

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF
TYNWALD COURT**

**Douglas, Wednesday, 19th January 2000
at 10.30 a.m.**

Present:

The President of Tynwald (the Hon Sir Charles Kerruish OBE LLD (hc) CP). In the Council: The Lord Bishop (the Rt Rev Noël Debroy Jones), the Attorney-General (Mr W J H Corlett QC), Messrs E A Crowe, D F K Delaney, J R Kniveton, E G Lowey, Dr E J Mann, Messrs J N Radcliffe and G H Waft, with Mrs M Cullen, Acting Clerk of the Council.

In the Keys: The Speaker (the Hon N Q Cringle) (Rushen); Mr L I Singer and Hon A R Bell (Ramsey); Mr R E Quine OBE (Ayre); Mr J D Q Cannan (Michael); Mrs H Hannan (Peel); Hon W A Gilbey (Glenfaba); Hon S C Rodan (Garff); Hon D North (Middle); Mr P Karran, Hon R K Corkill and Mr G T Cannell (Onchan); Messrs J R Houghton and R W Henderson (Douglas North); Hon D C Cretney and Mr A C Duggan (Douglas South); Mr R P Braidwood and Mrs B J Cannell (Douglas East); Mr J P Shimmin and Hon A F Downie (Douglas West); Hon J A Brown (Castletown); Hon D J Gelling (Malew and Santon); Sir Miles Walker CBE LLD (hc) and Mrs P M Crowe (Rushen); with Mr T A Bawden, Acting Clerk of Tynwald.

The Lord Bishop took the prayers.

Apologies for Absence

The President: Hon. members, we have apologies for absence from the hon. member of the Council, Mrs Christian.

Draft Sale of Parsonages Measure (Isle of Man) 1999 – Motion Carried

The President: Resuming consideration of the order paper, we turn to item 16 and I call upon the hon. Mr Speaker to move.

The Speaker: Mr President, I beg to move:

That -

- (1) the Report of the Ecclesiastical Committee of Tynwald on the draft Sale of Parsonages Measure (Isle of Man) 1999 be received; and*
- (2) the draft Sale of Parsonages Measure (Isle of Man) 1999 in the form laid before Tynwald be presented to Her Majesty for Her Royal Assent, as required by schedule 1 to the Church Legislation Procedure Act 1993.*

The Ecclesiastical Committee have pleasure in presenting this report to this hon. Court and the hon. members will find that it is in three distinct parts.

The first part of the report is the actual report itself on page 1 which spells out the way in which the new form of legislation of passing Church legislation will take effect.

The second part of the report you will find is actually the memorandum, a memorandum which was prepared for the Ecclesiastical Committee to consider and in that memorandum we spell out the reasoning for the new order to come forward and that is to be found in the third part of the report, which is the Sale of Parsonages Measure (Isle of Man) 1999 and in that

particular area, if members would turn to the first part of that measure, which is the third part of the report, they will see at 1.3 where the new bit will be added to Church legislation, and it says there at (3A): 'The following sum shall be paid by the Board out of the net proceeds of a disposal of land comprising the parsonage house of a benefice to the parochial church council of any parish or part of a parish within the area of the benefice, namely a sum equal to the total of any sums expended by the council in carrying out, or in meeting or contributing to the cost of, any works of improvement of the house carried out with the consent of the Board during the 10 years ending with the completion of the disposal'.

Now, the object of the exercise is that it was decided there was inequality in so far as those people who maybe had raised funds to do up, shall we say, the vicarage in their own particular area and had been generous maybe even in the giving, it was discovered that if then, because of plurality or some other reason, that vicarage was being sold off, the money would go generally into the church fund and there would be no ownership in effect of the parish council having any part of that fund. So this measure will allow the ownership of some of that money in 10-yearly proportions. So if they have expended money four years before the vicarage, shall we say, was to be sold, well then there would be six tenths remaining and they would get proportionally that sum of money back to the parish. It does give the flexibility of allowing some money raised by the parish to go back to parish use, and the Ecclesiastical Committee, having looked at the recommendation from the Church itself on this particular measure, are happy to propose the motion on the Tynwald order paper this morning.

Mr Duggan: I beg to rise and second, sir.

The Lord Bishop: Mr President, just to thank the committee for pushing this onto the agenda and just to explain the background, over the last 10 years of my time here I have asked every parish to have a planned maintenance performance on vicarages and parsonages which very often in the past, I have to say, have been rather neglected over the years and we were faced very often with a situation where, when an incumbent left an area, the vicarage was in a very, very poor state. So in the last 10 years there has been a considerable expenditure on the part of many parishes with new incumbents coming in, often up to the sum of £25,000 or £30,000 to repair very essential damages and repairs needed for the buildings and so it became obvious after a few years that if a vicarage had to be sold, there would be a certain amount of unfairness on the part of a parish which had expended a fair amount of money if it all then went into the stipends fund, which is the normal procedure.

So I am very happy that this is before you because it does actually make a lot of equality in the system as it now is. Thank you.

The President: Reply, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: No, Mr President, I thank the Bishop for his comments.

The President: Hon. members, I will put the resolution set out at item 16 on the order paper. Will those in favour please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**Petition for Redress of Grievance of Arthur Derek Radcliffe –
Reference to a Select Committee – Motion Carried**

The President: Item 17, the hon. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Mr President, a month ago I put a question on the question paper to the Chief Minister relevant to the Sulby plan. I did so to make sure that as far as the Chief Minister and the government were concerned they were content with the situation as it currently is.

I therefore have asked to have this item put on the order paper because I was satisfied that this is a genuine grievance and this grievance was presented at Tynwald on 5th July and I think it is one which we should be prepared to pick up.

The petitioner actually asked for a committee to be formed and following that line I beg to move this morning:

That the Petition for Redress of Grievance of Arthur Derek Radcliffe presented at St John's on 5th July 1999 be referred to a committee of three members for consideration and report.

Mr Downie: Mr President, I wish to second and in doing so I have been mentioned in this petition and I must put on record now that I would like to see this matter resolved. I have always had a very good relationship with Mr Radcliffe, the petitioner. I bear him no animosity whatsoever and I am as anxious as anybody to see exactly what is behind his petition and if there has been some injustice done, address that very situation.

As I say, I have no problem seconding this at all and I would be grateful, if the Court agrees, which I am sure they will do, that we look at all of the aspects leading up to the production of the Sulby Village Plan and the whole matter can be dealt with right from the start of the planning procedure. Thank you, Mr President.

Mrs Hannan: The petition, as Mr Speaker says quite rightly, was presented and it does have a grievance and I support the select committee being set up. However, I think I would like to invite the Council of Ministers to go a little further than that by the select committee, and that is Tynwald, looking at the particular issue that is being addressed, but I also think the Council of Ministers should look at something like Nolan and when I say Nolan, the situation that has developed in the United Kingdom where we do look at standards in public life and I think that those sorts of issues should be addressed by the Council of Ministers as soon as possible to look at this because I think there are more pressures being brought to bear on people in the public life and public aspect and I think the sort of issues that have been raised in other places should also be addressed here and I would hope that the Council of Ministers would do that.

With regard to a select committee, I am not sure that three members is enough to look at this because this is an extremely important issue to this Court and how this Court operates and how this Court has certain aspects of, in this instance, planning put before us. Planning is a contentious issue, as we heard yesterday. We heard yesterday some of the comments that were made about development in certain areas and in this particular area and this particular issue that has been raised it was removing one part of land from development, putting it somewhere else, somewhere else where it is going to be for government much more difficult to address the issues of planning because the services are not provided to this new area and therefore I think the whole of this issue really comes back to planning. So I am not sure whether three members looking at this is enough and I think maybe more, but I leave it to the Speaker who has addressed this, if he thinks that three members are sufficient, but I have a query over that. Thank you, Vainstyr Loayreyder.

Mr Lowey: I rise to support the petition that is on the paper, Mr President. I would only just take issue that whether it is three or five members is immaterial. I think the evidence will be collected by the committee and sifted and then presented to this Court. I think three or five is immaterial and I think sometimes when you have a very difficult thing to go through, then perhaps the smaller the committee the more intensive it can become as opposed to a larger one. So there is a case for five but there is a very strong case for keeping it small, tight, focused, because I would like this committee to meet and resolve it as quickly as possible.

Mr Brown: Mr President, I would just like to be clear on the basis that my understanding of the grievance is there are two grievances from the petitioner and there is an indication here that members are talking or indicating we should be looking at the whole planning system, and I think that is a separate question. (**Mr Downie:** Hear, hear.) In the actual petition - and I have got a copy of it here - was the first grievance, as I understand it, and maybe Mr Speaker could clarify it so there is no misunderstanding of what the select committee is being asked to do, and I have no problem in supporting the select committee, but I do believe we need to concentrate on the two issues, not concentrate on all planning, which could broaden it out and take for ever to decide. The petitioner has specific grievances and the first one, based on his petition, is that 'at the time of the decision to recommend de-zoning, the Minister responsible lived 135 metres from the land proposed for development in the Issues and Options document and was subsequently to sell his house for a figure in excess of £400,000:00. The Petitioner contends that Mr Groves should have declared an interest, taken no further part in the process and should certainly not have chaired the meeting. The planning process should not only be fair but also be seen to be fair if it is to have any credibility. The participation of Mr Groves at this stage completely invalidates the Village Plan as those involved at later stages must have attached considerable weight to the recommendation of Mr Groves Department.' Then the second one, as I understand, is that 'The Petitioner is further aggrieved in that for two years DoLGE refused to give any information as to who actually sat on the Committee that recommended the de-zoning of the land', and therefore I understand it is those two specific issues that are being asked to be examined and I have no problem in supporting that. I think the wider issue of the planning process and 'Issues and Options' system and so on is a different issue, and I would like to hear Mr Speaker respond to that when he winds up.

Sir Miles Walker: Mr President, I rise to support the resolution as it is written. I think three members is probably appropriate. There is a difficulty of getting members together and it seems to me that this is an issue that ought to be sorted and settled as soon as can be.

I take the point made by the hon. member for Castletown, Mr Brown, that the petition is in fact quite succinct in its purpose and the two issues there, I think, should be addressed.

I understand the grievance of the petitioner, but I also think that Mr Groves, who has been mentioned in this Court during the debate and in the petition, should also have an opportunity of putting his case. It seems to me that that is quite important as well.

The planning system, I think, is an additional debate and if any recommendations are made by the select committee after it has reported that some things should be looked at, so be it, but a case has to be made for that in due course. I think the job in hand is to look at the grievance of the petitioner and get a report back to this Court as soon as practical.

Mr Quine: Mr President, I take a similar position to the hon. member for Castletown and the hon. member for Rushen, Sir Miles Walker. I have no problem at all with the two grievances which are the grievances I can extract from this petition being examined. Indeed I think it would be foolhardy of us not to examine those grievances, and that is not prejudging them in any way at all. I am very happy to have an examination of those aspects. But any thought that this exercise should be enlarged to include standards in public life or that it looked into planning procedures or indeed that it be looked at as a mechanism for to have a further review of the Sulby plan, which is subject to statutory procedures, those matters are matters separate and distinct. In supporting this petition I am making quite clear that I support it on the basis of what in effect Mr Radcliffe has complained of and that is allegations in respect of Mr Groves which remain to be examined and see whether there is any substance or not. That is fine. Let us look at that. Let us look also at this question of what, if any, information was delayed or withheld and report on that. That is what I understand to be the substance of the grievance and that I would ask Mr Speaker to confirm is what he seeks in promoting this petition.

The President: Reply, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, Mr President, I am very happy to concur with the hon. member for Castletown, with my colleague for Rushen, Sir Miles, and the hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine, in relation to the planning procedures and the system, as has been referred to, quite happy to acknowledge that what I am asking for is a committee to sit and look at the prayer of the petition, to actually consider the petition, and that is the job of whoever will be appointed to serve on this committee if in fact the Court gives me that permission to have the committee formed.

Having said that, I would also want to make the point, so that there is no misunderstanding whatsoever, that, if as a result of looking at the prayer of the petition, the select committee, whoever may sit on it, sees as a side issue that there is a need for some comment on the planning system, it would in my book become a side issue and that would come back in that form as a report to this Court and it is this Court then that would decide what action it would take on it.

What I think is here instantly is there is a grievance and that grievance is well founded and felt as far as I am concerned, and I think, as my hon. colleague Sir Miles, said, there is a need that it should be cleared as practically and as soon as is possible, and I take the point that my other hon. colleague on the Legislative Council, Mr Lowey, made in relation to Mrs Hannan's comment as to should the committee be five or three? I did consider that in putting the motion down and I take Mrs Hannan's point that, yes, sometimes it is better to have a committee of five. In this instance I have the instinctive feeling that the Court would be better satisfied with a committee which can get on with the job and bring it back and report here, clearing the issues as we go.

So I am thankful for the support which appears to be abounding within this Court this morning and I am certainly grateful to the hon. member for West Douglas for being prepared to second the motion on the order paper. I so move.

The President: Hon. members, I will put the resolution set out at item 17 on the order paper. Will those in favour please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

With the resolution carried, hon. members, we proceed to elect three members to the committee.

Mr Radcliffe: I propose Mr Speaker, Mr President.

Mr Cretney: I beg to second, Mr President.

Mr Downie: I would like to propose Mr Corkill, the hon. member for Onchan, Mr President.

Mr Quine: I beg to second Mr Corkill.

Mr Gelling: Could I propose Mr Waft of the Legislative Council, please.

Mr Lowey: I propose Mr Radcliffe of the Legislative Council.

Mr Braidwood: I propose Mr Quine, Mr President.

Mrs Cannell: I am happy to second, Mr President.

The President: Could I have any seconders, please.

Mrs Crowe: I second Mr Waft, Mr President.

Mr Crowe: I second Mr Radcliffe.

The President: Now, for Mr Radcliffe, a seconder?

A Member: Yes, Mr Crowe.

The President: Thank you. And our next nomination?

Mr Singer: I move Mr Brown.

Mr Braidwood: I propose Mr Quine, Mr President.

Mrs Cannell: I am happy to second, Mr President.

Mrs Crowe: I propose Mr Geoff Cannell from Onchan.

Sir Miles Walker: I beg to second, Mr President.

Mrs Hannan: I second Mr Brown and propose Sir Miles.

A Member: I beg to second.

The President: And that is seconded. Right.

Mr Cretney: Thirty-three.

The President: Are there any further nominations? Are there any left? Learned Clerk, do you have the nominations now in alphabetical order?

The Acting Clerk: I think so, Mr President.

The President: You have ballot papers in your possession, hon. members, and the learned Clerk will read out those names that have been nominated and you will vote for three vacancies.

The Acting Clerk: Those nominated and seconded are, from the Legislative Council, Mr Radcliffe and Mr Waft; and from the Keys, Mr Brown, Mr Cannell, Mr Corkill, Mr Quine, Sir Miles Walker and Mr Speaker.

The President: In the Council would Mr Kniveton act as the teller, please.

Mr Kniveton: Certainly, sir.

A ballot took place.

The Speaker: In the Keys would Mr Shimmin act as teller, please.

The President: Hon. members, the outcome of the ballot: Mr Radcliffe, 4 votes; Mr Waft, 20 votes; Mr Brown, 7 votes; Mr Cannell, 5 votes; Mr Corkill, 15 votes; Mr Quine, 10 votes; Sir Miles Walker, 7 votes; Mr Speaker, 25 votes. The outcome of that ballot means that Mr Waft and Mr Speaker have secured places on the committee. There is still one remaining vacancy and we will ballot on the remaining names for one vacancy. If you have got your ballot papers to hand the learned Clerk will read out the remaining names.

The Acting Clerk: The remaining names, Mr President, are Mr Radcliffe, Mr Brown, Mr Cannell, Mr Corkill, Mr Quine and Sir Miles Walker.

The President: One vacancy.

A second ballot took place.

The President: The outcome of the ballot, hon. members: Mr Radcliffe, no votes; Mr Brown, 1 vote; Mr Cannell, 3 votes; Mr Corkill, 18 votes; Mr Quine, 8 votes; Sir Miles Walker, 2 votes. Mr Corkill has the necessary number of votes to qualify him for the committee and he now makes up the number that comprises the committee and the committee will proceed to discharge its responsibility.

Air Traffic Routes – Statutory Body to Regulate – Debate Commenced

The President: Now, hon. members, we turn next to item 18 and I call upon the hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: Thank you, Mr President. I beg to move:

That Tynwald is of the opinion that a statutory body be established as a matter of priority to regulate, when necessary, air traffic routes to and from the Island.

This motion is proposing that a statutory board be established to regulate, and by inference license, air traffic routes to and from this Island to the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands. I am of the opinion that it is extremely important that the requirements of the travelling public are realised when they are travelling on business or pleasure.

This motion does not have any effect on the open skies policy adopted by this government, which is a policy which I have supported and do support, and which will enable more airline operators to open routes to the Island, but what it will do, if implemented, will be to ensure a spread of destinations and the full development of scheduled services by airline operators without fear of those routes being pirated.

The requirements of the public are for a good number of destinations off the Island, a reliable and acceptable frequency of schedules, reasonable pricing and, for the route operator, that if they meet these criteria, a guarantee that they will not come up against unfair competition.

At the moment any airline can operate from the Isle of Man subject to Civil Aviation Authority approval, which only concerns financial and operational fitness. This government has no control or input into that approval and does not need any. However, whilst this Civil Aviation Authority approval does not conflict with our open skies policy, it does not ensure the best service to the public on a route where there is competition and not enough overall business for those airlines to make it profitable. The opposite, and in my view unacceptable, position would be for an airline to demand sole access to the airport's facilities, to the detriment of any other airlines, by threatening to switch their services elsewhere or give up routes, and we must resist any such threats which are a pistol to their head.

We have seen what has happened to sea services and I am sure that many hon. members, having seen how the user agreement worked in practice, would not with hindsight support it now.

We can no longer endorse a position where the government has very little input into the type of transport used, the frequency of services, the destinations served and the facilities offered.

Licensing an air route would not be monopolising the situation, as the licensing board would be able to lay down the rules, monitor the service, invite tenders for routes if it was thought to be the right thing and to withdraw licences from an operator which was providing a substandard service.

The responsibilities of the statutory licensing authority would be to consider the quality of an application, supporting the opening of new routes, and where there was an application to open a second service on an established route, to decide if the route was being satisfactorily served and the number of seats provided adequate.

An example might be an airline wishing to operate a service only at lucrative times of the year or an infrequent scheduled service when another operator was offering a good, all-the-year-round service. In this case the licensing board would be making a judgement as to the need to protect the operator who was operating the all-the-year-round service successfully.

Another example might be an operator wishing to open a London route and the judgement as to the need. Manx Airlines operate a regular service to Heathrow and make between £2 million to £3 million profit a year on that route, probably the most profitable domestic air route in the British Isles. Last week we heard Mr Liddiard of British Regional Airlines decrying the fact on Manx Airlines of the new Jersey European route to London City Airport three times daily, and I would ask hon. members not to be misled by relating that complaint to this proposal, for the reason that Manx Airlines are part of a huge international multi million-pound conglomerate now who have been looking at the implications of selling their Isle of Man-Heathrow slots for a while, and this has been a matter of great concern, naturally, to government. It is nothing new. However, the slots are theirs, not ours, it is their commercial decision, and our problem is that they have to answer to their shareholders, not to the Isle of Man Government or the Manx travelling public. They could have commenced an Isle of Man-London City route if they had so wished, but they chose the Isle of Man-London Luton route. So let me also at this stage dismiss the thoughts that London City is a cheap option for the airlines. In fact members will probably be interested to know that London City Airport, with its high cost per metric tonne landing charges, high passenger charge and

extended peak period involves a cost to an airline that is double the cost of Heathrow, three and a half times the cost of Gatwick and four times the cost of Stansted, and these figures are based on a 100-seater ATP with a 65 per cent load factor, three rotations daily, with a morning rotation being charged at peak rate where a time band applies.

If an airline wishes to commence an expensive service to an airport such as London City, then a licensing board could offer them some guarantee of being able to fully develop that route as long as all aspects of the service are acceptable, including fares.

From this February the traveller to the centre of London on a day return will have a choice: Manx Airlines to Heathrow at a cost of £277 or to London City at £69 which I understand will be a standard, not an introductory, fare. Therefore the competition is fair and there is no difference between the Manx Airlines competition with itself into London Luton at about the same price and which may account for a good proportion of the empty seats that Manx Airlines complain they have on the Heathrow route. However, the adoption of my proposal before this Court today would benefit Manx Airlines if another airline wished to commence Luton or Heathrow routes because the licensing board would decide if these routes were being well served, and if so, would probably not license another carrier on those routes.

If a licensing board was in being at this time, with Manx Airlines licensed to Heathrow and Luton and Jersey European licensed to London City, another airline operator wishing to open a route to London could be encouraged to open a London route into Gatwick or Stansted if the licensing board was satisfied with the standard of service to Heathrow, Luton and London City. The board would then be ensuring that unfair competition would not make the presently served routes unviable and that a wider choice would be available to the travelling public.

Heathrow is not the be-all and end-all of London routings. I would inform hon. members that Gatwick has more scheduled destinations to Europe and the United States than Heathrow. Stansted has 53 schedule destinations to Europe, and London City has 19. The Manx travelling public, particularly the business traveller, would clearly benefit, therefore, from the ability to travel to more London airports and would have a choice of destinations with interlining links which offer both convenience and choice of price structure. Therefore I visualise the licensing authority encouraging competition between airports rather than on specific routes, as the number of passengers to and from this Island is not large enough to ensure direct and perhaps unfair competition which was not to the detriment of the airline and to the passengers. The best interests of the users would be by active competition between air transport operators and such competition should be sufficient to stimulate but not be such as to discourage active and long-term route development.

If this hon. Court accepts this proposal and legislation is forthcoming I think it should be made clear to operators who between now and then begin to compete on established routes that the original operator, subject to them having offered a satisfactory service in the manner I have previously described, would be given priority on that route.

Legislation to introduce a transport users committee is to be introduced in the next parliamentary session and I foresee that committee working closely with the licensing authority in judging the acceptability of a current and future service, certainly from the view of the traveller.

The matter of licensing air routes was faced a few years ago by the Channel Islands who introduced a licensing system for many of the reasons that I have set out. Such a licensing system has resulted in Guernsey and Jersey having, for example, three routes in to London airports.

The European policy of 1995 created a situation where an airline was free to fly anywhere within the EU and did not distinguish between good services and bad services, regular scheduling or haphazard scheduling. The Channel Islands recognised the threat to their services when they first proposed this licensing system to protect their regular services, and not being a member of the EU, they decided they could take this action. The United Kingdom Department of Transport recognised their concerns and gave the Channel Islands the nod that they could legislate, which they did. They had the support, and I think this is very important, of both British Airways and British Midland, of whom Manx Airlines were a part, who were both concerned that airlines might go cherry-picking certain routes.

A final point, if I may explain, are the words 'where necessary' in the motion. There would be no requirement to obtain a permit for any flight where there is no requirement to obtain either an air transport licence or route licence from the Civil Aviation Authority, and that covers such as air ambulances, air taxis or technical stops.

Air transport is growing in importance on the Isle of Man as more and more people wish to travel and I hope we will recognise the importance of ensuring the widest choice and reliability of air routes and airline operators from the Island. This would be achieved by a licensing authority which will have the ability to judge the position and lay down policies which ensure what is best for the people of the Island as well as encouraging the best business practice for the airline company. I therefore seek the support of hon. members for the motion as printed under my name.

Dr Mann: I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

Mr Brown: Mr President, I was hoping to get maybe a bit of a feel from other members as to any concerns they may have and maybe I could have responded to them, but anyway, clearly this is an important issue for the Isle of Man. The issue that is raised is of considerable importance in terms of being able to travel to and from the Island with air services.

I listened very carefully to the hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer, and really tried to pick up what is different now than what he proposes and the only difference I could pick up really was that he wants to set up a separate statutory licensing authority which is not directly answerable to Tynwald, and I do not really understand that. At the moment all the points that he raised are the direct responsibility of the Minister for Transport who is directly responsible to Tynwald Court who cannot fudge behind a committee, cannot say, 'Well, that's a matter I can raise with the body', as we see with the MEA and as we see with others. He or she is directly responsible to Tynwald Court for the policies laid down and what goes on, and I cannot understand why we would want to weaken that. So the big question then has to be two questions: (1) why regulate and (2) why set up a separate statutory body?

Now, the hon. member has been very careful in his motion that is down to use the term 'when necessary'. It sounds very innocent. The member said, 'Well, I am not saying now, it's just when necessary.' Well, with 'when necessary', if I require new legislation because we have a problem in the Isle of Man I will not have any hesitation at all in coming and seeking

new legislation to strengthen my department or whatever. So 'when necessary' really does not mean anything except that you would have in being legislation that says when necessary you can set up this group of people. The big question then is who? Who are they going to be responsible to? What is their job? What is their remit? What is their role? And what will they be able to do that the Isle of Man Government cannot do? Because that is the important thing.

There are limitations on what the Isle of Man Government can do because if you want to have a situation where we have air services to and from the Isle of Man - and I would suggest to hon. members we enjoy better air services now than we have in my lifetime - why should we change what seems to be working well? We keep a close eye on what goes on. We keep in close liaison with the airlines. We have an open skies policy which enables anybody to provide services. We watch what goes on.

So the big question is, would any regulatory body be able to do more than the Department of Transport can do now? And I would suggest it is unlikely because we are not the masters of our own destiny in this because we can only control what happens at Ronaldsway Airport. We cannot control what happens at Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester, Liverpool or anywhere because that is separate. So the question has to be, if you are going to do it, why do it?

Now, at the moment we enjoy, and the hon. member said about the spread of destinations, something like 18 destinations for an Island of our size, with one new one coming up which is London City. So that will be 19. We have services to London Heathrow, London Luton, London Stansted, Southampton, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds Bradford, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dublin, Birmingham, Jersey and Guernsey every day of the week - very comprehensive services. So what is a regulatory body going to do? Why did Europe go into an open skies policy? Why did we follow it? Because we believe that competition or the potential threat of competition, and or, is of benefit to the Isle of Man because restriction will mean that complacency takes over. That is what you need to keep in your mind.

What is going to be better? We only have to look at recent history to see what has happened. If we had a regulatory authority, is it likely that Emerald Airways would have been allowed to operate from Liverpool? I would say no because the regulatory authority, with the remit it would have, would say it is not in the Island's best interest to have, and certainly Manx Airlines would have argued, another airline operating from Liverpool. But what happened to Liverpool? I can remember getting my ear bent when I was Minister for Tourism because I welcomed Emerald Airways coming and providing services from Liverpool to the Isle of Man and I got my ear bent from Manx Airlines: 'Fancy doing that.' And I said, 'Why? What do you want me to say? That I do not welcome them.' But what was the result? Fares were lowered, services were increased, and most importantly, the throughput through Ronaldsway substantially increased in both directions. The Manx people benefited and the tourists to the Isle of Man benefited and therefore the Isle of Man benefited.

Emerald Airways has gone off the scene. We have not seen a major change in what has gone on. We have seen a drop in the figures. But the operator who operates that service now, Manx, also know that Emerald might come back. So it is to their advantage, because of that potential threat, to keep the service competitive and to keep it comprehensive. Fine. But if you have a licensing system it will give security to the operator because you have taken away the option of potential threat. Now, how are you all going to explain that if fares start to increase

and services stagnate? That is the simple question, and I cannot be absolutely right because I do not really know, but what I do know is that the present system we have in what is a very competitive market keeps Manx Airlines on its toes because the biggest competitor of Manx Airlines in London is Manx Airlines. The biggest competitor Manx Airlines have to its Heathrow services is Manx Airlines and that is in London Luton. It has gone into London Luton and provided a low-cost access to London for a very good reason: to try and ensure nobody else does it. That is fine. But would they do that, and this is a question you have to keep in your mind, if we had a system that licensed who could operate to the Isle of Man if we were saying, 'We won't give a licence from London Luton to anyone else and you stay where you are at Heathrow'? I suspect it would not.

Now, what about the Heathrow situation? Well, I am on record quite clearly as saying, as far as I am concerned and I believe as far as the people of the Isle of Man are concerned, we wish Manx Airlines to retain its services to Heathrow. We think they are very important to the Isle of Man. But the one thing you all need to know is we cannot force them to retain a service from Heathrow. If they decide tomorrow to sell their slots, apart from a legal challenge, which we are looking at, we would have a great difficulty in trying to make them stay from Heathrow, and if we had a licensing authority and Manx said to them, 'We're pulling out of Heathrow and we're going to come from Luton only, let's say, or Gatwick', are the licensing authority going to say 'No, no, no, no. We won't give you a licence to operate from those two: you must stay at Heathrow', and Manx say 'Well, we'll still sell our Heathrow slots and we just won't provide a service from London at all.' The licensing authority is going to say, 'Oh well, we'd better give you Gatwick then', because the reality is that that is what they would have to do.

So what is it going to do? I would suggest it is going to make no difference except weaken our position because at the moment it is the government of the Isle of Man that deals with any challenges or deals with anything and not a statutory body set up by Tynwald, no disrespect to Tynwald, but a statutory body set up to do a specific job, a quango, because that is what it is. You are taking it away from the politicians and setting up a quango. That is fine in the UK because in the UK it is so big that a quango can concentrate on the issue, but here in the Isle of Man you have directly involved myself as a minister, the hon. member of the Council, Mr Kniveton, who is a member of Tynwald Court, and the hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan, who is a member of Tynwald Court, all three of us you have direct access to, you know who we are, you can soon bend our ear if you are not happy. We can soon inform you if you need to know what is going on and the one thing you know is that we are more than likely going to think on the lines that you think on because we are answerable to the people. We are not a quango. We are not set up to be able to hide. We are there answerable to the people.

Now, let us take the Heathrow situation and I would like to put on record because it is amazing how the story has changed from other quarters about just what was offered by Manx Airlines to the Isle of Man Government. So let us put it on the record of *Hansard* so there is no misunderstanding (**Mr Cretney**: Hear, hear.) and let us be clear. Manx Airlines approached me and said - and this was after the interest shown by Ryanair, by the way - they would guarantee services daily to and from Heathrow, London, and they were willing to enter into an agreement for five or 10 years and in return for them doing that and providing that service the Isle of Man Government were to give an exclusive agreement, and I repeat, an exclusive agreement which would mean that we would not permit any other airline to operate any air

services to or from any London airport, not just from Heathrow because nobody can get into Heathrow, but from any other London airport. So that would have meant the only people who could fly in: Manx.

Now, being politicians, first we took it very seriously because we want to see Heathrow retained, but secondly, we took into account what is the Island's best interest? What is it the people of the Isle of Man want? I think the people of the Isle of Man want choice. I think they want guaranteed and regular services of a reasonable quality, and I think they want reasonable fares. I do not necessary think they want low fares. Some do, but I think most people want reasonable fares. They want fares so that they say, 'Yeah, I think I'm not being charged too much for that service', and that is where our job comes in.

So after considerable discussion within the department and at Council of Ministers level we considered all the implications, the potential problems for the Isle of Man and the potential benefits for the Isle of Man, and I have to say - and I have no qualms at all about this, and I am on record as saying I support Manx Airlines because I know what the service was like in the early '80s and Manx Airlines have done this Island proud and I believe the staff have worked hard to improve the services beyond what we could have ever hoped for, and the economy has helped as well - there is a change in the picture. Manx Airlines now are a PLC and they are responsible to their shareholders first and foremost. It has changed the picture and I hope Manx Airlines will continue to provide services well into the future, but there is more influence on that from other parties than ever we will have because we are the provider of a facility and that facility is called Ronaldsway Airport and we, the Department of Transport, are there to try and ensure we can secure services, provide the best services and so on and so on, and there are many ways we can do that, but I do not believe we are there to secure a monopoly, and it will be said, I believe, we are not talking about a monopoly, we are talking about securing the services, but to do that you secure a monopoly.

Mrs Crowe: Yes, and we do not want that.

Mr Brown: You cannot have a free market, i.e. an open skies policy, and control it. You cannot have that: it is impossible. You either have an open skies policy and you get on with it or you say, 'We won't have an open skies policy: Manx Airlines, come on board, we'll let you operate the services.'

I know it is likely to be tried to distort what I say, but the reality is we enjoy good-quality air service to the Isle of Man. If we had a restriction, a statutory body, or for that matter even the Department of Transport if it was laid down in the legislation, would say the provision of services from London City are not in the Isle of Man's best interest and are likely then to say, 'You can't have a licence.' Is that really what members think we should be doing? Because let us be honest about this: we are talking about real responsibility here of politicians making decisions that might or might not go one way or the other, but that is our job and if we have to take the heat, we have to take the heat. That is our job because our interest should be the long-term interests of the Isle of Man and what is going to happen in air services, and to be quite honest we can only do so much. Do not believe we can control what goes on in the UK. It is impossible. Do not believe we can control how the airlines fight it out. It is impossible.

The Jersey situation has been mentioned. Jersey had something like 26 airlines operating into Jersey, mainly with unscheduled services. In other words they were package

deal-type services. I can remember going to Jersey once when we went to Manchester and we just dealt with it in the normal way. You turn up at the desk to take your seat because we had it booked and we only just got on the plane, because of the way they operated in those days, but Jersey had a big problem. They had so many airlines fighting it out in a way that we do not enjoy. But why? Because they have substantially more people going to Jersey than we have, but Jersey has brought this system in because the thing has changed in Jersey. Their tourists have dropped, their numbers have dropped. Go and see their airport. It is massive towards our. There is a reason. It is a whole different ball-game and you cannot compare it.

So we then, if you take it back to the London one, said to Manx Airlines after careful consideration, 'We're sorry, we believe the open skies policy is in the Island's best interest. We believe that airlines, if they want to provide a service, should have the opportunity to do that and we will make charges, we will provide incentives and so on which we do', and that is where it is at the moment. There are no other offers on the table. That is where we are.

So why do we need to set up a statutory body? The wording is very innocent: 'when necessary'. I would just say to members again: if it necessary and if it is realistic for us to introduce or need to have powers to safeguard our services in a way that we do not envisage at the moment, then do not have any qualms at all. I, and I am sure whoever follows me in the Department of Transport, would seek powers. Have no qualms about that. The only question before you is should the responsibility for air services via the provision of services at Ronaldsway Airport be in the hands of a minister of the government of the Isle of Man or in the hands of a quango? Because that is the only question you are being asked. I believe, and I firmly believe, the buck should stop in this Court. The minister should be responsible. He might not be able to resolve the problem, he might not be able to secure the services, but he or she is answerable and that might not be able to be got through a quango.

So I would say to hon. members, be very careful. The choice is yours, but you might send out the wrong signals, and just one final example. London City - whether or not it will work we do not know, whether or not Heathrow will be retained, we do not know, but one thing we do know is London is a very important market to the Isle of Man and is a very important market to any airline who wishes to remain in business and do not get mixed up in the fighting between airlines who have a financial interest and the Isle of Man Government's position whose interest is to safeguard the future of the Isle of Man and its people, and that is what matters, and just be careful how you deal with this one because the motion sounds harmless, and potentially it is lethal, and I would recommend to hon. members err on the side of caution, leave things as they are, allow the Department of Transport to do its job, let us see how it develops and if there are problems, do not worry: whoever is Minister for Transport is going to make sure that this hon. Court is aware of the situation and will seek any powers it requires in an endeavour to safeguard the future services of air services to and from the Isle of Man. I would therefore urge members to vote against the motion on the agenda.

Mr Karran: Eaghtyrane, I just would like to say that as a person that has always been a sympathiser towards looking into the establishment of regulating off-Island transport I have a certain amount of sympathy in the fact that I think it should be investigated. I could not support the proposal that is in front of us at the present time because I believe that it is too simplistic: we have got to do it and that is it. But I am equally concerned on the other side that we say, 'Well, leave it to us and if we need to take the powers, we will' but when you need to take such

powers it is too late, it is crisis management in those cases, and it is about being proactive instead of reactive.

I have to be honest with you, that at the present time, if I was voting one way or the other, I would be voting against this motion because I do agree with the hon. minister that this is just a bland statement and I think it is no good at it is at the present time and it would give out the wrong impression as far as this is concerned. But I think it is wrong to say that somehow we have got it right as far as Manx Airlines and as far as our air services and our sea services are concerned in my opinion. Emerald Airways came in because basically the passengers were getting exploited by Manx Airlines and the prices came down because of Emerald Airways. Now, admittedly at the moment the prices have not gone up again to what they were, but I think people's memories are short as far as that is concerned.

I feel that this proposal is worthy of investigation, not to give it a green light and say we are going to do it, but I think it is worthy of investigation and I believe that for the words 'That Tynwald is of the opinion that' we should substitute 'That a select committee of three members be appointed to consider and report on the proposal' as far as 'a statutory board be established as a matter of priority to regulate, when necessary, air traffic routes to and from the Island', and I think that that would not be a bad suggestion because if we have got ourselves in a situation when we need these sorts of powers, we need them thought out and I do feel, hon. members, that it would serve this hon. Court well to have a look at this.

The minister is quite right, it is a commercial firm and it is part of British Regional Airlines and it is a small part of it, but I still consider that Manx Airlines is the jewel in the crown as far as British Regional Airlines is concerned as far as the profit is concerned, and I do feel that we are not, and it concerns me, and I have said this before, I personally believe that we should look at the regulating of not just air but sea. I would say other things about sea, but I think it would be wrong in this Court, especially with the media here, with my concerns which I have made representations to certain people about and I will be making other representations, but, hon. members, I think it would do no harm because at the end of the day the minister is right. This motion as it is now is no use. It would be wrong to vote for it blindly without any thought process, without any ideas of what we are doing. But he is equally right that we have to make sure that we have an effective and efficient off-Island service to London for the king-pin of our economy which is the finance sector.

I would hope hon. members would support the possibility of a select committee and I hope that the minister will be put on it and I hope that the mover will be put on it and maybe somebody else in this hon. Court as the valve between the two extremes, and I do hope that somebody will second that proposal to have a select committee and let us see and maybe hopefully it can come back and then, minister, if it is rubbish, it can be put to bed and done away with, but at the present time to say, 'Well, if we get into that situation we'll bring in emergency powers', that is not when we need to do it because this issue is something that needs to be looked at now and I believe that this would be a golden opportunity to say that, and I think in the long term Manx Airlines would rather that, have it investigated, have them in there, let them put their case to the select committee and then we can put this thing to bed one way or the other, whether it is a load of rubbish or it has worthiness, but to just vote for it now would be naivety as it is and to vote against it I think would be a missed opportunity because at the end of the day off-Island transport is vital to our finance sector and it is vital to

make sure that it is efficient and effective as far as providing the service that it needs in order for it to flourish. I beg to move:

For the words 'That Tynwald is of the opinion that' substitute 'That a select committee of three members be appointed to consider and report on the proposal that'.

Mr Crowe: Mr President, clearly this is an important issue, as other members have said, but it is unclear to me as to what the mover Mr Singer is trying to achieve with his motion. Is it to protect the Heathrow route or is it to encourage new operators to use Ronaldsway to have flights to London and other destinations? And we are aware that Jersey European will soon be flying to London City Airport, which will give further choice on the London route.

The point that I wish to make principally is that if the government consider that the Heathrow services are vital for the future of the Island, then it should be negotiating with Manx Airlines to buy the Heathrow slots and then lease them back for as long as Manx Airlines use Heathrow. If Manx Airlines stop using Heathrow or are merged or taken over by another airline, the Isle of Man Government would then have control of the slots and could lease them to another airline. Government would then be in control of the Heathrow link, and I think government or the Department of Transport should seriously look at this question of trying to buy the slots. It is simply an investment in the future.

We should see the Heathrow link as valuable for business customers connecting to international routes, but at the same time we can also encourage the potential for Gatwick, Stansted, Luton City Airport which airlines such as Ryanair or easyJet have capitalised on.

If we want to see the Heathrow link retained we should seriously consider purchasing the Heathrow slots as an investment for the future. The investment will always have a value and in my view would appreciate over time. Thank you, Mr President.

Mr Quine: Mr President, first of all may I second the amendment which Mr Karran has moved; it is the least I can do in view of the flattering remarks he made about me yesterday. *(Laughter)*

A Member: Mending bridges!

Mr Karran: He is looking for the knife!

Mr Quine: The Minister for Transport said that all of this comes down to only one question: whether we leave control in the hands of a minister or whether control passes to a quango. I really have rarely seen such a misrepresentation of an issue, to try to render something as important as this down to those terms. There is clearly a far greater public interest in this issue than he has recognised.

The way I see it we are really asked today to look at two options, two alternative approaches, and there may be variations on that theme. Option one is essentially the status quo where in substance an airline subject to the landing rights and payment of the fees and obviously getting access to the airport at the other end can come and fly into this Island and it will stand or fall on the viability of its operation. That is what we have got, and I must say, contrary to what the Minister for Transport has said, I think there is abroad within this Island a degree, to put it mildly, of unhappiness with that arrangement or with the product of that arrangement. But that is the existing situation, that is the status quo, and the Minister for Transport feels, and he is entitled to feel if he so wishes, that we should stay with that.

The alternative is for us to either express a view here today that we favour licensed routes, albeit the selective licensing of routes, or if we follow the amendment that Mr Karran has put forward, that we have a select committee evaluate that alongside of what we have.

Now, what does the licensing of routes give us? I think it gives us quite a bit, and to any member who has had an opportunity to read the very substantial Channel Islands papers which trace their investigation of this matter from 1970 up to 1994 when the change took place I think it will be apparent when you read those documents that there are very substantial benefits. I mean, through a licensing authority we would have a proper evaluation of those routes, we would have a mechanism to take account of schedules, we would have a mechanism to take account of capacities, the viability of operations, the frequency and standards. That is all laid down as part and parcel of the Channel Islands arrangement. Now, quite clearly that franchising of a route is very different from what we have now under an open skies policy. So let us be frank: there are substantial differences.

The minister, in a document to us, has made his case for the open skies policy. That is in a memorandum he has circulated to us. I must confess there is very little in that by way of substance. He has of course added to it this morning. The case that seems to be made for us is that it provides more services and more competitive fares.

More services? Yes, I think we have seen an increase in services in recent years, I do not think that is to be disputed, but then against a strengthening economy and an increase in population I suppose it would be surprising if we had not had an increase in services.

More competitive fares? That, I believe, is highly questionable, leaving aside the particular situation which we have with Liverpool, which I will revert to. Liverpool is a very special case and certainly if you remove Liverpool from the equation I have yet to see any persuasive evidence that we have more competitive fares. We have a wide-ranging structure of fares which you may have access to at a point of time when you try to get them or you may not be able to get access to them - very confusing and obviously concocted, I would suggest, to make sure that the weight goes towards the higher fare structure.

Does it provide more competition? I do not see how it does. I do not see how the minister can claim that this arrangement provides more competition, because de facto what we have is one large airline, because this is not little Manx Airlines, this is now a large PLC, as we have said. We have one large airline that is in there and for to get competition, how does another airline get in to provide that competition? Very difficult. It would need a great deal of resource and unless it could get a sufficiently viable foothold to make it economically workable, then what is going to happen of course is exactly what happened to Emerald Airways, although they were not a large concern, I accept that, but even a larger concern would find it difficult to compete and make it work.

At least with a route licensing system, confronted with the situation which we appear to be confronted with now in relation to Manx Airlines and Heathrow, where they are saying in effect, 'If you let these people operate to the city, our slots at Heathrow could be in jeopardy: we may sell them', at least you would have some leverage because they could be put at risk, the supporting routes of Manx Airlines that come into the Isle of Man through a licensing system. So I believe there is some real value there.

Reverting to Liverpool, I think Liverpool makes an interesting case study, because I think we are already seeing, with the disappearance of Emerald, an upward movement in fares, and I am sure if the Steam Packet were not running as they are currently running to Liverpool, that claimed keenness, which is the word that is used in the document by the minister, in the fare structure for Liverpool would not exist. So Liverpool, to my mind, makes a very interesting case study. Let us put it another way, let us move from Liverpool and say has the open skies policy in relation to Heathrow seen keenly priced fares? I suggest to you not because they have a monopoly and it is not a regulated monopoly, and I think that is the difference between a licensing system where, depending upon the interpretation you put on it, you have a monopoly of sorts through a licence but it is regulated, as opposed to with Heathrow where they set the fares and they control the market.

I think it could quite legitimately be said that the open skies policy, given our situation, lends itself to a monopoly. Now, that is not unique to our air fares. Island size here I am afraid we have to live with a number of monopoly situations, and taken in the round that probably benefits us because we have advantage of scale and so on, but I do maintain that if we are going to have monopolies they should be regulated, the public interest should be secured, and it is not apparent to me under the present circumstances that that interest is secure. Given the lion's share of the market, give the lion's share of the traffic in and out of the Island, air traffic, I am sure few would argue against the proposition that I would expound that there is in place now a virtual monopoly situation in respect of Manx Airlines, and it seems to be one which is enthusiastically supported by the minister who unashamedly says that he is a supporter of Manx Airlines.

Reverting to the alternative, the case for the licensing of routes, I would recommend to members and I would certainly recommend to any select committee that that this hon. Court may see fit to set up that they have a close look at the history leading up to the adoption by the Channel Islands of the exercising of their rights, which they had to fight for and they fought very hard to get these rights from the UK. They fought from 1970 to 1994 to get these rights, and the clinching factor, as indeed the minister has pointed out and the mover has pointed out, was this change in regard to the European Union liberalisation of air services; that clinched it. But looking at the case they made, you will see that there were two key points on which they kept promoting their case, pushing their case. One was that it was prejudicial to the constitutional development of the Channel Islands, that this was a domestic matter and one which properly lay within their control, and they made that point strongly, and secondly, they founded their case on the submission that there was a need to enforce licensing decisions because that was the only effective way to secure the local interest, the Channel Islands' interest. As I say, ultimately they have got those rights and certainly they appear - and I do not have any current information - to be happy with the arrangement they now have in place.

I do not see that what is proposed as a concept for endorsement here or for examination, that of licensing routes, is without merit. I think it has considerable merit. The case against it appears to be on the basis that there is real substance in the open skies policy, and of course there is a case, there is substance there, but where does the real benefit lie? It would not involve us in embracing a new concept because, after all, we had an open seas policy vis-à-vis the Steam Packet, but the government and this hon. Court set that aside and brought in in

effect a system of the licensing of routes in respect of the Isle of Man Steam Packet. So there is something to be investigated here surely by a select committee.

Mr Brown: You ought to read that report.

Mr Quine: I am perfectly capable of reading; I am not sure about yourself.

Mrs Hannan: Miaow!

Mr Quine: But if it measured up in relation to that scenario, then there must be pretty formal reasons why there is not a parallel of some sort to be drawn in relation to the proposition that is put here.

I recognise the strength of Mr Karran's submission in this respect. He is saying, all right, perhaps on the strength of this motion we do not have before us all the information, indeed how could we expect the mover to have all the information on which to take a definitive position, not even for a declaratory resolution, but let us have some members of this Court look at this in depth and do a proper evaluation and report back to this Court. So even if hon. members are not inclined and have reservations about the substantive motion, I would suggest it would be prudent to support the amendment: that could have advantage and certainly there could be no downside to that. Thank you, sir.

The President: The hon. member for Onchan, Mr Cannell. We have before us the resolution and the amendment and some members are qualified to speak to the amendment if they so desire. Proceed, sir.

Mr Cannell: Thank you, Mr President. I find this perplexing because I have heard two sets of arguments and normally once you have heard one you make your mind up on what you are going to do, but I find myself convinced by two separate sets of arguments, and my very basic political training, compared with some of the more eminent members of this Court tells me to retain the status quo in that situation.

We have heard mention of the open skies policy, and I was pleasantly surprised to hear that that had been accepted, because normally the temptation is to take fright when the big brother threat is put up: 'If you allow anybody else, we will do all manner of things which will injuriously affect you, we will fly only on certain days of the week, we will only go on the most popular routes', et cetera et cetera. So on that element at least full marks to those who continued the plucky decision to retain what is referred to as an open skies policy.

But let us at the outset not kid ourselves that there is any philanthropy involved in air transport. Manx Airlines, when they were putting out press releases a couple of years ago telling how they were subsidising services to Liverpool for the benefit of the people of the Isle of Man, were doing absolutely no such thing whatever. They were attempting to preserve their credibility in a market that they saw and which in very, very recent times is now really building up to where you will be able to travel on airlines for next to nothing, in fact you already can on Go and easyJet and all these people who are establishing, and now publicly for the first time we have heard mention of an investigation to the Isle of Man's airlines by Ryanair. Now, my knowledge of that is that they have access to incredible European markets to bring tourism into the Isle of Man. I need go no further, as a member of the tourism department, except to say it was a very active approach. But what did that actually make Manx Airlines do? They then approached, apparently, the Department of Transport to say that they did not want this,

maybe not in so many words, but they said they did not want it and they wanted London blocking off to their advantage.

Now we hear that Jersey European are considering flying, in fact they are going to fly into London City, and my information is that Manx Airlines are considering doing something similar. Now, that will end up with the position we had at Liverpool, where you had the absolutely ludicrous situation of, all right there were people on both, literally planes lining up alongside each other loading passengers for a flight to the Isle of Man five minutes apart. They did not take off at the same time but it was near enough, and it was obvious in the same way that the Manxline versus the Steam Packet thing would be repeated. Something would have to give. There is only so much room.

But in the Isle of Man I do believe, as one of the previous speakers has said, that people are crying out for realistic fares. Now, some of that might be of course to emulate the Channel Islands where one of the main points of the difficulties they had was that they were not getting the volume of traffic in the winter. They were looking for air companies to fly regular flights in the winter and they would not give them that guarantee. In the Isle of Man, although there is business traffic of course to Jersey, I would suggest that we have a different type of traffic altogether because we have a substantial local element seeking to travel on all the routes we have heard, and it is probably the best spread of routes we have ever had at the moment. With some of them I do not know how they are sustainable, but presumably people do want to go to Aberdeen occasionally and go to all these places, because one thing you can guarantee is that they would not fly them if there was no profit, because, and rightly so, like anybody else running a business they are out to make money. They are not, with one or two minor exceptions through sponsorship deals and things which are the norm these days, in the business of actually propping up ordinary customers to their advantage, and quite rightly so too.

So what we had there at the open seas policy, as it was, was the declaration of a user agreement, and it is ironic that the minister who is in charge now of the Department of Transport was reasonably forceful, I think it would be charitable to say, in his endeavours to lay down the user agreement. Now, many would say the user agreement is working. We have today a scheduled service across the Irish Sea for passengers which we might not have had we not had that, because there are probably a hundred people aboard. They have got the *Lady of Mann*, I think, running at the moment on it.

Mrs Crowe: Only because of refurbishment.

Mr Cannell: But it is nothing to do with that. The Steam Packet's mainstay is the freight to the Isle of Man, and they, by the user agreement, recognised that they had to sail these services at uneconomic times if they wished to have the major carrot of the freight contract to the Isle of Man, and that is the difference between air services and sea services.

Now, I am not a fan of the user agreement at all. I hark back to the great days of the fight between Manxline and the Steam Packet, but again exactly the same thing happened: they just could not be sustained, something had to go. In fact the Steam Packet Company, through their takeovers by Sea Containers, actually pulled out of Liverpool, said it was not viable, nobody wanted it, they abandoned it. But that was not because it was no good, that was because Jim Sherwood owned Heysham and paid less to run the Steam Packet boats through

Heysham than he would through Liverpool. But the Manx people and the tourists voted with their feet and now we have a better Liverpool service now than probably we had in its heyday, except for summer when there were thousands of sailings for the tourist department.

Then you have the Heathrow link: is it desirable for the Isle of Man for its business traffic? I do not suppose there is anybody here who would even entertain paying the fares to Heathrow if they were paying it on a personal basis to go on holiday or business. They would look to go to Luton or to Stansted, as we have heard, or to go to any of the other airports rather than pay close to £300 for which the same individuals could have a week in Majorca. But the business community seem quite happy to pay that for the convenience, probably for the prestige of Heathrow because the connections also give you a guaranteed link on to the Far East and to the other long-haul flights pretty easily. So as long as they are prepared to pay that they will do it.

But what about the slots? The slots at Heathrow are worth millions of pounds; you cannot get them: there are not any left. So let us not kid ourselves that if it looks a good do for Manx Airlines to get shut of them and pass the money into the rest of the company they will do it, they will not just say, 'Well, you know, the Isle of Man people like coming into here: we'd better look after them.' That will not happen: they will go if they think it is a desirable thing. It is a monopoly that they are seeking for London, and Jersey European now threaten to do it.

So it is all about money, I am afraid, and the whole thing is orchestrated. It is orchestrated by those who have set up Manx Airlines, and there are plenty of us here who remember the days of British European Airways and their predecessors -

Mr Henderson: Cambrian.

Mr Cannell: - Cambrian, all manner of operations, and they have all been swallowed up, amalgamated, taken over merged et cetera. Manx Airlines was established, then through Michael Bishop it became part of British Midland, it is British Airlines of Europe and all manner of other titles now, but at the end of the day it is all down to a conglomerate seeking to make the most money, and who can deny them that.

The Liverpool service at the moment is running very satisfactorily, but as previous speakers have said, that is in great jeopardy for its price, and that is before, for tourism, we load up with the dreaded air tax, which is a big threat, and probably you will find is going to be increased annually on that.

So when I hear a very eloquent argument from the hon. member for Ayre and I hear his close friend the hon. member for Castletown, the Minister for Transport, clearly they have such a rapport between them that it might be that if we are going to establish a committee they should both be on it, and I am sure we could sell tickets to watch it. *(Laughter)* But at the end of the day, unless there are any other speakers who will sway me, my intuition tells me to stick with the status quo.

Mr Corkill: Mr President, I will be brief, but there are a few points I want to make and these are subsequent to the contribution by the member for Ayre who has really provoked me to speak. I mean, the truth is that the hon. member obviously is still licking his wounds from the defeat over his Bill to have this crazy franchise situation on the Irish Sea where there was a vision of hundreds of operators queuing up to provide a service on the sea route, which was

completely dealt with at the time, but the hon. member has raised it in this debate, and what I wanted to make sure, and my hon. colleague from Onchan has made that clear, is that the situation is a completely different environment.

Returning to the motion on air routes, also the hon. member for Ayre's contribution I think gave the impression that the Channel Islands have got it right. It is not very long ago that I had phone calls from politicians in Guernsey absolutely fraught because they had lost their Heathrow link. So they have got it that right, that they lost their link despite the different way of regulation, and I think it goes to show, as the hon. member for Castletown made it clear, that many of these issues are outwith our control, and we have to manage a situation, and my view is that the open skies policy is that best way forward. It is the existing policy and I would suggest that the motion before us is steering us away from that policy and I do not believe that that would be in the Island's interest.

Other speakers have mentioned Ryanair, and I think it would be useful perhaps for hon. members and for the public to appreciate that the government does push the frontiers back with regard to what is seen as a monopoly provider service to the Island.

I believe that Manx Airlines provides a very good comprehensive service to the Island. We go to all these different routes. We have modern aircraft. We have an engineering situation down at Ronaldsway. They employ hundreds of people on the Island and I believe they are a very good company, albeit they have changed to a PLC, and why have they become a PLC? Because they are a good company that people wish to invest in, and I think they should not go unnoticed. But they are commercial and I think that one thing that people, the public, wish to see is an improvement in fares. We all want to travel more often at more competitive prices and we see the competition in the UK and Europe which is there because of an open skies policy. We see easyJet leaving from Liverpool for £29 to wherever. We see Ryanair advertising on the television, and quite rightly people of the Isle of Man want to see some of that action. But the reality is we have to just be conscious of our economies of scale.

It is about a year ago that I was invited to be part of a working group looking at the situation as to whether another operator could come to the Island and bring lots of tourists. The name in the discussions at that time was Ryanair. I do not believe it is a secret because it has been in the press and members have spoken about it today, and my concern initially straightaway is we must not damage the Heathrow situation because it is so vital to our economy.

My environment as Treasury minister is that I meet regularly with people in the financial services sector and I think the position is famous for the number of lunches that the Treasury minister enjoys. There is never a lunch goes by that the Heathrow situation is not mentioned. There is never a time when I am on the flight down to London that it is not mentioned. You see the same people travelling on that route all the time doing business for this Island, very comprehensive business, and it is very important. So that was in my mind uppermost when the discussions started about whether another operator may be interested in coming to the Island.

The reality is that these low-cost operators do not wish to contribute anything at all except filling the seats. They do not want to pay airport charges. They do not want to pay any taxes or contributions in any way whatsoever and that is the way that they are working their

way into the competitive market of filling seats. That is the only way they can operate, and that may be the air transport future for Europe; it has an American flavour about it.

Now, my view was, okay, go a certain distance towards attracting other operators because the public of the Isle of Man are looking for these lower-cost seats, and I think government push the boat out a long way, to be fair, to try to attract this competitive situation, and I think that was seen in the press and I think it has been seen by the reaction from Manx Airlines. They are a commercial company, there is an open skies policy and they are aware of that. That is why there are cheap fares to Luton now - there were not a year ago - and that is why there are more £99 seats to Heathrow and they do exist, although publicly -

A Member: Try getting one.

Mrs Crowe: Definitely.

Mr Corkill: - people would say, 'Oh, you can never get one', but my wife got one last week, so they do exist.

Mr Singer: Did she say who she was?

Mr Corkill: But they are off-peak times. The reality is that the Heathrow slot is a day return: out early in the morning, back late at night. If you fly from Inverness to London early in the morning or late at night it is the same sort of cost -

Mrs Crowe: Exactly.

Mr Corkill: - the costs are business costs, but we must not confuse that with the desire of the Manx public to have budget price transport and that is, I believe, possible in the middle of the day, and certainly I think that the whole debate that has been going on over the last few months will encourage Manx Airlines to make available seats which they have that are empty that will make available to the public at budget prices those seats because surely it is better to have people sat on them than flying empty seats.

But anyone who runs a business who is worried about the competition is obviously going to keep those seats empty because it is a way of reacting. If there is a new operator on the horizon, if there is potential, you have got those seats available and you can fight back, and I believe that that is the situation that we see at the moment. I believe that Manx Airlines are actually utilising those empty seats and trying to market them now, and I think that has got to be in the Island's interest and that is the benefit which has come out of the debate, which I believe was engendered by the Council of Ministers in the way that they approached the situation. I have to say that when the reaction from Manx Airlines to the threat, as it may well be, about losing the slots came back I had a view that maybe we have gone too far on this, but I think overall government has kept its resolve.

The point I want to make is that under the terms of the motion I do not believe any other body could have put that amount of public pressure into the situation in the same way that we as elected representatives of the people of the Isle of Man have been able to do so, and I think that is the very point that the Minister for Transport, Mr Brown, has made. Okay, he used the word 'quango'. Whatever that body is, if it has not got that direct input from this Court I do not believe they will be as successful at creating the competitive market.

The hon. member for Ayre quite rightly said that we naturally have monopolies because of our Island situation and I was very interested in the hon. member's comments early in the New Year when he said that the APG's policy was to address monopoly situations within the Island, and I think that is generally what the people want and I think the best we can achieve in most circumstances is the threat of competition. If competition arrives in a big way we get an Isle of Man Steam Packet and 'Mannin Line' scenario where both do badly and services suffer

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Mr Cretney: Manxline.

Mr Corkill: Manxline, sorry (*Interjection and laughter*) - and we must be careful that we do not enter into that situation again.

I do think that in the world of the air services to the Island there is more potential for competition, there are more operators probably willing to come to the Island, and whilst the economy is buoyant, then hopefully that will engender it, and that is another reason, obviously, for keeping to the open skies policy. I think it is the right policy for the future, not just for the present, and I wish to support really the comments that the Minister for Transport made. I think it is unfortunate in terms of this debate that he did speak first because he could have perhaps answered a number of points, particularly the hon. member of the Council's point Mr Crowe, who said that the Isle of Man Government should buy the slots. I do not believe that that is legally possible -

Mrs Crowe: No, it isn't.

Mr Corkill: - but maybe that could have been answered.

Those are the points I wanted to make and I would ask members to vote against the amendment which I think takes us nowhere, but more importantly, to vote against the motion on the paper.

Mr Bell: Mr President, as someone who has been a regular critic of Manx Airlines fare structure, if not their service provision, in some respects I welcome a debate of this nature. However, I perhaps a bit, like the hon. member for Onchan, am baffled at some of the positions which have been taken so far during this debate because not only have I in the past frequently criticised Manx Airlines performance but I did also in the past strongly oppose the concept of a user agreement with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and I still believe that that position was right and would stick by that. However, during the debate on the user agreement I was strongly supported by my MHK for Ayre, Mr Quine. But listening to the presentation we have had so far, it strikes me that he has turned his position completely on its head from those few years ago because if in fact we agree to support this resolution as printed on the order paper, what in fact we are doing is moving away from the open skies policy, which has been the policy of the Isle of Man Government for some time now, into a series of user agreements with individual airlines to individual airports. It is exactly the same concept. We mentioned regulating quality of service, frequency of service, fare structure. Those are precisely the ingredients which were argued in favour of the user agreement with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company.

So what in fact is being proposed to us, as I say, is a series of user agreements with primarily presumably Manx Airlines but also any other airline that comes along and I cannot for

the life of me see how that is going to benefit the Isle of Man travelling public, the business community or indeed our tourists, such as they are, who wish to come to the Island from various destinations. I cannot go along with that.

Equally the resolution, and I think the hon. Minister for Transport has made reference to it, states, 'that a statutory body be established as a matter of priority to regulate, when necessary, traffic routes'. Now, you do not have the option of 'when necessary' if you are setting up a regulatory body. You either regulate the routes or you do not. You cannot pick and choose as to which routes you choose to regulate. So if this quango or committee or whatever is set up, it will have to regulate every single route to the Island, otherwise it is going to be severely compromised and I think we need to recognise that, that 'when necessary' I really cannot understand the purport of having included in the resolution because it either nullifies in fact what the resolution is trying to achieve or it is going to cause such complications in terms of practical application that it just is unworkable.

I think, as I see it anyway, this whole debate has been generated by the early initiative of Ryanair to come in to the Island and Manx Airlines response to that, and anyone, certainly those of us who have been in this hon. Court for a number of years, will recognise perfectly well Manx Airlines' standard response to any form of competition coming in to the Island, we have had it year after year after year, and this is exactly the same as happened before. They cry wolf so often that one day they are really going to get themselves burnt by it.

The threat this time is that they want a monopoly of all London airports, as the hon. minister has said, in return for keeping the Heathrow slots. At the same time we hear that the profits on the Heathrow route are subsidising every other single route in the United Kingdom to the Isle of Man. Now, are they seriously saying to us they are going to walk away from the golden goose which keeps the whole airline afloat? Are we really seriously expected to believe that?

Hon. members have made reference to the level of service Manx Airlines provides for the Island now, and I would agree with members that the Isle of Man is served better now by the various airlines than probably any other time in our history, and that is something which is to be welcomed. It is something which certainly has been generated in part at least by the economic success of the Island and one would expect it to happen. If it was not generated by Manx Airlines someone else would have stepped in the breach to provide that. But let us not kid ourselves that this effort on the part of Manx Airlines to cover all bases to the Isle of Man is as a result of some philanthropic approach to the Isle of Man. Traditionally, whenever there has been a hint of new competition coming in to the Island from new destinations, Manx Airlines have done their best either to block it or indeed to take up a minimal service from that airport to block competition coming in. That has happened on a number of occasions and will continue to do so, and it is not necessarily with a desire to provide improved services to the Island from that destination, it is to block competition coming in, and fair enough they are a commercial operator, it is entirely within their power to do so, but let us not kid ourselves as to the reasons why this spread of services has come about.

There is no question in my mind that the overwhelming feeling of people on the Isle of Man is that they want to see fares fall. There is no doubt, as I said, that the range and quality of service themselves have improved, but in the face of rapidly falling fares internationally, generated initially in America with their internal flights, latterly in Europe and Britain, and the

internal air routes in Britain now are probably the highest cost per mile of any other domestic route in the world, and I think the Manx people feel aggrieved that the Isle of Man is not benefiting from the huge savings which they can see advertised every single day in the newspapers in Europe and America and anywhere else and it is quite staggering when we think that it costs more to fly from the Isle of Man to London than it does from London to Los Angeles. There has to be something wrong with the fare structure, I believe, to find ourselves in this situation.

But that brings us back to the original point, I suppose, as how best to respond to the legitimate desires of the Manx travelling public. Is it best served by continuing the policy of government in expanding the open skies policy to encourage competition to come in, to provide better incentives to bring competition in, or indeed to provide better incentives to Manx Airlines themselves to reduce fares, or is the solution in government or quango regulation which in effect is going to provide monopoly services from a range of airports throughout the United Kingdom?

As I said at the outset, I totally opposed the user agreement with the Isle of Man Steam Packet and my view on that is exactly the same now for the airlines. I cannot support for one moment the concept of abandoning an open skies policy where competition could more freely come in to the Isle of Man and move to a situation where the government regulates through a new form of user agreement the services from individual airlines. I think the only losers in that will be again the hard-pressed Manx travelling public and I do not believe that is in their interest or in the business interest of the Isle of Man.

So I cannot support the resolution as printed. I think it is a superficial resolution at this stage, it will be a retrograde step for the Isle of Man if we find ourselves in this situation. I believe, as I have said, that if this resolution is to be passed we have no option but to regulate all routes. It is not a question of when necessary and we should recognise that, and I believe that if we were to pursue these steps we would in fact be discouraging competition to the Isle of Man just at the time when we most badly need it, so I cannot support that resolution and I would very much urge members to oppose it as well.

As for the amendment, that is really for members to choose but I hope, in making a decision on the amendment, they will bear in mind the words and thoughts which through experience I have expressed and also indeed the comments made by the hon. minister and Minister for the Treasury as well. I do not believe a change from departmental responsibility to a quango to deal with these matters is necessarily the best way forward.

I am sure, in fact I would hope, that the Department of Transport is monitoring with some urgency developments such as have been referred to in the Channel Islands and other ways to stimulate the right sort of service to the Island and I would expect that to be reflected in the policy decisions made by the Department of Transport and hopefully ultimately endorsed by the Council of Ministers and Tynwald.

But I would urge strongly that hon. members realise that we would be potentially going down a very dangerous route if we were to support the move as recommended in the resolution and I would ask hon. members to vote against it.

Mr Rodan: Mr President, in speaking against the motion and the amendment I do not wish to repeat much of what the last speaker has said but just a couple of points I feel are worth reiterating.

It was earlier in the debate suggested that the basic argument used by the Minister for Transport was flawed and oversimplified the situation in that the issue boiled down to one thing as to whether it was this Court or whether it was a quango responsible for this particular issue. Now, I certainly did not read it that way. I saw the essence of the argument as expressed by the Minister for Transport very clearly as being, 'Is an open skies policy, i.e. free competition, consistent with regulation?', to which the answer is very clearly no. Where regulation is appropriate of course is where there is already a monopoly situation when the public interest demands safeguards into issues like frequency of service, choice of guaranteed destination, fares level - all issues which, if unregulated, would be directed in the interests of company shareholders and certainly not necessarily the interests of the travelling public. Where regulation is appropriate as well is if you want to entrench an already existing monopoly for whatever reason.

But I think it is very clear that we are not, and certainly not yet, in a monopoly situation with airlines. It might appear to the public that we are because there is one major player, but the reason we cannot call this a monopoly situation is because there are no barriers to competition, there are no barriers in existence and other competitors can and do come on the scene. Nor do we wish a monopoly, but the surest way to guarantee and entrench a monopoly is to have a body regulating routes and possibly that might lead to regulating fares in the public interest and exercising judgements which are best made by the free market itself.

Therefore I would say that a statutory body, especially one which is highly questionable as to who it would ultimately be accountable to, is not the way forward. If you wish to entrench monopoly you will vote for the motion, but if you think as a matter of political principle that an open skies policy and free competition on the one hand and licensing and regulation on the other hand are inconsistent with each other, then you will vote also against the amendment.

Mr Downie: Mr President, a lot has been said in the debate so far but I just want to make one or two points.

I think it goes without saying that in the airline business it is very much the law of the jungle and I think in this particular instance the policy which the government adopts presently is the correct one. We are not going to be big enough to get in there and mix it with the lions and tigers of the airline industry. They are the people who are best served to sort out their internal differences, and I think that we have already seen in the last few years a whole new dimension coming from the airline industry itself and there has been this flexibility and I think while this is the present situation we ourselves need to have flexibility within our system to allow market forces to prevail and allow this competition element to be very much to the forefront.

The other thing that is apparent within the airline businesses too is that they come and go and I have no doubt in my mind that this present attitude where they are cutting the legs out from under each other is going to lead to disaster in some areas because they just cannot compete, some of them, on price and I think that in the not-too-distant future, as we have seen in the past, there will be casualties in the airline industry. It just cannot go on this business

where seats are virtually given away, and as the minister said, we have got to have dependability, reliability, continuity of service and, where possible, at reasonable prices, and I think that, in not being known as a particular friend of Manx Airlines, I would like to say that I think they have done a good job and they do serve this Island well. All right, there are warts and all in there and there is good and bad but by and large they have done well.

If you want to see a system, and I suppose it is one of the last of the dinosaurs in Europe which has experienced difficulty in airline terms and had to be bailed out with EU money on a number of occasions, you need not look any further than Aer Lingus and I would hate to see a similar situation where we had a national airline propped up with government funds and given all sorts of monopolies on routes. That, to me, has been a recipe for disaster and I wonder, now that the bulk of the support to Ireland has been withdrawn by the EU from this very month, how long actually Aer Lingus will manage to survive because there is tremendous competition in southern Ireland and indeed even Manx Airlines can knock the pants off them on a flight from Dublin to London on a fairly regular basis.

So I think we have just about got things right at the moment in the Island and if there is a requirement to regulate routes or to go down this particular avenue the department already has the powers to be able to do that and I think if a situation arose, I have every confidence in the department that they would seek to do that and bring the issue to this Court.

I am one of these who are firmly of the opinion that if it is not broken, it does not need fixing and I think for the time being we should keep an eye on the situation but be happy to leave things as they are. Thank you.

Mrs Cannell: Mr President, to start with I was most surprised in some ways by the opening remarks made by the hon. Minister for the Department of Transport, really surprised that he did not want us to actually look at this, because to my mind if members were supportive of the original motion on the agenda today, then legislation would be required to be drawn up, and it would be up to members in this hon. Court and House to determine what was contained within that legislation and what was not, and so there would be strict criteria laid down in legislation as to how the body would function, how it would be constituted, how many representatives would be on it, where they would come from, who they would be answerable to and the duration of their terms of office. Now, that to me seems very simple because ultimately this hon. Court would be answerable for the statutory body, how they performed et cetera. We would be answerable.

At the moment what we have to look at is the present situation, and the hon. minister for the Department of Transport has been very helpful in that he has told us that his department and he can not control what occurs at any airport outside Ronaldsway. He made that quite clear, that his department is only responsible for the operation at Ronaldsway and can only have an impact as far as that particular airport is concerned. He has no control. But then he did go on to say that that situation is better, that he only has control of one airport, and the situation is better that only one minister has control over the whole issue and that that minister ultimately is responsible to the hon. Court of Tynwald. Well, I would suggest, members, that that is a very, very unhealthy position for such an important issue.

Mr Brown: Democracy.

Mrs Cannell: We do not have democracy in this Island, but that is another issue I would address at a later date.

Mr Brown: Well, go home then.

Mrs Cannell: For one member of this hon. House, this elected House answerable to Tynwald Court to have control of a situation like this to me is not a prudent situation to have in being. So that is my view in regard to that.

Now then, why are members here today being persuaded not even to support the amendment? Why not look at this situation? Well, I would suggest that the Council whip has been out today, which is a very rare exercise in this administration, but it has. I do not know who is holding it, but certainly members have been whipped into action because we have heard five ministers of the Council of Ministers -

Mr Brown: It makes a change for the APG then!

Mrs Cannell: - come out, with only perhaps two or three to go, and so it is quite clear to me that there is a very, very strong effort here to kill anything off in relation to this issue. Well, that says a lot for the public interest, doesn't it, because there is much public interest in this.

The previous speaker said, 'If it isn't broken, don't fix it.' The public are saying every day that they believe it is broken and it is in need of attention, in need of emergency attention, and I am inclined to agree with them. At one time I may have thought 'Well, there's a bit of smoke here: I wonder is there a fire', but having travelled fairly recently myself on day returns and a couple of days in London just before Christmas, I have to say that I am in total agreement with the public opinion. People feel that they are being . . . ripped off basically - thank you, hon. member for Douglas East - by Manx Airlines. The sad thing, of course, is that we do not have a choice and I think that is the important thing that hon. members ought to reflect on today.

We have heard all sorts of red herrings here. You have heard words like 'quango' being thrown into the debate to frighten you away from supporting any initiative to look at this issue -

Mr Cretney: We know we need a quango.

Mrs Cannell: - which I think that we should be doing.

You have a situation where people are paying or being quoted a fare - and I am going to talk about price structures to start - people are being quoted sums such as £400 return from Scotland to the Isle of Man. Now, that was quoted to me by a lady on Saturday who was coming to the Isle of Man on domestic business, and when she complained to Manx Airlines they managed to drop it to three hundred and something. So that seems quite odd to me, that if one does not complain you pay the first price quoted which might be much greater than that which would be afforded to you if you are brave enough to stand and shout. So it is he or she that shouts loudest that gets the cheaper fare.

We have had Jersey and Guernsey quoted today and the situation they have. What has not come out in this debate is what happens in relation to the Shetland Islands and the system they have in the Shetland Islands and it may interest members to know that the authorities there, the governmental authorities there, actually subsidise all travel for their residents in the Shetlands up to 30 per cent. (*Mr Downie interjecting*) Now, the reason for that of course is that that area and the Shetlands is regarded as quite rich. There is a lot of oil money going

through, there is a lot of activity. Equally, the argument was put to me on Saturday, returning to the Island, by a fellow traveller, 'If we can travel like that and our area' - in which this woman was formally resident - 'is regarded as a rich area, then what of the Isle of Man which is the home of my birth? This is a rich Island because of the amount of private finance that is going through. The economic prosperity is good. So what is happening here?' I could not answer.

What the Manx public want is choice. They want a choice of schedules, they want a choice of service, efficient service, reliable service - which is not always the case with Manx Airlines - they want a variety of destinations in which to travel and they want fair, reasonable and a choice of price, and they are not getting that at the moment.

Mrs Crowe: Oh yes, they are.

Mrs Cannell: Now, we heard earlier in the debate that Manx Airlines has grown and it is a very, very large, I would suggest, powerful, company. What other company operating flights would want to take on a situation like that, especially when we have the recent very sad situation, I believe, where Emerald Airways have had to withdraw from a lot of the popular routes. There are all sorts of rumour and speculation as to why that actually happened, but I felt it was a sad day when they withdrew because it removed choice, it removed selection of route, it removed variety of scheduled flying times and most importantly it removed a choice of price.

Now, of course what Emerald Airways offered was a service without the trims, without the frills. Manx Airlines, on the other side of the coin, at the time were offering a lot of the trims, a lot of the frills and the icing. If you wanted a service where you were waited on with food and drink you went with Manx Airlines. If you wanted basically just to get there and get back without a drink or anything else, then you went with Emerald.

But I have to say that whilst we did have competition for a while, Manx Airlines were kept on their toes and I have to say, and I am very saddened to have to say this, that I believe the quality of service to the passenger has gone down quite dramatically and I have witnessed that myself this last 12 months: it has gone down quite dramatically. So it is choice that the people want. That is what they want: a choice.

I have no problem with the original motion, but then members would say, 'Ah, but she won't, will she, because it's an APG colleague moving it.' That is quite true. It is an APG policy to correct or to address the situation of monopolies. I would suggest that this would regulate a monopoly that we have now and it would provide a healthier environment in order to attract other airlines to come in to provide a service which Manx Airlines is not presently providing.

But if members are not satisfied with the arguments they have heard thus far, then surely the most appropriate and the most sensible thing that we can do is to support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran. He is suggesting a select committee of three to look at the contents of the motion on the agenda. I see no harm in that and I believe a lot of good could come out of that. Firstly, we would be addressing the public concern. That is of paramount importance because if members throw this whole issue out today how can you possibly face the electorate in 18 months' time and say, 'Oh, well, I said this or I said that.'

Mrs Crowe: Oh, but we don't all think of that the whole time, do we?

Mrs Cannell: Well, some might not be thinking about it -

Mr Brown: You would.

Mrs Cannell: - but I think secretly it is on most members' minds.

Mrs Crowe: No.

Mr Brown: Yours.

Mrs Cannell: It has always been said pre-election year is more important than the year of election itself. (*Interjections*) We heard a pre-election speech yesterday by Mr Brown, but that is another matter.

Mr Brown: That is what I believe in. That is the difference between us.

Mrs Cannell: Well, that is what makes debates interesting in this hon. Court, Mr President, because we do, some of us, have a difference of view.

Mr Cretney: That is democracy.

A Member: Hear, hear.

Mr Downie: And a choice of airlines!

Mrs Cannell: It is not my idea of democracy, not true democracy. (*Interjections*) So I think members should ask themselves not is there a problem, because I think if most of us are listening to our electorate, and I think the majority are, then we know that there is a problem.

We have heard the hon. member for Ramsey, the Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Bell. Now, listening to his debate I would have said, 'Well, he has paved the way for a select committee. That speech is in support, in my view, of looking at the issue.' That may not be what he intended, but that is the way it was perceived by myself and, I believe, others. He was making a case to look at it and I would agree with him. So let us look at it. Let us select a committee to actually look at it and come back and debate again if you feel that you must. If you are not convinced by the arguments thus far then go for the middle road and the middle road is a select committee, but for goodness' sake do not listen to the Council whip today. Whether or not they are shareholders remains to be seen.

A Member: Ooh!

Mrs Cannell: Remains to be seen, I said. But just to finish on the subject of the profit margins of Manx Airlines, between two and three million per annum. Perhaps to satisfy the needs of the Manx public and business travelling to and from the Island they should take a cut in their profits. So, please, members, support a select committee as a middle road. Thank you.

Mrs Crowe: Mr President, I rise only to clarify a point or a remark that was slipped into the speech by the hon. member for Ayre and was also alluded to by the hon. member for East Douglas and that is when it was implied that the cheap fares to Heathrow were not available. The facts are that Manx Airlines has to satisfy the Office of Fair Trading on the Isle of Man -

Mrs Cannell: That is easily done.

Mrs Crowe: - that not only are the fares, as advertised, available, but that they are in sufficient number on each flight to satisfy our fair trading standards, and indeed we check the records and they do so, and I wanted to make that quite clear. Thank you, Mr President.

Dr Mann: Mr President, when I agreed to second this motion I did say to the mover, 'You will find it extremely difficult to explain in some detail your proposal to the Court because very few members of the Court are actually closely involved in the operation either of the airport or of the airlines.' All I know is, and I am sure this is behind the original resolution, that there are, as other members have said, very strong views outside in the public arena that somehow something needs to be done with the present situation relating to air transport.

Years ago we had, as has been referred to, many such problems with sea transport as well. We probably still have. The same situation existed then and it has been resolved not very satisfactorily.

What disturbed me, I think, more in the response to the first speech of the mover was the defensive attitude of the Department of Transport. Instead of seriously looking at the situation, the proposal, it was a very defensive thing that somehow the department was coming under attack. Now, I do not think that that is true. I think we are dealing in the principle, not in the detailed practice. The response of the hon. member for Onchan to actually have a select committee I think represents this lack of detailed knowledge and detailed practice within the members of this Court, of which I must admit I am one.

Let us face it, the public are dissatisfied and even the private sector are dissatisfied, in spite of the assurance that they are not, because they are also paying fares elsewhere in the world and they know what is happening just as much as anybody else. There is the dissatisfaction. Now, if we are going to dismiss it out of hand, then we will be seen, rightly or wrongly, to be in league with the present situation. We do have open skies, but we do have a de facto monopoly.

Now, in the public interest, if not in individual positions, we should at least have a select committee to at least look at the situation, produce a report and then when we are facing public criticism we can say, 'It has been done and this is the advice.' At the moment, just to assume a defensive attitude and say, 'We're right anyway' is asking for trouble. If you cannot come to terms with what is immediately being proposed, at least let it be looked at and those recommendations can either be accepted or rejected by this Court in due course. I would say that is by far the wisest way, if not the party way.

Messrs Cretney and Cannan: Vote!

The President: If the Court is prepared to vote, I have to ask the hon. member for Ramsey how long he estimates his reply is likely to take.

Mr Singer: Mr President, probably 10 minutes.

The President: In which case I propose to adjourn and will call upon the hon. member to reply immediately after we resume this afternoon. Would the Court be interested in a quarter past two start?

Members: No.

The President: Right, no problems: 2.30 the adjournment.

The Court adjourned at 1.05 p.m.

Air Traffic Routes – Debate Concluded – Motion Lost

The President: I call upon the hon. member for Ramsey to reply to the debate.

Mr Henderson: Mr President, I did catch your eye earlier before lunch. I wanted to add a few words to the debate.

The President: Hon. members, you will recall when the Court rose there was a question that the hon. member for Ramsey should reply at that stage or that his reply should be adjourned until immediately after lunch. There was no question of calling any further participants from the debate. Accordingly I call upon the hon. member for Ramsey to reply to the debate.

Mr Singer: Thank you, Mr President. May I first of all thank the hon. member of the Council, Dr Mann, for seconding my motion. I certainly found it very interesting that we have had four ministers stand up -

Mrs Cannell: Five.

Mr Singer: Four ministers plus Mr Brown stand up to - (*Laughter, Mr Brown interjecting*) I mean, five including Mr Brown standing up to support what I think is a very weak position that the department finds itself in at this time, but I am pleased to see that the ministers at least have regrouped since last night's housing fiasco.

Can I say, first of all, I support the minister's rejection of Manx Airlines's approach for a total Island monopoly. I think certainly that that was the right decision to take.

In summing up I would like to make some general comment and then specific comments to particular members' contributions, and I would like to thank everybody who has made a contribution.

This motion is only in regard to air routes to the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands; international routes fall within the responsibility of the UK Government and its bilateral air services arrangement, and any international services would continue to need a CAA route transport licence. I did refer to the Channel Islands several times and other members have referred to the Channel Islands during the debate, but the fact is that they have faced this matter and they have tackled it. I have spoken with their board, or certainly the person who is in charge of their board, and they have said that they are more than satisfied with the result.

I may also refer to one particular comment of the hon. member for Castletown and also my colleague Mr Bell about the terms in the motion, the words 'when necessary', and I thought I had explained what was the meaning of the words 'when necessary' but if I can find it I will repeat what I said. The 'when necessary' only referred to licences which . . . Well, let me give you the exact words, please: 'The words "when necessary" in the motion - there would be no requirement to obtain a permit for any flight where there is no requirement to obtain either an air transport licence or route licence from the Civil Aviation Authority such as an air ambulance, air taxis or technical stops.' I explain, that is the meaning of the words 'when necessary' and I do believe, when definitions are needed or what was intimated needs to be looked at, that the records of the *Hansard* of Tynwald is looked at and I have clearly explained there what I see the words 'when necessary' meaning in the motion.

I would expect the statutory licensing authority to have the following aims in respect of scheduled air services to the Isle of Man: firstly, to maintain year-round scheduled services of sufficient capacity to cater for all user categories; secondly, to secure the provision of sufficient

capacity throughout the year to cater for the needs of the tourist industry; thirdly, to secure the lowest fare structure consistent with viable operations, and Emerald Airways, who have been mentioned, may well have been given by a licensing board permission to run the route to Liverpool because of their air prices, and we did see that it did bring down Manx Airline's prices, which were extremely high until that date; fourthly, to obtain continuity of service from year to year with the airline or airlines operating on the route being in a position to develop the service for the benefit of all categories of user; fifthly, to obtain the highest possible frequency of service; sixthly, to obtain the highest possible standard of service; and seventhly, which is most important, to monitor services and take suitable action if they became substandard. So you would not be cementing monopolies on routes, as licences could be withdrawn. Airlines could not become complacent because the licence is not irrevocable.

Now, these aims would introduce a degree of regulation to safeguard user requirements, particularly Island residents, whilst not negating the argument that competition provides lower cost air travel and the provision of quality services. I think there is a slight difference between the interpretation of the words 'open skies' in this debate. An open skies policy, for myself, means open skies where there is fair competition. The present open skies policy of the Department of Transport means fair competition and it can also mean unfair competition. A licensing board would equally protect Manx Airlines as any other airline operating out of the Isle of Man. The policy of the Department of Transport certainly makes no distinction between regular use and what one might call irregular services. The position of Jersey could change and the position of the Isle of Man can change and may well be changing within the next 12 months. Surely it is important, hon. members, that it would be disastrous if we could not rely on maintaining air links with the United Kingdom all the year round. Few routes make profit all the year round and so it is important to take steps to protect all-year-round scheduled services against airlines which may choose to operate only at the lucrative time of the week or the lucrative time of the year.

Having listened to the hon. Minister for the Department of Transport I felt that his department is demonstrating what one might call a laissez-faire attitude, so when this problem does arise airline routes could be lost because of unfair competition and the inability for the airlines to make a profit. It would be too late then to protect the needs of the Isle of Man traveller. What would happen if Manx Airlines did switch from Heathrow to London City and became a predator to chase off the initial established route by Jersey European Airways? Could the minister do anything about that? The answer clearly is no. You only have to ask the questions, why did the Channel Islands see the necessity of protecting their interests? Why did they choose to go to all the trouble of introducing legislation if there was no threat? Why did they not just sit back, as the hon. minister is doing, and wait to see what happens? There is nothing wrong, hon. members, with fair competition but, to ensure fair competition, you do at least need a referee.

The hon. member Mr Quine suggested a select committee -

Mr Quine: Mr Karran.

Mr Singer: Mr Karran, and was seconded by Mr Quine. Certainly the present policy could result in the loss of services and less destinations, and the fact that Manx Airlines virtually have a monopoly now and under a licensing system would receive protection if they

provide a good service may be questionable to many members as being a monopoly, and therefore Mr Karran's suggestion, which was seconded, may well be the way forward.

Mr Crowe was asking a question about the operators operating from the Isle of Man. They need the encouragement and confidence to invest in long-term development of routes and they should not be looking over their shoulder at what may be unfair competition creaming off the profits or trying to chase them off the route which becomes unviable for two operators.

The hon. member for Onchan, Mr Cannell, was talking about Manx Airlines and the 'big brother' effect, their stamping their feet at DoT, and he said that we were right to call their bluff. Unfortunately, hon. members, one never knows when it is bluff and when it is not bluff. The licensing board's concern would be indeed fare structures. Some of their destinations do not make a profit because they are only repositioning, so the profit quoted may not be relevant in those cases and certainly Manx Airlines, I think, have two routes which they call routes but they are only repositioning aircraft, but I am sure that the shareholders of Manx Airlines would not be happy if Manx Airlines were running all their routes apart from the Heathrow route at a loss. Certainly I think the hon. Mr Corkill's comments were not very relevant regarding Heathrow, because licensing authorities cannot control airlines who wish to cancel their services but the licensing board can prevent predatory action to the detriment of the travelling public. The Treasury minister cannot delude himself that Manx Airlines are going to retain their Heathrow slots, whoever he speaks to or whoever speaks to him.

I think he also commented about airlines wanting something for nothing. Certainly maybe easyJet or Ryanair want something for nothing. Well, I think that the policy of the department is quite clear that nobody here is going to get something for nothing, that they all have to compete on an equal playing field, and similarly Jersey European will no doubt be paying all their taxes here and there, only receiving the incentives that any airline receives from the Department of Transport to commence a new route. If Manx Airlines wished to they could provide budget prices at all times of the day, but they prefer to make their £3 million profit in the Isle of Man/Heathrow route on behalf of their shareholders.

My hon. colleague Mr Bell was talking about franchising and licensing, and certainly the licensing board would have the power to withdraw licences if they felt that a service is inadequate. Depending on the rules that were set down they would be able to take much stronger action than that that was adopted by the user agreement for sea services.

Mr Bell was dismissing Manx Airline's threats as crying wolf.

Mr Bell: Yes, because they have done it before.

Mr Singer: Fine. So they have done it before. As I have said, I think that they may cry wolf and then eventually we may think that they are crying wolf and in fact they are not crying wolf. We might goad them into action as they are no longer the airlines of the Isle of Man. Manx Airlines are not the airline of the Isle of Man; they are now a European airline.

Mr Rodan - I listened to his comments. I think that the term 'quango' is often thrown in as a derogatory term to try and ruin an argument, because it is a derogatory form of word for an unnecessary committee, but the licensing board would have a very important function in regard to air transport services servicing the public. We talk about a free market; you have seen what happens to a free market in retailing on the Island. We have heard the comments

about Tesco's coming, what effect that is going to have on the rest of the retailing. We hear of a major shop in Port Erin shutting down in the next week or so because they cannot face the major competition. (*Mrs Crowe interjecting*) I think it is not so much as free competition in this Island; it is more a case of having satisfactory arrangements to provide for the public, and an air licensing board would help with the continuity of service.

It would be no good for the minister, as he said, to bring the issue to this Court if something turned up after the event, as we saw last evening at the housing debate. We have to tackle these matters early, recognising that there may well be a problem, and Mrs Cannell, the hon. member for Douglas East, was quite right in her observations. The point is that the minister does not wish to give up the control he thinks he has over airline routes on and off the Island. In fact, he has no control, and if he wanted control he would still have to come to Tynwald for support in an emergency situation, and that situation would be too late.

It is said, 'If it is not broken do not fix it.' Common sense says sometimes to check on the condition so that it does not break in the first place, and I felt that it was particularly regrettable during the contribution by the hon. Mrs Cannell that she was heckled when she was putting her views. It was not a case of heckling as one often does in jest but particularly, I thought, it was unacceptable that the heckling was by ministers of this government.

Dr Mann said something needs to be done regarding air transport. You know, we have a nice airport, we have nice facilities, excellent facilities in fact, but in practice we have no control outside that building of who flies in and who flies out, where they go, what kind of service they are producing, what service they are giving to the Isle of Man public and the question is, do we need to define the position for the future as to whether we take action or not?

I have two final points to make. Mr Karran's point, first of all: he said - it is an important point in debate and we need to look into it - 'It is important to act before the event,' and I believe that this is such an important matter for the future of the air transport of this Island that I would be very happy to see a full investigation in line with his amendment. It is of extreme importance to the Island and I would be happy, as I say, for us to look into it. Let us get it right, not just sit back in self-satisfaction believing that perhaps we are infallible.

The final point - I would like to quote the hon. Minister for Transport, a quote that he made in the housing debate last night, when he said something on the lines of 'We see problems coming and do nothing and then we are surprised when they hit us'. This is exactly in parallel with this particular motion.

As I say, I am happy if members wish to support Mr Karran's amendment because I do believe there will then be a full investigation, we will be able to come to conclusions that we feel are correct and the public will be satisfied that we have come to the correct decision, but unless we do do that and we just throw this out without even looking at it then the public have every right to be upset and to accuse us of sitting back and doing nothing. Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Hon. members, the resolution is set out at item 18 on the order paper, and to that resolution we have the amendment in the name of the hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran, set out on the white paper in your possession. Will those in favour of the amendment standing part of the resolution please say aye; against, no. The noes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys -

For: Messrs Cannan, Quine, Houghton, Henderson, Duggan, Braidwood, Mrs Cannell, Messrs Singer and Karran - 9

Against: Messrs Gilbey, Rodan, North, Sir Miles Walker, Mrs Crowe, Messrs Brown, Cretney, Shimmin, Downie, Mrs Hannan, Messrs Bell, Corkill, Cannell, Gelling and the Speaker - 15

The Speaker: Mr President, the amendment fails in the House with 15 votes cast against, 9 votes being cast for, sir.

In the Council -

For: The Lord Bishop and Dr Mann - 2

Against: Messrs Lowey, Waft, Kniveton, Radcliffe and Crowe - 5

The President: The amendment also fails to carry in the Council, hon. members, with 2 votes being cast in favour and 5 votes against. With the amendment having failed we move on to the resolution as printed on the order paper at item 18. Will those in favour of that resolution please say aye; against, no. The noes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys -

For: Messrs Cannan, Quine, Houghton, Henderson, Duggan, Mrs Cannell, Messrs Singer and Karran - 8

Against: Messrs Gilbey, Rodan, North, Sir Miles Walker, Mrs Crowe, Messrs Brown, Cretney, Braidwood, Shimmin, Downie, Mrs Hannan, Messrs Bell, Corkill, Cannell, Gelling and the Speaker - 16

The Speaker: Mr President, the motion fails in the House, 16 votes cast against, 8 votes cast for, sir.

In the Council -

For: Dr Mann - 1

Against: The Lord Bishop, Messrs Lowey, Waft, Kniveton, Radcliffe and Crowe - 6

The President: In the Council, hon. members, one vote has been cast in favour of the resolution, 6 votes against. The resolution fails to carry.

Housing – Further Provision for First-Time Buyers – Amended Motion Carried

The President: We move now, hon. members, to item 19 on the order paper, in effect two bites of the same cherry in two days, but having had such a lengthy debate yesterday I am sure a lot of the ground has already been covered and obviously members will use their judgement in their presentation of case. *(Laughter)*

Mr Karran: Eaghtyrane, I beg to move:

That Tynwald is of the opinion that the Government has failed to respond to the lack of adequate housing for first-time buyers and requests the Council of Ministers to table plans for the development of a further 300 housing units for such buyers no later than the April 2000 sitting.

I take the hint. I shall be short, but what I do believe is that this motion is about a fundamental issue of affordable accommodation which we have not got at the present time. The government of any nation is primarily there to create the environment for a society where we create the environment and the development of affordable houses.

This has not been allowed to happen here. We have allowed the development of a Frankenstein when it comes to the housing issue. Development land is worth more being undeveloped than developed. When we are seeing a figure touching £300,000 an acre now for development land it is rubbing salt into the wounds of those seeking a home. The planning permission on most land is for low density housing, so allowing for four on an acre, before even a brick is put down, we are talking in the region of £75,000 plus and that does not allow for drainage, roads et cetera on top of this and lawyers' fees. So we have created the monster and only we can make sure that the monster is firmly destroyed.

Hon. members, using our own government figures for the past three years we have not produced the numbers of houses that we need, and at the same time we have allowed another 1,500-plus persons into the Island to increase demand. You do not need a good degree in anything to understand that that is a recipe for increased tensions within our society and reduces the chances of those seeking accommodation of all sorts in the private and public sector.

I think the fact that we only received the government report that was on the agenda before this item shows that there is some common sense prevailing and being allowed to shine through. I am not trying to defend the indefensible.

So the first part of my motion is fact. Placing these newspaper articles about brownfield development, the real issue is that unless you are going to create really severely high-density housing you are going to have to do this in order to get that on brownfield sites, and that is a fact. And the Tynwald Street brown site development is at least five years away, even allowing for the compulsory purchase exercise - good PR, but we need action now.

I find it surprising - and yet it supports my motion - that last week, going to a meeting in my department I discovered that half the land that I had planned for hospital accommodation is now going to be first-time buyers. It just shows where there is a will and somebody prepared to hit a nerve we can see some action.

The housing policy report is a green light to the speculators and those who would want to exploit the people who have not got the fundamental right of a roof over their heads, but this Court will hopefully not show a green light to those in the privileged position at the present time and remember the young people and the people who want the basic commodity of life, and that is some sort of decent affordable accommodation.

I say to the Chief Minister - and I hope that your government will support my motion - I am happy to take responsibility for the development of plans for 300 housing units of first-time

buyers. If you want me to become responsible for housing as a whole I am happy to do so. I am prepared, Chief Minister, to put my neck on the line if I am allowed to get on with the job.

Hon. members, I could go into many details and, as the President has said, it has been a long debate, but one of the things I do find amusing is how many people now are claiming that they were the instigators in trying to buy the land in Johnny Watterson's Lane when there was so much criticism at the time.

I am prepared to allow first-time buyers' houses, to support first-time buyers, to be built in my own constituency because this is a scandal at the present time. We need to be showing that we are prepared to stand up on this issue at the present time.

I hope this hon. Court will support my motion and will let government know that it does support these people at the present time. I am prepared to put my neck on the line in order to try and get something done. I hope this hon. Court will support this motion, which is a fundamental right for everybody to be able to afford decent, affordable accommodation and I hope this Court will support my motion that is in front of you now. I beg to move.

Mr Lowey: I beg to second, sir, and reserve my remarks.

Mr Gilbey: Mr President, as you have intimated, yesterday we debated housing for four hours giving it the importance that it deserves, and I certainly shall not repeat all that I said then. Members of the Department of Local Government took very careful note of the views expressed by numerous hon. members and will be following up many of those views. Not only did I take notes, but my colleagues did and so did Mr Halliwell. However, I do hope that what I said then and what my colleague, the hon. member for Ayre, said will have convinced hon. members that the Department of Local Government (1) recognises that there is a shortage of housing units, particularly for first-time buyers; (2) is determined to alleviate this problem; (3) has made positive plans, and has taken and is taking definite actions to provide more housing units, particularly for first-time buyers. If any hon. member has doubts about this, the members of the department, officers and I would be very pleased to meet them to go through plot by plot what we are planning to do. But in addition, it must be clear from the debate that the department would be under constant pressure from the Council of Ministers to achieve its objectives. Indeed, without giving away the Council of Ministers' secrets I should say this matter is raised at virtually every meeting of the Council.

Turning to the motion before us I would comment as follows. The first part is not correct. The Department of Local Government, a responsible department of government, has not - and I stress, *not* - failed to respond to the lack of adequate housing for first-time buyers. It has responded actively and positively, as I have just said; actively and positively as explained yesterday; actively and positively as set out in the policy document which was approved by this hon. Court last October and as detailed in the Housing Policy Review Report 1999; and actively and positively in the ways reported in the media virtually every week for the last month or so.

Turning now to the motion before us, the second part is so vague as to lead to no positive policy at all. It says, 'a further 300 housing units', but further to what? It does not tell us what the starting base is. Then it goes on without mentioning what period - are the 300 houses to be provided in 2 years, 5 years, 10 years? We are given no guidance.

Instead, I propose a positive amendment. This is based on the policy contained in the policy report, the figure of 400 housing units to be provided a year is calculated using the projections contained in the central policy projections which all departments are expected to follow and use. The amendment endorses the policy objective of facilitating the provision of a minimum - and I stress, a *minimum* - of 400 new housing units per annum over the next five years. Thus we will be striving to provide more than 400 unless the situation changes in such a way that less are required. This is surely a positive policy objective which this hon. Court can support. Then the amendment shows that out of the total of a minimum - again I stress, a *minimum* - of 400 units a year, an average of 80 should be for first-time buyers and 80 for the public sector. It finally notes the very considerable amounts budgeted to be spent on new and replacement public sector houses in the Department of Local Government and the Environment's budget. Mr President, I beg to move this positive and realistic amendment:

For the words after "That Tynwald" substitute -

- "(a) having regard to the estimate of the Department of Local Government and the Environment, contained in paragraph 17.2.2 of the Isle of Man Government Policy Review Report 1999 (Volume 2), endorses the policy objective of facilitating the provision of a minimum of 400 new housing units per annum over the next 5 years;*
- (b) supports the provision within the said policy objective of -*
 - (i) an average per annum of 80 first-time buyer housing units in total by both the public sectors and private sectors, and*
 - (ii) up to 80 public sector housing units per annum (including an average of 30 replacement units and family and elderly persons' housing units);*
- (c) recognises that provision is made within the five year capital estimates of the Department of Local Government and the Environment and Local Government housing authorities of £21.58m for new housing units and £9.56m for the replacement units (including Lower Pulrose)."*

Mr Houghton: I beg to second, sir, and reserve my remarks.

The President: The hon. Mr Crowe.

Mr Crowe: I was going to second.

The President: Sorry, sir. The hon. member for Peel.

Mrs Hannan: Eaghtyrane, I thought, with having the debate yesterday on housing, there would have been a more positive response from the Department of Local Government and therefore I am saddened that we have had just the amendment that is before us. I think the motion before the Court today is a very conservative motion, just to ask what the ideas and where these developments are going to take place. I would have hoped that the Council of Ministers and the Department of Local Government could have looked at this and said, 'Yes, we are positive about what we are doing,' not necessarily accepting the motion in full but being able to say, 'Yes, Tynwald, because of what was expressed yesterday, is concerned about housing and about the future housing and future development, and come forward maybe not in April but maybe it could have been in July with a full package of what was on offer, what land was for development, with a really positive response. Yes, we have had a response now

to say we have got to accept what the department is doing in relation to A, B and C, an average of 80 first-time buyers and housing units in total, both in the public sector and private sector, and housing units of replacement and elderly persons' housing units, and so it goes on.

I am just saddened that we have not got something more positive in relation to the motion before us, which would say, 'Yes, we will come back and we will map out where these developments are going to be.' I know the mover attacks government from time to time, and government should be answerable to members of this hon. Court, and therefore I would have hoped that the response could have been from a very positive level by the department and by the Council of Ministers to say, 'This report has been received before us, but this is what we are going to do positively with regard to spelling out exactly where these developments are going to be taking place,' even bearing right down on Pulrose and maybe saying that some of the houses in Pulrose could be first-time buyers, and some will be replacement units - something that is really positive, and I think we have missed out that opportunity for a positive response from government to this motion before the Court today.

Mr Downie: Mr President, I have some sympathy with the mover of this amendment today. I think that whatever we may feel in government terms things have moved on. There is, in my opinion, a growing crisis on the Island with regard to providing certain types of houses, and I think that while the housing market has become much more lucrative, there is much more profit in building a house in the range of £150,000 to £200,000, where people are actually queuing up to buy.

I know that the department has looked long and hard at first-time buyers' property and I know from my time in the department that government does have a considerable amount of land in its ownership for this particular purpose for first-time buyers' housing and for the provision of local authority homes. However, the problem is that a lot of this land in government ownership cannot be serviced at present; it cannot be properly drained or provided with the other facilities required for successful development. Now, some time ago in my own department, to try and assist with this situation we did identify an area in St John's which DAFF owns, and I have already told the minister that if it would help him we would be willing to make this land available which could be serviced, it would provide for about 25 new houses, there would need to be a requirement for a special planning inquiry for the area, but I think all departments are prepared to sit down and address this problem and try and be more positive or more pro-active. Even in the Douglas area, the department are moving forward with their plan for Springfield and Harcroft, but there are nine acres of land behind there at the old nursery at Ballaughton which the Corporation owns and reluctantly is just falling into a state of misuse. They do not grow their plants any more; the land has just been left to grow infested with weeds now. Surely here is an opportunity where, within the Douglas conurbation, there is an opportunity to provide up to 90 dwellings on that land.

These issues, I think, are the ones that need to be addressed and I think that some of the local authorities who are housing authorities, rather than leave it all to central government again, are the people who should be pushing this and, as the hon. member for Castletown said yesterday, they even have powers of compulsory purchase, and I think what we have got to try and do is accept that there are problems ahead and it is not just a Department of Local Government and the Environment problem or a central government problem; it is a problem

that should be faced and borne by every responsible housing authority in the Island. We just do not have the resources, I think, within the department to do all this, and at the same time try and put together and deal with all the other housing issues including progressing the redevelopment of 250 local authority houses in the Pulrose area. The resources are not there, and I have a lot of sympathy with the minister and the members of the department because it is not easy, and there is no doubt about it, they are on a hiding to nothing.

I think also an opportunity should be taken of reviewing the existing estates in Douglas. We know there are areas in Willaston - the old road going up to the Manor Hotel which is not used any more; you could put a whole row of housing up there, and possibly utilise those for first-time buyers' houses. If the corporation would physically go out and identify areas where additional housing could be put in as well as looking at Pulrose and Spring Valley, there are places there where additional rows of housing that could be put in with no detriment to the services. In fact, they would enhance certain parts of the estate and allow for additional facilities to go in.

There has been no mention made of Linden Grove. Here is an area that the government bought some time ago, albeit they are waiting for the final situation with the prison to develop, but that area there could easily accommodate 50 to 60 first-time buyer homes on a brownfield site. These are all things that are in the pipeline and I am sure the department is doing what it can to progress them.

I am somewhat taken aback; there seemed to be a change in the debate, because to my mind in my time in planning the member moving this motion today has always been vehemently opposed to any development in his own area, and perhaps it is with the view now from the latest local plan that Onchan has virtually abrogated itself from any further development in the area, that he is coming forward and perhaps changing his tack a little bit. Now -

The President: Hon. members, I would ask the Court to remember the resolution before them for consideration. We seem to be doing the same thing as we did yesterday - with more justification yesterday - of straying away (**Members:** Hear, hear.). This is concise debate by comparison, and I would ask hon. members to put a bit of new thinking and new sparkle into it.

Members: Hear, hear.

Mr Downie: Yes, thank you. I would just like to say that (*Laughter*) -

A Member: Yes, what?

Mr Downie: We will have the champagne and the sparkle later! I would just like to say that I think that the member today in moving this motion for the development of a further 300 housing units for such buyers no later than April 2000 sitting is totally unreasonable. There is a real world out there; to effectively put together the package that the minister, the hon. member Mr Gilbey, moved has taken a number of years to put together. If there is a crisis in housing I think we need to see a lot more evidence of that. But what is required, in my opinion, is that we need to be waking something like a sleeping giant and involving local authorities and other people who have responsibility for housing and let us see if we can look at it from that angle and find land that can be serviced and built on, and some movement can be made quite quickly.

The other aspect that has not been touched on, of course, is the financial implication in all this and whether or not there is enough money in the provision of first-time buyers' houses for various developers to get involved.

I am not supporting the motion of Mr Karran's today because I do not think it is reasonable, and where I have expressed concern about the progress the department have been making, I think that if the situation does get out of control there is a mechanism where other departments are willing to assist, and I think other authorities could be brought in to assist.

Mr Shimmin: Unlike the previous speaker, I have not been a member of the Department of Local Government and the Environment, so I listened attentively both at the presentation by the department and yesterday's debate. Now, the debate yesterday tended to be of interest although repetitive in many areas, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) but it did educate me, there was a number of key areas brought out and it was clearly stated that it was to be received as opposed to received and adopted. The significance of that was made clear yesterday, and I have some sympathy with the minister who is now trying to use this motion as a vehicle to get through some of those issues to get the Tynwald resolution and support for the department's hard work, which I think yesterday was recognised is a major step forward, a major challenge. I commend the officers and the political members for having got to that stage, but we are not there yet.

I do believe that the hon. minister has misjudged my views in bringing this amendment forward, which I must admit I am quite affronted by. I believe that Mr Karran for many months, if not years, has been pushing this issue regularly with commitment, he has raised the stakes and once again he has come forward with a motion which on its own I would have struggled to support. We all know the difficulties, we all understand how complex this issue is, but how critical and imperative it is. Yesterday we debated the department's attempts at coming forward, and I think they were told clearly how this Court felt, where the weaknesses were and that they were having a report that they could build upon.

I believe that my only way of registering to the hon. minister how strongly I and some of the quieter members of this Court may feel is to actually vote in favour of Mr Karran's motion just to impress upon the minister that this is not an issue which can be hijacked; this is not an issue which can then be used in order to put forward the department's view. I believe the sincerity is there, the nature of the importance has been proven, and I think that it was a mistake to come forward with this type of amendment to a motion. I would have had much more respect had the department fought it on yesterday's debate and said, 'We have had the discussion, we have taken notice but this is not the way forward.'

I do not believe that on its own Mr Karran's motion would be a solution, but I will register my dissatisfaction and my support for Mr Karran by supporting his motion, and I would hope that other members will support Mr Karran's sincerity and try and show to the department, although we realise the difficulties, that we have got to get action on this quickly and to merely rubber-stamp this amendment, I think, would send out the wrong message to the department. I would hope people will support the motion.

Mr Henderson: I shall be very, very brief, Mr President. The hon. member for West Douglas has just resumed his seat. Hear, hear! Welcome to the real world! And, as I said

yesterday in my little bit of debate, let us bite the bullet. I too support Mr Karran's motion. Thank you.

Mr Lowey: Yes, as seconder of the motion I must say that I am, too, disappointed with the response. Can I recall what the Chief Minister said at the beginning of the year on housing? He said his minister was going to have a conference with members, which we duly had, and we were going to debate it and he would be interested in what the members had to say. I am sure the Chief Minister must have been impressed yesterday, where we all tended to put our twopenny worth in, and I would suggest that, by and large, we all agreed in this Court that there was a serious problem, forgetting how we arrived at it, and we needed a way out.

Now, having said that, the response to the amendment seems to me, we have listened to nothing. We have not listened to any concerns, as the hon. member for West Douglas has said, and you are going to get exactly what was decided last October in the policy document. That is sad. That saddens me too. I thought we were more responsive than that.

I am not going to regurgitate yesterday's debate or to prolong this debate, but I too will be supporting the proposal and voting against the amendment, although I do not at the end of the day think it will make much difference to what I would call the policy of the department, to use the minister's phrase yesterday when he asked the Court to support the document, because it does not really mean anything; it just means accepting you can pick and chose what you want. I am saying to you: in accepting the proposition I think the department's proposals will go ahead anyway, but I am very saddened once again that we are supposed to be listening and being responsive and we are not listening, and we are pushing ahead irrespective, and that is a sad start to the year.

Mr North: Mr President, I resisted getting up and I enjoyed the debate yesterday and I will not go over that. This is first-time buyers and it seems to me we have come full circle since I came into this hon. Court in 1988, when we had the problem when we were short of first-time buyers houses, and Mr Delaney, who I think was the minister at the time, got out and got things moving. All right, there were a lot of mistakes made with lack of clerk of works and everything else, but there was some lateral thinking that went on.

Now we have got two problems: we have done a full circle, we have got the short-term problem now again which the minister is trying to solve, and it needs lateral thinking; it is not easy, because the other problem is we have not looked 20, 30 years ahead, in the past. We have been absolutely like ostriches in terms of long-term planning in acquiring land, we really have, and we still do not seem to be learning that you have to look 20, 30, 40, 50 years ahead to make sure that this Island stays with the same quality of life and the culture that we have got now, and if we do not plan ahead in terms of land acquisition, then for first-time buyers, for our own people, we will have a problem.

I am going to support the amendment, naturally, because I do believe the minister is trying to get something done. That does not mean to say that I am expecting him not to come up with some more lateral thinking to produce some more houses, because I think he could. I think if the will is there, it is there to produce, and I think this hon. Court, whether you are for Mr Karran's motion. . . The hon. member for West Douglas, quite rightly, said Mr Karran has been promoting first-time buyers for the last two or three years, but as far as I know, so has everybody else in this Court. I certainly have, and at Council, when the hon. previous minister

was there, it was almost on a weekly basis: 'When are we going to get it moving?' and it is now starting to happen, fortunately, and I am fortunate that there is going to be some first-time buyers in Braddan parish, up at Cronk Grianagh, and some sheltered accommodation is going to be built up there which will free up some more housing for some first-time buyers within the local authority, and it is not just local authorities and central government; the long-term planning can be done by both, and that is why we need those plans out as soon as possible.

But let us just not argue as to which resolution or what it is. I am relying, and I am sure everybody else in this Court is, on the Minister for Local Government and the Environment producing the goods. Let us have some new lateral thinking over and above his policy, because I am sure he realises what is required. Let us see what can be done, Mr President.

Mr Quine: Mr President, I am sorry if I must recap on one small part. I do apologise for that, but either the figure that has been calculated based on the professional advice we have got is right or it is wrong. We had a lengthy debate yesterday, and there is no evidence produced to say that that figure is wrong. That is my starting point: either those figures, those projections are right in the formula we have used is right, in which case our target figure has been appropriately cast, or it has not. Okay, those base figures, projections for population amongst other things, may not be accurate: they may be up or they may be down, but we have to work to some base figures. Those are the base figures we have worked to and we have said we will review them on an annual basis. So I would ask members first and foremost to look at the weight of evidence, and the weight of evidence is that this figure of 400 is realistic.

Now, this is not new ground that we have covered in terms of that programme. We had a debate in May 1999 and again we looked at these figures, we looked at the calculations and - it was Mr Karran's motion, if I remember right, that was the basis for that debate - an amendment went forward which is almost, indeed, in identical terms to that which is now before us, and this hon. Court approved that. That is only in the May/June period. So I would ask hon. members to accept first and foremost that that figure of 400 is properly calculated and is a reasonable target, not set in stone. So that is my starting point.

Secondly, how can we produce - and today I am confining my comments just to sheltered housing - the numbers? The figure of 80 - can we produce them?

Mr Gilbey: First-time buyers?

Mr Quine: First-time buyers, yes, we are referring to. Can we realistically produce that figure? The answer is, unquestionably yes. The figure of 80 takes into account the private sector and the public sector - the public sector with a subsidy support and indeed the public sector through us, through our release of land, the public sector through a degree of support in one form or another. So that figure of 80 - is it achievable? Quite clearly it is achievable, and I hope we established that yesterday. But there was a request here today: have we got the sites? Where are these sites? These sites, of course, are referred to at page 49, some of these sites are in the policy report of 1999, and that deals with sites, some of which will be developed for public and some of which will be developed for first-time buyers. So those sites are there; that information is there for hon. members, and of course for those hon. members who were able to attend the briefing the other day, they were also part of the brief which Mr Halliwell gave you in relation to the sites. So the sites are available to produce them.

I think two major concerns come out of this debate. One is whether or not there is enough land to accommodate them. That is the total housing programme, and then of course the first-time buyer programme in particular. In relation to this five-year programme I think it is clearly established that that land is available. 'Buy more land' they say. We have been buying more land. We bought another 10 acres only less than two months ago. We are in the market for buying land. It is like a ship at sea - you do not stop it and start it overnight; there is a lengthy lead time. But we are in the market for buying land; we are buying more land. We want to produce them as quickly as we possibly can. We want to remove any constraints that are in our way and get on with this programme. If hon. members feel that they wish to be kept briefed on how we are progressing, then the department has no difficulty in six months' time in providing members with a brief as to exactly how things are progressing. If that provides any comfort, we are quite happy to go along with that.

What we need is to get on with what I believe is a soundly based programme and have it executed. Get on with it, produce the houses. We are already producing these houses. Yesterday we made reference to the fact, just on the public housing alone, that there are 77 units now under construction, and that is not including the large replacement programme in respect of South Douglas - a very large programme. So we are getting on with it. I honestly believe that what we need to do now is to move away from all the rhetoric attached to the subject and get on with implementing the programme, but if hon. members would like to be given a further brief, say in six months' time, as to how this is progressing, I have no problem in providing that and I am sure the minister will have no problem providing that. Thank you, sir.

Mr Gilbey: We will provide it.

The President: Reply, hon. member?

Mr Karran: Eaghtyrane, I would start with the amendment by the hon. minister. This amendment is just another green light to the speculators. If we go with this amendment it will not encourage anybody to release land at the present time. We are not in control.

He talks about the timescale for the 300 houses. The way I would do it is, yes, I would look at government land to start off with. I would be putting out an advertisement in the paper and I would be asking for interested parties; I would be legally tying them up before I would be coming back to the department to go through the planning procedure. I believe that this motion and my proposals - if there is a will it can be done, but there has not been a will. As I said at the opening of my comments, government creates the atmosphere for everything within the economy and we have created a Frankenstein as far as housing is concerned, because we have not kept our finger on the pulse and we have allowed it to be dodged for far too long - too little, too late.

I think the hon. member for Peel is quite right. You know, we must show business that we have real commitment to actually doing something. When we have the absurdity of having people that have development land. . . and half the development land is not for sale. Take my own constituency: there is a prime piece of land will never be developed, more likely, in my lifetime - mine and the owner's lifetime - because it is the best house in the constituency and it would be ruined by a load of houses round it, but it sits in this beautiful site that would put a hell of a lot of houses into my constituency. We could talk about compulsory purchase and

that could be a possibility, but there are other pieces of land which would be just as good developed.

Well, I am not surprised by the hon. member for West Douglas, Mr Downie, on the fact that he is one of the ones who have laid down the foundation stones for why we are in this mess at the present time, and I think we need to be clear about that. So I can understand why he wants us to carry on how we are at the present time, but people out there are suffering, Eaghtyrane, suffering badly at the present time and we should be showing some action. I know I have not got the corner on sincerity; I know there are a lot of people there who are prepared to do it and Who are concerned as myself and need something doing.

I find in this Court once again one is being misquoted. I was the only member of my constituency, no disrespect to my colleagues, that actually wrote in and pinned his colours to the mast of where I wanted to see development. I actually was going to give them more development on Birch Hill; I would have given them development on Howstrake Holiday Camp. If it is between butterflies and gays or first-time buyer houses then I am afraid the first-time buyer houses come first, and I do not see why first-time buyer houses should always be in the less desirable areas, why they cannot be in the posher areas. Why can't they have a view like everybody else? And if my private member's Bill had been accepted and maybe can be revisited, you can actually make it more effective and actually make sure that the right sort of people get into these houses in the first place.

The hon. member talked about the local authorities. You know, everybody is to blame. We are to blame. I am part of this government. I might not be a member of the Department of Local Government, but I failed to get the action that has been needed for so long, but to blame the local authorities is wrong. One of the reasons why we have not got these houses is because of our designation; there is no mixture of high-density housing available at the present time. Developers plead with me. I have been to the Chief Minister, I have brought developers to the Chief Minister, I have had meetings with the developers over the last three years to try and get some movement, and they say 'We cannot do anything - the planning, the planning, the planning' and may I say that I was disappointed. Admittedly politically it is a good thing that you have dezoned the land at Birch Hill for me, because I am going to get . . . the Council of Ministers have with the DoLGE. I am going to say now it would be less of a pain in the neck to myself and my three colleagues, but it is wrong. We need first time-buyers houses. I am prepared to allow them in my area.

I just hope that the hon. member for West Douglas will have the good grace to say we have failed. I am prepared to try and do it myself and let us not have a dog-in-a-manger approach. If the Chief Minister wants, I am prepared to put my money where my mouth is and I am prepared to come back to this Court if you give me the responsibility and let me get on with it.

I appreciate the hon. member for West Douglas's support, because the whole idea of this motion is about a green light, and what we do not need is a green light to the speculators. We have the absurdity of a situation where you take Governor's Hill. A quarter of Governor's Hill is privately let at horrendous prices and your figures will prove that. Now, what we have got to try and do is create that atmosphere, that environment that says, 'Hey boys, maybe it is about time we stopped trying to exploit people and let us get a bit of this property back into the market, because it is not going,' because if we do not get that initial thrust of getting a large

amount of houses in, 80 houses will not do that. I can bring you down within three or four doors of my parents' house down in Spring Valley and I can get you three people who want to buy their own houses - two that are 110 per cent that I would put money on that will buy one of them; there is two, just in half a dozen doors from my parents, and I would more likely be able to get you 40 people on top of that that I know around my own constituency who have been forced off the housing list and are now living having to pay £400, £500 a month, virtually having the wife out to work to keep a roof over their heads.

I appreciate the support from Mr Henderson and I appreciate the support from Mr Lowey.

I think the points from the hon. member for Middle about the repeat in history are right; we have not had a long-term plan as far as that is concerned. I do feel we have got to look at not just this motion, which is not the solution. This motion is part of a package of measures that need to be taken, and I think my private member's Bill will be one of those measures that will need to be taken. But, hon. members, do support this motion, because if you do not support this motion you will actually see the £300,000 per acre development land per acre go up to £400,000, because it shows there is no will in this House to tackle the problem. At the end of the day I believe that we must do that.

I understand the points from the hon. member for Ayre and I understand he is in a difficult position, and I understand his stance as far as this is concerned, but the bottom line in this hon. Court - and I hope the Chief Minister will not support this amendment to my motion - they say 'Put up or shut up.' I am putting up and I hope that if this motion is supported you will come and see me and I will be happy to try and see whether in April I have come up with the goods; then I will be satisfied as far as it is concerned because at the moment, if this goes through, all you are doing is yet more green lights to the speculators. The rent will go up even further. I explained, Eaghtyrane, the other day, when you have the absurdity of people saying, 'Do not sell your property, hold on for another six months you will get another ten grand,' 'get it out in the light, letting for £600 or £700', it is immoral and I have raised the issue about doubling the taxation within the Treasury on rental income. It is immoral.

Hon. members, support the motion. I believe, I know, we can achieve this. I know developers, so long as we can tie them down, that can come up with this and bring back some sort of reality into the situation of accommodation and destroy the monster that we have created of exploitation of our people regarding decent affordable accommodation.

The President: Hon. members, the resolution is set out at item 19 on the order paper, and to that resolution we have the amendment in the name of the hon. member for Glenfaba circulated to you on the white paper in your possession. Will those in favour of the amendment standing part of the resolution please say aye; against, no. The noes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys -

For: Messrs Gilbey, Quine, Rodan, North, Mrs Crowe, Messrs Brown, Houghton, Cretney, Braidwood, Downie, Bell, Corkill, Gelling and the Speaker - 14

Against - Sir Miles Walker, Messrs Henderson, Duggan, Mrs Cannell, Mr Shimmin, Mrs Hannan, Messrs Singer, Karran and Cannell - 9

The Speaker: Mr President, 14 votes have been cast for and 9 votes against, sir.

In the Council -

For: Messrs Waft, Kniveton, Radcliffe and Crowe - 4

Against: The Lord Bishop, Mr Lowey and Dr Mann - 3

The President: In the Council, 4 votes have been cast in favour of the amendment, 3 votes against. The amendment carries, hon. members.

I will now put the resolution as amended to the Court. Will those in favour please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it.

A division was called for and voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys -

For: Messrs Gilbey, Quine, Rodan, North, Sir Miles Walker, Mrs Crowe, Messrs Brown, Houghton, Cretney, Braidwood, Shimmin, Downie, Mrs Hannan, Messrs Singer, Bell, Corkill, Cannell, Gelling and the Speaker - 19

Against: Messrs Henderson, Duggan, Mrs Cannell and Mr Karran - 4

The Speaker: Mr President, the motion carries in the House with 19 votes cast for, 4 votes against.

In the Council -

For: Messrs Waft, Kniveton, Radcliffe and Crowe - 4

Against: The Lord Bishop, Mr Lowey and Dr Mann - 3

The President: In the Council, 4 votes have been cast in favour of the motion, 3 votes against; I declare the motion to have carried.

Hon. members, that concludes the business before the Court, the Council will now withdraw and leave the House of Keys to transact such business as Mr Speaker will put before you. Thank you all very much.

The Council adjourned.

HOUSE OF KEYS

The Speaker: Hon. members, the House will stand adjourned until Tuesday next, January 25th at 10 a.m. in our own chamber.

The House adjourned at 3.45 p.m.