



Press Release

“IS MANX DEMOCRACY FAILING?”, ASK ISLAND’S YOUNG PEOPLE

The annual sitting of Junior Tynwald took place in the Tynwald Chamber in Douglas on 21 July 2008.

Thirty Year 12 students from the Island’s five state secondary schools took part in the one-and-a-half hour sitting, presided over by President of Tynwald, the Hon Noel Cringle OBE MLC and attended also by Speaker of the House of Keys, the Hon Steve Rodan SHK, Chief Minister, Hon Tony Brown MHK and Tynwald Members Hon David Anderson MHK, Mrs Clare Christian MLC, Hon Anne Craine MHK, Hon Phil Gawne MHK, Mr Quintin Gill MHK and Hon Eddie Teare MHK. A number of other students worked with Manx Radio and Isle of Man Newspapers to report on the sitting.

The Isle of Man Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, chaired by Mrs Christian, has overall responsibility for Junior Tynwald. The Branch sees this tradition as an important way of achieving its aims to promote knowledge of the constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy.

After an informative tour of the Chambers led by the President of Tynwald, the young people experienced one hour of questions to Ministers followed by half an hour of debate. The questions submitted by the students were incorporated into a Tynwald style Question Paper which covered such matters as the price of transport to and from the Island, the future of student grants, and the recycling of household waste. Answers had been prepared by the Civil Service in the normal way and were delivered either by the Minister for the relevant Department, if present, or by another current Tynwald Member acting on behalf of the Minister.

The motions for substantive debate covered Manx democracy at the local government level and the age at which young people may drive. These provoked lengthy and well informed discussion.

President of Tynwald, the Hon Noel Cringle, said:

“I thoroughly enjoyed this sitting of Junior Tynwald and I was once again impressed with the extent and quality of participation by the young people. If they retain an interest in politics and in their Manx Parliamentary heritage, then the future of the Island is in good hands.”

Speaker of the House of Keys, the Hon Steve Rodan, said:

“Once again the Island’s five state secondary schools have come together in a Parliamentary sitting and once again the young people have given an excellent account of themselves. All credit is also due to their teachers and to staff in the Department of Education and the Clerk of Tynwald’s Office for all the preparations behind the scenes which made the event run so smoothly on the day.”

Chairman of the Isle of Man Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Clare Christian MLC, said:

“Today’s debate brought home yet again how privileged we are in the Isle of Man to have the oldest Parliament in continuous session. You only have to look around the world at what happens when Parliamentary democracy fails, to realise how important this is. I congratulate Junior Tynwald on raising important issues and I encourage them to play their part in revitalising Manx democracy in the years to come.”

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