

63RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF JERSEY

The Bailiff:

On this very special occasion - the 63rd anniversary of our Liberation by forces of the Crown - it is a particular pleasure to welcome His Excellency The Lieutenant Governor, and Mrs. Ridgway, in the gallery above. **[Members: Approbation]** By a happy coincidence it is also another anniversary, because on 9th May 1386 the Treaty of Windsor was signed between England and Portugal - the oldest friendship alliance still existing - and it is therefore an equal pleasure to welcome our guest of honour for the Liberation Day proceedings His Excellency Dr. Alberto Jardim, and Mrs. Jardim. **[Members: Approbation]** And finally, may I extend a welcome on behalf of Members to Colonel Korkach, the Russian Attaché from the Russian Embassy; and Seneor Gamido from the Spanish Embassy attending our meeting this morning. **[Members: Approbation]**..I give the floor to the Chief Minister.

Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):

Thank you sir, Sir, I have made many speeches in this House but none give me more pride and none make me feel more emotional than those that I have been privileged to give on Liberation Day. Making the Liberation Day speech in the States on behalf of the people of our Island is one of the greatest honours that can fall to a Jerseyman and I am humbled and deeply grateful that today is the third occasion I have been asked to do so. We are particularly privileged this year to share our services and our celebrations with the President of Madeira and I would like to add my own very warm words of welcome to those you have already expressed, Sir, to His Excellency and Mrs. Jardim. We are delighted that they have been able to join us and we hope that they much enjoy their time with us and leave with many happy memories of our Island and of our special day. A year ago when I stood here on Liberation Day I spoke of the need for us to always value our freedom and to never take it for granted. For 63 years May 9th has been a highlight - perhaps the highlight - in our calendar. A day to celebrate our freedom, a day to remember those who suffered through the dark days of occupation and in particular those who gave their lives; but a day to pay tribute to those who restored our freedom and, above all a day to celebrate that we are Jersey. We have prospered and grown as a community in so many ways since that joyous day of Liberation 63 years ago and we enjoy a remarkable quality of life, but we must never forget how different it might have been. How different it would have been had we remained occupied and governed by a foreign power who would have controlled our every move day in and day out for the last 6 decades. We must never forget that it could have happened and we should for ever be thankful that since 1945 we have been able at all times to take our own decisions, to chart our own progress and above all to be a free people. However, it has not always been easy and nor can we pretend that there have not been and continue to be problems within our society. In the past few months at Haut de la Garenne and elsewhere we have learnt of another darker side of life which existed in those intervening years between Liberation and today. Our values have been questioned as indeed has our autonomy. A cloud has descended over us all and it is a cloud that will only disperse when we have fully met the challenge it represents. The national and international media have sought to portray Jersey as a den of iniquity, but those of us who live here and who love this Island know that this is not and never has been the case. A very few people would appear to have committed vile crimes in our Island, but the vast majority of us had no inkling of that whatsoever and are truly appalled by it. Despite that we have all been tried and found guilty by the kangaroo courts of newspapers, radio and television with no regard for the truth whatsoever. We will prove the wrong; we will again use those skills we have refined over the years to meet and to overcome adversity, to show the watching world that we are more than capable of caring for victims and others who need our support and more than capable of bringing those who have committed crimes to justice, and that we meet the highest international standards in all such matters. We know that this is not only a good place to live, it is also a place where good people live. It is a place where thousands of

people work selflessly to provide support, care and assistance to all who need it; a place of charity workers, who raise a phenomenal amount of money to support good causes; enthusiasts who work tirelessly on improving our beautiful environment; the Honorary Police who add so much to our community; volunteers who support our Overseas Aid programmes; carers, the neighbours who support one another. The list of those who strive unceasingly to make Jersey a good place to live just goes on and on, and this is the real Jersey. The Jersey in which we rightly take great pride and which we love so much. I am confident that shortly a new liberation will come to Jersey, a liberation not brought about by liberating forces but a liberation brought about by truth and openness. The truth will inevitably out; the real Jersey will once again be revealed and we will again hold our heads up high, look the world straight in the eye and proclaim with immense pride “We are Jersey.” But today we celebrate and remember May 9th 1945, the suffering that preceded it and the freedom it brought for us all. Let us do that with passion, emotion, gratitude, laughter and perhaps even a few tears. **[Members: Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Thank you Chief Minister. That concludes the business of the States and the meeting will now adjourn and we will form up in the Royal Square in due course to process down to Liberation Square.