock	Lucie Cocks	Megan Conroy
Sarah Tulip	Gabrielle Gicquel	Helen Sandeman
Emma Voak	Shannon McCauliffe	Natasha Voisin
Elena Palasmith	Leslie Le Falher	Shannon Muddimer
Megan De Ste Croix	Emily Raper	Rebecca Smith
Sundeep Watts	Rebecca Williamson	Mairi Hare
Edward Le Maistre	Lucy Corbet	Gemma Gouyette
Ross McCall	Elizabeth Cahill	Joanne Egre
Matthew Brookland	Stephanie Sanderson	Daniel Le Roy
Chris Magee	Lara Iezzoni	Henry Matson
Tyrone Rees-Davies	Kelly-Ann Thomas	Ciaran Cowham
Tom Coward	Chris Le Long	Tom Le Cocq
David Haine	Richard Brooks	Alex Watson
Tom Peters	Karla Summers-Shaw	Anthony Hibbs
Todd MacDonald	Cesare Omissi	Craig Brown
Stefan Chinniah	Frances Littler	James Villalard
Debbie Reeve	Delphine Tomes	
Stephanie Rose	Emma Brint	

States Members present:

Senator T.A. Le Sueur, Deputy Chief Minister
Senator S. Syvret, Minister for Health and Social Services
Deputy J.B. Fox, Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture

Communications by the President:

The President welcomed student members to the ninth Jersey Youth Assembly and advised that Senator F.H. Walker, Chief Minister had sent his apologies as he was unwell and therefore unable to attend. The President thanked Senator Le Sueur for agreeing to take his place.

QUESTIONS

Tom Coward, of Victoria College, asked the following question of the Minister for Health and Social Services –

What precautions have been put in place to attempt to protect Jersey from H5N1(Bird Flu) and in case of an outbreak what plans have been put in place to attempt to control and contain an outbreak?

The Minister for Health and Social Services replied in the following terms –

There are no cases of bird flu in Jersey at this time. To protect Jersey from bird flu the Environment Department has:

- Introduced a licensing scheme for importing live birds to Jersey
- Asked all keepers of poultry or water fowl to register with the Environment Department.
- The public have been advised not to touch dead birds and to report dead birds to the Environment

Department

- If a death looks as if it may have been due to bird flu, then tests will be sent off to a laboratory in the U.K..

The Environment Department is monitoring cases of bird flu in Europe. If cases of bird flu occur in Northern France or the U.K., all U.K. domestic birds will be required to be kept inside.

If we get cases of bird flu in Jersey an exclusion zone following veterinary procedures will be set up and live birds within the same flock will be killed.

The Environment Department will give advice to poultry workers and the Health and Social Services Department will give advice to the public if a case occurs in Jersey.

Chloe Mattock, of Jersey College for Girls, asked the following question of the Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture –

What sort of parental contribution is going to have to be made for 2007 entry undergraduates from Jersey?

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture replied in the following terms –

The current system of grant aid for young people entering Higher Education is based on a partnership between the States and parents. Parental Contribution is determined by family income. Faced with increasing costs of Higher Education and increasing numbers of young people from the Island wishing to enter Higher Education however, the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture has commissioned a complete review of Higher Education funding. This review will explore ways in which the burden of cost can be fairly shared between the States, the parents and Students who are the ultimate beneficiary of Higher Education. Until the outcomes of that review are known, the Minister is unable to give precise information about parental contributions beyond 2006.

Megan De Ste Croix of Jersey College for Girls, asked the following question of the Health and Social Services Minister –

How does the distribution of money to places such as Brook compare with that to health education in general?

The Health and Social Services Minister replied in the following terms –

States funding for health education and health promotion regarding s---l health comes from a variety of budgets for example, Health and Social Services, Education Sport and Culture and Home Affairs. In relation to Health and Social Services our Health Promotion Department does not presently have a dedicated post for s---l health work. However, the Health Promotion Department co-ordinates the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Certification and Healthy Schools Programme. A significant proportion of the PSHE certification focuses on s-- and relationship education (SRE) and the Healthy Schools Programme also has SRE as a component.

Both the Healthy Schools Programme and Personal, Social and Health Education certification work involves the planning and delivery of training to teachers as well as one-to-one support for teachers and youth workers regarding s-- and relationship education. In 2005 this required approximately a one and a half day a week commitment from the Health Promotion Officer leading on work regarding young people's health. This equates to circa £14,880 per annum.

The total cost of the Healthy Schools Programme (part of which relates to s----l health) to the Health Promotion Department in 2005 was £1,500 + administration costs.

The total cost for Personal, Social and Health Education certification (part of which relates to s----l health) to Health Promotion Department in 2005 was £2,200 + administration costs.

By comparison in 2005 the Health and Social Services Department contributed £233,400 to the funding of Jersey Brook.

Gemma Gouyette, of Beaulieu Convent School, asked the following question of the Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture –

In order to preserve our heritage should French remain compulsory in our Island's schools?

The Assistant Minister for Education, Sport and Culture replied in the following terms –

It is important to preserve our heritage and the teaching of French plays a major part in this.

French is part of the core curriculum at primary and secondary level up to the end of Key Stage 3 when pupils are about 14 years old. At Key Stage 4, young people are given greater individual choice in the subjects that they study. However, schools are still required to offer a modern foreign language and all schools in Jersey currently offer French.

The key task for the Department of Education, Sport and Culture and our schools in this respect is to emphasise the importance of capability in the French language and to ensure that learning the language is an enjoyable and rewarding experience for students. To this end, all our schools have links with France and many students visit that country during their primary and secondary education. A conference for students held at Hautlieu recently took place to drive home the message and a meeting of French and Jersey education officers is planned in order to explore how technological links can be used to improve language experiences of both English and French speaking students.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The legalisation of Cannabis

The Assembly rejected the proposition of Tom Le Cocq from De La Salle College that Cannabis should be legalised for medical and personal usage.

Parental consent for abortions

The Assembly adopted the proposition of Frances Littler from Beaulieu Convent School that girls under the age of 16 must receive parental consent before being granted an abortion.

The Assembly voted as follows –

POUR:

Shannon Muddimer
Natasha Voisin
Joanne Egre
Rebecca Smith
Gemma Gouyette
Emma Brint
Megan Conroy
Delphine Tomes
Mairi Hare
Frances Littler
Helen Sandeman
Lucie Cocks
Emily Raper
Elizabeth Cahill
Kelly-Ann Thomas
James Villalard
Stephanie Rose
Emma Voak
Henry Matson
Alex Watson

CONTRE:

Stephanie Sanderson
Leslie Le Falher
Lara Iezzoni
Gabrielle Gicquel
Debbie Reeve
Lucy Corbet
Rebecca Williamson
Chloe Mattock
Stefan Chinniah
Sarah Tulip
Daniel Le Roy
Anthony Hibbs
Matthew Brookland
Tom Peters
Chris Magee
Ross McCall
Karla Summers-Shaw
Elena Palasmith
Megan De Ste Croix
David Haine

ABSTAIN:

Chris Le Long
Edward Le Maistre
Todd MacDonald
Tom Coward
Sundeep Watts
Ciaran Cowham

Craig Brown
Cesare Omissi
Richard Brooks
Tom le Cocq
(24)

Tyrone Rees-Davies

(21)

(6)

One student, Mr. Shannon McCauliffe, did not vote.

The introduction of compulsory voting in elections

The Assembly rejected the proposition of Emily Raper from Hautlieu that voting in elections for Senators and Deputies should be compulsory from the age of 18 years.

The legalisation of Euthanasia

The Assembly rejected the proposition of Emma Voak from Jersey College for Girls that Jersey should commission research into the frequency of assisted dying, and the general public's views on voluntary Euthanasia; and, that Euthanasia should be legalised in Jersey, in only extreme cases, with effective controls in place, if a living will is drawn up by those over sixteen or parental consent is given for under sixteens.

Capital punishment for the worst cases of child molestation

The Assembly rejected the proposition of Ross McCall from Victoria College that the worst cases of child molestation should be considered a capital offence.

-

The Assembly rose at 5.10 p.m.

JERSEY YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2005

The YOUTH ASSEMBLY convened on 17th March 2005 at 2 p.m. in the States Chamber, under the Presidency of Senator J.A. Le Maistre Chairman of the Executive Committee Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Jersey Branch.

CONSTITUTION

Youth Assembly Members present (50)

Saul Gindill	Hannah-Louise Gillies	Anthony Davies
Thomas Wherry	Fiona Elston	Ben Morel
Christopher Ware	Vicky Trehorel	Zoë Collins
Christopher Agathangelou	Charlotte Chown	Stephanie Almeida
Simon Milner	Ruth Waters	Betty Quaranta
Gregory Servant	Carla Plater	Chris Le Long
Sunir Watts	Katherine Woodward	Richard Brooks
Michael Johnson	Barbara Littler	Mathew Robin
Philip Le Feuvre	Victoria Pirozzolo	Ben Stuart
Simon Le Feuvre	MacKenzie Monserez	Jordan Neill
Lee Gouyette	Clare Gouyet	Jessica Buttle
Tristan Rees-Davies	Ciara Jones	Jennifer Bourke
Annabel Blaine	Francine Le Neveu	Aaron O'Toole
Francesca Eddy	Victoria Keen	Kylie Walker
Charlotte Curtis	Jack Norris	Brendan Roberts
Hannah Dart	George Pierce	Johnny Poole
Sinead Brennan	Jessica Harris	

States Members present:

Senator W. Kinnard, Senator S. Syvret, Senator P.F.C. Ozouf
Senator P.F. Routier, Senator M.E. Vibert.

Communications by the President:

The President welcomed student members to the eighth Jersey Youth Assembly.

QUESTIONS

Brendan Roberts of De La Salle College asked the following question of the President of the Environment and Public Services Committee –

Now that Jersey's waste disposal plant is up for renewal, are environmentally sound alternatives being considered?

The President of the Environment and Public Services Committee replied in the following terms –

As President of the Environment & Public Services Committee, I have a two-fold interest in ensuring that, whatever plant replaces the old Bellozanne Incinerator, it is an environmentally sound alternative. Firstly, the Environment and Planning side of the Committee's role will dictate that any plant for the disposal of the Island's residual solid waste (that is, the quantity left after recyclable materials have been removed) must be environmentally acceptable, in terms of emissions and other impacts. Secondly, on the Public Services side of the Committee's responsibilities, the Committee will strive to ensure that it provides a modern waste disposal system that complies with environmental standards and represents value for money.

It must be emphasised that no final decision has yet been taken on the type of technology that will be used. However, whatever type of technology is chosen, the Committee is signed up to complying with the best European environmental standards for such a plant. These are laid down in EC Directives, and, although these

Directives refer to Incineration of Waste, they apply equally to any type of thermal treatment process for waste, such as gasification or pyrolysis (in these processes the waste is first turned into a gas, and the gas is then burnt in a gas engine to produce energy).

The problem with the existing plant, from an environmental point of view, is that it does not have a proper clean-up system for the gases that are emitted. The Committee admits openly that it is far from achieving acceptable environmental standards in this respect. Comparing emissions from the old plant with those from a modern, compliant plant, it is clear that, for every day that the old plant is running, pollutants are being produced in quantities that would be produced over the course of months, if not years, from a new plant. This is a source of concern to the Committee, over potential health issues, and a cause of embarrassment, in terms of international environmental conventions that the Island is committed to complying with.

In researching the options for the Island's residual waste disposal system, the Committee's advisers have considered numerous types of plant, including hybrid combinations of different types. The priority is that the plant chosen, as well as meeting the environmental standards, must give a reliable, secure route for the processing of the residual waste. The Island has no "back-up" disposal route, such as a landfill site for non-inert waste, as exists in other mainland jurisdictions. I hope that this will assure you that the Committee's advisers have researched these matters fully, and that the Committee will constantly have environmental matters and concerns in mind, when making proposals for the replacement of the existing residual waste disposal plant.

Christopher Aganthangelou of Victoria College asked the following question of the President of the Policy and Resources Committee –

What provisions are in place in order to ascertain the views of States employees in such professions as Education, Police and the Fire Service in relation to decisions which directly influence their operational effectiveness?

Senator W. Kinnard. Acting as Rapporteur for the Policy and Resources Committee replied in the following terms –

May I say at the outset that the States is an organisation which makes a positive effort to encourage its employees to come forward with any comments or suggestions that they may have on ways in which we can improve the quality of service to the public.

The States does this in a variety of ways. At an individual level we have in place a system of performance review and appraisal, in which employees are given the opportunity to discuss with their managers any issues that they may wish to raise, including operational matters. In addition, employees are able to raise issues at team meetings, and they are also encouraged to contribute towards a variety of States-wide initiatives. Not least of these is the Five Year Vision for the Public Sector, approved by the States in May last year, in which a commitment has been made to deliver a wide range of improvements to the public sector. As a key part of this five-year programme, a change network of 120 States employees has been established in order to promote two-way communication between management and staff.

The question refers to three departments, and I will comment on each of these in turn. In relation to the Fire Service, employees are encouraged to raise operational issues with members of the Fire and Rescue Service Association, and any points arising can then be discussed with middle and senior management.

A similar approach is taken at the States of Jersey Police, although as might be expected the detailed arrangements are slightly different. Employees are invited to raise issues with management on a continuing basis, and there is also a system of quarterly Constables' Forums at which police officers are able to discuss issues with senior management.

Turning to the education service, the Education, Sport and Culture Department has a range of structures in place to encourage discussion and debate with employees. These include the Education Consultative Council, which is attended by ESC Committee members, officers from the department, and union representatives of the Island's teaching staff, and the Departmental Consultative Council which provides a similar forum for support staff and manual workers. In addition, consultation takes place with staff as part of numerous project initiatives, and these

include ICT projects, large building developments and other projects.

In conclusion, therefore, I can advise the Assembly that there are a wide range of measures in place that are designed to ensure that employees can have their say in matters affecting operational effectiveness. It is recognised, nonetheless, that this is not an exact science, and we are always pleased to receive suggestions about further ways in which we can improve communication with our employees.

Vicky Trehorel of Jersey College for Girls asked the following question of the President of the Education, Sport and Culture Committee –

What is the Education, Sport and Culture Committee doing to encourage young Jersey graduates to return to the Island?

The President of the Education, Sport and Culture Committee replied in the following terms –

The issue of students returning to the Island is a very important one – our research suggests that 62% of local students who go away DO return within a ten year period of graduating.

The delay in their returning may be due to a number of factors. Some graduates, for example, do not wish to return immediately – preferring to develop their careers in the U.K. in the first instance, especially in law and teaching. Others may find social life in the U.K. more appealing after graduating. There is some evidence to suggest that many who return to the Island do so at a point in their lives where they have families and young children - at this point the safety, the weather and the high quality of education on offer becomes particularly attractive to them. At this point also, many may have a U.K. home to sell which will help them meet the high cost of local housing.

Some students of course are aware that the subjects they chose to study at university and the career path they choose will make it particularly difficult for them to return as there are few if any vacancies on the Island within their subject disciplines – there are more opportunities in ‘media’ in the U.K. for example – students should be aware of this before they decide what to study. There are also some major disincentives to students considering returning to the Island immediately following graduation, particularly Jersey’s high cost of housing – many, having spend three years away from home and, having lived independently, would not wish to return to live with their parents, neither can they afford the cost of local accommodation.

The ESC Department maintains a system of grant aid to ensure that all young people who can benefit from Higher Education are able to access it without falling into the level of debt experienced by many U.K. students -- this enables local students to return to the Island without being chased for repayment of student loans. We also send regular information about career opportunities in Jersey to all our students whilst in the U.K.. In partnership with the Economic Development Committee, through the Economic development strategy and through the cultural strategy, soon to be debated in the States, we are encouraging diversification of our economy to ensure that there are a variety of job opportunities in a number of employment sectors rather than simply one area.

The ESC Committee is also working towards developing higher education provision in the Island in a number of key strategic subject, thus removing the need for some students to leave the Island in the first place if they do not wish to do so. Clearly this subject is a states wide issue but the ESC Committee is doing all it can to remove the disincentives to returning and provide broader opportunities for those who wish to do so.

Aaron O’Toole of Highlands College asked the following question of the President of the Employment and Social Security Committee –

Why do mothers in full time education not get help with nursery fees?

The President of the Employment and Social Security Committee replied in the following terms –

Some mothers in full time education can get help with nursery fees in certain circumstances. There is also of course the provision of free nursery places in primary schools. Mothers are also able to gain some financial

support for nursery fees (if they have low incomes) from the Parish Welfare System and if families are paying tax, tax relief on childcare costs also helps with the cost of nursery fees. With regard to the Social Security childcare allowance there is an eligibility criteria to the allowance, in that it is built on the principle of "making work pay" and the conditions of the benefit require the claimant to have a minimum income. In cases where this threshold income is not achieved, no benefit is payable because the claimant is not in work or is "inconsiderably employed". This is different to the family allowance system where financial support is given to help with the cost of children, whether a mother or father is in or out of work. My Committee is developing a new income support system which will be looking at the provision of childcare to those who are undertaking approved training and educational courses linked to gaining employment.

Betty Quaranta of Hautlieu asked the following question of the President of the Health and Social Services Committee –

Would the Health and Social Service Committee agree that, in light of the alarming figures relating to the number of young women requiring the ‘morning after pill’, the pill should be free for all women over the age of 18?

The President of the Health and Social Services Committee replied in the following terms –

There is no alarming increase in the use of the morning after pill. Very careful public health records are kept and a clear downward trend is discernable.

Should the morning after pill be free? No medicines in Jersey are free unless the patient or client is in receipt of Health Insurance Exemption (HIE).

The cornerstone of the States’ approach to sexual health is the practice of safe sex. This achieves two objectives. Firstly, it prevents unwanted pregnancy. Secondly, (via the use of condoms) the risk of sexually transmitted disease is significantly reduced.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Anti-social behaviour orders are not a useful tool

The Assembly rejected the proposition of Jessica Buttle, Highlands College that anti-social behaviour orders were not a useful tool when attempting to tackle the problem of anti-social behaviour in Jersey.

Smoking ban

The Assembly adopted the proposition of Jack Norris, De La Salle College that smoking should be banned in all places of work, including pubs and nightclubs.

The Assembly voted as follows –

POUR:

Saul Gindill
Thomas Wherry
Clare Gouyet
Ciara Jones
Francine Le Neveu
Victoria Keen
Ruth Waters
Carla Plater
Brendan Roberts
Johnny Poole
Anthony Davies
Barbara Littler
Vicky Trehorel
Sunir Watts

CONTRE:

Jessica Harris
Christopher Ware
Simon Milner
Gregory Servant
Ben Morel
Zoë Collins
Sinead Brennan
Hannah-Louise Gillies
Fiona Elston
Charlotte Chown
Victoria Pirozzolo
Michael Johnson
Charlotte Curtis
Ben Stuart

ABSTAIN:

Chris Le Long
Richard Brooks
Lee Gouyette
Annabel Blaine
Francesca Eddy
Katherine Woodward

Philip Le Feuvre
Simon Le Feuvre
Tristan Rees-Davies
Hannah Dart
Mathew Robin
Jessica Buttle
Jennifer Bourke
Aaron O'Toole
Kylie Walker
Betty Quaranta
Stephanie Almeida
MacKenzie Monserez

(26)

Jordan Neill
Christopher Agathangelou

(18)

(6)

Changes to the role of the Connétables and the Honorary Police

The Assembly rejected a proposition of Mathew Robin, Hautlieu that –

- (i) the existing 12 Connétables (Head of Parish and Honorary Police) should cease to hold a seat in the States of Jersey; and,
- (ii) that the powers of arrest, search and charging currently held by the Honorary Police within each Parish be abolished.

The Assembly voted as follows –

POUR:

Jessica Harris
Ben Stuart
Christopher Agathangelou
Gregory Servant
Sunir Watts
Michael Johnson
Lee Gouyette
Hannah-Louise Gillies
Barbara Littler

Sinead Brennan
Ruth Waters
Carla Plater
Brendan Roberts
Johnny Poole
Jordan Neill
Mathew Robin
Richard Brooks
Chris Le Long

(19)

CONTRE:

Philip Le Feuvre
Saul Gindill
Thomas Wherry
Clare Gouyet
Ciara Jones
Tristan Rees-Davies
Christopher Ware
Simon Milner
Simon Le Feuvre
Ben Morel
Zoë Collins
Jessica Buttle
Annabel Blaine
Francesca Eddy
Charlotte Chown
Victoria Pirozzolo
Hannah Dart
Charlotte Curtis
Aaron O'Toole
Jennifer Burke
Anthony Davies
Barbara Littler
Carla Plater
Charlotte Chown
Vicky Trehorel

(25)

ABSTAIN:

Jack Norris
Fiona Elston
Francine Le Neveu
Victoria Keen
Kylie Walker
George Pierce

(6)

Relaxation of the Island's immigration Laws

The Assembly rejected a proposition of Annabel Blaine, Jersey College for Girls that Jersey's immigration laws should be relaxed to include non-EU Members (giving equal opportunities to non EU residents), but integrating population restriction to avoid over population.

The Assembly voted as follows –

POUR:

Saul Gindill
 Thomas Wherry
 Annabel Blaine
 Philip Le Feuvre
 Francesca Eddy
 Victoria Keen
 Ruth Waters
 Jack Norris
 Brendan Roberts
 Sinead Brennan
 Anthony Davies
 Jennifer Bourke
 Vicky Trehorel
 Charlotte Curtis
 Hannah Dart
 Jessica Harris
 Aaron O'Toole
 Charlotte Chown
 Hannah-Louise Gillies
 Fiona Elston

(20)**CONTRE:**

Carla Plater
 Christopher Ware
 Simon Milner
 Gregory Servant
 Ben Morel
 Zoë Collins
 Johnny Poole
 Richard Brooks
 Lee Gouyette
 Katherine Woodward
 Victoria Pirozzolo
 Michael Johnson
 Barbara Littler
 Ben Stuart
 Jordan Neill
 Christopher Agathangelou
 Clare Gouyet
 Francine Le Neveu
 Kylie Walker
 Betty Quaranta
 Stephanie Almeida
 MacKenzie Monserez
 Mathew Robin
 Jessica Buttle
 Simon Le Feuvre
 Tristan Rees-Davies
 George Pierce
 Chris Le Long **(28)**

ABSTAIN:

Sunir Watts
 Ciara Jones

(2)**Fines to reflect the cost of crimes**

The Assembly rejected a proposition of Saul Gindill, Victoria College that fines should more closely reflect the true Economic cost to society in terms of the Police and Court resources involved in dealing with the offences committed.

The Assembly voted as follows –

POUR:

Saul Gindill
 Thomas Wherry
 Clare Gouyet
 Ciara Jones
 Simon Milner
 Gregory Sevant
 Ruth Waters
 Lee Gouyette
 Michael Johnson
 Katharine Woodward
 Mackenzie Monserez
 Christopher Ware
 Christopher Agathangelou
 Sunir Watts
 Philip Le Feuvre
 Simon Le Feuvre
 Tristan Rees-Davies

CONTRE:

Francesca Eddy
 Charlotte Curtis
 Hannah Dart
 Sinead Brennan
 Jessica Harris
 Hannah-Louise Gillies
 Fiona Elston
 Charlotte Chown
 Carla Plater
 Barbara Littler
 Victoria Pirozzolo
 Francine Le Neveu
 Victoria Keen
 Jack Norris
 George Pierce
 Brendan Roberts
 Johnny Poole
 Anthony Davies
 Ben Morel
 Zoe Collins
 Stephanie Almeida
 Betty Quaranta
 Chris Le Long

ABSTAIN:

Kylie Walker
 Aaron O'Toole
 Jordan Neill
 Mathew Robin
 Richard Brooks
 Vicky Trehorel
 Annabel Blaine

(17) Ben Stuart
Jessica Buttle (26)
Jennifer Bourke (7)

Lowering the age of majority for women

The Assembly rejected a proposition of Victoria Pirozzolo, Beaulieu Convent School that the age of majority should be lowered for women as they mature earlier than men.

The Assembly voted as follows –

POUR:

Ruth Waters
Carla Plater
Clare Gouyet
Ciara Jones
Francine Le Neveu
Victoria Pirozzolo
MacKenzie Monserez
Barbara Littler

CONTRE:

Jessica Harris
Christopher Ware
Simon Milner
Gregory Servant
Ben Morel
Zoë Collins
Sinead Brennan
Hannah-Louise Gillies
Fiona Elston
Charlotte Chown
Philip Le Feuvre
Michael Johnson
Charlotte Curtis
Ben Stuart
Jordan Neill
Christopher Agathangelou
Saul Gindill
Thomas Wherry
Brendan Roberts
Johnny Poole
Anthony Davies
Vicky Trehorel
Sunir Watts
Stephanie Almeida
Simon Le Feuvre
Tristan Rees-Davies
Hannah Dart
Mathew Robin
Jessica Buttle
Jennifer Bourke
Aaron O'Toole
Kylie Walker
Betty Quaranta
Chris Le Long
Richard Brooks
George Pierce
Jack Norris
Francesca Eddy
Annabel Blaine
Lee Gouyette (40)

ABSTAIN:

Victoria Keen
Katherine Woodward

(8) (2)

The Assembly rose at 4.50 p.m.

JERSEY YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2004

The YOUTH ASSEMBLY convened on 25th March 2004 at 2 p.m. in the States Chamber, under the Presidency of Senator J.A. Le Maistre Chairman of the Executive Committee Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Jersey Branch.

CONSTITUTION

Youth Assembly Members present (55)

Hannah Ferrari-Bradley	Rohini Gangaramani	Hannah Galloway
Fran Black	Emma Richardson	Kate Brackley
Nadia Alani	Yasmin Tabbakh	Sarah Whiteley
Sarah Ingram	Francine Le Neveu	Julie Hankin
Victoria Keen	Beth Adelman	Holly Jeffrey
Lauren Horman	Tara O'Driscoll	Jasmin Olver
Jo Rotherham	Melloney Bird	Philippa Carboulec
Sarah Fisher	Jade Ecobichon-Gray	Nicola Herbert
Jack Jouanny	Gary Male	Carla Mackay
Jeremy Maçon	Tiago Pedro	Laura Perrée
Alison Pugsley	Christopher Rive	Ben Morel
Steven Lawrence	Oliver Dearie	Steven Meiklejohn
Rob O' Brien	Ben Sandeman	Philip Ashley
Angela Roberts	Marie Shales	Samantha Le Couilliard
Ciara Smith	Holly Clinton	Tobias Cook
Scott King	Adam Spurr	Ben Toudic
Brian Constantine	Tristan Rees-Davies	Michael Johnson
Simon Milner	Philip Le Feuvre	Hamish Maclachlan
Ibrahim El Gazzar		

States Members present:

Senator F.H. Walker, Senator W. Kinnard, Senator P.F.C. Ozouf
Deputy F.G. Voisin, Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier

Communications by the President

The President welcomed student members to the seventh Jersey Youth Assembly as well as Mrs. Cheryl Gillan, Treasurer of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and Member of Parliament for Chesham and Amersham, and Mr. Andrew Tuggey, Secretary of the U.K. Branch of the CPA and Regional CPA Secretary.

QUESTIONS

Hamish Maclachlan of Victoria College asked the following question of the President of the Home Affairs Committee –

Would the President please inform the Assembly how the Home Affairs Committee envisages the relationship between the Honorary and States of Jersey Police will develop over the next five years?

The President of the Home Affairs Committee replied in the following terms –

The President envisages that the relationship between the Honorary and States Police will develop in a more formal and accountable structure, which makes it clear what the public are entitled to expect from both organisations. Indeed one such formal document has been drawn up already following extensive consultation between the States Police, the Honorary Police and the Comité des Connétables. This is a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out agreed guidelines to be followed when a member of the public calls the Police

Control Room. It details the circumstances in which it is appropriate to send an Honorary Officer and those circumstances where it is necessary that the States Police attend.

This Memorandum of Understanding is currently with the Comité des Connétables awaiting their agreement. Such formal memorandums will not however replace the partnership working which is well established between the States Police and Honorary Police and continues to be strengthened by a number of positive developments, including joint participation in Operation FOCUS campaigns, which are carried out from time to time to target anti-social behaviour in St. Helier. Honorary police officers also attend States Police tasking meetings which are held to brief police officers on the weekly policing priority.

Finally, it is envisaged that selected and additionally trained Honorary officers will increasingly play a supporting role to the States Police in the island's plans to protect against terrorism and other major events in the future.

Marie Shales of Highlands College asked the following question of the President of the Privileges and Procedures Committee –

Should a Deputy elected only on a Parish-wide vote be allowed to be the President of a Committee with Island-wide responsibilities?

The President of the Privileges and Procedures Committee replied in the following terms –

In the majority of Parliaments around the world most members are elected to represent small geographical areas but, once elected or appointed as Ministers (or Presidents in the current Jersey context) are expected to carry out national or island wide responsibilities. The British Prime Minister, for example, is only elected by the people of the Sedgefield constituency but is, of course, expected to take ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the entire U.K. government.

I am conscious that there have been criticisms of the present system in Jersey which can allow members who have been elected or re-elected unopposed to be appointed as Presidents of Committees. I believe this is in fact of more serious concern than the reference to small geographical areas referred to in the question. It could be argued that members who do not have to face an election are not held directly accountable and they may not even have had to prepare a manifesto of their policies.

Different ways of combating this are being considered by the Special Committee on the Composition and Election of the States Assembly which has the same membership as the Privileges and Procedures Committee and is currently reviewing these issues. One option we are considering is the creation of larger constituencies which would be a grouping of parishes and would almost inevitably lead to contests. This would, hopefully, compel candidates to put their views forward on both parish and Island issues. Another solution, not as well favoured, is to run a second election, where those interested in Presidential (or for the future Ministerial) positions run. Although this would add to the number of elections, it would be possible to get a better idea of candidates' experience and skills, and overall suitability for senior positions, by focussing solely on persons who are seeking senior positions.

Scott King of Victoria College asked the following question of the President of the Economic Development Committee –

Could the President please inform the Assembly why competition is not encouraged in the mobile telephone industry in Jersey?

The President of the Economic Development Committee replied in the following terms –

Competition is at this very moment being encouraged in the mobile telephone industry in Jersey. This has been the case since the new Telecommunications (Jersey) Law 2002 came into force in January last year. The Law ended Jersey Telecom's legally protected monopoly and allowed for the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority to promote competition in the provision of both landline and mobile phones. I understand that the JCRA is endeavouring to make this happen.

Hannah Galloway of Jersey College for Girls asked the following question of the President of the Policy and Resources Committee –

Should the youth of the Island be represented regularly in the States?

The President of the Policy and Resources Committee replied in the following terms –

The Policy and Resources Committee believes that it is crucial to Jersey's future that young people should be engaged in the political decision-making process. Policies on issues such as housing, employment and the environment will have a direct impact on their future, and it is therefore vital that the youth of the Island should have their say.

We need to ensure that planning and housing policies recognise the desire of young people to have affordable housing, and we also need to develop ways of diversifying the economy so that a wider range of jobs and careers are available to young people.

My Committee is currently preparing a Strategic Plan which will set out aims and objectives for achievement by the States of Jersey over the next five years, and one of the key aims in this document will be 'to invest in Jersey's youth'. This aim arose out of the Imagine Jersey event and the desire of young people themselves to play an active role in the policy-making of the Island. For example, many young people would like to have more of a say in how to improve educational opportunities in the Island, including in particular more vocational and higher education options and opportunities.

In support of the aim of 'investing in youth', it is proposed that the States should actively consult with young people in planning activities, facilities and policies that directly impact on their lives.

Exactly how we go about this process of consultation will be a matter for further discussion with young people, but in the first instance my Committee is proposing the establishment of a Youth Forum, which will plan a regular channel for communication between young people and States members. The Youth Forum will also be able to serve as a training ground for our next generation of political leaders.

There are other ways for the youth of the Island to be represented in the States. In a democracy, we all have a direct influence on the political process through our right to vote, and I would urge all young people over the age of 18 years to ensure that they are registered. I would also want to positively encourage young people to consider putting themselves forward for election to the States.

In conclusion, I would wholeheartedly support the view that the youth of the Island should be represented regularly in the States, whether this should be through active consultation, through the power of the ballot box, or through direct representation as members of the Island's Assembly.

Ben Morel of De La Salle asked the following question of the President of the Environment and Public Services Committee –

How does the President propose to improve the efficiency of the Environment and Public Services Committee whilst maintaining, as far as possible, the policy aims set out by the previous Committee?

The President of the Environment and Public Services Committee replied in the following terms –

The new Environment and Public Services Committee has one of the most challenging agendas in the States. As well as running a huge range of existing services the Committee has just taken over significant budgets from the former Agriculture and Fisheries Department and the whole of the met service from Harbours and Airports Committee.

In addition to this, new policies are needed in a number of areas. For example new ways of funding and managing the public bus service has to be found; the incinerator has to be replaced and a method of funding agreed and

identified. On the Planning side more homes need to be found, a new approach to the rural economy is needed and the new Planning and Building Law needs to be brought into force.

At the same time the Committee has to achieve efficiency service and savings as a result of the fundamental spending review. This means cutting back in some areas of service and doing the same for less. This means that the Committee needs to review and ensure all its operations and services represent value for money. The public needs to be convinced that they are getting value for money for the services they pay for.

The Environment and Public Services Committee cannot do this alone or in isolation from other Committees. The move to ministerial government is changing the way the States is operated. Efficiency in the Environment and Public Services Committee will be improved by working more closely with other States departments. For example the States of Jersey needs to centralise the finance, human resources, IT and property functions.

The property services department comes under my Committee's responsibility and here I need to drive more value out of the substantial property portfolio of the States.

There is much to do within the Committee to improve efficiency and improve the performance in the eyes of the public. All this will be only achieved with an open and transparent close working relationship with the valued staff in the department. Teamwork is crucial to improvement and I determined to try and achieve this within the time available.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

The creation of a single sixth form for Jersey

The Assembly rejected the proposition of Sarah Ingram, Beaulieu Convent that a single joint sixth form should be established in Jersey.

The legalisation and taxation of soft drugs.

The Assembly rejected the proposition of Steve Meiklejohn, De La Salle College that –

- (i) certain soft drugs, namely cannabis, should be legalised
- (ii) that the proportion of money spent on punishment versus treatment for addicts should be reversed.

The removal of the Bailiff as President of the States and the creation of a Ministry of Justice

The Assembly, adopting a proposition of Laura Perrée, Hautlieu, agreed –

- (i) that the Bailiff should cease to be the President of the States of Jersey and an elected Speaker should be appointed in his place with like powers.
- (ii) that an autonomous Ministry of Justice should be created, headed by the Bailiff, which will essentially act as a scrutiny panel interpreting and monitor existing laws and implementing new ones. It will additionally be responsible for the overall machinery of the judicial system.

The removal of all religious symbols and ceremonies from schools

The Assembly rejected a proposition of Tristan Rees-Davies, Victoria College that that all visible religious symbols and religious ceremonies should be banned in schools fully under the auspices of the Education Committee.

Sunday Trading

The Assembly, adopting a proposition of Philip Ashley, Highlands College, agreed that Sunday Trading should be deregulated to provide more choice for individuals, encourage weekend Tourism and contribute to the economy

of the Island.

Members voted as follows –

Pour (36)

Adelmann, Alani, Ashley, Bird, Carboulec, Clinton, Constantine, Cook, Dearie, Ecobichon-Gray, El Gazzar, Fisher, Gangaramani, Herbert, Horman, Jeffrey, Jouanny, Lawrence, Le Couilliard, Le Feuvre, Machlachlan, Mackay, Maçon, Male, Meiklejohn, Morel, O'Brien, Olver, Pedro, Perrée, Pugsley, Roberts, Sandeman, Shales, Smith, Toudic

Contre (19)

Black, Brackley, Ferrari-Bradley, Galloway, Hankin, Ingram, Johnson, Keen, King, Le Neveu, Milner, O'Driscoll, Rees-Davies, Richardson, Rive, Rotherham, Spurr, Tabbakh, Whiteley

The introduction of an 'opt out' organ donation scheme in Jersey

The Assembly, adopting a proposition of Hannah Ferrari-Bradley, Jersey College for Girls, agreed that an opt out organ donation system should be compulsory in Jersey to replace the current opt in system.

Members voted as follows –

Pour (40)

Adelmann, Alani, Ashley, Bird, Black, Brackley, Carboulec, Clinton, Constantine, Cook, Dearie, Ecobichon-Gray, El Gazzar, Ferrari-Bradley, Galloway, Gangaramani, Hankin, Horman, Ingram, Jeffrey, Keen, King, Le Feuvre, Le Neveu, Machlachlan, Meiklejohn, Milner, Morel, O'Brien, O'Driscoll, Olver, Perrée, Richardson, Roberts, Rotherham, Shales, Smith, Tabbakh, Toudic, Whiteley

Contre (15)

Fisher, Herbert, Johnson, Jouanny, Lawrence, Le Couilliard, Mackay, Maçon, Male, Pedro, Pugsley, Rees-Davies, Rive, Sandeman, Spurr

The Assembly rose at 4.43 p.m.