

**RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES:
PROVISION.**

**Lodged au Greffe on 25th February, 1986
by the Education Committee.**



**STATES OF JERSEY
STATES GREFFE**

175

1986

P.25

Price : 50p

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -

to refer to their Act of 26th July, 1983, in which they approved, in principle, the phasing out of the use of Haut de la Garenne as a children's home and its replacement by two smaller independent children's homes and -

- (a) to authorise the immediate purchase by the Education Committee, subject to the approval of the Finance and Economics and Island Development Committees, of a suitable property for use as a small children's home;
- (b) if the need should subsequently arise, to authorise the purchase by the Education Committee, subject to the approval of the Finance and Economics and Island Development Committees, of a second property for use as a small children's home;
- (c) to authorise the Attorney General and the Greffier of the States to pass the necessary contracts in the matter;
- (d) to authorise the Treasurer of the States to make the appropriate payments from the Capital vote of credit granted to the Island Development Committee "Acquisition of Land - Major Reserve" (Vote No. C.0904);
- (e) in the event of suitable properties not being available for purchase, to approve, in principle, the construction of up to two purpose-designed children's homes on appropriate sites to be identified in co-operation with the Housing Committee.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- NOTES:**
1. The Island Development Committee, in its Act No. 2 of 10th February, 1986, approved the use of its funds in the Capital vote of credit No. C.0904, "Acquisition of Land - Major Reserve", by the Education Committee for the acquisition of up to two residential children's homes.
 2. The Finance and Economics Committee supports the Proposition. In the case of paragraph (e) of the Proposition, the Committee's consent is made subject to funds being available at the time.

Report.

1. In 1981 officers of the United Kingdom Department of Health and Social Security carried out a full inspection of the Child Care Service in Jersey and reported to the Education Committee. A major recommendation of their report was that the existing children's home at Haut de la Garenne should be replaced by smaller children's homes.

2. In 1982 the States approved the purchase of St. Luke's Vicarage for a sum of £68,000 for use by the Education Committee, initially as temporary overflow teaching accommodation for St. Luke's School and subsequently either as accommodation for teachers or possibly for use as a small group home for children in care.

3. In July 1983, following detailed consideration of the D.H.S.S. officers' report, the Education Committee presented a Report and Proposition to the States (P.79/83) recommending that in due course Haut de la Garenne should be closed and replaced by two smaller children's homes each large enough to accommodate between 12 and 15 children. The States approved the proposal in principle and recognised that St. Luke's Vicarage might be adapted for use as one of the children's homes and that it was anticipated that the voluntary homes - Brig-y-Don and La Préférence - would continue to provide residential places for 24 children with financial support from the Education Committee.

4. In 1984 the Trustees of La Préférence Children's Home (the Vegetarian Society) informed the Education Committee that they wished to concentrate their work in the United Kingdom and they could no longer maintain their home in Jersey. The Education Committee, having considered the implications of this decision, concluded that the facilities provided by La Préférence Children's Home were still required and accordingly, with the approval of the States, La Préférence was acquired in June 1984 and continues to function as a children's home under the administration of the Education Committee providing an optimum number of 12 residential and 6 day care places.

5. In its Report to the States recommending the acquisition of La Préférence the Committee restated its intention to pursue the plan to replace Haut de la Garenne with two small children's homes. The Committee informed the States that it would, in due course, be requesting a Capital vote of credit for extensions and adaptations to St. Luke's Vicarage.

6. Following preliminary studies in 1984 which were inconclusive, in 1985 the Public Works Department produced schemes for extensions and adaptations to St. Luke's Vicarage to make it suitable for use as a children's home. The estimate for the total work required to provide accommodation for 8 to 10 children was £143,000 including fees. The Committee considered this scheme and a subsequent cheaper modification, costed at £111,000 including fees, and concluded that the original cost of the property, together with the estimated costs of conversion made the project uneconomic in that the resultant building would be excessively expensive and would not wholly meet the need for a small children's home.

7. After consultation with the Finance and Economics Committee, the Education Committee decided that it should try to find a more suitable property for use as a children's home and that St. Luke's Vicarage should be declared surplus to Education Committee requirements and made available for possible use by another Committee or disposed of through the housing market.

8. Accordingly, since the summer of 1985, the Committee has been looking for a property to purchase as a children's home. When a property had been found, surveyed and valued it was intended, with the support of the Finance and Economics Committee, to present a Report and Proposition to the States for its purchase from funds controlled by the Island Development Committee. However, although several suitable properties have been offered for sale during the past six months, the owners have not been prepared to accept the lengthy time required for the Committee to secure the various approvals that are necessary in order to purchase.

9. It has therefore become clear to the Committee that if it is to acquire an existing property it needs to be in a position to pursue the purchase more speedily and effectively. The approval of the Finance and Economics and Island Development Committees must, of course, be obtained but it would be helpful if the States were to give the Committee its authority to purchase property to replace Haut de la Garenne without the need to bring the matter back to the House. Given that authority by the States the Committee will then, if it finds a suitable property, have it surveyed and seek the approval of the Finance and Economics and Island Development Committees before agreeing to purchase.

10. The Committee has recognised throughout that there could be a need for two small children's homes in order to phase out the use of Haut de la Garenne. At the present time there is one group of children living at Haut de la Garenne and it is that group which the Committee urgently wishes to rehouse. The Committee believes that it is possible that only one children's home with 10 to 12 places may be necessary at this time, but there are indications that the demand for residential places for children is increasing and may increase more sharply in the future as families come under greater stress. Certainly the present residential homes, including Brig-y-Don, are being used to their full capacity at the present time and, on occasion, well beyond their recommended capacity. If these trends continue then it will obviously be necessary to provide a second children's home as originally agreed.

11. Even with the prior authority of the States, the process of purchase will necessarily be prolonged and the Committee recognises that it may still not be able to acquire an existing property. The necessity to remove the group of children from Haut de la Garenne to more appropriate accommodation is an imperative which the Education Committee must not ignore. The States is therefore asked to approve in principle the provision of up to two small children's homes, either by purchase or by building purpose-designed homes on appropriate sites, and to note that the Education Committee may seek funds for this purpose in future Capital Budgets.