

STATES OF JERSEY



TRADITIONAL DELIVERY OF CHRISTMAS ADDRESSES (P.168/2008): COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 18th November 2008
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Privileges and Procedures Committee has considered the Proposition of Senator S. Syvret (P.168/2008) which asks the States to maintain the status quo in relation to the giving of traditional Christmas Addresses until any change to amend the procedures is approved by the Assembly.

It should be noted first of all that the objective of the tradition has hitherto been the delivery of Christmas *Greetings*. Until 1979, the Senior Senator, also known colloquially as the “Father of the House”, presented Christmas Greetings on behalf of all States members. Since that time, 3 sets of greetings have been made, one by the Senior Senator on behalf of Senators, one on behalf of the Connétables and one by the Senior Deputy on behalf of Deputies, with a concluding greeting from the Presiding Officer.

The content of the speeches has been true to the spirit of the occasion. They may have contained comment on some of the work of the previous year of the Assembly, possibly some comment on what the following year might bring and finishing with the compliments of the season. As with all traditions, they evolve over time. For example, although the speech on behalf of the Connétables was originally made by the Senior Connétable, by agreement between the Connétables, this has latterly been delivered by the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables, who may or may not also be the Senior Connétable. It may well be that, in future, the delivery of the Traditional Christmas Greeting will evolve further.

The Committee has reviewed the Christmas Greetings which have already been transcribed in the official report for the years 2005, 2006 and 2007. With the exception of the last speech, all have followed the format described above. The Committee decided to go back further and has also had transcribed the greetings delivered in 2000 and in 1995 to provide further comparators over a longer period. Members may review the transcriptions at the Appendix.

It is clearly not possible to legislate for tradition, which is a custom handed down orally or by practice. A procedure debated and approved by the Assembly will no longer, by definition, be a tradition, and the Committee therefore does not believe that the tradition of Christmas Greetings is an appropriate matter for debate in the Assembly.

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

WEDNESDAY, 6th DECEMBER 2006

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Bailiff:

Senator Norman, the floor is yours.

18.1 Senator L. Norman:

Thank you Sir. This is a great honour for me but a very unexpected honour due to the unfortunate indisposition of Senator Syvret, on behalf of myself and my Senatorial colleagues to offer season's greetings to the other Members of the States, officers and others who support our work, although I have to say 6th December does seem a little early to be doing that. But nonetheless, it is our last sitting before Christmas. **[Interruption]** I shall not start again. We are where we are so I shall carry on from where we left off. It is natural as we approach the end of the year that we reflect on the 12 months that have just passed and if there was a theme – and each of us will have experienced different highlights and lowlights – the whole year, I think, has been based on the word “new”. We have a new Lieutenant Governor, who with Mrs. Ridgway has already established himself as a true friend of Jersey and taken an inordinate interest, not just in the affairs of the States, but in the Island as a whole. I cannot help but reflect that some Lieutenant Governors – even after 5 years – still seem to be the “new” Lieutenant Governor. General Ridgway is very much already the Lieutenant Governor and has been taken to Jersey's collective heart. I will stretch newness a little, but we have also a nearly-new Dean, who was sworn-in towards the end of last year. But he has just completed his first full year with us and I would like to reinforce the welcome that we gave him at that time, although at that time I was disappointed to discover that Robert Key was not an England batsman that I was hoping to meet. But having said that, I am sure the Dean would have been more welcome in Adelaide a couple of days ago than many of the current England batsmen. But undoubtedly the sentiments I expressed about the Lieutenant Governor can equally be expressed of the Reverend Robert Key and, without wishing to sound patronising, I congratulate him on his debating skills and look forward to hearing more from him in the New Year. Now that is something Senator Syvret would not have said. **[Laughter]** But with a caveat, of course, provided that he agrees with my point of view – that is the Dean, not Senator Syvret – **[Laughter]** Also new, Sir, we have the usual sprinkling of new Constables, whose contribution to debate and the work of this Assembly is of vital and increasing importance. We have set a new precedent which I hope will be maintained; that is completing the budget debate in one day – something perhaps we could try on other equally weighty issues. Our system of government is probably the most significant new thing and that completes its first year. Last year during these greetings speeches Senator Syvret said: “We will see how the new system of government works and whether, in fact, we have changed the culture of government in the Island and moved to something better.” There were risks and potential pitfalls with such a major change and I think all Members and officers, from humble Back-Benchers like myself right down to the Chief Minister **[Laughter]** deserve a little pat on the back for ensuring that the transfer to the new system has gone so smoothly. I think we can say, in relation to Senator Syvret's comments last year, the new system does work. I am sure it will improve further and, indeed, we have moved to something better. Sir, on behalf of the Senators, I offer season's greetings to His Excellency and Mrs. Ridgway; to you, Sir, your family; the Deputy Bailiff and his; the Dean and his family; to the Law Officers, the Greffier and all who support them; to Norma, our tea lady – who, after much machination by the

Minister for States Members' Refreshments, will be joining us for lunch later on today. To all who, directly or indirectly, work for the States; to the media; to the electorate and the public we represent; and, of course, on behalf of the Senators, to our colleagues, the Constables and the Deputies – a happy and peaceful Christmas to all.

18.2 Connétable K.P. Vibert of St. Ouen:

Sir, on behalf of the Comité des Connétables, I would like to take this opportunity to express our most heartfelt greetings to you and our fellow Members in this House. I do not claim that I will be quite as hilarious as the Senator but I will do my best, Sir. This has been a much quieter year than 2005 when the House sat for a record number of times to enable it to pass all the necessary Laws and Regulations needed to establish Ministerial government. The new government set-up has worked, as Senator Norman said, exceptionally well considering the dramatic change which it was. But that the Council of Ministers saw fit to invite the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables to sit as a non-voting Member of the Council was very much appreciated and has helped greatly in maintaining the traditional links which have always existed between the States and the Parishes. This has further strengthened the role of Connétables as the Représentant du Peuple, the role which they have held since the inception of this House and one which I would like to take this opportunity of saying: "Long may it continue." The Connétables, despite the added demands on their time parochially, have played an active part in the new Ministerial government. The Connétable of St. Clement presides over the Privileges and Procedures Committee. Three Connétables hold Assistant Minister posts and 3 serve on Scrutiny Committees, with 3 others sitting on the Planning Applications Committee. The Connétables, Sir, continue to demonstrate their eagerness to play a full and active role in the workings of this House, the role which the electorate expect of them. 2006, Sir, saw the retirement of John Germain, my predecessor, as Chairman of the Connétables and has seen the new Connétable of St. Martin join our ranks. He has already proved his worth, not only for his deep knowledge of rating matters, but for his breadth of general knowledge in winning the Island's first "Weakest Link". **[Laughter]** I would like to take this opportunity, Sir, of wishing the Connétable of St. John our very best wishes in his retirement. This is his last sitting in the House, with his successor being sworn in on Friday of this week. I would like to take this opportunity of wishing him and his wife a happy and fulfilling retirement. The highlight of 2006 for the Connétables was the bringing into force of the Law which introduced the Island-wide rate – a Law which at long last saw the end of the inequity of the funding of welfare, where 3 Parishes were carrying the bulk of the financial burden. That the introduction of the new Law went so smoothly clearly demonstrates that the Connétables had carried out a meaningful consultation process and that the majority of ratepayers had clearly understood what was being introduced. Maybe there are some lessons to be learnt by our fellow States' Members. Sitting, Sir, as I do on the Council of Ministers, gives me the unique opportunity of seeing the Council in action and I would like to congratulate them on the way that they have tackled the first year in office. Yes, they may have made some mistakes, but when one considers the complexity of the new system I believe that they have done an excellent job. The States made the correct choice of Chief Minister and on behalf of the Committee of the Connétables I congratulate Senator Walker for the way he has led the Council and on becoming the Island's first Chief Minister. I would also like to congratulate him on, possibly what may become – when history is written – a unique first Minister to be married during his term of office and I would like to wish him and Fiona our very best wishes. May I, Sir, take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those Islanders who give of their time voluntarily to the service of the parochial system? In the honorary police and any other roles, their service is the backbone of Island life. Sir, it gives me great pleasure to wish you and Lady Bailhache, the Governor and Mrs. Ridgway, the Dean and Mrs. Key, the Attorney General and Mrs. Bailhache, the Law Officers' Department, the Greffier, the Deputy Greffier and all their staff, the ushers and Norma in the Members' room a very happy Christmas and prosperous and healthy New Year. Finally, I wish our fellow Members, the Senators and Deputies a restful and relaxing Christmas and every success in 2007.

18.3 Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

Last year I urged all Members – the old ones as well as the new – to make extensive efforts to get to know one another and to resolve to work together irrespective of their political ideologies and background. I have to admit I have been pleasantly surprised. I think that message was taken on board and a lot of Members have made strenuous efforts to get to know each other and to work together. Now the new Members are not so new, as yet, and they appear to have managed to get their feet under the table. Indeed, certainly from the foot-stamping they appear to have found their feet as well on many occasions. I think we have had a productive first year and I look forward to continuing that work into the next year and the third. In making a Christmas address, Sir, I am reminded of the opportunities that I have got to say things that perhaps are not, perhaps, mainstream and I was giving some thought to Christmas in general. Our Christmas messages have come somewhat early this year – it is 6th December – and I hope it is not a forerunner or warning of global warming that everything is speeding-up that fast and Christmas will end up, as in our Antipodean parts, somewhere in the middle of summer. But in thinking about Christmas I was struck by some radio programmes just recently. We human beings, we share surprisingly quite a lot of underlying – what is the word, baggage perhaps? I cannot think of any better word at the moment – which binds us in ways that perhaps we would not realise. So I did a little bit of internet surfing and I just looked-up a couple of the major festivals that go on at this time of year. We do have the Hindu Festival of Diwali and that is a festival of lights. It also includes gift-giving and fireworks, so it is 5th November brought forward or whatever, and essentially lights. We do have the Muslim Festival of Eid and that is a celebratory meal, presents for the children, there are some similarities there and card exchanges and that is after a period of fasting – the Ramadan. The Jewish religion, we have Hanukkah, Festival of Light, and again there is the feasting, if you like, and the exchange of presents. Now, what surprised me, Sir, was that on this radio programme people were talking to children as to the differences within their religions at round about the Christmas period time and what was coming over very, very strongly was how commercial things were getting. The emphasis seemed to be moving quite strongly away from some of the softer things – the softer, more emotional things at Christmas – and there seemed to be a hard-edge being put on to the festivals and I think that is a real shame, Sir. I was a little bit surprised as well. We had those Members who wished to take the opportunity to read it, we had a small report from the Economic Development Ministry and they were talking about – here is a surprising recommendation – how about a ‘quick win’ that could be developed rapidly which will be a truly special winter offer to use a canopy of light as a focal attractor. Well, that is fine and we do have Christmas lights. But a thing I was not particularly happy with is – if we go down – Jersey has developed a Christmas festival and could probably develop a strong Christmas shopping offer. Now there is a lot more to life and living than buying presents or giving presents to people that they do not particularly want. The children, obviously, respond in this world to greater needs and requirements, and if we are outsourcing work to places like India, it does come across to me that perhaps we should be a little bit more careful in passing over some of our bad habits and encouraging the children to be as, maybe, greedy or non-sentimental about the better things for Christmas. So, with that in mind, Sir, I was also surprised last year – my children were probably more than me – was that there are 2 chinks of light that suggest perhaps that there is a new way forward and a new thinking that is beginning to take over for our festivities that we have at the end of the year. I would just like to say a few words to share with Members. My children were extremely upset and surprised – surprised first of all and upset later – when they received a gift from their auntie of 60 trees. Right. Now, they did not come in the back of a lorry but they came in an envelope and the 60 trees had been planted for them by their aunt in Africa; and, of course, children being children said: “Well, what is this? Thanks for the card.” They did not get a card and they said: “Right, when is the present coming?” because the days turned into weeks and when the present did not arrive there were a few embarrassed faces all around. I have noticed – there is a well-known charity I have shown people but I will not advertise – you can give an Alpaca package: you can give emergency shelters. Now, you could... if you are looking for a potty pressie idea installed by experts: “Our toilets prevent disease from spreading, go on buy a bog it is definitely not money down the pan.” Now this is one way forward of passing on our generosity to other countries that are in a more deprived state than ourselves and I think it has got a lot to commend it but it

is really at the other end of: “What am I going to get for Christmas?” and instead: “What could I give for Christmas?” The second point I would like to make, Sir, is that I think Christmas presence – with a C-E –, rather than Christmas presents – with a T-S – is something that we should all think about. It is becoming fashionable, slowly but surely, to instead of exchanging unwanted gifts or giving money or whatever, to spend time with family and relations and people that you respect or would like to get on with. I think that at Christmastime has got a lot to commend it. With those thoughts in mind, Sir, I would like to... not to put too much of a damper on Christmas, but it may well rain. I would like to wish from the Deputies’ benches the best seasonal compliments to yourself and Lady Bailhache and to the Deputy Bailiff and Mrs. Birt; to His Excellency, the Governor and Lady Ridgway; to all the Law Officers and their families; and to the Dean and his wife; to the members of the Greffe, to the court ushers and the tea lady –or ladies on occasion; and also to the Constables’ benches and the Senators’ benches. I wish everybody on our side a Merry Christmas and I look forward – as indeed do all the Deputies – to working with everybody in the New Year.

The Bailiff:

May I thank the Acting Senior Senator, Senior Connétable, Senior Deputy most warmly on behalf of His Excellency, the Crown Officers, the Greffier and his staff, the Viscount, the Chief Usher and his staff – and Norma, of course – for their good wishes, which are most warmly reciprocated. If the Senior Connétable and the Senior Deputy will forgive me perhaps I might particularly thank Senator Norman, who stepped into the breach and whose extemporaneous contribution was so good that my advice to him is that he ought not to prepare his speeches any more. **[Laughter]** Senator Norman spoke of newness and a new Lieutenant Governor and a new Dean and I hope he is not looking forward to a new Bailiff too shortly. **[Laughter]** May I also extend the best wishes of the Assembly to the Connétable of St. John on this, his last occasion in this Assembly, and again wish him a most happy retirement. Members sometimes ask me whether it is difficult sitting here and saying nothing and whether I occasionally feel the urge to get stuck into a debate and speak my mind. Well, the truth is: not often. Occasionally, I feel that a debate might, perhaps, have come to a conclusion a little sooner than, in fact, it did. But then, this is a parliament – a legislative assembly – and Members have the right and the duty to express their views. One thing which I will say, and I think I echo the comments of those who have spoken before me from the perspective of a detached observer, and that is that most of the concern about Ministerial government voiced before its introduction have not materialised. There may, of course, be wrinkles yet to be ironed out, but from the perspective of the President of the States, on the whole, the transition from Committee government to Ministerial government and the introduction of a system of Scrutiny have gone remarkably well. Certainly, this Assembly is as vibrant as ever and its determination to protect the rights of individual Members remains as strong as it ever was. While dispute and disagreement are of the essence of politics and, indeed, of democracy too, it has been heartening for me, as President, and I suspect for Members too, to see that the personal attacks and gratuitous unpleasantness about which His Excellency’s predecessor spoke at his valedictory speech to the Assembly, have largely, if not entirely, been absent since the last elections. It has made this Assembly more effective and, certainly, a much more pleasant place to be and all Members must take credit for that. Another noticeable change – and I am sorry that he is not here at this moment – has been the willingness of the Dean to take risks and to give us a moral and spiritual perspective on some of our debates. All non-elected Members tread with great care – rightly – in exercising their prerogative to speak in this Assembly. But I hope that Members will have welcomed the Dean’s thoughtful observations and contributions. So, finally, may I thank all Members for their support which has made the task of presiding virtually an unalloyed pleasure? **[Laughter]** I wish all Members a very happy Christmas and a restful and peaceful interlude with their families until we reconvene next year. So, in default of any other business, the meeting is now closed and we reconvene on 16th January 2007.

STATES OF JERSEY OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 13th DECEMBER 2005

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

8.1 Senator S. Syvret:

“It is customary at this time of year that the senior Senator, the senior Connétable and the senior Deputy say a few words. I hope to do that, although I confess I have not had a great deal of time to prepare my thoughts on the subject just lately. Christmas is nearly upon us and Christmas is, of course, the season of goodwill. It is also the very beginning of an entirely new system of government for the Island and an entirely new way of working and a whole new approach to addressing the issues that face our community by this Assembly. It is to be hoped that the spirit of goodwill, which we enjoy at this time of year, is carried over into the new system of government, not only in the months ahead but the years ahead, so that we can work co-operatively and constructively with one another, in which we respect our differences of opinion but we work together for the greater advantages of the community. It is important to remember that we perhaps can be very inward looking in this Chamber and perhaps, to some extent, in the Island. We need to remind ourselves, no matter what the difficulties we face at present in Jersey, they are as nothing compared to the troubles and difficulties that many, many millions and indeed billions of people around the world are experiencing. I think it is wholly right that, at this time of year, we do turn our thoughts to the outside world and the troubles, the difficulties, the poverty, the starvation and the war that affect so many places around the world and hope indeed that things improve, that governments and international bodies can in fact become more focused on addressing the needs of the world and addressing the needs of the world’s poor and dispossessed, the hungry and those victims of war. So let us hope also that some of the great good fortune and benefit that we enjoy in this Island will go out to more people around the globe in the year ahead. I would like, of course, to ask that the Assembly’s season’s greetings be extended to his Excellency and Lady Cheshire and to you, Sir, and indeed Lady Bailhache. I also think it is important and right that we extend our thanks and our gratitude to all of the Island’s public sector workforce, who work under our ultimate control and authority, for the very good job that they do. We have an excellent workforce, who work extremely well and effectively on behalf of the community. I would also like to extend season’s greetings and thanks to all of the volunteers that do tremendously important work in many areas of our society. I know from simply my perspective at Health and Social Services that a vital number of rôles are carried out by voluntary and charitable organisations throughout our community, often addressing people who are in the direst of need. Again, I think the Assembly should extend our greetings, our thanks and our appreciation to those people. We would also, I think, on the Senatorial benches, like to extend our best wishes to our fellow members, the Connétables and the Deputies. Whether that feeling of *bonhomie* will persist into the New Year, of course, remains to be seen. We will see how the new system of government works and whether in fact we have changed the culture of government in the Island and moved to some thing better. Sir, on behalf of the Senators, I wish everyone the best wishes of the season, and I hope everyone has a very happy and successful Christmas and New Year.”

8.2 Connétable J.B. Germain of St. Martin:

“On behalf of my fellow Connétables, I would like to extend our Christmas greetings to you all

and to all members of this House. It has been another busy year for the States, particularly as we prepare for the change from the committee system to the ministerial system of government. Last autumn, the States had a major debate on its composition and there was some uncertainty as to whether the Connétables would still be in this House this Christmas. However, we are still here. I was encouraged when reading Senator Walker's statement, to see his change of heart and that he is now a strong believer in the Connétables remaining in the States. The Connétables have been asked more than once in the last few months whether they will be playing an active rôle in the scrutiny of this House. In addition to their parochial responsibilities and duties, the Connétables have always been actively involved in committee work in the past and, indeed, I know several committees would have struggled to be quorate but for the attendance of the Connétables. We have, therefore, always expected to be fully involved in the new system, whether in the Executive or Scrutiny rôles. Following the elections today, Sir, it is good to note that the Connétables are represented by the Constables of St. Ouen, St. Lawrence and St. John as Assistant Ministers; the Connétable of St. Clement as Chairman of the Privileges and Procedures Committee; the Constables of Grouville and St. Peter on the Public Accounts Committee; and the Constables of Trinity, Grouville, St Brelade and St. Mary on the Scrutiny Panels. That is not a bad lot, is it, Sir? (**Approbation**) Thank you very much. It was worthwhile waiting for that. In addition, the Standing Orders provide for the first time that the Comité des Connétables is itself recognised by the States and may lodge draft legislation and propositions and answer questions. Members will know that the Comité has lost no time in availing itself of this opportunity and has today lodged a draft amendment to the Dogs (Jersey) Law, a further indication (if it is needed) that the Connétables will continue to play a full and active rôle in this Assembly and look forward to working closely with the Executive. This autumn's elections have resulted in a number of changes on the States in Senators' and Deputies' seats, but, because of the staggered election dates for the Connétables, it is not so obvious that there have been changes amongst our number as well. In fact, 4 of the Connétables are still in their first term of office, having been elected within the last 3 years. The most recent change has, of course, been the election of the Connétable of St. Brelade, and we welcome him and the other members who have recently joined the States. There may be further changes in 2006 as the terms of 5 other Connétables expire. A highlight for me this year, Sir, was the visit of Her Majesty for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Liberation. It was an honour to be able to present many parishioners who themselves had lived through the Occupation of Jersey or served in the forces during the War. The strong, royal link we enjoy is continued by the Lieutenant Governor's generous gift of oak trees and Royal Windsor Oak acorns, which the Connétables received last month. These will be planted in the Parishes. Sir John has taken an active interest in parochial life during his term of office and we wish him and Lady Cheshire well in their last few months in Jersey. Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to all those who work in an honorary capacity for our Island, particularly all the honorary officers of the Parishes and especially the Honorary Police. They are an example to us all as they serve the public. Many events, such as the Royal Visit, would not have proceeded without their willing assistance. As the States embark on a new system of government, it is perhaps appropriate to mention that the organisational structure of the Honorary Police changed earlier this year. These changes do take time to settle, and I hope that the Christmas spirit of peace and goodwill will be reflected in unity and co-operation amongst members as we seek the best for our Island whilst adjusting to the new system. Finally, Sir, we do thank you for the manner in which you preside over this House, that your door is always open and that you are always ready to offer words of advice and guidance when these are required. We also thank the Attorney General and the Solicitor General for their continued advice and support of the honorary system. Sir, on behalf of the Connétables, it gives me great pleasure to wish you, Lady Bailhache and your family, Sir John and Lady Cheshire, the Dean and Mrs. Key, Deputy Bailiff, Senators, Deputies of this House, the Attorney General Greffier of the States, the Viscount and their staff, the Ushers and Norma (our tea lady), the press

and many others associated with this House and their families a truly peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and our very best wishes for 2006.”

8.3 Deputy R.C. Duhamel:

“An unexpected pleasure that, after 12 years, I have risen to the top of the tree— as an angel or fairy, I don’t know, but time will tell. On a more formal note, Sir, perhaps I should pay tribute and thank the outgoing members from the Deputies’ benches. They are not in the House, but they have made a mark and a contribution to Island politics, and we thank them for what they have done. Likewise, I would like to formally welcome those members to the Deputies’ benches who have freshly been elected and to perhaps ask everybody to ponder on a more sober note. The Island, as we know, is sailing into uncharted waters. There will be new opportunities to plumb and fathom the hidden depths of ministerial government. That means that there are going to be different styles and different systems of working. Under the old system, as we know, the opportunities for rubbing shoulders with our colleagues were greater than perhaps under this new system. Members will remember that it was common practice for the new members to perhaps be placed on 2 Committees, and that meant that you were able to begin to talk to and to socialise and to run political arguments through and alongside a number of members – counted in 10s or 15s. Under this new ministerial government we do have a rather different system whereby a number of new members have been accelerated to the top and the opportunities for rubbing shoulders with as many members, I think, has disappeared. With this in mind, Sir, I think I would like to highlight 3 particularly memorable occurrences that I had over the last year, just to indicate the opportunities that members have got, particularly if they pursue their own initiatives, in order to flesh-out what it really means to be a politician or an effective politician in Jersey. One such occasion, Sir, was an invitation that was extended to members by the Conseil Général de la Manche to come back on one of those 3-masted sailing boats. Indeed, not many members of this House afforded themselves the opportunity to do so. I took it upon myself to persuade Deputy Peter Troy from St. Brelade that this was what he wanted to do and he didn’t really want to catch the plane at an early stage or the boat at an early stage and have dinner with his wife, that he would rather spend a number of more pleasurable hours drifting at sea. To be fair, Sir, he warmed to this and even went out and purchased a new pair of what I thought appeared to be oversized black Bermuda shorts – but there we go – in case he was called upon to swab the decks. His knees haven’t been the same since. During that time, we also had the opportunity not only just to talk to those members from Jersey who had elected to come back by that passage, but we also had an opportunity to speak to some of the Guernsey politicians who had done the same thing. I think vital, vital links were forged and communication was made with our politicians in Guernsey – something which will be of use in further years. A second occasion, Sir, that I remember quite vividly was a certain Senator ‘Typhoon’ Ted Vibert who was elected with a number of other members from our Scrutiny Panel to go on a mad-cap quick trip to Norway and back inside 12 hours. We managed to cadge a lift on a private jet and we went baggage style, but nonetheless there was a very, very useful opportunity not only to engage in long conversations with those members of Panel that otherwise wouldn’t have happened, but also to talk to the officers not only of the Department but the Scrutiny officers as well, whilst at the same time bridging the gap, so to speak, and giving a member of the public an opportunity to play a very much appreciated part in allowing us to use his private jet. The third memorable occasion, Sir – in fact there were more, but I will limit it to 3 – was a chance that I had had in France again to engage with our Chief Minister, Senator Walker. I managed to keep him up for half the night over a number of brandies – I won’t tell you how many, Sir, but I counted them on the fingers of one hand – during which we managed to have a very, very far reaching, frank and open discussion. I was most surprised and encouraged the next day when he came up and spoke to a number of members and suggested that the very essence of being a politician in Jersey and something that perhaps he had missed and a number of other members had missed was the

opportunities for social interaction. Indeed, Sir, he said that in the new House he would take it upon himself to invite all members on a frequent basis to his house in order to have political discussions and to chew the cud. I am waiting for the invitation to arrive. But, seriously, Sir, the point I am trying to put across is that we must take it upon ourselves to rub shoulders and to discuss things and to try and do whatever is best to bring out not only the best in people but to engage in sensible political talk in order to bring about what is best for the Island, because, by doing that, I feel that, in making what is best for the Island, we are playing our part in what is good for the world. So I would ask all new members and in particular the old ones to bring forward their New Year's resolution, if you make one, and to make extensive efforts to get to know one another and to resolve to work together irrespective of their political ideologies and background. With that in mind, I would like to wish from the Deputies' benches the best seasonal compliments to yourself and Lady Bailhache; and to the Deputy Bailiff and Mrs. Birt to his Excellency, the Governor, and Lady Cheshire; to all the Law Officers and their families; to the Dean; to the members of the Greffe; to the Court Ushers and the tea ladies; and also to the Constables and the Senators. In the words of Tiny Tim from Scrooge, '*Merry Christmas everyone*'. Thank you, Sir."

8.4 The Bailiff:

"May I thank the senior Senator, senior Connétable and the senior Deputy most warmly for those good wishes. The tradition of Christmas wishes from the senior members of the banks of Senators and Connétables and Deputies reminds us, I think, that we are one Assembly. We have spent today and indeed some time 2 or 3 days ago electing Ministers and electing today those who will scrutinise the actions of ministers, but this small ceremony reminds us that we are all in a sense on the same side serving the public in the interests of democracy. When I was a very small boy I had a Hornby electric train, which some members of the Assembly – perhaps many are too young, but some members of the Assembly – will remember. One began by assembling the trains, the passenger trains, the goods trains, the passenger carriages and the trucks and then one assembled the trees and shrubs and put signal boxes, lights, the points, sidings and buffers in place. It seemed to me that that was a pretty good analogy for the process which we have been engaged in the last few days. I won't suggest who might be the buffers and who might be the trains, but they are all in place. Another advantage, I think, of these exchanges of Christmas wishes is that it does allow one to bring to mind some very improbable mental images. We have heard of Deputy Troy on his knees scrubbing the decks and Deputy Duhamel playing the part of an angel. It reminds us again that this is a unified Assembly. So may I, in that spirit of goodwill, thank all those who have spoken for their warm good wishes and to reciprocate them to all members of the Assembly, their spouses and families? It has been a very active year. Highlights, I think, as the Constable of St. Martin mentioned, certainly must include the visit by Her Majesty The Queen and all the other events marking the 60th anniversary of the Liberation. It reminds us, as if we need reminding, of our close connection with the Crown. I appreciated, as I am sure did His Excellency, the good wishes extended to our Lieutenant Governor, who shows such a consistent interest in the affairs of this Assembly. So may I, on his behalf and on behalf of all the Crown Officers, the Viscount's staff, the Greffier's staff, the Chief Usher and all who serve this Assembly, wish Senators, Deputies and Connétables a relaxing and peaceful Christmas and New Year. May I join also, because one must not forget the third or perhaps it is the fifth estate, the media in those good wishes? Without the media, the public would have no means of judging what takes place in this Assembly and we extend, I am sure, collectively our good wishes to all of them as well. I thank members for their kindness and good wishes."

States of Jersey
12th December 2000

TRANSCRIPTION FROM TAPE RECORDING OF STATES MEETING

Senator Horsfall

We come to the time again for Christmas messages and I am always amazed how quickly the year seems to go by that we should be back at in this position so soon and I well remember at this time last year I included in my words a welcome to all the newly elected members and I expressed the wish that they enjoyed their work and time as States members. I feel, Sir, that this year that wish has to be replaced by congratulations because all those members have played very prominent and active roles in States affairs. I must say, more so than any other group of new members in my experience in the House. Looking back on the year I would just like to mention one or two things with a particular matter there is the threat we face from the European Union and also the OECD. These are serious matters which have taken up a great deal of highly skilled top level effort over the last year. The challenges that are posed will not go away and next year is undoubtedly going to see them come to a head. We should all be grateful to those who spend so much of their time on this issue. The going is tough but I am confident that we will reach a satisfactory conclusion. During the year, Sir, we have had some lively debates some of them have been rather long and most recently what I can only refer to as a marathon Budget debate, which was the longest again in my experience, all of which shows that democracy and debate are alive and well in this Chamber. One highlight of the year was Jersey hosting the Executive Committee and Small Countries conference of the CPA. That event went extraordinarily well and if the profuse thanks received from far flung parts of the world are anything to go by, our thanks are due to all of the hard working organisers many of them, of course, in the Greffe. When I say, Sir, that we undertook that task to make life easier for the United Kingdom which is responsible for the main conference, and as I said at the opening ceremony, we are always pleased to be able to help out one of our former colonies. We recently bade farewell to Sir Michael and Lady Wilkes, as Sir Michael's term of office came to an end. We were all sorry to see them go, however life goes on, we turn the page and now we look forward to the arrival of the new Lieutenant Governor in January. By all accounts we have in Sir John Cheshire an eminently suitable person of high military rank, which is exactly what the people of Jersey wanted. Sir John's arrival will be followed in July by a visit of Her Majesty The Queen. A visit that I am sure will brighten up our year. A year that may prove to be historically significant because we will be considering a report on the Machinery of Government due to be delivered in January by Sir Cecil Clothier. While I have no idea what it contains I feel sure that we are headed for interesting times during the year of 2001 and if I dare say it, and I know that Senator Norman will agree with me, the real start of the new millennium. Sir, it only remains for me to wish you Lady Bailhache and your family a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and also included in our good wishes are the Dean, the Crown Officers, the Greffier and, for the first time I say this, and **her** supporting staff, the ushers, Norma who looks after us in the Members Room and last but not least the members of the press that look down on us from their seats in the gallery, the hard seats I hasten to add which is no more than they deserve. **(Laughter)** To them and their families on behalf of the Senators I also wish a happy and peaceful Christmas and happy New Year. Thank you, Sir, and our good wishes go with you over the holiday season.

Connétable Pollard

Sir, this year Senator and indeed Deputy Baudains who will be speaking next, I think I could consider them "old hands" at the Christmas greeting having spoken for their first time last year. But this is my first opportunity as a senior Connétable in the House to extend the Christmas greetings on behalf of my fellow Connétales. Sir, this time last year we were on the brink of the year 2000 with a newly

constituted House as has already been said and much to appreciate. Sir, the Senator the Connétable and the Deputy each had words of advice for Christmas last year and to all the newly appointed States members, and that was that we should not be afraid to move forward, make decisions rather than just talk around issues and above all that we should retain a sense of humour, and I can hear at the back of me now, an advice that is equally relevant as we move forward into the year 2001. Sir, although not a general election year there have been nevertheless changes to the membership of this House in this last year. The Comité des Connétables has had three chairmen this year and I hope this record will not be repeated or broken in future years. Sir, on behalf of the Comité I should like to pay tribute to the former Connétables of St. Lawrence and St Mary who both chaired the Comité as part of this year and to the former Connétable of St. John who retired only last month. We wish them and their families the compliments of the season and extend a welcome to those elected to fill their positions. We also welcome Deputy Martin as a new Deputy to the House this year and also equally to the new Connétable of St. John who already, only having been a member of this House for some 2-3 weeks, has attended four States sittings, I don't think that will be beaten. Sir, likewise there have been a number of changes and Senator Horsfall has already referred to some of those including the States Greffier, the Deputy Greffier, the Attorney General and the Deputy Bailiff and the term of office of the Lieutenant Governor, General Sir Michael Wilkes as we know came to an end last autumn. Next year we look forward to welcoming the new Lieutenant Governor and has already been said Air Chief Marshall Sir John Cheshire. Senator Horsfall has summarised the main events of this year so I shall not repeat them but it has been a year in which there have been many important political debates. A year in which the public of this Island has voiced concern over various issues including, taxation both at Island and parochial level. As we anticipate debates next year on the Clothier Review, the review of government for the year 2001 census and amongst other things we must remember that we are here to serve the public that has elected us to the States as States members, and we must listen to their views and opinions whilst seeking to use our vote wisely in this House for the good of the Island in which we live. Sir, although serving the Island as members of the House and thus receiving the publicity which we may or sometimes may not appreciate we must remember many others who serve our Island in a voluntary and honorary capacity. Our Island is built on the best traditions of the honorary service and it is appropriate that we should pay tribute to the enormous amount of work carried out in the Island by so many without seeking recognition or reward. To all these people we offer our thanks and extend our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Sir, finally we do thank you for the manner in which you preside over this House, that your door is always open and that you are always ready to offer words of advice and guidance when they are required. Sir, on behalf of the Connétables it gives me great pleasure to wish you and your family, the Dean and Mrs. Seaford, the Deputy Bailiff, the Senators, Deputies of this House, the Attorney General, the Greffiers of the States, the Viscount and their staff and of course the ushers, the press and many other associated with this House in one way or another and of course their families, and we wish them a truly peaceful and enjoyable Christmas with the best wishes for the year 2001.

Deputy H. Baudains

Thank you Sir, members will know that I am always very critical of people who stand up and say "well I agree with what the previous two speakers have said" and then repeat it. I will try not to do that but of course on this occasion speaking on behalf of the Deputies I must to a certain extent and it is with pleasure that I extend our greetings from the Deputies side to you and to the Crown Officers and the Greffier and to everybody else who have been mentioned by other people. One thing that Senator Horsfall said in saying how the new Deputies have worked so hard in this session and they have done more than other ones. On behalf of those new Deputies I would like to thank you for your remarks. I think one thing that strikes me is that we have got a lot of new Deputies and a lot of old Deputies, old Senators and old Constables and young ones. But how we all seem to work so well and I think it is so important and I think of the thing that John Le Marquand taught me when I was in the Young Farmers Club, and taught all of us then "argue like mad when in Committee but come out and be

friends” (**Approbation**) and I think it is so important that we can all argue so much and yet go out in the Coffee Room and have a cup of coffee with the person we have just been pulling their policy to pieces. And I think that is so welcome. I think everybody has been mentioned that needs to be mentioned except one section of the (not of our Assembly) but our partners. I always feel, Sir, that our partners perhaps suffer more criticism than we do; I think perhaps our partners read the commentators in the Evening Post who say “Oh Deputy Baudains said this that and the other” and get upset with it for us it is like water off a ducks back at times and we don’t do, it and therefore I would like to extend our greetings not only to everyone who has been mentioned but to all our partners and the partners of the Greffe staff, the Crown Officers and your wife obviously. So, Sir, I would like to extend the compliments of the season to everyone that has been mentioned before. (**Approbation**).

Bailiff

Thank you Senator Horsfall, Connétable, Deputy Baudains for those good wishes which are warmly reciprocated by all the Crown Officers and the staff of the Assembly. It is the case, I think, and it was very appropriate that Deputy Baudains should emphasise it that at this time of year such differences there are between different parts of the Assembly are put aside and we recognise that we are one Assembly which is here for one purpose which is to serve the community of this Island. Senator Horsfall referred to the very successful Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference which took place in Jersey earlier this year and it is interesting to learn from other jurisdictions how they do things. I went to Ottawa to the House of Commons earlier this year and found myself in the Chamber at Question Time, which members might be interested to know is limited to one hour. The Chamber is very large and the acoustics are terrible so that unless the microphone is used it is almost impossible to hear anything which is being said. Both members and Ministers are limited to 90 seconds for their questions and answers respectively and the Speaker enforces these time limits quite ruthlessly by the simple expedient of cutting off the amplifier. I have a vivid mental picture of an incandescent Prime Minister cut off in his prime shaking his fist at the Speaker but of what he said almost nothing could be heard. Now tempting as the thought might be, I don’t think it would work here. Many quite difficult problems, as Senator Horsfall alluded to, face the Assembly next year and will need careful thought and ultimately wise judgement. The external threats have already been referred to. On the domestic front we have the continuing problems of poverty, the abuse of alcohol and drugs and the almost critical state of the housing market to which Deputy Le Main has referred quite recently in the respect of the perspective of young people seeking to gain a “toe hold”. I hope that all members will be able to find time over the holiday period to relax and will return refreshed to grapple with all these challenges. I, too, express the good wishes of the Assembly to the media who watch like hawks over public affairs keeping us on our toes and reporting on our deliberations sometimes with commendable accuracy. (**Laughter**) All the officers of the Assembly join with me in wishing members a very happy Christmas with their families and friends and a joyful New Year. (**Approbation**)

STATES OF JERSEY

19th December 1995

TRANSCRIPTION FROM TAPE RECORDING OF STATES MEETING

Senator R. Jeune

This is one of the opportunities for members of the House at this time to say personal and a few kind well meant words to several people. May I start by sending our good wishes to His Excellency we are full of admiration that he can stand or sit rather for a whole day here and look happy (**Laughter**) and we are delighted to see the interest you have taken in our proceedings and hope that you will continue to come and take an interest in us, but we send you all our very best wishes. (**Approbation**)

To you Mr. Bailiff we also extend our good wishes. It is your first year as Bailiff and we have been full of admiration on the way in which you have conducted this Assembly and looked after the members here. A matter for some congratulations is the way you conducted the Budget in your first year, I know, not an easy matter. (**Approbation**) And the way you stage managed this morning so that we finished our work in good time. Our thanks also to all those make the running of the government and the government machine and our part so much easier, and I think of the Crown Officers, the Greffier and Deputy Greffier, to the Ushers and the tea lady who all have a part in, dare I say, the smooth running of the government and the making of our part that much easier and we thank them all of them very much indeed. (**Approbation**) I say to all those that we include in this vote, may all your worries be 'lodged au Greffe' this Christmas time. (**Laughter**) We send to you all and to your families our best wishes for a very joyful Christmas and a New Year which will be happy, healthy and smooth running. Sir to all of you a Happy Christmas. (**Approbation**)

Connétable Hamel

Mr. Bailiff the Connétables have associated themselves with these sentiments expressed by Senator Jeune and wish you all well for Christmas and the New Year. (**Approbation**)

Deputy Rumboll

Sir, saying nice things is not the exclusive prerogative of Senators and Constables and may I on behalf of the Deputies warmly endorse the words of Senator Jeune. We all thank you, Sir, for the way in which you have conducted our affairs in this your first year and helping us all individually and dealing with the affairs of State. We wish you and your family, and you Your Excellency and Lady Wilkes, a happy and peaceful Christmas and we certainly endorse the thanks offered for the support given to us by Crown Officers, the States Greffier, Committee Clerks and all those who support us individually in the work, but particularly, Sir, we wish you and all your family a peaceful and Happy Christmas this year. (**Approbation**)

Bailiff

Senator Jeune, Connétable and Deputy Rumboll thank you very much for your kind words. I have been in or associated with politics long enough to know that when so many kind words are spoken the honeymoon period must be about to come to an end. (**Laughter**) It had been, as members will know, an eventful year and we look back over the Liberation celebrations with some nostalgia. I was looking a few days ago at some of the photographs taken in the Royal Square on VE Day and particularly at those of the spontaneous eruption of joyful community singing after the formalities, and I saw Senator

Shenton arm in arm with the Deputy of Grouville and it looked as if the Constable of St. Peter was holding hands with the Deputy of Trinity (**Laughter**). It was a reminder that the spirit of Christmas can occasionally be carried forward to other parts of the year. The House is occasionally criticised and indeed I think sometimes criticises itself for being slow and unproductive but I thought members might like to know that this year has in fact been a very productive year. Important laws on computer misuse, inquests, medicines, health care, parish rates, franchise and many others reached the statute book in 1995. Over 400 pages of primary legislation and over 800 pages of subordinate legislation became law this year. It is an achievement for which I believe that all members can feel collective satisfaction. We also, of course, had the Strategic Policy debate which was something which would very much mark the last occasion upon which Senator Jeune I think will be moving these Christmas greetings in this House. I thank you all very much for your understanding during my first year of office, I speak, I think, if I may also, on behalf of His Excellency to thank you for your warm comments to him. I, too, should like to express my thanks to all those who serve in this House and particularly to the Greffier and the Deputy Greffier of the States for their loyalty and support during the year. I hope that the spirit of Christmas descends upon all your homes over the holiday and that you all particularly those members who have suffered ill health during the year, return physically, spiritually and morally refreshed for the fray in 1996. I wish you all, a very Happy Christmas. (**Approbation**).