

2.5 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the 200th Anniversary of Fort Regent:

Would the Minister explain what plans he has, if any, to mark the 200th anniversary of Fort Regent?

Senator M.E. Vibert (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

May I thank the Constable for asking the question, which allows me to give some prominence to the 200th anniversary of Fort Regent? The foundation stone at Fort Regent was laid in November 1806 and to mark this 200th anniversary, there has been an awareness-raising programme throughout 2006, with banners in Fort Regent and a logo on literature sent out from Fort Regent. The Blue Badge Guides have included Fort Regent in many of their walks this year and highlighted the anniversary. Media coverage has highlighted the anniversary on various occasions throughout the year, and there have been photographic and art displays at the Fort. Two of the Fort's very large cannons have been refurbished and brought inside for the display. E.S.C. (Education, Sports and Culture), my department, will also be shortly publishing a conservation statement on Fort Regent which will recognise its importance as an historical monument. I am pleased to say that the Lieutenant Governor has accepted an invitation to unveil a commemorative plaque to mark the anniversary on 9th November and all States Members will shortly be receiving their invitations to that event.

2.5.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Would the Minister agree with me that the 200th anniversary of Fort Regent represents a real, positive opportunity to decide once and for all a positive future for Fort Regent, and will he undertake with his department to try to establish one in this anniversary?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes, and it is part of the Island's Strategic Plan approved by this House.

2.5.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am pleased to hear about the awareness-raising programme being run by the Minister's department. Unfortunately, it has not raised my awareness at all. I was aware that the anniversary was coming up and, of course, it is just over 2 weeks away. Does the Minister not feel it is, frankly, discourteous that the Constable of the Parish in which the Fort is situated has not been invited to any function, and indeed, as far as I am aware, the public of Jersey have not really been involved in being able to put this event in their diaries? Does he think this is a fair way and a correct way to mark such an important anniversary?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I am sorry that the Constable has been unaware. It has been featured in the *Jersey Evening Post* on several occasions and, of course, if he had visited the Fort - which is in his Parish - he would have seen large banners advertising the 200th anniversary. I am pleased to say he will be invited. Thousands of members of the public visit the Fort every day and see the displays and the fact that it is the 200th anniversary. I think that it is an opportunity to mark the 200th anniversary and we have done so. I personally would wish that we can secure the future of the Fort, and particularly improve the interpretation of the historical aspects, as we included in a plan that this

States Assembly approved some years ago now, but unfortunately, no funds have been forthcoming to enable it to be put into action.

2.5.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

The Minister does not obviously agree with me that it is discourteous not to invite a Constable to an event in his or her Parish, but to rely on the media to provide that invitation process for him. Now, of course, he has given us some information, I will be able to block off some appropriate time in the diary. Could I press the Minister on his view of the Fort? I note that there has been some fairly large structures erected on it around the signal station. Is he aware that it is a proposed S.S.I. (Site of Special Interest) and what are his comments on the damage which would appear to have been done to this building?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes, I am very aware of it, and in my original answer I stated that we had had a conservation statement prepared, so that we are fully informed in future of the historical importance of the Fort, and we would not do anything without permission and we would not do anything to damage the historic integrity of the Fort.

2.5.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

As the media has been mentioned, recent issue was given to the world heritage proposition in the media, and one of the aspects of establishing Jersey as a centre of world heritage - I believe - were the outstanding fortifications in Jersey. Will the Minister be looking into these issues to help establish Jersey, if it is desirable, for those reasons?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Certainly, and the Jersey Heritage Trust will help us in our deliberations there. Our forts and fortifications are outstanding, particularly, of course, Mont Orgueil and Elizabeth Castle, which were used in anger. Fort Regent is a newer fortification, which of course - luckily - was never required.

The Bailiff:

We come to the next question, but before I call Deputy Southern, may I remind Members, please, that Standing Orders require that all supplementary questions and answers to them should be concisely expressed?