



RECORD OF THE MEETING
OF THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY
HELD IN STANLEY
ON 27 FEBRUARY 2009

**RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
HELD IN STANLEY ON FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2009**

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
(Mr Keith Robert Biles JP)

MEMBERS (Ex-Officio)

The Honourable Chief Executive
(Dr Timothy Rupert Thorogood)

Elected

The Honourable John Birmingham
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

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

The Honourable John Richard Cockwell
(Elected Member for Stanley 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)

CLERK: Claudette Anderson-Prior MBE
PRAYERS: Reverend Richard Hines

APOLOGIES:

The Honourable Ian Hansen
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable the Director of Finance
(Mr Keith Padgett)

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**The Record of the meeting of Legislative Assembly
held on Friday 27th February 2009**

PRAYERS

Attorney General

The first matter for the Assembly today is the election of a new Speaker for the Assembly following the resignation of the previous speaker, Lewis Clifton. Under the Constitution and the Standing Orders, that election is presided over by the Attorney General, which is why I am speaking now.

I therefore call for nominations for the post of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, I nominate Mr Keith Biles.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

I second the nomination

Attorney General

Are there any other nominations? There being only one nomination, I declare that Keith Biles be duly appointed as speaker. I therefore ask him to come forward to take the Oath of Allegiance, The Oath of Due Execution of Office and to then assume the office of Speaker.

Mr Biles took the Oath of Due Execution of Office and Oath of Allegiance and assumed office.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, the next items is to elect a deputy speaker, may I have nominations please?

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, I nominate Mr Anton Livermore.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

I second the nomination.

Mr Speaker

Are there any other nominations? Then I declare Mr Anton Livermore as the deputy speaker.

Mr Livermore took the Oath of Due Execution of Office and Oath of Allegiance.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, if I may seek the indulgence of the House, the Deputy Speaker and I would like to thank the Honourable Members for their votes of confidence in us and certainly

I undertake to serve this house to the best of my ability and to honour its customs and usages. Honourable Members, I thank you.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

The confirmation of the record of the meeting of Legislative Assembly held on Friday 14 November 2008.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, I have before me the record of the meeting of 14th November 2008, would you please signify your agreement that I may sign these minutes as a true record.

Members Agreed.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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 the Legislative Assembly and Laid on the Table pursuant to section 34(1) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance 1977.

- Coins Order 2008
- Immigration (Suspension of Issue of Permanent Residence Permits)(No 2) Order 2008
- Taxes and Duties (Defence Contractors' Employees Exemption)(No 2) Order 2008

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker, I lay on the Table the papers as listed by the Clerk.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Questions for Oral Answer

Question Number 01 of 2009 by the Honourable Andrea Clausen

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Could the Honourable Richard Stevens please inform this House of the current policy regarding the Falkland Island Government funded students being gainfully employed whilst undertaking FE or HE studies overseas?

The Honourable Richard Stevens

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Hon Dr Andrea Clausen for asking me the first question in the first Legislative Assembly and the first Assembly of 2009. I feel honoured.

There's no written policy regarding whether or not students may be gainfully employed while undertaking FE or HE studies overseas. However, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that this activity has been precluded in the past. And this I can personally support because that's the information that was given to us as parents when Caris and Liam went to further education.

It's not common in the Falkland Islands but many other countries do have part time employment to supplement their incomes from about the age of 16 onwards. Indeed many students in the United States of America expect to either win a college scholarship or work their way through college.

If students feel that they are able to work and that their studies and their achievements do not suffer as a consequence, then this provides a widening of experience to students. If their employment is associated with their course of study, which would be advised, then this may have considerable benefits, e.g. a Saturday job in a travel agent's for a person studying Travel and Tourism or Music students who play in a band and being paid for live gigs in local music venues.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Thank you very much Honourable Richard Stevens for that answer. So just to be completely clear, we have no written policy but there has been verbal advice given in the past to preclude students from actually carrying out any work. I just want to understand that, for example, our HE students, (who may have more financial pressures upon them given the proportion of their grant money that they find bound up in paying for their accommodation) are able to take the kind of employment that you have alluded to such as weekend work. I would find it unwise to preclude them from doing that kind of work if they were in a financial position that was not satisfactory. We must remember that not all the students who go away are fortunate to have financial support from their parents. Some are not in that position. So I think I would seek assurance from the Honourable Member that those students won't be precluded from some level of employment. I would counter that with I wouldn't like to see their studies affected. They are adults at this stage, in higher education. Would you comment on that, please?

The Honourable Richard Stevens

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, yes I can confirm that there isn't a written policy but I can also say that there has been strong advice/instruction from the Education Department in the past, not to take work. Where children do take up employment in the UK to support their financial status in the UK, whether they do that or not, after hearing this evidence has to be a judgment that they take. Obviously there is also evidence in distant form that suggests that putting too many hours into work can damage their potential in study so, at the end of the day after hearing this information they can work but judgement is whether they can do that without damaging their potential in their studies.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Thank you for your answer. I think it would be useful perhaps if Education did have a clear policy one way or the other so that students are aware of what they can and cannot do while they are overseas.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Question Number 02 of 2009 by the Honourable John Birmingham

The Honourable John Birmingham

Will the Honourable Andrea Clausen please explain how the rent rebate system for FIG tenants works in practise?

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable John Birmingham for this question and I hope that I won't confuse the answer. I'd like to thank the Treasury for assistance in this answer.

The Rent Rebate Scheme is designed to assist people in standard Government housing with their basic rent and service charge payments when they are receiving low incomes. All income received is taken into account including welfare assistance, family allowances and child maintenance, if appropriate. A calculation takes account in terms of all persons over the age of 16 living in the property. The amount of income included is the amount of income after tax but before pension or other deductions.

No rent rebate is awarded if a tenant has savings greater than £15,300, unless the tenant is in sheltered housing and has savings accruing from the sale of a previous property.

The system uses a allowances scheme to represent expenditure and therefore does not separately take into account specific items such as childcare, fuel, food, electricity bills and loan repayments. The rebate is calculated by taking the applicant's total income away from the allowances awarded based on their circumstances. If their income is less than their net allowances, they are entitled to a 100% rebate of their rent. For every Pound income exceeding the net allowance the rebate is reduced by 65pence.

The rebate granted covers service charges but excludes any FIG provided heating or white goods charges. Allowances vary depending on an individual's circumstances, taking age, dependence, the family unit into consideration.

Applications can be submitted to the Treasury by any FIG tenants in Stanley over the age of 18 years and must be supported by proof of earnings and bank statements. Assuming all information required is submitted rent rebate applications are processed within 10 days of receipt.

As you might have gathered from that explanation, it's not that straight forward. It is quite a complex system and it is different to systems that are applied in other areas such as welfare payments. The aim of this system is to not encourage people to require more money and what I mean by that is if you compare it to the welfare system, e.g. it's based on what you spend as opposed to this allowance system which relates to your circumstances and not what you spend. You could, if you were being a cynic, assume in the welfare system because it is related to what you spend. If you spend more on certain items your level of welfare assistance could go up it is a possibility in that system, whereas with the rent rebate it doesn't work like that. It is a very complicated allowance system with 4 categories of allowances which are all related to marital status, children, and a whole bunch of other criteria.

I would just like to add, I think, while given the opportunity that this appears to me to be clearly an area that needs review. And you will be aware that we have a Green Paper on welfare related payments and the idea is to try and come up with a scheme that can be applied fairly and equitably to all individuals regardless of whether its welfare, rent rebate, and we will see where we get with that.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Andrea Clausen for her answer and she has even taken away my supplementary. Thank-you very much

The Honourable Mike Summers

Could I ask the Honourable Andrea Clausen if she is able to give us the approximate number of people currently in receipt of rent rebates?

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am afraid I do not have that statistic but I can ensure that we get it and it is supplied to this house.

In response to the supplementary questions:

- There are currently 37 people in receipt of rent rebate
- The Rent Rebate scheme only applies to FIG tenants (including Lookout Lodge)

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

The Honourable Andrea Clausen has explained how it works but could she give me some assurance that the issue of old age pensioners whose pension went up by £5.00 and their rent rebate was reduced so they finished up paying more this year than they actually received again in pension. This does seem to be an anomaly.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

My Honourable Colleague has indeed raised an area that passed us by during the last budget round and, in effect, what happened was we received a number of recommendations for increases in pensions and we also received and agreed recommendations on increasing the thresholds on how the rent rebate works. The affect of this was for some individuals that they were caught and ended up having to pay a little bit more. With hindsight it would have been useful to see how many people would have been captured by these changes. Certainly during the forthcoming budget process we will be seeking advice from the Treasury to ensure that we don't end up catching out individuals whether it be for £1.00 or £5.00 and we will also be looking at exactly how those increases have been recommended so that we can be clear what they are related to.

The Honourable Mike Summers

Would the Honourable Andrea Clausen please advise whether the rent rebate system is available for tenants of either private sector properties or properties like the Falkland Islands YMCA. And, if it's not, what sort of contribution does that make to our housing policy to encourage private sector housing?

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I, in fact, I don't know whether it applies to people who are in private housing. From the information I have been provided with by the Treasury it appears that it only applies to Stanley Government housing and I agree with my Honourable Colleague that there is an anomaly and it does nothing to help those in the private sector. This is perhaps another point that we should pick up on when we are looking over the overall review how a rent rebate system works.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Question Number 03 of 2009 by the Honourable John Birmingham

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, can the Honourable Janet Robertson confirm to this house that the FIG Emergency and Disaster plan is current and ready to be rolled out?

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Chief Executive for this answer. The FIG Major Incident Plan was last revised and updated in April 2008 and was tested in a major “Silver Teal” exercise on the 9th of April 2008. The plan is kept under constant review and a further revision incorporating improvements to the “Silver Command” arrangements whereby services are co-ordinated by the Chief Executive is due to be provided this April. A further Major “Teal” exercise is currently scheduled for June this year.

The plan is basically updated from time to time as staff and detail such as phone numbers change and also, each “Silver Teal” exercise results in an action plan to effect improvements, which then results in a revision to the plan. This is all part of continuous improvement to existing arrangements.

It should be remembered that the Business Continuity Plan for Government as an organisation to cope with things that stop it operating such as fire or flooding of the IT service, etc is a separate document and set of arrangements.

GMT has recently agreed an action plan which will lead to an updated corporate business continuity plan for Government and progress against that is being monitored.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I thank the Honourable Janet Robertson for her very good answer and I am sure I and many others will sleep easy in our beds tonight.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

I am very glad to hear it.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Question Number 04 of 2009 by the Honourable John Birmingham

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members would the Honourable Mike Summers OBE, please inform this house when he expects the independent economic review of the Sand Bay Meat Processing Plant and its overall effect on the economy to begin?

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy to tell the House and the Honourable Member that this review has begun and a fair amount of work has been done. Members of the House would also be interested, I would expect, in when it's to be finished and when the outcome will be revealed. The original target for completion was June 2009. At the request by Members of the Assembly this has been brought forward to March/April, in time for the Budget Round. This is quite a difficult task for the Senior Policy Officer to achieve but he is attempting to do so. He has had to await the arrival of the new General Manager of FIDC,

who has responsibility for the assets at Sand Bay and has some other work to do. He will be attempting to complete it by March or April in time for the Budget Session. Thank you.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Mike Summers for his comprehensive answer.

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, would the Honourable Mike Summers please confirm that this study and review is going to be as wide ranging as it possibly can. There are a number of farmers who have concerns about the way in which different types of product is selected, processed, slaughtered and exported and there are wide ranging concerns. I just wondered if he would confirm that as many people as are necessary will be part of the review.

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy to confirm that the part of the programme for the Senior Policy Officer is to talk with Farmers about the issues that affect them in respect of the meat processing plant. What he cannot do, of course, is to review the operations of the plant. That's outside his remit. But he would be talking directly to a number of farmers about this issue.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, can the Honourable Mike Summers please confirm that when all this work is finished it will be made public in due course?

The Honourable Mike Summers

I can indeed confirm that.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Motions

Motion Number 1 of 2009 by the Honourable Mike Summers OBE

"This House welcomes the recently issued policy paper on the setting up of a Public Accounts Committee, and welcomes comment and opinion from members of the public on how the PAC can be most effective and provide value for money".

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in introducing this Motion I will be relatively brief because I don't want to talk about all the things that Honourable Members may wish to touch upon. I would just recall that the setting up of the Public Accounts Committee in the Falkland Islands under the new Constitution was an initiative of Council of two iterations ago although we had foreseen it in a slightly different way. I believe there is deep and enduring support for the existence of a Public Accounts Committee in this Assembly. It is unfortunate, I think, that others have tried, in a way, to take over the creation and formation of a public accounts committee which I think, unfortunately, gives the impression to members of the public that it's been done somehow against the will of the Assembly. That is absolutely not the case. And, it is this Assembly's wish to see a Public Accounts Committee in being before the end

of this Assembly. That will rely to an extent, on the speed of the consultation and the speed of the drafting of the necessary legislation following that consultation. But it is our ambition to have a Public Accounts Committee in place before the end of this Assembly.

Just touching on one of two issues in terms of what we do need to discuss on the Public Accounts Committee. Its purpose, obviously, is critical, and what we think its role in life is going to be important. I think what we are all clear about or I hope we are all clear about that its role in life is not to be the opposition to the Government. Its role in life is to review issues to do with the public accounts and to make sure that the public accounts are being kept properly and that policies made by the Government are being carried out efficiently and effectively and providing value for money. It is not there to review policy.

A key issue for the Public Accounts Committee will be how its agenda is set and that's a matter open for debate and clearly how it's to be funded. I am not sure that really is a matter for debate since all public funding is provided by this House and standing sub-committees of this House and funding can only be provided by the Standing Finance Committee. We are aware, of course, that Public Accounts Committees in some other Overseas Territories do not function particularly well or so we have been told because they are starved of funds. It is important, therefore, that in thinking about how to do this we make sure that we have mechanisms in place that make that, if not impossible, at least politically untenable for either this or future Assemblies.

On that note, Mr Speaker, I will conclude until I have an option, I think, to wind up at the end of the discussion. But I do commend to the public and to the House the policy paper on the Public Accounts Committee and ask as wide a group of people as possible to contribute on what they think the Public Accounts Committee should be doing for this community.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Andrea Clausen, if you wish you may rise to second the motion and you may reserve your position to speak for a little later.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will second this Motion at this point and I will make a few comments as well. I endorse my Honourable Colleague's introductory comments about the role and the duties in so far as he has mentioned them in his introductory words wholeheartedly. This is a very, very important committee and, speaking personally, has my complete support. It's been quite interesting hearing some comments from visitors who have given us indications about how Public Accounts Committees work in other areas. I just like to mention, my colleague touched on funding issues and the role of the public accounts committee apparently is opposition in some areas and I think those two things are completely linked especially in some other Overseas Territories. We have been led to believe that where these Public Accounts Committees in fact do not function properly it is because they haven't got funding but that has been principally driven because they are seen as a vehicle of opposition and not one to assess value for money. So we have to be really, really clear and work very hard to ensure that that doesn't happen here to our Public Accounts Committee.

I think I would just like to make a few other comments in outstanding areas that people will see from the paper that is out for public consultation that there are a range of areas where policy points to be decided. I, too, would like to encourage members of the public to put forward what they think about some of these policy points to help inform us as we take this thing forward.

For myself I would just like to touch on a few of those areas. I agree that the primary function of the committee should be to examine Government's accounts and audit reports as

well as statutory bodies as and where appropriate. I agree that it should operate by examining issues and events following their occurrence and not prior to their occurrence. That is something that a Public Accounts Committee can do. It can perhaps look at a project proposal before it's happened and assess whether or not it's appropriate but I do not think that is what the role of the Public Accounts Committee should be. It should examine what's happened after the event.

Principally, it should assess value for money rather than trying to assess technicalities of a project, for example. It should absolutely not be responsible for examining Government Policy issues. This again, touching on, I guess, the subject of whether it sees itself in the role as opposition but should look at the outcome from those policies and should review those. That is absolutely clear.

It should control its own agenda but insomuch as that work programme that is set is approved by this House along with the funding requirements. Just further on that I think in terms of longevity in term. Certainly a subject that's been raised by colleagues. I would just like to state that I would support the term and longevity of the accounts committee to run slightly out of sync with the Assembly. What I mean by that is so that there is over-lap between Assemblies so that we would elect one mid-term and then (obviously it won't be that straight forward for this particular Assembly) but if we could try, I would support trying to accommodate so that it has over-lap and it is set so that a new Public Accounts Committee doesn't run with the Assembly, because obviously once a new Assembly is elected, there are lots of new things happening and it might be quite hard to then also have a new membership of a Public Accounts Committee. It would probably be quite useful if there was some kind of continuity there during all of those changes.

I think I will probably stop there because I am sure my Honourable Colleagues have other points that they'd like to make but I would just like to add again that I completely support this and I look forward to reading comments from members of the public and I sincerely hope we have many. Sir, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, in rising to support the motion I would just like to point out that in fact I agree with practically everything that's been said and I would be quite surprised indeed if any of my colleagues would not because this has been discussed at quite some length. We have debated these issues and what we really want to find out now is whether the public agree with the recommendations in the paper or whether we have any alternative views. I think one of the things that might cause some contention or some discussion, well, there are a couple of issues, one, as to whether the Public Accounts Committee can review policy and comment on that and I think the general feeling amongst Members is that it shouldn't but obviously that's an area that we would like to hear further comment on. The other one is what the Honourable Andrea Clausen was referring to about the whether the Public Accounts Committee should be able to review policy before it is set or indeed budgets before they are set or simply review them afterwards and, again, there is general agreement amongst ourselves that it's what should be an ex-post role i.e. after the decisions have been made by Executive Council and Standing Finance Committee rather than before-hand. But again this is an area where it is quite likely that others might have a different view on so the debate on that is quite important. And again, the funding issue, I suspect, well the comments that the Honourable Andrea Clausen made, too, about starvation of funding for Public Accounts Committee that if members don't actually like the work of the Public Accounts Committee they can simply resolve it by not giving them any money. Members will, of course, be accountable for this decision and they will have to face the consequences at the due time. I think in this case, I mean we can actually speak for this Assembly, we can't speak for any future Assemblies, but certainly this Assembly has been very much supportive

of the whole concept of a Public Accounts Committee so it would be incredibly bizarre of having argued it and tried to get the whole thing going and made sure that it's been fully included in the Constitution that we then chose not to give it any money and essentially cease its operation.

So again, I would like to reiterate the comments that we really want views from everybody that although we have discussed it amongst ourselves that we really need to have this discussion in public and with members of the public.

I support the Motion.

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I, too, would like to record my support for the Motion and also to point out that all the points which I wish to raise have already been raised, I believe. I think the only thing which we need to reiterate is that the process of the Public Accounts Committee is retrospective. I think we need to recognise that they work retrospectively, looking at whatever has happened rather than looking at policy and issues like that.

The other thing I think we need to make very clear is the fact that this isn't a committee which is elected by the Assembly. It's a committee of the Assembly. And, if I could repeat what the Honourable Mike Summers said, it is not helpful for outside agencies to put outside pressure on us to actually make decisions on this. This is our committee and we should actually make progress at our own time.

Mr Speaker I beg to support the Motion.

The Honourable Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, yes, I, too, would wish to support this motion and all the comments made by people who have spoken before me. I have just a few general observations I would like to make on this process. That is that we are probably quite late on in the day in having a PAC. Most countries in the world have had one for some considerable time. I have been looking on Google and I see, and I am sure it's not the earliest one that 1902 is the date that where I saw somewhere in Australia I think had a PAC. So, we are quite late on in the process and also we are a very small country. I think therefore, that we need to make sure that what we eventually come up with is suitable for the size of our country and isn't too onerous for those taking part in it. We don't have corruption. Maybe the PAC will discover that we do but I think that's unlikely. We don't have a lot of issues that other countries have, we don't have political opposition parties which can create a lot of mischief, we have people that don't necessarily agree with the way in which things are being done, that is only right and proper, it is the reason why back at the early stages earlier Councils thought that it was important that there should be a PAC.

I would just like to make the point that I think we have got to try and keep it simple, I think we have got to start slowly and build up our capabilities over time based on experience and knowledge of performing the process.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members most things have been said, but I would like to follow on from the Honourable Mike Rendell about the size of the community, the size of the Government and the size of any potential problem. I think that the only way, having taken

nine years to get to this, the only way that the Public Accounts Committee will work is if there is a level of reasonableness and responsible behaviour that we know we can normally get along with. Mr Speaker that is all I would like to say on that.

The Honourable Richard Stevens

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members I also have not got much more to add but I would like to talk about a few areas of concern, just to bring into the debate, that is probably just expanding on one of the things that the Honourable Mike Rendell was talking about in as much as the size and moving from that size to whatever we need. This time when we are searching round for money in the community to set up something that is going to cost us more, I suppose, has to be not questioned but examined I think that we all hope that it will be value for money. But, like with many institutions that are set up there is always the possibility that they grow, it is obvious that they will cost more money. I think one of the things that I would like to bring to this debate is that point, that we need to make it a functioning body but something that is always under control on how much it is going to cost us.

One of the other concerns that I have had during the discussions about the PAC is the amount of people in our small community that can be on the PAC but don't participate in Government wherever that might be, taking part in debate from outside in, if we have got enough people to be in this committee that are not already taking part in other areas (i.e. the various committees like the Rural Business Association or others). It is just thinking of whether we have enough people over a period of time to always have that capacity and bringing in new ideas. Ultimately, I think from the debate that we are having here we should move onto the debate hopefully that we will have within the general public and the ideas will feed back that they will put back into us, so that it is thoroughly thought through and debated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members I support the Motion.

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, thank you and I thank Honourable Colleagues for all their comments which I think are helpful and will hopefully help the public in their thinking about how this should work and I do entirely endorse the sentiments that have been expressed by Colleagues that what we need to do with the Public Accounts Committee is to start small and start simple and build on it as we go along and as we find appropriate and value for money roles for it and that those roles are given to it subsequently.

Just on the issue of funding, I would just make the analogy perhaps between the Public Accounts Committee and a number of other things that the Government funds and the issues that have been raised about whether the Government or a future Government might starve of it funds, I think are a bit drastic and highly unlikely. We fund a number of non governmental organisations not all of which are necessary in tune or agreement with current government policy, but the mechanism is for that organisation to submit to the Legislative Assembly effectively, the Standing Finance Committee an agenda for its activity and a cost that they would like us to contribute to. Exactly the same process can and I think should occur for the Public Accounts Committee.

I would just like to comment that the role of audit in any organisation including the Government is an essential role, as you sit inside the Government looking around and doing things, you can't always see what people can see from the other side. The role of audit not only of the finances but of the processes and procedures of a Government is always important, other people's eyes are always important, that is one of the essential capabilities and roles of the Public Accounts Committee to look at something slightly differently and to say actually – are you sure that that process is the correct process, the correct procedure to get the right

value for money for the public. I hope to see the Public Accounts Committee making a very positive contribution to the system of governance here.

I would just like to pick up on one final point because I think it is an issue that we would like to hear about and that is the question of regulation, it was suggested by some of us and certainly by myself in the course of early debate on the Public Accounts Committee that it might have a role in regulation of monopolies. The current policy paper suggests that that is not appropriate and I think colleagues by in large accept that premise, I'm not sure that I'm 100% convinced by it. I think there is a role for something like a Public Accounts Committee which is independent of the Government to look at monopolies, not only of the Government but perhaps in private sector to make sure that the ordinary citizen is being well treated by what are very often de-facto monopolies. I have no well developed thoughts on this issue but intuitively, I do think that something like a Public Accounts Committee could have a role in regulating perhaps prices and level of service to the community where there are a number of de-facto monopolies. I would like to hear the public debate on that issue as well as many of these others if we could during the course of these discussions.

Mr Speaker, in winding up, I think that is all I have to say, I support this Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members the Motion is that this House welcomes the recently issued policy paper on the setting up of a Public Accounts Committee and welcomes comment and opinion from members of the public on how the PAC can be most effective and provide value for money. The Motion is so carried.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

The Motion for Adjournment.

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker I beg to Move that this House stands adjourned *Sine Die*.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members the Motion is that this House stands adjourned *Sine Die*. Would any Honourable Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Honourable Andrea Clausen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support this Motion I think I'd like to start by welcoming our new Mr Speaker to this House. I look forward to working with him for the remainder of this Assembly and also to our Deputy Speaker as well, our first Deputy Speaker as provided for by the new Constitution.

There are just three things I'd like to make mention of today. In my role of observing on the Board of Sand Bay Meat Plant because of being chair of Standing Finance Committee, I would just like to make comments on a couple of issues that are bounding around at the moment in the public and causing some angst both for the plant itself and the Board and also for some of the producers. A lot of it is also linked to the wider economy and what is going on in global markets.

Recently there have been problems with supply from producers and just to give you an idea of some of the figures, if the plant can't operate because there aren't any animals provided to the

plant per day, it costs about £4,000. So, that's £4,000 wasted. That is a lot of money a lot of tax payers' money in some cases depending on their level of and proportion of subsidy on the day. So I appreciate there are a lot of factors out there that may be causing a lack of supply whether it be animals not being up to muster basically on the day, whether it be transport problems or a whole host of other things. I think I would just like to certainly put on record my concern about this and I would like to see that issue resolved whether it be producer or logistical or any other. I believe that in some cases people aren't aware what condition their animals are in until the day before they are due to go to the plant and I think that's probably unreasonable. I think FIMCO itself will be working very hard to try and address that and put in place some procedures so it's avoided.

I was also aware of some problems about transport at the moment. I don't mean to be castigating any of the individuals involved in transport. It's just the way it's working. We have a new link basically we have a new vessel, a new contract, a new style of operation and we all have teething problems and they have to be resolved and I would just endorse people working together to try and resolve these issues so that neither the producer or the plant are disadvantaged too much.

I think my other comment on that regarding the international markets and perhaps sometimes for producers to put wool and shearing obligations ahead of meat supply – everybody will be aware of in the Islands that wool prices have taken a tumble. We don't know how far they will go down. Meat prices are at least holding up at the moment and are actually improved in some areas. Some of that is because of the ability now to produce a different range of cuts and can now target a specialists' own market and that's all good. But we must remember why FIMCO was set up and it was to spread risk. And, it certainly at times like this when that is hopefully exactly what it's doing for those producers who are able to produce both meat and wool. Obviously it doesn't help those who are just producing wool. So I think I just would like to underline that fact that this vehicle for economic development was set up to spread the risk and to help people and we need to properly support it because if it is not properly supported by the producers it makes it very hard then for public and political support to then follow.

Just something to declare a complete interest in, in this but I would like to mention it today as my daughter is in part time schooling but has entered into the schooling forum. But I am very disappointed to have missed her sports day – her first sports day this week. The agendas for meetings of the Assembly are set well in advance and there is very little we can do about that. I do believe that there is more that can be done over at the Education Department to try and resolve this issue. I appreciate it might not be simple but I hope that there is flexibility out there and I would hope that those people who are representing parents are sure that they are representing all parents' views. It is the case that today in many households both parents work and a lot of them work a Monday to Friday job and that is prohibitive if they have young children or any children who are at school and they would like to attend such things as Sports Day. So I would like to see that issue brought forward by parents if they are interested so we can simply change it

Just finally, I would just like to say a couple of words on the budget process and the economy, in particular because I have been absent for some time and haven't had opportunity to take part fully in the Green Paper process. Which is absolutely essential and which started at the last budget round which, and of course I fully endorse because it provides us with information to help us make more informed decisions going forward in terms of revenue measures and pressures on public finances and also plays a very important role in feeding into the Economic Development Strategy, all of which I have come back to and bit behind but am happily taking part in. It was at least very, it was kind of comforting this morning to hear in a briefing at Standing Finance Committee from one half of our investment managers at least that the Falkland Islands' Government position with regard to our investments is certainly not as bad

as it could have been if we had adopted or previous Council had adopted a riskier approach and riskier objectives in terms of the investments. Because quite a conservative plan it's actually been quite rewarding, I say rewarding, it's protected more than it would have if we had a different investment plan so I think that was good to hear and I certainly look forward to hearing recommendations going forward from our investment managers and from the Treasury as to how we can even better manage our investments going forwards in this very unusual climate. It is difficult, nobody has a crystal ball, we don't know what's going to happen but I mean at least we can be marginally comforted that we may have lost in some areas but the losses would have been much bigger had we a different approach.

That's all I'll say for today. I think I've made up for my absence now.

Sir, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Mike Summers

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I once commented in this House before that every day that goes by is another piece of history but this is an historic occasion today because it's the first Legislative Assembly under the new Constitution and therefore I think it is important to mark it.

I am feel delighted to welcome you sir as Speaker and to thank you for taking up that task and also to welcome Anton as Deputy Speaker. It's good to see as many people as possible serving the community.

I would like to start by thanking the Commander British Forces for an excellent Capability Day that he afforded to Members of the Assembly just recently, a couple of weeks ago. It gave us the opportunity to have a current briefing on issues to do with Defence of the Falklands to look at a couple of the assets they have on station or had on station at that time and to have discussions with members of the command group about the defence policy and the defence strategy. These discussions on a regular basis are essential. Communication is the most important thing. In all elements of government communication between different pieces of the Government are between ourselves and the Defence Forces in the Falklands so thank you very much indeed for that and for the reassurance that the defence of the Falklands is in a very strong and positive position and the deterrence capability that we have here is more than adequate for current circumstances. So, thank-you for that, Commander.

I would just like to mention the visit of Members of Parliament which has just concluded very successfully. They were, of course, already both friends of the Falklands effectively before they came but again, that kind of briefing on a face to face basis and for them to see what goes on here is absolutely invaluable and I look forward to that programme continuing.

I would just like to note that yesterday the new Joint Position Statement between the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office for the operation of the Airbridge was signed in London and we will be issuing a press release shortly, hopefully on Monday about the essential content of that and to make sure that the public are fully informed about how the Airbridge is expected to operate going forward.

I would like to make some relatively brief comments about the economy and the economic development strategy. My colleague has already mentioned where we are in terms of our reserves and that is very satisfying. We have, as she has mentioned, generally taken a conservative approach to the investment of Government reserves and that's put us in good stead on previous occasions and again on this. I think we will probably continue to be very conservative with the public's funds.

The Economic Development Strategy, which has been underway for some while now, is quite a substantial piece of work and it involves not only analysing and evaluating the country as a whole and the economy as it currently is but also making some projections, assumptions, predictions about where it might go. That means getting into quite detailed work in existing industries, in the Fishery in particular, Tourism, perhaps less so in Agriculture because so much work has been done in that area already and trying to pull them together into a cohesive strategy. I was having an interesting conversation with some officers the other day about how the EDS was developing and they agreed that we do have an economic development strategy in place and have done for many, many years. It is just not written in the form that some people would expect to see in an economic development strategy. So we will do that. We will complete that work but I can't promise that it's going to be that quick because there is so much analytical work that needs to be done to ensure that the proposals that we are putting forward will be able to assist and affect the economy and will be able to create additional growth to enable the community here to continue to enjoy the services that it expects. So the economic development strategy will probably not be produced until towards the back end of this year, therefore almost certainly not in the life of this Assembly. And it will be for the new Assembly to finish it off.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I would just like to welcome the forthcoming visit of HRH the Princess Royal to the Falklands on another occasion. It will be delightful to see her here again and it is yet another affirmation of the closeness between the Falkland Islands and Her Majesty's Government in the UK.

Sir, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Mr Mike Rendell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have just a few general points relating to my portfolio duties. In particular I am taking advantage of this forum to get a few small messages out to people in the Camp in particular on television and the Camp upgrade. The Camp upgrade, the telecommunications upgrade appears to be going very well. Having said that, I received comments that there is still quite a lot of work to do. People can see that aerial bases have been put in but masts haven't been put on them. I am assured that by the end of April everything will be completed and the system will be fully operational. I think this is an important message to get out to those that might be a little concerned. There seems to be inactivity in some areas. That is because there is a lot of activity in other areas and you can't be everywhere all the time.

I think we have to be patient as far as the new system is concerned. I think people are being very patient but until it's fully operational and up and running and everybody's connected to the new system and disconnected from the old system it's going to be very difficult to draw any conclusions. And that is going to be the important time so I just call for patience and hoping along with everybody else that the new system will just transform the way in which people can operate in the Camp both from the private point of view and also for businesses. I think it's a very important development that's taking place, one that's been in planning for a long time, one which is going to help the rural development strategy and the camp economy and hopefully keep people out there and take more people back out to the Camp, which is so important.

Just a few words on Television, people in Camp will have received a letter within the last week or two asking them what they want, making lots of various pointers about what distances they can be from satellite dishes and all that sort of stuff. And, it's very important that these responses come back as soon as possible because nothing further can happen on procurement of satellite dishes and everything else until we know how many are needed. So, it is important to respond as quickly as possible so that process can move on.

I would like to comment on economic activities which colleagues have already discussed FIMCO and the Abattoir and the broader economic development of the Islands and how important it is that those are closely, we had a question earlier on about how soon the review of FIMCO will be completed and we have already talked about that in some detail but it is so important especially at the moment where wool prices appear to be plummeting and there doesn't appear to be any real hope on the horizon that they are going to come back up and how that will affect people in the Camp who produce wool that certainly FIMCO's strategy and the broader strategy compliment each other to overcome the problems that this may bring.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Richard Cockwell

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support this Motion I, too, would like to welcome you to this House and look forward to working with you in the next two or three meetings. And, also the Deputy Speaker who, in deference to you, sir, I hope he doesn't actually have to take up the role.

The financial situation that we are in and the world is in at the moment is talked about a lot, so I am not actually going to put my five eggs in the basket there. I think everybody has made it very clear so far that we are in difficulties. However, we are not in such difficulty, not in the level of difficulty we could have been if it hadn't been for careful financial management in the past.

The Honourable Andrea Clausen raised the issue of the problems that the meat plant is having regarding logistics in various areas and I can reassure her that the General Manager of FIDC is undertaking a very active role in this and I believe that in the future it will be sorted out, in the near future at least I hope it will be.

The Honourable Mike Summers mentioned the Economic Development Strategy. I think it is also very important that the Rural Development Strategy is given that very high priority. The situation of our people in Camp, particularly under the new financial situation – the price of wool and such like is becoming very difficult. And, we do have to try and find more ways of supporting the camp and also building up the population base.

In my portfolio: I would like to welcome the arrival of Mr David Waugh, who is the new General Manager, who, will have a very steady hand on the tiller and I look forward to working with him for the rest of this Assembly. I would also welcome the arrival of Mr Ken Johnson, who is looking after the port development. He is the Development Officer and I look forward to a report from him hopefully, not as soon as I originally stated in the previous Legislative Council meeting but I do look forward to it within the next three or four months anyhow.

One of the things in my portfolio which hasn't been mentioned and there is going to be quite a large change in the departments which seems to be very small and that is the Historic Buildings. Jane Cameron, who has been a leader of the Historic Buildings Committee for many, many years, is actually asking to be released from some of her duties and it is going to be quite difficult to replace her. I do wish to express my appreciation for everything that she has done for the built heritage of the Falklands over many, many years. But I think we do need to recognise that we do have a responsibility for our built heritage. If it goes, we cannot replace it. And so I think although we are in a period of financial difficulties I believe we should not forget this.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Motion.

The Honourable John Birmingham

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to speak to this Motion, I also would like to join the many well wishers to yourself to this house and also the Deputy.

Many things have happened since this House last sat, not least a name change and a new Constitution coming into play. But I would just like to say a few things on current issues that are floating around.

For instance, last week in the front of the *Penguin News* we saw a headline about Major Biggs and his son reaching new heights. And, I'd like to publicly acknowledge the fete that Major Biggs and his son Daniel achieved by climbing the highest mountain in the Andes. I think it's a very good flag-waving exercise for the Falkland Islands and I do hope that in some way in some form in the future our appreciation would be shown.

And, of course, climbing is sport and there have been a lot of discussions about the state of our one and only recreation field here in Stanley and I would like to take this opportunity in informing the public that the Public Works Department will be undertaking further works, not least the installation of some water. As we live in the land of experts the general feeling seems to be that one thing that it does lack is watering during dry spells.

And I note that the school, the Education Department has found a partner for exchange visits and I wish it all the success and I hope it is the right kind of school for us to have exchanges with.

The FIGAS (Falkland Islands Government Air Service) has been under the spotlight recently and it's pleasing to note that the interim review has now been delivered to Members of the Assembly and I hope and expect that that review will be published in the very near future.

And thinking of reviews, of course the Review of Government has now been accepted by Executive Council on a cost-neutral basis and as Petronius says – "We will see."

The daily cost of living is something, of course, that affects everybody, not least, the price of fruit not only in the town but in the Islands and I spoke with the major importer of fruit yesterday about this and it was explained to me that actually what's happening is we are in what they term the "hungry gap" between Northern Hemisphere fruit being made available and of course that's what appears to be what we are eating at the moment which is why it's very, very expensive and we are just waiting on the in-season fruit arriving and he has assured me that the price will reduce significantly. Because I do know that people do and have become used to fruit being available and I hope to not spend £1.05 on a banana the week after next.

There's a term being floating around, called "future proofing." And, future proofing apparently is making sure that things are OK financially in the future. My idea of future proofing is that perhaps the Falkland Islands Government would not be looking at any grand investments that may seem OK at the time but actually is going to cost on an annual basis by having a large subsidy. And, my idea of future proofing is making sure that our children and grandchildren do have something left in the bank.

At the public meeting this week there was overwhelming approval for the continued flying over of Stanley and the environment, generally, of the RAF. I think that that should go very much towards giving comfort to the Air Commodore and his staff at Mount Pleasant. I think that following on from what has been said about our day out, and seeing what the British Forces here can do, and continue to do, it certainly gives me extra comfort that you are here and you will remain here, and, by far the majority of the public support that.

To finish up I just would like to say that today the schools are involved in this because today is “national doodle day.” I expect some of the Members around this table to take part and I look forward to the exhibition.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Richard Stevens

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I would also like to welcome you to our happy band and to the Deputy as well.

I’ve got a few things that I would like to talk about. First of all a most enjoyable experience last night at Government House at a reception for Shirley Adams-Leach who was awarded the MBE. It was really a community event where there was a great depth of feeling throughout the people that were there towards Shirley. Whenever the Governor said anything positive there was a ripple of agreement. It was really good to be there. It did occur to me while standing there and listening to all Shirley’s work that we could have probably filled a football pitch with the people in the community that have been brushed by her work and her involvement with music in the community. It was Shirley’s modesty after she received her MBE by saying it was everybody else’s work that had made it possible. That was typical Shirley. That was a good event to be at.

I would like to thank Barbara Booth, who has been our Director of Education for the last few years for her work within education. Obviously we will see the fruits of her work over the next few years and I think for me it has been bringing the schools together and the training centre and also putting in the structure that Councillors asked for. It hasn’t all together been an easy time for Barbara and perhaps some of the pressure put on her was introduced by us but hopefully in the future we will look back and think it has been a good job done.

Certainly if you watch breakfast television, which, of course, I never have time for over any period of time, the debate about education and also health is on-going. A week doesn’t go by when health and education aren’t mentioned at least a couple of times.

Recession: One of our wool brokers of a few years ago says recession always affects wool first and the pressure came off wool last and it is my experience over nearly 25 years, or it will be 25 years this year. With my experience I would say that is entirely right. Obviously many farms have tried to move into different areas, which brings up the point that the Honourable Dr Clausen was trying to speak about and that is the time-line for trying to slot in a shearer that has another 20 odd farms to or a tourist boat that you are also trying to service that you are probably phoned up from Port Sussex farm and ask them if they could delay it because you have the shearers or the lorry was coming to pick up the meat and it probably wouldn’t be worth the 6p or whatever it would be but it’s not easy. But coming back to this recession that is affecting farmers, depending on who you speak to, if you’ve got fine wool, people are telling me that they expect to lose 40% of their wool income this year from last year so perhaps just to give you the benefit of that, there’s, lets say it’s a third so it’s like going to work and you have a wage of £21,000 and your employer says that he is sorry but from now on your annual pay is going to be £14,000. It’s going to really affect farmers this year. Not only that of course, again experience tells me that when times are tough people always leave it until the last day to pay their bills, so coming further and further down the line farmers will see the money in their banks over a greater period of time. I am told that we will get that money eventually but like everything else the bills are still coming in on a regular basis.

I would also like to be more controversial now and try and stimulate debate about the farms that have been sold or going to be sold for large sums of money, which have come from outside the Islands that dwarf farm economics and to discuss the wrongs and rights of it. On one side Government bought and sold and facilitated the splitting up of farms over 10 years in the '80s and a lot of mistakes were made at that time and then during the '90s Government spent millions trying to stabilise, trying to maintain that status quo. Perhaps it can be argued that that kind of support then didn't allow for the economic forces to lead to amalgamations, which in some ways would have made more economic farm units.

Today in our society we protect our housing stocks in Stanley from people that are non-resident even if they have Falkland Islands' status, and, that is probably right. We realise that people from outside could afford high prices for housing which would drive up costs which would make it more difficult for people in our community. In our fisheries we protect areas of that industry with ITQ and I know that might be simplistic but it is also there. What I am saying is that money coming from inside and buying farms changes the cost and might interfere with those natural economic forces that might strengthen what we might already have or will affect the rural community basically. You know, there's a huge amount of debate to be had if areas of land that are really important – let's take Keppel Island – belongs to an outside entity and this asset that we have that would be a huge jewel in the crown for tourism is now closed off to actually people that live in the Falklands or greatly restricted. This again may happen if land is owned by people who are not influenced by any economic pressure within the Islands.

Having said all that, I am a farmer and I see my farm as my pension and, at the end of the day when I am too old, bad natured and crippled to want to carry on, I would like to get the best value for my farm. So I am saying it's a debate we should have. We should know where we are going and what the affects of selling off important parcels of land can be to us. I know this topic has been discussed by the Rural Development Strategy Group and I think as many people who feel strongly about it as possible should contribute to this debate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Janet Robertson

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, of course I would like to echo the welcome, Mr Speaker, it's great to have you here and to Anton, too, of course. The fact that we had to go through this process is unfortunate but I am really pleased with the result.

I am just going to start on something slightly gloomy. A few people have been asking me recently if I think the recession is a good thing because there are people out there who think it is. This is not a subject, I think, that is unique to the Falkland Islands. I think probably around the western world they think it's a jolly good thing because it is that time we stop being so selfish and consumerist and we recognise the true values etc., etc. I can understand that argument but I still cannot, for the life of me think that recession is a good thing. It leads to far too much individual suffering, it restricts development, and, of course, it delays things that will help the community as a whole.

However, although I am not a great one for thinking that every cloud has a silver lining I could see that perhaps if there are any benefits to a recession maybe people re-evaluating some of their priorities is not such a bad thing and also looking around them and seeing who around them is suffering and what perhaps could be done to help. I was struck recently finding out that there are people in our community who really are struggling and struggle fairly desperately. They need help. They need assistance and they get a good measure of that from Government. But in this community who are so fantastic at raising money for charity – I think we rightly have got a good reputation for that and I am very, very proud of that but

there doesn't appear to be a charity that is solely in existence for the purposes of on-going help for our most needy in society. I am not suggesting that there is any fault. There is none there. It's probably a reflection generally of how successful we've become over the latter years but I think it is something we could keep in mind and think about. And, certainly take opportunity to look around us and see what the situation is for some people.

There are some really good things that I would like to talk about, too. The Honourable Richard Stevens has mentioned Shirley Adams-Leach. I was at that reception last night and I found it very moving and I think it's very, very well deserved and I congratulate Shirley wholeheartedly.

The other person I would like to mention is Barbara Booth. She's had a little bit of a difficult time at periods here has been mentioned but I think that a lot of achievement has come out of that pain. The interim inspection report at FICS is a good indication about how things have progressed over the time that she's been here. I remember her from the first few months of her arrival being able to pin-point very clearly and with great accuracy what she thought were some of the weaknesses in our system and I am very glad that she has had the vision and the ability to promote the improvements. I am very glad that Executive Council has supported that. I am extremely glad that we now have a form of career progression in the Education Department and we have our first ever local Deputy Head, that we have an ever increasing seamless transition between IJS and FICS, that pupil tracking is improving all the time, and these are only some of the things that probably as parents we don't get to see but there's a huge amount of work going on in both schools to achieve those objectives.

I'd like to say a little bit about the Hospital. I think there were many who were feeling a little bit bruised recently as a result of a very public report on the internal review at the hospital and I know that is very difficult for staff not to feel all personally attacked when such a report comes out. I would just like to remind the public, of two things, one is that it is precisely the reason that we have internal audits and a programme for internal audits, it's so that we can, on a fairly regular basis identify areas of weakness in our system and areas where further training and further monitoring is required and it's quite clear that in a large department like the Health Service, there's more scope for systems not functioning as well as they could compared to smaller departments.

The second thing I would like to remind everyone of is that the Health Service is a health service and what was criticised was the administration of that. The Clinical Governance Report on the Hospital that came out in 2007 rated the hospital very highly and pointed out that we are extremely lucky to have the excellent health service that we have. So I just want you to remember that and I know the media pointed it out as well last week that there are very, very positive things coming out of there.

Just to pick up on a point that Councillor Clausen made about Sports Day I have sort of bored people in the past with this subject. I think our children's main Sports Day should be held on a weekend so that parents could attend so that we can increase the profile of sport in schools. I am quite aware of the problems of essentially putting in place or an extra day of schooling so clearly there would have to be some compensation for that somewhere else by an extra day added on to the holidays or something like that. I understand the school managers were not particularly in favour of this idea. I don't know the details, I don't know why but I do believe it is something that has to go up to much wider consultation because most parents I talk to are very much in favour of it and it would seem that some members of staff are as well so I think it's a subject for certainly further consultation.

I would just like to comment on National Doodle Day and propose that if we want to have a doodle champion, it has to go, of course, to the Honourable Richard Cockwell. He can

actually produce a picture, whereas I can only colour in my letters. It doesn't look that impressive.

Sir, I support the Motion.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, Thank you on behalf of Anton and, indeed myself, I thank you for your welcome and the House now stands adjourned accordingly.



Legislative Assembly Question for Written Answer

Number 01/2009 by the Honourable Mike Summers OBE

Would the Chief Executive please advise:

- 1. When any of his officials first knew of the proposed visit to the Islands of around 60 Argentine veterans commencing 13th March;**

FIG officials first became aware of a potential visit by an Argentine veteran group (on 14 March) on 17 February. This arose as a result of an e-mail message received from an Argentine on that day which then led to an Internet search. This suggested that a party of 10 veterans plus approximately 20 family members would visit on 14 March.

On 11 March officials were notified by local LAN representatives that it appeared 70 passengers were booked to fly from Rio Gallegos on 14 March.

Officials have assured me that they had no earlier information on the unusually large number of Argentines visiting by air.

In the event, 59 passengers boarded at Rio Gallegos. 52 were Argentine nationals which included veterans, family members, marathon participants, journalists and private visitors, and 7 other nationalities.

- 2. Whether Government House were aware of the visit, and on what date they first knew;**

Government House were notified of the potential visit on 17 February and of the large potential number on 11 March.

3. Whether any considerations had been given to formal liaison between the Government authorities and the group to avoid misunderstanding about acceptable behaviour

Prior consideration was not given to formal liaison between Government authorities and the group about acceptable behaviour.

4. Whether all immigration procedures were properly complied with.

All immigration procedures were properly complied with.