

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIR OF THE PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES
COMMITTEE BY DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER 2020**

Question

Further to the response to Written Question 386/2020, will the Committee consider and report back to Members on the use of second or third languages in other parliaments or assemblies, and whether members in other jurisdictions are required to translate their own speeches when using another official language of the body in question, as a means of determining whether existing conventions and procedures in the States Assembly in the use of its official languages are reasonable or need to be amended?

Answer

We have undertaken research. There is a limit, however, to the usefulness of these comparisons as most parliaments operating multi-lingually do so out of a necessity not comparable here.

The Singaporean Legislative Assembly, for example, allows business to be conducted in the English, Mandarin, Malay or Tamil languages, all of which may represent a particular MP's mother-tongue or sole spoken language. Simultaneous oral interpretation of speeches in Malay, Mandarin and Tamil into English and vice versa is provided by the Parliament Secretariat's Language Service Department, however, even in Singapore, under certain circumstances, a Member who desires to speak in Malay, Mandarin or Tamil is required to provide an English translation of a prepared speech and hand it to the interpreter prior to delivery of the speech.

Hearing French and Jèrriais occasionally spoken in the Assembly is a welcome dynamic and important for our character, identity and heritage as well as the promotion and survival of our native tongue. After a recent exchange on the floor of the Assembly one not only marvelled at the phonological dexterity of gifted members but the clarity and brevity of their contributions - to the extent that one was given to muse on the benefit of making the French language not optional but compulsory. These Members helpfully provided instant translations, and they are best placed so to do.

Our position remains that the Greffe is not resourced to provide an instantaneous interpretation service for speeches made in French or Jèrriais and there are no plans to introduce such a service.