

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

57/2010

5 May 2010

The long and detailed explanation given by the Government about the lift at Referendum House has missed the woods for the trees. The point is that had the second lift at Referendum House been operational then the incident would not have happened in the first place.

The Government fail to understand that the Opposition have a duty to raise the concerns of our constituents and these include the tenants of Referendum House who drew our attention to the matter. Indeed, the information in our statement was supplied by the tenants themselves who were the people there on site and affected by the breakdown at first hand.

The essence of the problem at Referendum House is that for a very long time it has been operating with only one lift while the second new lift is installed. This has meant that when the only working lift breaks down, it creates serious difficulty for tenants of the building some of whom are unable to access their homes by using the stairs.

This applies to the elderly ladies who were the first to telephone the Opposition with their complaints very early on the morning in question, and to other persons carrying goods or with prams or wheelchairs who were also unable to access the building. The distress and the tension that this caused to the people who found themselves in this predicament is considerable and the Government should be more understanding.

The Government had told Parliament, following questions last year from Shadow Housing Minister Charles Bruzon, that all the new lifts at the two tower blocks would be ready by the end of 2009. When in February 2010 Mr Bruzon raised the matter again in connection with the remaining lift at Referendum House, he was told that it would be ready by the end of March.

It is beyond dispute that if this second lift had been working as planned, then the incident would not have happened. It is the failure of the Government to deliver the second lift on time, which they conveniently ignored in their lengthy response, that contributed to the problem in the first place.