



**RECORD OF THE MEETING
OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
HELD IN STANLEY
ON FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2008**

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The Speaker of The House
(Mr Darwin Lewis Clifton OBE)

MEMBERS (Ex-Officio)

The Honourable Chief Executive
(Dr Timothy Rupert Thorogood)

The Honourable the Financial Secretary
(Mr Keith Padgett)

Elected

The Honourable John Birmingham
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable John Richard Cockwell
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Ian Hansen
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Mike Rendell
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Janet Robertson
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Richard James Stevens
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Michael Victor Summers OBE
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

PERSONS ENTITLED TO ATTEND

The Attorney General
(David Francis William Pickup)

The Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands
(Air Commodore Gordon Moulds MBE RAF)

CLERK: Claudette Anderson-Prior MBE

PRAYERS: Reverend Richard Hines

APOLOGIES

The Honourable Dr Andrea Patricia Clausen
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

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**The Record of the meeting of Legislative Council
held on Friday 23rd November 2007**

PRAYERS

Clerk of Councils

The Election of Members to Executive Council

Mr Speaker

Honourable Member I propose to appoint both the Attorney General and the Honourable Financial Secretary as tellers for the purpose of election of Members to Executive Council.

May we proceed then to the first ballot for a representative for Stanley.

The Honourable Mike Summers is duly elected to represent Stanley constituency on Executive Council

We now proceed with a representative for the Camp constituency.

The Honourable Mike Rendell is duly elected to represent the Camp constituency

Now we proceed to a representative for either Stanley or Camp constituency.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen is duly elected to represent Stanley or Camp constituency

The overall result, The Honourable Michael Summers representing Stanley, The Honourable Michael Rendell representing Camp and the Honourable Andrea Clausen representing Stanley or Camp in this particular case.

Clerk of Councils

The confirmation of the record of the meetings of Legislative Council held on the Friday 26th September 2008.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members I have before me a record of the meeting of Friday 26th September 2008 will you please kindly signify your agreement that I may sign the minutes as a true record

Honourable Members

Aye

Clerk of Councils

Papers to be laid on the Table by the Honourable the Chief Executive

Copies of Subsidiary Legislation Published in the Falkland Islands Gazette since the last sitting of Legislative Council and laid on the table pursuant to Section 34.1 of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance 1977:

1. Wearing of Seatbelts (Amendment Regulations) 2008
2. Customs Fees (Amendment) Regulations 2008
3. Capital Equalisation Fund No 2 Order 2008

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker I am pleased to lay on the table the papers listed by the Clerk.

Clerk of Councils

Questions for Oral Answer

Question Number 17 of 2008 by the Honourable Ian Hansen

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Can the Honourable John Birmingham advise this House on the current progress at the airstrips at New Island, Beaver Island and West Point Island? Can he also inform this House on costs incurred on surveys and works undertaken to date? And, is the Honourable Member able to indicate the final costs expected before these strips are deemed operational again?

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, initial surveys were carried out at the three airstrips by the assessment team. Those were officers from Stanley Airport, the Falkland Islands Air Service and Civil Aviation Department and the Public Works Highways Section and Design Office.

The potential to lengthen these airstrips was identified. However, in each case a considerable amount of earthworks will be necessary. The PWD now needs to make a more detailed assessment of and for each airstrip with the aid of earth-moving equipment in order to be able to provide a reasonable, accurate cost of completing works to lengthen the strips. It will be necessary to move the equipment to each of the islands on the *Concordia Bay* so that these more detailed site inspections can be carried out. The first attempt to do this had to be abandoned due to unsuitable weather conditions for the *Concordia Bay*.

It is yet to be decided when a second attempt will be made. It is necessary to interrupt the *Concordia Bay's* scheduled service to allow time to get the equipment on to the islands. So this has to be planned carefully

The costs incurred to carry out the above survey work to date have been £9,650 and, additional costs of up to £20,000 are anticipated to enable the full assessments to be carried out. Once the complete assessments are carried out it would then be possible to estimate the costs of the required works to lengthen the airstrips. It is not possible to make any estimates at this stage.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Does the Honourable Member share my concern that costs may escalate to the point that it's simply unaffordable to service these locations? And, does the Honourable Member know if there is any consideration or will there be any consideration to reverting to servicing these islands using the limiting loading and take-off factors that were in use?

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the first question regarding the costs, and whether it would be worthwhile or not that, I would imagine would be a political decision. On the second, the use of these airstrips is regulated by the ASSI and it's under those regulations that FIGAS are operating at the moment.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker.

Clerk of Councils

Question Number 18 of 2008 by the Honourable John Birmingham

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, can the Honourable Janet Robertson confirm that the number of medical consultants visiting the Islands in this financial year is equal to previous years? And that those consultants clearly make more than one visit and will continue to do so?

The Honourable Janet Robertson

I am pleased to confirm that the number of Medical Consultants' planned visits to the Islands in this financial year remains unchanged and is equal to that of previous years. Outline plans also include two additional consultants to visit. It is planned for the ophthalmologist and an oral surgeon will visit.

Every effort will be made to ensure that consultants who make more than one visit to the Islands in a year will continue to do so.

However, the visits are normally arranged according to clinical demand. It should be noted that all visiting consultants for the next financial year will be reviewed as part of the whole budget process.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Janet Robertson for her answer. I have no further questions.

The Honourable Mike Summers OBE

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Janet Robertson advise the House what arrangements are normally made to advise the public when the visiting consultant will be here? It's my observation that visiting consultants come and go without the large majority of people knowing that they've been here.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I couldn't actually say for sure. I would have to certainly go back and get clarification for that. My understanding is that usually referrals are made to visiting specialists by our local medical doctors and therefore they are probably not widely advertised as you would suggest.

Clerk of Councils

Question Number 19 of 2008 by the Honourable John Birmingham:

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, will the Honourable Mike Rendell please explain the feasibility and the approximate cost of introducing an island-wide mobile phone network?

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, Government is aware and very much appreciates that the extension of the mobile phone network to Camp is seen by many to be important for social, business and safety reasons. Accordingly discussions regarding the extension of the mobile network to other locations in Camp have been taking place with Cable & Wireless for some time, particularly as a roll-out of the new Camp infrastructure takes place, which provides some new opportunities for the location of mobile equipment.

The term, islands-wide should be used with caution. It is very doubtful that total coverage of the Islands could ever be achieved and it is unlikely that all the outer islands could be covered.

As a point of comparison, total mobile coverage does not exist in the UK. However, some preliminary considerations have been given to extending coverage to the majority of the main settlements and road networks. There are a lot of variables and power is a requirement of mobile systems, thereby substantially increasing operating costs apart from the capital outlay. In very "ball park" terms, it could cost anything from £1million to £1.5million to extend mobile coverage widely throughout Camp and involves from 6 to 10 new sites. The central part of West Falkland would be very

difficult to cover and at least one completely new major site including 24-hour power with diesel back-up would need to be built. This is because of the existence of imposing mountain ranges.

However, in order to commence consideration of a programme to extend mobile coverage to Camp, Cable & Wireless was asked to provide FIG with a proposal and outline costing for the establishment of mobile stations on Sussex Mountain and Malo Hills. These locations were chosen because they would provide coverage to large areas of the most often travelled parts of Camp and provide in-fill to existing coverage from stations in Stanley and Mt Pleasant Peak.

Proposals from Cable & Wireless have now been received and they will also contain options to provide repeater nodes at Port Howard so that both sides of the Ferry Route will be covered.

Coverage predictions include areas including much of the North Camp roads infrastructure, Teal Inlet and Estancia, the track to Volunteer Point, San Carlos, New Haven and much of Lafonia.

Whilst this project is being evaluated the cost estimates are strictly confidential in confidence, commercial in confidence and subject to confirmation in due course so they cannot be revealed today. Government is currently considering these proposals including seeking views from other organisations with the intention that a table for the paper will be presented to the Executive Council in due course.

The key issue is whether we can afford to spend the money for this project in this current financial climate with so many other calls on the budget. If agreed, this will be a matter for inclusion in the 2009/10 budget. With the current emphasis on completing the Camp upgrade project work on extending the mobile network cannot realistically commence until Quarter 3 of 2009 in any event in the 2009/10 financial year.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Member for his very comprehensive answer.

The Honourable Mike Summers OBE

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, does the Honourable Mike Rendell agree with me that mobile phones are a blight of privacy and orderly life? But nonetheless they do make a contribution to safety and the art of gossiping will be much enhanced by the mobile service and it will be a very fine judgement as to whether we shall proceed?

The Honourable Mike Rendell

That would be a political decision, to be taken by colleagues. I would just like to make it known that I don't have a mobile phone but that's my own personal situation.

Clerk of Councils

Question Number 20 of 2008 by the Honourable John Birmingham

The Honourable John Birmingham

Speaker, Honourable Members, can the Honourable Mike Rendell confirm that there are plans to speed up the immigration/emigration procedures on Lan Chile flights into and out of MPA by computerising the current system?

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are no immediate plans to speed up the immigration/emigration procedures at Mount Pleasant airport in respect of LAN flights into and out of MPA by computerising the current system.

This has not been seriously considered as a high priority at this current time by reason that the Immigration/emigration Policy Working Group and immigration staff are fully engaged in the completion of a comprehensive immigration policy review. A major overhaul of the existing immigration computer databases is also currently in progress. As time and other priorities permit a range of airport processes including those as applied to passengers, will be reviewed. However, in the case of computerising the records of relevant passenger information at the point of arrival or departure, initial thoughts are that whilst it might be technically feasible, the cost of so doing for the relatively small number of passengers involved would be very high, whilst the degree of efficiency improvement and time saving achieved may well be minimal.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, can the Honourable Mike Rendell tell me whether I am the only one going through immigration that finds it strange to have to hand my passport over so that an individual who I know very well has to look at it, look at my photograph to see whether I am the same person, exciting as that might be, but also then to write down by hand my passport number that has probably gone through there countless times before?

The Honourable Mike Rendell

I would agree with the Member that it's very strange.

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Can the Honourable Mike Rendell inform me whether the opinions about the effectiveness of computerisation and speeding up the process is the opinion of somebody who is experienced in the process of computerising and the understanding in the benefits of it, or is it just the opinion of somebody who doesn't think it's a good idea.

I personally agree with the Honourable John Birmingham that the passage through customs and immigration when one arrives at the airport is just another irritation. The airport is not the best place to be hanging around and, if it is delaying people coming through, particularly tourists, it isn't doing our reputation very much good.

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Yes. I would agree with the sentiments made by the Honourable Member. Having recently coming through myself, a matter of two or three weeks ago, it seems to me that the issue is much broader than just computerising immigration details when people arrive. It's the whole design of the area. It's the way in which baggage is collected, brought through, the way in which inspection of baggage is carried out. There are a host of issues which completely need to be revised. In my opinion the current system is abysmal and, although there have been a number of studies over the years to try and improve things I just don't think we are getting anywhere at all and I do believe that a total change needs to be considered.

The Honourable Mike Summers OBE

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member has re-confirmed what I was first going to say, which is that the regular chaos at the terminal is occasioned by the physical restrictions of the terminal. Can I therefore address my supplementary to the Honourable Richard Cockwell and ask him whether the Development Corporation is still working together with the Ministry of Defence on alternative lay-outs and designs; that we might be able to consider to improve the situation?

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

I am very pleased that the Honourable Mike Summers asked that question. My understanding is that there is continuing discussions between the Development Corporation and the MOD about options to improve the facilities and I totally agree that it is necessary to get this forward rapidly and I hope once we have a substantive General Manager in the Development Corporation this is one of the issues which he will take very seriously.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Yes Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, could the Honourable Mike Rendell confirm if he agrees with me that when looking at all these procedures whether we might not also look at the rationale behind having a stamp in your passport when you also have a status stamp and whether one of the whole purposes of the Status Stamp is not to make things simpler for immigration and emigration purposes and whether the two are really required?

The Honourable Mike Rendell

I agree with the Honourable Member that this should be examined. It does seem odd that in those circumstances that more ink would need to be wasted.

Clerk of Councils

Motions

Motion No 7 of 2008 by the Hon Michael Summers OBE

This House notes the concern the continuing world financial crisis and the inevitable affect it will have on the Falkland Islands. It commends the Government Green Paper on the Budget for 2009/2010 and invites all members of the public to join the debate on our future budget strategy.

This Motion will be seconded by the Honourable Janet Robertson.

The Honourable Mike Summers OBE

The first part of this Motion, Mr Speaker, is an important part because it is a fact that the Falkland Islands will be affected by the current financial crisis and turmoil in all sorts of areas in the world as it currently is.

We have seen today in Standing Finance Committee that the level of inflation currently existing in the Falklands is very substantial. We seem to be in a position at the moment in the world which is unusual at least in a number of respects and one of them is we can expect high inflation and low interest rates. Those two together are not normal but that is currently how it is and exacerbates many of the difficulties that we as a country will have and many individuals in the community will have.

We also have unstable financial markets which has effect on the level of our reserves. We've had information today that the value of the reserves has decreased and they have decreased by a significant amount but not to the extent that it needs to concern us too, too much. But it will have effects on some of the budget strategy because the relatively long standing plan to keep reserves/operating expenditure at a level of 2½ times operating expenditure is probably going to have to be reviewed in this budget strategy. That is a concern and there will continue to be concern in the banking sector and a number of industrial sectors that will inevitable affect the Falklands in ways that we don't yet know. So it is a concern and we must be vigilant to changes in world markets.

In respect of the Green Paper, I think it's a good piece of work and an ideal opportunity to try to engage the community in the reality of these issues. I think there are still an awful lot of people who think that actually this is all a bit of a fuss. And, I think it will pass by and we will end up without too much difficulty in May next year passing another balanced budget or somewhere near it and everything will be fine. I am sorry to disappoint all those people but it just will not be like that. The situation is more difficult and, the purpose of the Green Paper is to stimulate some debate and raise the overall level of understanding of everyone about financial issues and the choices that face the Islands. Major choices do need to be made about the level of public service and we do wish to encourage everyone to have a say before these decisions are made.

I will just repeat one or two points from the Green Paper for the benefit of the wider audience, we do expect a lot from our public services and we know what's achieved overseas and we expect to replicate that. That's an issue we may have to re-examine.

The Government is required to achieve ever increasing international and UK Standards for some of the services that it provides and I think the UK Government, working together with all the Overseas Territories, needs to think about the degree to which it pushes international standards on the Overseas Territories.

We do need to continue to invest in economic growth and infrastructure and I think this is a crucial issue. Simply cutting investment in the future is not a realistic option for anybody. Therefore those who think that actually all you really need to do is to cut the Capital Budget or cut FIDC or cut support for investment in tourism that is a very short-term recipe. It goes deeper than that.

We have, over many years had strong revenues in the fishery but it is certainly the case that Illex revenues have reduced over time. The long-term budget strategy or the medium-term financial plan at least and part of the long-term budget strategy is for the Government to be able to discount the affect of Illex revenues in particular, which have been fluctuating widely over recent years and cannot be expected to reach the levels that they were previously.

So, we are in a very different financial situation. I would make the point that Government has been cutting back for several years and improving its efficiency and the Green paper does show in real graphical terms that the Government has in fact been reducing recurrent expenditure year on year for at least the last five years in real terms.

So those who say that all the Government has been doing is spending more and more money and we should just stop doing so that's not correct, either. In real terms expenditure has been decreasing already for the last five years but regrettably, so has income.

So the real challenge of the Medium Term Financial Plan is to dispose of in our planning scenarios the Illex income and that is effectively £5million a year as it currently stands. So we need to recreate that gap between revenue and expenditure so that we are making continual contributions to the reserves. Because, of course, the reserves simply stay at the level that they are, in the longer term, in real terms they will be worth less and less or we will not be in the strong position that we currently are.

If the choices that were facing us were simple, they'd all have been done by now. It is not a simple thing. I did make the comment at the Public Meeting the other day that simply cutting Government Expenditure is not necessarily the recipe for economic success. Because as you cut economic expenditure there is less disposable income available both to individuals and to the community as a whole and, of course, that results in a smaller economy and the same sort of recession that we are now seeing reported widely in Europe, in the Americas and, indeed, some places in the Far East.

So, simply cutting expenditure without having real thought for its effect is not the way to go. I do not discount that we should be cutting expenditure but we must be careful to bear in mind that there are still people in the community who require to receive a salary of some sort to exist and we still need to have a capital programme, which is one of the elements that has driven our economy for so many years. So, when we cut expenditure, we should be seriously thinking about how that reduction in expenditure will affect people who are in the community.

Reductions in purchases from overseas should be the prime target for reductions if we can do that or the payment for services overseas and that has considerably less effect on the community on the whole.

There has been a suggestion from some quarters that all we really need to do is to lower the rate of income tax and this will miraculously increase investment and increase the size of the economy. Sorry, but I don't believe it. I have seen no evidence of it since the tax reforms in 2002 and I've seen no evidence from anybody that all we need to do is that and suddenly investment will flow and, of course, in these current climates that is highly unlikely.

I have made the point to colleagues and others that the economic development strategy that we are working on should be evidence based. And so if it is a fact or it is a contention that reducing the rate of tax will stimulate the economy in some way and we will need some evidence of it then by all means we should be thinking seriously about that.

I have also made the point to colleagues in the Secretariat that the other work that we are producing in terms of the Economic Development Strategy needs to be evidence based. It is no good simply producing a whole list of assertions and beliefs and views unless they can be supported by evidence.

So both the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Long Term Economic Development Strategy must be supported by the evidence available to us.

Mr Speaker, I think that is probably sufficient from me. There are a large number of questions raised by the Green Paper on the Budget. There are no easy answers but we would like to engage with the general public in finding the best way forward. It is our intention that next week there will be a panel discussion on the radio followed the week after probably by a phone-in to give people from the Camp and other people the opportunity to contribute. There will be another public discussion on this before we wind-up consultation on the 19th of December. I encourage colleagues to make contributions on this important issue and all members of the public to join the discussion on how we carry our budgets forward.

Thank-you

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Janet Robertson if you wish you can simply rise to second the motion then reserve your position to speak later during the debate.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support the Motion I will take the opportunity to speak now, thank you.

Councillor Summers has given an overview of the situation of where we are today. I don't think I need to repeat any of that. I would just like to point out perhaps that whilst the Motion does make reference to the current financial crisis it is also true that these issues that we were looking at before the current crisis occurred, a few of us made reference during the May Budget Session to the fact that we needed more and a better time to prepare the public for some of the decisions that we are going to have to be making. In fact, this Green Paper arises as much out of that decision as it does from the crisis that we are now in which as Councillor Summers rightly said is already going to have some affect on us. We had an interesting public meeting on Tuesday evening. I felt perhaps we didn't get quite as much discussion as we could have hoped but I hope that will change now that it's probably a fairly new way to approach things. We have not really been accustomed to producing Green Papers in the past and the point was made at the meeting was essentially what we had done with this Green Paper is give a list of options and ask people to choose between those options.

I think it's worth reminding people that if they look carefully at the paper it does state examples and the word, "examples" is used and it is quite clear that if anyone has got a particular view of a particular government expenditure and they can put it forward sensibly and rationally then, of course it will always be considered. It's not confined to the areas that were mentioned in the Green Paper. They were examples.

Quite clearly any suggestions that are put forward and it's the things that we have to take into consideration in looking at all of this is that nebulous concept the national interest. A bit of a difficult term because one person's national interest is not another person's national interest. But certainly there has to be a demonstrable interest in the wider benefits for the whole community and not just the specific parts of it.

The suggestions put forward in the Green Paper mean quite clearly what most people will have latched on to are issues about health and education. Everyone will be aware that those have been subjects of discussion for us, certainly ever since I've been on Council and obviously they are areas that are very dear to people's hearts. However, they are services which take a large part of the budget. They are very important services but it is also true to say that we benefit from excellent services that are world class, if not above in both those areas. Anyone who has ever visited the Islands from abroad will tell us all that our standards of health and education are really very, very good in the Islands. There are very few places left in the world where these services are entirely, universally free. We have had the benefit of not having to make any contributions to either of these services for some time and it is definitely time now to look at it and see if there are ways that we can make contributions. Although the National Health Service exists in England there are not many other countries where the same applies.

This is probably the reason why those two have been put forward and we have mentioned before that there is a review of the financing of the Health Service going on and, that will obviously have to be as wide ranging as possible. The Medical

Services Levy was discussed last year but this also we can look at a number of areas or a number of areas including one presumes insurance and tax will have to be considered as well.

With regard to tax, there is reference made to increasing both asking for views on increasing either personal or company tax. I think it is important with regard to company tax to fully understand any implications of tax increases. I take Councillor Summers' point that the last review of tax did not visibly lead to great increase in investments and I think the point about tax breaks and certainly I hope they are looking at this in the context of the Rural Development Strategy. The tax breaks have to be specific and have to have a certain principle aim in mind. It cannot be just cutting the tax rate and hoping that it will have an affect.

So the company tax, I think, should be considered in the light of the outcomes from the Rural Development Strategy, the National Economic Strategy and, of course the Tax Review. This will be happening later in the year, I think it would be foolish for us to make a decision on that now.

Comments were made the other evening, at the public meeting, about cost-benefit analysis. I would just like to reiterate Councillor Summers' point he made earlier on about investment. We cannot invest in the future it is not an option. We cannot close off investments into areas that don't immediately seem to be providing a return now. If we did a cost-benefit analysis of all government expenditure we probably wouldn't be spending anything on anything at all. We have not conducted cost-benefit analysis on street lighting or the Leisure Centre or any other host of areas they are not exactly in investment areas either. If we did a cost-benefit analysis on the port, I doubt very much that it would lead us to go and build a port.

But without investment there is stagnation. Without investment we do not move forward and, the critical reason for the strategies that we are putting in place now precisely in order to identify those areas of investment that will lead to greater long term growth.

I don't think I will say anything more at the moment but I am hoping, Mr Speaker, that you will allow us to respond and speak more than once in this debate as it is such an important one.

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to support the motion and before I say anything else I would like to commend everybody who had input into this Green Paper. It's a huge document it may not be very large compared to some documents we have but a lot of very hard work gone into it. I do commend that.

I think that the Proposer and Seconder have said most of the things which I wanted to say but if I could just re-emphasise one or two issues. I think investment in the future is absolutely vital for the Falklands and I am totally committed to that concept and I hope that we all are. We cannot stop investment in the future because the Islands will just revert back to what we had many years ago and so this must happen and I hope

that it will be, in the long run, a private and public sector joint venture to make sure that the development of the Falklands goes ahead in the way we have to see it go.

We do have difficult questions to ask, difficult choices to make at this stage. I noted in the Penguin News today that the options were spelt out on the front page. I would like to reassure people that these aren't proposals which are going to happen, won't necessarily happen and that things will have to be looked at.

And the question of cutting back on medical services overseas would we actually have to increase the size of the hospital? All these things have got to be looked at very carefully. Closing the Abattoir it may seem a quick fix but we'd have all the problems in the Camp that people are starting to rely on the income from the Abattoir and hopefully the Abattoir will be able to become self-sustaining or at least making a significant contribution to our economy, which I believe it is starting to do so.

So all these things, which appear to be, they sort of jump back at me when I looked at the newspaper this morning, well yes, these are options but what we are really trying to say is we've got to look at our whole economy based on this Green Paper and take it into public consultation. And I really do believe that's what we really need.

Sir, I beg to support the Motion.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, those colleagues who have spoken previously has addressed many of the issues in this document and I do support the Motion taking this document forward. I think my view certainly would be that the affect on the population of the Falklands as a whole is going to be the most difficult to bottom out because I know it won't be easy to make a decision on which services should be cut or on how to increase revenue.

That certainly won't be easy, what to do with tax that certainly won't be easy but the affect it will have on the community and the Falklands as a whole is going to be extremely difficult to put into prospective because if you take the extreme examples perhaps that were put into this paper, the health and education cuts, closing the Ferry and Abattoir, perhaps one that should have been there, closing the Leisure Centre, that affect very different levels of the sector of the sector of the Falklands.

Health and Education cuts obviously would affect everyone but at different levels. Closing the Ferry and the Abattoir would mainly affect the rural community. If you closed the Leisure Centre that would mainly affect the Stanley community. So it's all this mix of how we handle the effect and that certainly won't be easy.

I, at the moment, don't have any answer to that, obviously. I think there has to be a long-term, definitely has to be a long term issue. We just don't want quick fixes otherwise its pointless doing it.

I think probably the only other thing I would say at the moment is without doubt wide the public consultation and debate is of paramount importance in this issue and that's all I have at the moment, Mr Speaker.

Thank you

The Honourable Richard Stevens

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support this Motion I look at this Green Paper on the Budget as the start of a process of us as Government trying to involve all of the community. It's a communications process where we are trying to allow people to understand where we are and why we have to make difficult decisions.

Education, for example, we've been debating how to save money in Further Education and Higher Education. The process started before this Council and we have taken it on. We have been lucky enough up till now not to look for contributions from parents and students and, it looks as though we are going to have to look at all the issues again and put them out into the public domain so everybody can discuss them and hopefully contribute. Perhaps people will be able to not only understand but can contribute perhaps alternative ways of finding money. That would be great.

The whole procedure of Green Papers starting, with this budget and going on into other areas, to me the most important part is bringing everybody along with us. I know we talked and we do have means testing working within the community today in certain selected areas and in this paper its called wealth related payment. I know that a lot of people find it sort of a distasteful mechanism and others think it's a really valuable one but hopefully that the Green Paper, when it comes out, will unravel all the difficulties and the complexities of how you bring means testing without making another group of people in the Falklands under financial pressure, how people in that first threshold if that's how it works. It isn't liable to pay for a number of services. A good example to try and put it across is if you have three children close together in higher education and further education then it is a possibility if we were to do means testing its possible that a family will be hit three different ways. Of course, that's a very simplistic way of explaining what I am trying to say. But we have to be sure it's thought through and I am sure members of the public will be able to contribute.

That's all I have to say at this present time.

I support this Motion.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to speak to this Motion there really aren't that many more things to cover that hasn't already said but I'll try my best. Taxes – everybody seems to hate taxes. If we look at some of the countries in Europe with the highest standards of living, they also pay the highest taxes, for instance Sweden and Denmark but they also have a very high level of service and very often you do read in the large countries right wing politicians declaring that I can, if you let me, lower taxes and increase services especially by efficiency savings and cost cutting. For instance in National Health Service we have seen that happen and some contracts have been cut to the bone and they now decided that some of the diseases that are

coming into the hospitals are because they haven't been properly maintained and cleaned and possibly weren't worth the cut.

I don't have a problem paying taxes. I look upon taxes as being payment for services and so if it came to the crunch I certainly wouldn't have a great difficulty in raising taxes as long as they were fairly raised and across the board.

Reducing services, selected services, the Falkland Islands Government has a whole range of services they provide to the public. Serious decisions will have to be made. I don't have a problem with making serious decisions. What I don't want is, my grandson when he grows up and is able to come at me to ask that when I was there why I didn't make those decisions. By not agreeing to any hard time decision making because it was unpopular then has had an affect now which would be many years down the road.

It sounds as if we are in a terrible pickle. We are not in a terrible pickle, as they said in Lafonia last week there is a flip side to this. What it will do is make us think that this Green Paper that's going out the editorial and the front page of the newspaper that was out today hopefully will be a start to a lot of debate without the Council, the departments and the population at large to understand that we do have a problem and it's not going to hit us straight away big time but we have to deal with it sooner rather than later.

It has been said recently in this room about development projects and we must continue with development projects and I agree with that. But in this room at the public meeting it was also said that we should learn from our mistakes and hopefully we will try and do that. But the idea that we would go ahead with a major development when the cost-benefit analysis suggested that actually it won't make any money I don't see how I would be able to agree with that. I think this would all get very complicated but I really think that Councillors, surely this Council will learn from recent development projects.

One department probably the first on the list of changes and if you like, some would say a "slimming" of the way the service is delivered is FIGAS. Two weeks, maybe three weeks ago the Penguin News did a survey and actually although there are complaints about the way FIGAS have changed. The changes have only been in operation just over the month. The majority of the employees at FIGAS certainly when I go down there are willing to give it a shot. It hopefully will save money and increase revenue. Nobody knows until later on in the season how that's going to develop but we have to give it a chance. I thank the colleagues here for supporting me as the portfolio holder when I have to answer some of the critics. But FIGAS is one area where it's very, very important that we have an air service but it's costing £1million a year to subsidise that. So the point that was made earlier on there about the best way forward I would suggest what we have to do is chose the right way forward. I think one thing the Falkland Islands should never do, should never as an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, we should never allow ourselves to get to the point where we have to go and ask the United Kingdom's Treasury for any financial assistance.

Mr Speaker I support the Motion.

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support the Motion I make the general comment that I think a lot of speaking has already taken place on this subject and I'd like to pick up on a few areas. I think the important thing about this Green Paper is that it's just getting the ball rolling. Hopefully it is making people realise that we have a really serious issue and we've really got to try and sort it out together.

We've never really taken this road before. We have always waited for decisions to be taken probably in the last 10 minutes of a budget select committee, which allows to balance the budget and that is definitely not the way to do it. And I think we have now come to that recognition and, I see a few frowning faces around the table. In every other budget session I have attended decisions are taken in the last 10 minutes in order to achieve the outcome that we want regardless of what we might wishfully to think and this is the way forward. Hopefully the public at large will engage. It was interesting at the public meeting that there was a level of engagement in some quarters and in others there wasn't. I haven't read the front page of the Penguin News yet but from what colleagues are saying it appears that it will certainly be thought provoking to get people thinking about it and that's the important thing.

A few comments that colleagues have made, means testing for example, I understand the Honourable Richard Stevens' thoughts about particular circumstances he raised. I'm sure those sorts of issues will be addressed in the Green Paper on wealth testing. But surely we can't have a situation where somebody that's earning £100,000 a year gets exactly the same benefits as somebody that's getting £20,000 a year. We have to do something about it, it is just grossly irregular and unfair so we have to look at means testing. There can be absolutely no doubt about that.

I think we are going to end up with a broad range of solutions, I am quite sure there are a broad range of solutions to try to achieve the aims of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Some of those more thought provoking pieces that were put in like closing the Abattoir and stopping the Ferry are clearly there to make people just think about the serious circumstances which we could come face to face with if things went really bad.

I am quite convinced that, that was just a mischievous entry in the paper because there is no way at all in which either of those things can close because the long-term conclusions of either or both of those things would mean that the Camp would completely collapse and it will cost much, much more money than keeping them going, so they are completely ridiculous.

I support the Motion

The Honourable John Birmingham

Point of Order Mr Speaker. I disagree with that word, ridiculous

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the Honourable Janet Robertson asked if I would consider waiving or agreeing to Members speaking a second time. I am not sure perhaps that's really necessary at this point given that you were opening up the debate – the wider debate. If you wish to speak a second time I am prepared to allow it.

The Honourable Mike Summers OBE

Mr Speaker, can I exercise my right to wind up?

Mr Speaker

You certainly can.

The Honourable Mike Summers OBE

Mr Speaker I thank colleagues for their valuable contributions to this question. And, there are a number of ways of looking at the issue we have at hand. And that is exactly the point, of course that there are a number of ways of approaching these issues and a constructive debate between members of the government and members of the public.

I had a fascinating piece of correspondence from a well known local media outlet the other day who asked me whether the issues we put in the Green Paper were just there as the most difficult because then when we came to some slightly less difficult issues to balance the budget it will all be terribly simple. Sorry, no. It is not like that. Big ticket issues do need to be addressed.

But we also need to address some of the wider issues. The only way that this country is going to succeed and continue to succeed as it has done in the future is if we have a vibrant private sector supported by appropriate government regulation and legislation policies.

We have a successful fishery; we have a successful tourism industry, which is heavily supported by a semi-successful agricultural industry. I would make the point and I think it's just important to muse on this from time to time that actually, without the agricultural industry it's highly unlikely that the tourism industry here would flourish at all. So those two things go together.

There is clearly more we can do and I think the work on Gross National Product statistics have not yet been sufficiently developed to show us where the real issues are but I am convinced that there's a lot more to be had from the fishery, there's a lot more to be had from tourism and actually I remain positive about the future for agriculture because being in the food producing business is a good place to be.

We will have to in terms of not only the budget strategy but the economic development strategy that comes, I think, to open our minds to increased entrepreneurship in the Falklands and increased competition because in difficult times the instant reaction is usually protectionism and protectionism rarely works. So I

think we have to open our minds to the fact that actually there are other ways of growing and expanding this economy and that has to underlay the whole philosophy of the budget process, not only this year and next year. It is how we expand the economy and make things grow, not how we contract them and pull them in.

So the appeal, really, for myself and my colleagues is for everybody to get together on this and work in a constructive manner. We need contributions, positive contributions from the Union because a lot of individuals, a lot of working class people will be affected by this and I would like to see the Union actively involved in these discussions and debates. We need active and positive contributions from the business community but also from any other sector of society that would like to join in because everybody will be affected, the ordinary man in the street, business people, pensioners, young people are all affected the same and we all have the same interest, which is a strong and viable economy going forward.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members the Motion is that this House notes with concern the continuing world financial crisis and the inevitable affects it will have on the Falkland Islands. It commends the Government Green Paper on the Budget for 2009/2010 and invites all members of the public to join the debate on the future budget strategy.

Honourable Members I will put this motion to the vote.

All Councillors were in favour.

The Motion is so carried.

Clerk of Councils

Order of the Day: Bills

The Falkland Landholdings Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2008. This Bill is being presented under a Certificate of Urgency and therefore requires a first reading.

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker, thank you. This Bill amends the Falkland Landholdings Corporation Ordinance. It provides for two Members of the public to be appointed to the board by the Governor. This replaces the existing provision under which two members of the Farming community are to be elected from amongst their number and then be appointed to the Board by the Governor.

There are basically two reasons for this change. Firstly, the process of defining the farming community for an election purpose is actually quite complicated and largely impractical, certainly these days. And, secondly, determining farming community is now considered too restrictive and members of the wider community may have relevant skills which could be useful for Board membership.

Mr Speaker, I move the first reading.

The Honourable John Birmingham

I seconded the Bill.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is that the Bill be read a first time is there any objection to the Motion? There is no objection to the Motion, the Bill will be read a first time.

Clerk of Councils

The Falkland Landholdings Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2008

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members the Motion is that the Bill be read a second time, does any Honourable Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the public can better understand, the way it sits at the moment is that you would have to be an active member of the Farming community to be involved on the Board of Falkland Landholdings. That actually stopped anybody who had recently retired, who had a lot of experience and this would change that and allow anybody to be put forward and to be elected to sit on the Board.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members it seems as though we may be able to adopt the fast track for this. (*Members in favour*)

The Motion is that the Bill be read a third time and it does pass. Is there any objection to the Motion? No objection, the Bill will be read a third time and passed.

Clerk of Councils

The Falkland Landholdings Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2008

Motion for Adjournment.

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker, I move that this House stands adjourned *Sine Die*.

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I don't intend to speak very long because we have been talking quite a bit this morning. But I think I should talk again about the world financial difficulties and the fact that we do recognise that sooner or later it will hit us and also I think we need to recognise that recovery, a bit like the fuel prices, will take a bit of time to catch up with us. So we need to be aware of that and prepare ourselves for that eventuality.

I'd like to welcome back the Attorney General as he's been away for some time. It's good to see him back and I would also like to compliment Ros Cheek the Principal Crown Council who has done very sterling work while she's been Acting Attorney General.

This is the last meeting of the Legislative Council of the Falkland Islands. From now on we will be called the Legislative Assembly and so it is quite a momentous period in our time and the reason for changing our name to Legislative Assembly is so that it is understood that we are not just a rural district council or a town council. We are an Assembly who actually governs a country. In view of this I would like to see that we have a MACE. Under the present financial circumstances it may be difficult to afford one at this stage but I would like to propose that we do have a MACE which is formally brought into the building. I am also, looking across I believe that Mr Speaker, the Clerk and the Attorney General should wear wigs.

I support the Motion

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I, too, am going to be very brief. I just have a couple of issues I would just like to address.

We often hear about opposition to Councillors overseas trips, are they worthwhile? I recently attended the Party Conferences (during) late September-early October. And my answer to that particular trip overseas would be 'yes, definitely.' This is the 21st year that the Falkland Islands have attended which means that the Falkland Islands has a pretty high profile at these conferences. The Falkland Islands Government Representative if there is anybody to know who anybody is believe you me, she knows them. And just the fact of making contact with people who will always have a say, I guess, in shaping our future or helping us to shape our future has to be of huge importance. It's not just the current MPs and the old friends but the prospective candidates who will be in power in the future. So for me that is definitely a worthwhile exercise.

The other issue I want to address today and I won't go into any great detail because I believe my colleague to my right would also like to speak about it that is Cable & Wireless, in particular camp telephones. It's very positive to see the inclusion of Goose Green, Darwin and Fitzroy, are on the new system and I think Fox Bay and Port Howard are soon to join. But I think it has to be noted that the remainder of the Camp are experiencing possibly the worst service that we have ever received.

That's why I welcome very much the formation of, I thought it was, the Telecommunications Users Group but I believe it's now called the Telecommunications Consultative Forum. So, I will refer to it as the TCF from now on. I welcome that because I think the views and the needs of those resident in the Camp on the old system need to be considered and there needs to be some action or recommendation through that group or from us on the current tariffs that are unopposed on the current service.

There is absolutely no doubt that the old system that is in operation now is absolutely diabolical and the speeds are dropping as low as 2 on occasion, which is unacceptable. Just a personal incident was that it took me three attempts over three evenings last week to download an antivirus update, a total of seven hours, which is a bit beyond the palate.

I hope that my colleagues would support the sentiment that the quality of the service, especially when it sinks this low and until we that are on the old service can actually get on to the new service I think the charges should be reflected in the service. Now, whether this is how it's done I don't know. I would probably personally suggest that we should be asking Cable & Wireless to slash or totally remove service charges until we go over to the new system. But that is another discussion for another day. I certainly hope that colleagues would support the fact that something needs to be done.

I think that's all I have Mr Speaker. I beg to support the Motion for Adjournment.

The Honourable Richard Stevens

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I won't speak for very long either. I would also like to speak about Cable & Wireless. First of all I'd like to say how hard I think they and their supporting crews worked in appalling conditions on top of mountains in the most exposed places, connecting towers, climbing up towers, laying concrete. It really has been impressive and I have had a first hand view of what's been going on with the work at Sussex Mountain. It has really been exciting to hear the broadband and the improved broadband system coming out to camp, it's never fast enough but it's still a great, great moment.

However, I have to move into the area of discontent and actually I can remember when it was slightly worse when we had the first camp phone with boxes under the tables which hummed so loud, people in Camp seemed to get rid of it but if you had visitors you could hardly have a conversation because of the noise coming from under the table. Then we moved to the micro-station like we have now which was certainly an improvement at Sussex anyway.

Now, Sussex has always been quite a good location its only got one or two links going back to town but even in recent times we have had what's probably kindly called issues being unable to turn pages on the Government Website, ordinary phone calls cutting off and I should imagine if Sussex is not that great then the far west, people that work through a number of links must have an unworkable system. So hopefully we have got work being undertaken to look into it.

It's very difficult to completely criticise Cable & Wireless because they are working so hard and many of us in Camp are looking forward to the day when we join this upgrade. But until we get there I think there should be some accommodation for the people whose services are certainly going down.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members I support the Motion for adjournment.

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, as the Councillor with responsibility for telecommunications I hoped I was going to be able to follow on behind my two Camp Colleagues to address the same issues that they have raised.

It does seem that Cable & Wireless have, perhaps, taken their eye off the ball in terms of the old system and have put all their efforts into the new system and I think that's probably almost inevitable.

It is also the case that the one meeting of the TCF, I think that's the easiest way to enunciate it, which has an RBA member, had no complaints before it on this particular matter. So I suppose it only illustrates that in its very earliest days it is not achieving the aims for which it was set up. I imagine by now the member for the RBA that's on the TCF will have received a number of phone calls because it is a wide-spread problem and it has to be addressed.

Trying to be a bit more positive now on the upgrade, we had a meeting on the upgrade last week where Cable & Wireless were able to tell us exactly how things were going and it is on time, it is on budget and nearly all the civil works have been completed and we have very good reason to believe that it will be completed on time, which is at the end of March this coming year.

I think a lot's going on behind the scenes. I think people in Camp probably are aware of the extreme difficulties within which the project has had to be taken forward. And I was very lucky, in the middle of the winter to go up to the top of Green Hill and see at first hand the sort of circumstances that exist when you go up 1,000 metres when down at sea level it's 4, 5, 6, 7 degrees up there it's -2C or -3C on the same day. And the sort of conditions that people are having to work in are extremely difficult. So we shouldn't take for granted what's going on here. I am sure we don't take for granted but some people may not fully understand the colossal scale on which this is being done. Not only are the conditions in which people are working very difficult but the new type of equipment that is being introduced is ground-breaking. And people all over the world are monitoring this new Cable & Wireless system because it is achieving lots of targets which are brand new. It's introducing equipment which has only been used in a couple places before. I don't think we are absolute guinea pigs so I wouldn't want people to think that we are just being tested out to see whether it works. That's not the case. All these systems have been proven in other places and we look forward to having a really good service in due course.

I was privileged along with a number of colleagues to attend the official opening of Newhaven last weekend and I think it was a very good event and it was very pleasing to see everybody coming together, a large number of people in attendance, everybody

very positive about it and it was a fairly enjoyable day and we were very, very pleased that we've got what we have got. I suppose I definitely have to make the comment that it's not yet completed in terms of the cross-sound link. There is clearly some more work that will need to be done at Port Howard but not to the levels that some people have made it seem necessary, in other words to have another Newhaven on West Falkland. That, of course, is totally unnecessary and it would not be considered in any way. But there will be some more work that needs to be done at Port Howard. There can be little doubt about that.

On the completion of the opening it became clear to me and other people have now picked up on this, that the plaque that was made may need to be re-made because I think there is not only a spelling mistake but there are also a few people missing off it. One of those is Bonner's Haulage, who worked behind the scenes on tops of mountains and in bottom pits pouring concrete, they have done a lot of civil works for both of the projects I have just been discussing and I think deserve recognition for the extremely professional way in which they carried out their tasks. So congratulations to them.

I just want to finish with a very few words on the visiting 1982 Veterans. It's again very pleasing to see the benefits which they are getting from coming down here to see battle sites, to meet up with Falkland Islanders and to, using the term, "lay their ghosts to rest", so important. But an additional area which I've noted with real enthusiasm this year is next of kin coming down or daughters and sisters whose brothers or fathers died in '82 being able to come down and see for themselves exactly what it was all about and hopefully going away knowing that it was well worthwhile.

Mr Speaker I support the Motion

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I along with my colleague Richard Cockwell won't speak for very long.

It was just mentioned there about the plaque. I will certainly take that along to the Public Works Department. I was in the Hospital the other day in the Dental Department and was looking at plaque and the misspellings I know a person in this town who's name is Brain because that's what's on his birth certificate. And I am not going to mention my middle name to anybody.

Mr Speaker, there were two major events this week, one being the Ferry, which has been actually well-aired - not in this room this morning but one thing I would say about the Ferry is that it is there now and really we have to make it work. And we have to look forward in that respect and not just as some people keep going on about the past.

And the other big event is of course, going through the Privy Council of the Constitution, which I am sure we will hear about shortly. But dare I say that this has been on-going for years and it comes into effect on the 1st January 2009. Honourable Richard Cockwell has mentioned that this is the last meeting of the Legislative Council but this has been going on for I don't know how many Councils but it is this

Council that has finalised it. And I think that everybody in this Council and previous Councils should be congratulated. I think that the Chair of the Select Committee has to be congratulated for his perseverance and commitment to see this through and it most definitely is a major step in the political progress in the Falkland Islands.

This year not only does it mark the 60th anniversary of Prince Charles but also marks the 60th anniversary of the Falkland Islands Government Air Service. Although there will be no formal anniversary events, it's my pleasure as the portfolio holder to congratulate the personnel both past and present on running what has to be amongst the most technical and testing of services that the Falkland Islands Government provides.

The service is going through a change at the moment, which has already been spoken about and I would just ask again that there be some patience and a willingness to give it time and a chance. I am confident that we will have a FIGAS that will serve the Islands, be it in a different way more suited to our changed circumstances for the next 60 years.

Recently there's been a person employed to finalise, within 6 months I believe, the location of a new or improved port. This project could make any other Falkland Islands Government project seem like petty cash if some people had their way and spent as much as some people want us to spend. One of the reasons given to me for a new port is that the future is in containerisation. I can't argue that, I am no expert, but this person does work in the fishing industry and he explained to me what containerisation meant in its basic form and it would appear that what it means and I have been squidding in the past, but it does mean that lumps of frozen fish are placed in containers here in the Islands and then they are not touched again until they are being sold and what you need for that he said is space. FIPASS, as it stands at the moment, if anybody wants to go down there for a look, actually if it was cleared of a lot of stuff has a lot of space so I just wonder whether one of the companies might like to maybe do a trial run and containerise something here to just see how it goes and see how beneficial it could be. Is it being done, I don't know. Well, if it's being done then do we need a Rolls Royce port facility? But we'll see. I'm sure there will be lots of discussion about this in the next few months.

It's already been said that we are not going to touch any big amount of the Consolidated Fund and we aren't going to, are we?

I would also like to say something about the Veterans that are here at the moment. I had the pleasure of welcoming them at the Narrows on Saturday night and there are some very fine and upstanding people here and I also agree it's a pleasure to see them and the relatives of those who didn't go home coming back. And I look forward to the building and the completion of the Veterans' House, Liberty Lodge down at the east end of Stanley.

Of course, dare I, even I am a caveman when it comes to telecommunications but I do know - I go out to Goose Green a fair bit and I believe that things have been rolling over in Lafonia recently and the rolling over of the broadband to the parts of the Camp that it's possible to get to I look forward to the time when modern technology that we enjoy here in Stanley is actually Island wide.

We have been serious this morning but the sun is shining. Life is pretty good here in the Islands and I believe that we are, blessed in many, many ways.

Mr Speaker I support the Motion.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wasn't going to speak about ports at all but I do feel compelled to make a couple of comments about containerisation. Having been one of the people that has spent some time putting lumps of frozen fish into containers on their way around the world, I'd like to say its not just about space but it's also about the capacity of FIPASS to take the sort of crane in that we would need to have good and efficient containerisation.

I don't have much else to say, really but I would just like to take this opportunity to commend all of those agencies that were involved in a major drugs bust recently, the Police, Customs and Immigration. Whilst I have absolutely no reason to believe, or at least I have total faith, that none of our children anywhere in the world are consuming a drug like this, I thought it might be a good time to just remind those who, because you're all in school won't hear it, but maybe your parents will, that the approach to drugs in this community is very, very different than the approach to drugs in the UK. Many of you when you go away to college might feel tempted or persuaded to partake and indulge. Well, experimentation is part of youth but I really urge you all to remember that that's really as far as it should ever go and that the attitude here is not the same as the attitude in the UK, or should I say visa versa so please don't be too tempted or carried away whilst you are there because it could go horribly wrong.

With regard to the Education Department, they are all working very busily at the moment looking forward to, (no probably not looking forward to), I can't imagine inspection is ever anything, somebody looks forward to particularly I would just like to say that from my point of view and, I think that the Honourable Richard Stevens would agree with me, we've seen a huge amount of work going into the Education Department by all concerned over this last year and are really encouraged that the messages that were given to us last year have been heeded have been taken seriously, not just by the staff but also by Council here who were persuaded to provide financial help that was required. I look forward to that and got high hopes that a big improvement will be seen.

Lastly I am very pleased with the Executive Council decision regarding the breast cancer screening, the equipment coming down. I am aware that the Cancer Support and Awareness Trust and indeed those at HMSC were in favour of not raising a charge in this instance because of the levels of fundraising that had already been provided by the community. Whilst I understand this I think that I think that it is a good exercise for people to make some contribution and I think that £20 is affordable. Of course anyone who feels they cannot I am sure will be able to apply for assistance. But I think it's a great development and I again congratulate all of those who have been involved in the fundraising and those people on the Trust itself who put so much effort into it.

Last but not least, yes this is our last meeting of the Legislative Council. On the reaction in Argentina and the outrage about the level of Democracy in the Falkland Islands. I think that says quite a lot.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Mike Summers OBE

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am conscious that Mr Speaker will be wanting to go for his lunch. I have just two or three things to say. I would like to add my welcome to the '82 Veterans and say what a delight it is to see them here on an annual basis at the Remembrance Service on Sunday and also to see the families and carers. I would like to add my thanks to those many people who take the Veterans in and look after them and give them such a good time while they are here and to help them to understand the way the society has progressed. That's a real contribution and we thank everybody for that.

In terms of the Constitution, I thank my Honourable Colleague for his kind words. It's been a long process but actually a very enjoyable one and I feel entitled now to argue with anybody about what's in the Constitution. I think I read every word of it at least 50 times. But it has been an important process and one that I hope will be of benefit to the community going forward. I hope it's not another 14 years or so before we revise the Constitution again because it is a live document and one that we should keep reviewed. In that respect, because I know that if she had been here our other colleague would have raised the issue of representation can I take the liberty of just reading a short extract from a letter that we had from the Minister on the Constitution? And she says:

“You also mentioned the discussions that had been held and the public meetings and in Legislative Council about changes to constituencies. As you are aware the intent of Section 27 is to give some protection to the minority who live in Camp. While some of the community would clearly like to see amendments to this section I understand there is no consensus amongst Councillors on this issue and that no majority view against the current draft came out in public meetings. I am clear, therefore, that we should proceed with the draft as it stands. Were Councillors as a body to ask me to do so, I would consider future amendments. And, of course that is the basis on which we have moved forward.”

Mr Speaker, I presume that the Constitution now having been passed in the Privy Council and laid before Parliament gazetted and will come into force on the 1st of January as a result of a proclamation that the Attorney General is shortly to issue that Select Committee on the Constitution has completed its work. I don't know if there is a formal process for closing select committees but I declare it closed anyway.

I have one other issue that I would like to raise and it is this: I would like, in this House, to send our formal thanks and congratulations to the UK's ambassador of the permanent representation in New York, John Sawyer who, with his team, achieved a terrific result the other day in the 4th Committee by denying an attempt by Argentina and Spain to compromise the right to self determination of peoples. The UK Government sponsored and was strongly supported in an amendment to the proposal

put by Argentina and Spain that the right to self-determination should not apply to those countries where there is a sovereignty conflict. That was firmly defeated in the 4th Committee by a majority of about 60% to 40%. As it is a tremendous result we are conscious that the UK Government and the Ambassador in particular put a lot of work into this. But it does show that the view that we have been taking here year on year on year that the right to self determination is a universal right that can't be compromised is understood and supported and accepted by the large majority of right thinking people. And, it's noticeable that some pretty big hitters voted with the UK in this respect including Australia, South Africa who spoke very positively on the subject, France, Italy, great result, the USA, Germany and even India, which is very interesting.

So I think we can look forward with a very positive attitude towards the UN supporting the right of people in the Falklands to self-determination. And, just to recall that the United Nations on no occasion has ever said that the Falkland Islands is restricted in its development either democratically or economically and that the view that the Argentines would like to put forward when talking with us, others and working with letters of protest that suggest that Falklands don't have that right to continue development without their permission is utter nonsense.

They have wasted something like 26 years now in navel gazing and wasted protests over the issue of self determination for the people of the Falklands. It's time actually that they moved on and understood that the world will not tolerate bullies and will not tolerate people who simply go land grabbing just to satisfy their own internal problems.

So Mr Speaker, many, many congratulations and many thanks to the Ambassador in the United Nations and I support the Motion

Mr Speaker

If I may, it's not the Speaker's position to pick up on comments made by Honourable Members but I do so in terms of the Honourable Richard Cockwell his expression that the House should have a MACE and several Members be wigged or gowned here, I would simply say this if there are financial constraints there is an excellent gavel here which I believe was a presentation to the House. Wigs, I believe, are rather expensive as indeed maybe gowns. I'm a bit of a traditionalist at heart and I don't think there's anything wrong with the purchase of three pairs of wellington boots, three bobble hats and a Falklands Tee-shirt.

With that, Honourable Members, I declare the House adjourned accordingly.