

**BROADCASTING OF STATES' MEETINGS.**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 10th February, 1987  
by the Broadcasting Committee.**

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**STATES OF JERSEY**

**STATES GREFFE**

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## PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to agree that B.B.C. Radio Jersey and Channel Television should be allowed to broadcast in sound only live transmissions of all States' debates in their entirety;
- (b) to agree that B.B.C. Radio Jersey and Channel Television should be allowed to use extracts from the live broadcasting of States' Sitings in the context of both news and current affairs programmes.

**BROADCASTING COMMITTEE**

**Report.**

1. The States by Act dated 3rd June, 1986 adopted a Proposition of the Broadcasting Committee (P.66/86) and agreed that, as an experiment, B.B.C. Radio Jersey and Channel Television should be allowed to broadcast, in sound only, live transmissions of all States' debates during the Autumn Session of 1986. The States further agreed that, during the period of the experiment, B.B.C. Radio Jersey and Channel Television should be allowed to use extracts from the live broadcasting of States' Sitzings in the context of both news and current affairs programmes.
2. At that time some Members expressed concern that the quality of debates might suffer. However the Committee has not received any such criticism from Members since the experiment commenced.
3. The Public Works Committee and the Department of Electronics have for some time been considering improvements to the sound system in the States' Chamber. As part of the experiment of the live broadcasting of States' Sitzings, they were able to obtain on loan new equipment which has enhanced the quality of the sound, and they have now decided that the automatic microphone system presently installed in the States' Chamber on a temporary basis should be made permanent with minor modification. A report prepared by the Public Works Committee is attached as an Appendix.
4. The Committee believes that the experiment has been successful and now recommends that the live broadcasting in sound only of States' Sitzings in their entirety should become a permanent feature.
5. Because of the improvements undertaken to the sound system and the decision of the Public Works Committee to purchase the existing mixers and new microphones, there will be no cost to the States in continuing to broadcast live transmissions of States' debates.

6. The experiment, generally, has been favoured by members of the public, but one criticism that has been identified is the loss of the five o'clock news when the States are still in session. If the States decide to continue with the live broadcasting of States' Sittings, Radio Jersey will investigate the possibility of splitting the broadcasts so that the States' Sittings could be transmitted on VHF and the normal programmes transmitted on medium wave, thereby offering a choice to the public. However, it could be sometime before this is achieved as resources will have to be made available. In the meantime, the Committee believes that if the States' Sittings continue beyond five o'clock, Radio Jersey, at an appropriate time, should be allowed to broadcast the local news headlines.
  
7. The Committee wishes to remind Members that both the B.B.C. and I.B.A. have a statutory duty of due impartiality in respect of political matters and, should the States adopt the Proposition, the B.B.C. and I.B.A. will have complete editorial freedom with regard to the use of extracts of the recordings for new items and current affairs programmes. Neither the Houses of Parliament nor local Councils in the United Kingdom impose editorial control over the broadcasters. If it were felt that there was a reason for complaint, then there are already well-established channels for criticism to be made - direct to the B.B.C. or Channel Television, to the Broadcasting Committee or to the Channel Islands' representatives on the respective General Advisory Councils, presently Mrs. Gail Crill (B.B.C.) and Mr. Edward Potter (I.B.A.).

## APPENDIX.

## REPORT OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

The Public Works Committee has been under considerable pressure for some time, from Members of the States and the general public, to improve the quality of sound in the States' Chamber.

As part of the investigations in relation to the experimental broadcasting of the States, the Public Works Department sought to provide technical equipment for this experiment, which would not only serve for broadcasting but would also offer the possibility of improving the sound system within the Chamber.

Three main systems for providing the required quality of sound were investigated -

- (a) the pendent system consisting of fifteen microphones hanging from the States' Chamber ceiling;
- (b) a desk mounting system with one microphone between two Members - this would require 29 microphones; and
- (c) a desk mounting system with one microphone to each States' Member - this would require 56 microphones.

There was also the option of having an automatic switching system of the microphones or a manually operated system. Before the present broadcasting trials commenced reservations were expressed about the effectiveness of an automatic switching system with pendent microphones.

Experience has shown, however, that these fears were unjustified and that the automatic system works well.

The decision had to be made between the pendent system and the desk mounting system and technically there was little to choose between the results achievable by either of

the systems. It, therefore, came down to one of aesthetics and cost.

The cost for the pendent system is £11,000, for the desk mounting system with one microphone between two Members - £23,000, and for the desk mounting system with one microphone to each Member - £42,000.

The implementation of a desk mounting system is considerably more complex than the alternative and it is by no means certain that this would be less obtrusive, bearing in mind the number of microphones required. There are several other factors which militate against an automatic desk mounted system. Foremost of these are -

- (i) each microphone would require a privacy button to prevent whispers being relayed;
- (ii) the use of a privacy button might well disable the microphone of a speaking Member if depressed by his neighbour; and
- (iii) even if each Member had a dedicated microphone, his proximity to his neighbour would mean that pressing his privacy button would only inhibit his microphone, but he would still be picked up by his neighbour's microphone unless they were also disabled.

### **States' Chamber public system**

Following the success of the initial experiment with borrowed equipment, it was decided by the Public Works Committee to install the pendent system with smaller microphones. This has been done and the effect in the Chamber is far less obtrusive.

In order to improve the quality of sound across the States' Chamber, it has been decided to install an induction loop and an amplifier. For those States' Members who have difficulty in hearing certain speakers, a supply of loop receivers will be available. This induction loop system will be installed in the Chamber without any disruption or modification to the present Chamber.

The Committee believes that irrespective of whether the States continue live broadcasting of its sessions or not, these improvements are necessary and costs are being met from funds already available to the Committee under their "Maintenance of Public Buildings" vote of credit.