4. BILLS FOR THIRD READING

4.1. Road Races Bill 2015 –
Third Reading approved

Mr Houghton to move:

That the Road Races Bill 2015 be read a third time.

The Speaker: Item 4, Bills for Third Reading. The Road Races Bill – I call on the mover, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

In moving the Third Reading of this Bill, I will reflect on the main themes and, if I may, address some points raised in last week's debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many Hon. Members who contributed to the debate so effectively. In particular, I would like to thank Mr Singer, who successfully tabled an amendment to the Bill, reducing the scope for road racing on Sunday.

This comprehensive Bill seeks to replace the Road Races 1982, which has served us well for many years, with a new and updated Act.

First and foremost, the Bill creates clarity around roles and responsibilities. Ambiguity between the roles of the organiser, the Department of Infrastructure and the Police has been removed. It is now clearly the responsibility of the race organisers to organise, plan and implement a safe sporting and spectator event. Recent tragedies in a nearby jurisdiction have reinforced the importance of this approach.

Motor racing is, by its very nature, dangerous; road racing even more so. We accept to a degree that competitors in these events risk their lives. Although it is true, it sits less comfortably that spectators also accept risks when they attend these events. This should not stop us trying to make events safer, and I believe that this legislation will do that by giving the Clerk of the Course and marshals the powers they need to implement a safe sporting and spectator event.

When considering how an event can be managed effectively and safely, note needs to be taken of the activities that add little value but add considerably to the administrative burden of the organisers and the Government. This Bill will reduce considerably the amount of unproductive administration, and in doing so, I believe that there will be a net improvement in safety.

The Coroner reporting on the unnecessary deaths at the 26th Milestone inquest was critical on many fronts. The lack of overall co-ordination and management, the failures of process and the complexity of consent for prohibited areas. Mr Moyle in his summing up noted, as a matter of urgency, section 2 of the 1982 Act should be re-examined to see if a more simplified system can be brought into force. It has taken time but I believe that this Bill simplifies the system and balances the needs of event organisers with the rights of landowners and occupiers.

Through its application, the Bill introduces a risk-centred approach to racing events on closed public highways. Road racing with significant risks will be authorised through the new road races legislation. Low-risk racing events entertainment will be authorised through the Highways Act.

Through this Bill as amended, racing will be allowed to take place on a Sunday. This is now commonplace and creates the opportunity for races to be organised at the weekend, when more people will be able to enjoy them.

In clarification to Mr Malarkey's question during the clauses stage of this Bill, the practice of rescheduling races to the middle Sunday because of bad weather can continue, but racing can only take place between 1.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. This will indeed limit the current practice.

The Isle of Man has a celebrated history of road racing, and it is an important part of our unique cultural identity. All in all, this Bill makes a material improvement to our road racing law, and in

doing so promotes the public interest by protecting the future of road racing on the Isle of Man. As such, Mr Speaker, I commend this Bill to the House for its Third Reading.

I beg to move.

Mr Watterson: I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, I put the question then that the Road Races Bill be read for the third time. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.