

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

THURSDAY, 9th MAY 2024

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[10:30]

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

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor

I would like to welcome everyone to this sitting to mark the 79th anniversary of Jersey's liberation from German occupying forces, and of course, start with, welcoming as usual, His Majesty's representative, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor to the Chamber. **[Approbation]** There is one item of public business.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

2. The Chief Minister, Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, will make a statement on the occasion of the 79th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Island

2.1 Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Chief Minister):

Today, as we gather to commemorate the 79th anniversary of the liberation of Jersey, many Islanders will be taking the time to reflect on memories and family stories of the Occupation and the experiences of those in our community who endured 5 long years of strict oppression under Nazi rule. It is also a day when many will contemplate the meaning of freedom, not least because, even in today's world, the flame of freedom is under constant threat. On this day, we also pay tribute to the bravery of those who fought for liberty, the allied forces who spearheaded the liberation effort, those who risked everything to defy the oppressors and often paid the ultimate price, and the Islanders who bore hardship with unwavering resolve, refusing to surrender their dignity and their values. As with many other local families, I grew up with stories of the Occupation. My grandparents, Bill and Violet Farnham, had 2 children; my Uncle Alan, born in 1931, and 4 years later in 1935 the family was completed with the arrival of my father, Colin. They had an idyllic childhood, spending their holidays at the family summer house at Long Beach, Gorey, often with their cousin Graham Carpenter, who went on to become Jersey's fire chief. It was here, on 28th June 1940, that they remember the 3 of them on the beach looking for sand eels when German bombers flew over at low level. So low, in fact, that they could clearly see the pilots in the cockpit. They ran up to the perceived safety of the summer house and heard the bombs falling on La Rocque and then St. Helier. They remembered secretly listening to radio broadcasts from London. They remembered being hungry. They remembered their parents going without so they could eat. For the rest of his days, my father always ate everything on his plate, which impressed me as a child. I watched with a slight bewilderment as he ate plate after plate of unappetising looking greens. "We would have been glad of these during the war", he used to say. This was because he remembered what it was like to go without and he deplored waste. But he confided in me later in life that it was his way of respecting the sacrifices made for him by the many facing extreme hardship towards the end of the Occupation. When I once asked him what, as a boy of 10, he remembered most about Liberation Day 1945, and he thought about it for a while, and he said: "Teeth", and recalled that everybody was smiling and laughing and he could see teeth. Lots of teeth are something, he said, he had not seen for 5 long years. The family remained in Jersey throughout the Occupation, and memories of those years remained with them and all of their generation for the rest of their lives. The stories they shared with my generation served sometimes to shock and sadden, but more often to inspire and to teach us. Stories that must remain with us and must be passed down to our children and our grandchildren, because it is important that we remember that time. Year by year, as we sadly lose more Islanders who lived through the Occupation, we run the risk of diluting our collective memory of their experiences and of the sacrifices made by the millions of servicemen and women, including many from Jersey, during the liberation of Europe. In the 79 years since the day Winston Churchill

announced that our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today, Jersey has changed immeasurably. The States Assembly of which I am, and I am sure every Member here today, is immensely proud to be a part, has its own origins in the reforms made shortly after the Occupation. Since those days, we have evolved to become a much more diverse and representative group. But we must remember that the freedom we enjoy every day to live, to express ourselves, to make our own laws, and to worship without fear or repression is rooted in that day. It is also an important lesson for us to remember that freedom is hard earned but easily lost. There are members of our local community who have escaped oppression, and some Islanders with families and friends in war zones around the world right now, or who are at risk from terrorist attack; for them liberation is still to come. This is a reminder that we should act not only in our own interests, but also in the interests of others, and for those in our Island community who need our help the most. In the very best lessons from those who endured the Occupation, we should protect those who are vulnerable. Speak up for those without a voice, and act with more kindness to each other. In a world where we see freedom and rights are being taken away, ensure that we remain tolerant and respectful in our words and deeds. We may not always agree or share every opinion. We may not like how others choose to live or express themselves. But we should value the freedom to speak out. We should value the freedom to disagree. We should value the freedom that enables us to act with respect and compassion. As we look back on the events of 9th May 1945, let us draw inspiration from the past to guide us in the present and in the future. Let us honour the sacrifices of those who came before us by upholding the values of democracy, of justice and equality. In closing, may I wish all Islanders a very, very happy Liberation Day. As we celebrate, whether as part of the public festivities with family or friends or just quietly in private, I hope you will join me in taking a moment to reflect that the freedoms we enjoy today did not come about by accident. They were fought for and paid for by a generation that preceded us. For that, they deserve our love, our respect, and our heartfelt thanks. Thank you. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Chief Minister. That concludes the business of the special sitting of the Assembly and the States stands adjourned to 21st May at 9:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

[10:45]