

Liberation Day Speech **9th May 2017**

Moussieu l'Gouverneur, Moussieu l'Chef Ministre, Mes Danmes et Messieurs

Anniet, j'vou fais la beinv'nue au septante-deuxième anniversaithe dé la libéthation. J'sais qu'y'a hardi d'vous tchi n'ethons pas comprins chien que j'vanne de dithe. D'abors, i n'y a pas fort dè gens tchi parle le Jèrriais chès jours, ou chès p'tetre la faute de ma pronounciation et dè m'accent, le rocqu'tin

Your Excellency, Chief Minister, ladies and gentlemen

1. A very warm welcome to you today to the 72nd anniversary of Liberation. I recognise that most of you will not have understood what I have just said. This is for two reasons – first of all Jersey French is not spoken as widely as it used to be, and secondly because my pronunciation is no doubt awful, having as it does a strong flavour of La Rocque.
2. A special welcome to Arthur Shales, in the St Brelade contingent, who tells me he is the last surviving member of the Band which played outside the Pomme d'Or on May 9th 1945.
3. Of course between 1940 and 1945 the language of Jersey French was used, not because English could not be spoken, but because it was the natural way of communicating in a way which the Germans would not understand. The language not only enabled

communication to be private, but in any event was part of our identity, as much a part of that identity as the Jersey cow, or the Jersey Royal potato.

4. I was wondering recently about what marked out Jersey's identity today. Answers given by the Chief Minister in the States in March this year showed that there were applications for registration cards from people of at least 67 different nationalities, and probably more. In terms of numbers, the top five nationalities were British, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian and Irish, and in each case the numbers of applications from those nationalities can be measured in thousands and not hundreds. I am particularly pleased to see here today representatives of the Portuguese and Polish communities in the island and I thank them for coming. Jersey's national day today is for their communities as well, just as it is for all of us who were not alive in 1945. It is interesting that although the biggest single group of applications during 2013 – 2016 was from Jersey born applicants of British nationality - slightly outnumbering the applications by non-Jersey born British people - approximately one third of applications for registration cards were made by non-British nationals.
5. While we have a significant number of nationals from outside Europe, there is no doubt that the diversity of our population has come about as a consequence of being part of the United Kingdom's commitment to the EU principle of free movement of

people. That was a choice on our part because it comes with the combination of free movement of goods and the Common Travel Area of the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Islands. The extent to which that free movement will continue will very much come under focus with the Brexit negotiations.

6. So when we celebrate Liberation Day – our national day – today, some of you will think only of 1945 and liberation from the Nazi regime. But just as Jersey French and the war years could demonstrate a Jersey identity, Liberation Day brings us all together in 2017 and in future years too, something that forges our identity.
7. Part of it is on show on this stage today, not for us as individuals – Crown Officers, Jurats, States members, clergy leaders – but for the institutions we represent. Of course there are those who from time to time become disenchanted with the Bailiff and Jurats, but in this imperfect human world, the institution of the Royal Court delivers justice as best it can. It is popular these days – here and elsewhere - to be critical of politicians, perhaps without spending too much time bothering to find out the facts, but the institution of the States is there to make the best decisions it can for the welfare of our community. In some quarters, we hear criticism of the clergy, but the institutions represented by clergy leaders reflect a message that a fulfilling life is not just about material things but spiritual ones too.

8. We should clasp these institutions to our hearts as part of our island identity, reflecting as they do our past, our present and our future.
9. But what else do we say to our children and our grandchildren to describe our Jersey identity - what it is to have our hearts and souls in Jersey today? When I was sworn in I said that I thought we ought to be reclaiming from those who abused it the expression "*The Jersey Way*". I renew that call today. To me it means being tolerant, being competent in what we do, and showing integrity and compassion. When I see these qualities emerging either in States debates or in litigants in the Royal Court, as I often do, it makes me proud to be in Jersey.
10. So let us treasure our institutions, learn Jersey French, eat Jersey Royals and drink milk from Jersey cows; and let us adopt the Jersey Way, whatever changes arise in the composition of our people in the future because that sums up what we were liberated from on 9th May 1945.