



**REPORT**  
of the Proceedings  
of the  
**FIRST**  
**House of Assembly**  
of  
**GIBRALTAR**

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**First Session**

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Vol. 1 — No. 1

FIRST MEETING, THURSDAY, 28th AUGUST, 1969.

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REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF  
ASSEMBLY

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIRST HOUSE  
OF ASSEMBLY HELD IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY CHAMBER ON  
THURSDAY, THE 28TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1969, AT 6.00 P.M.

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*Present:*

Mr. Speaker ..... (in the Chair)  
(The Honourable W. THOMSON, O.B.E., J.P.)

GOVERNMENT:

The Hon. Major R. J. PELIZA, Chief Minister.  
The Hon. M. XIBERRAS, Minister for Labour and Social Security.  
The Hon. Major A. J. GACHE, Minister for Information, Port  
Trade and Industries.  
The Hon. J. CARUANA, Minister for Medical and Health Services.  
The Hon. W. M. ISOLA, Minister for Tourism and Municipal Ser-  
vices.  
The Hon. Miss C. ANES, Minister for Public Works and Housing.  
The Hon. L. DEVINCENZI, Minister for Education and Recreation.  
The Hon. C. B. O'BEIRNE, C.B.E., Q.C., Attorney-General.  
The Hon. E. H. DAVIS, C.M.G., O.B.E., Financial and Development  
Secretary.  
The Hon. P. J. ISOLA, O.B.E.

OPPOSITION:

The Hon. Sir JOSHUA HASSAN, C.B.E., M.V.O., Q.C., J.P.,  
Leader of the Opposition.  
The Hon. A. W. SERFATY, O.B.E., J.P.  
The Hon. A. P. MONTEGRIFFO, O.B.E.  
The Hon. E. J. ALVAREZ, O.B.E., J.P.,  
The Hon. M. K. FEATHERSTONE.  
The Hon. I. ABECASIS.  
The Hon. Lt.-Col. J. L. HOARE.

*In attendance:*

J. T. SUMMERFIELD, Esq., Clerk to the House of Assembly.

*Prayer:*

Mr. Speaker recited the Prayer.

*Administration of Oath of Allegiance:*

Mr. Speaker took the Oath of Allegiance and administered the Oath to the Honourables Major R. J. Peliza, M. Xiberras, Major A. J. Gache, J. Caruana, W. M. Isola, Miss C. Anes, L. Devincenzi, C. B. O'Beirne, E. H. Davis, P. J. Isola, Sir Joshua Hassan, A. W. Serfaty, A. P. Montegriffo, E. J. Alvarez, M. K. Featherstone, I. Abecasis, Lt.-Col. J. L. Hoare.

CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT OF THE SPEAKER  
OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Motion re:*

THE CHIEF MINISTER (Hon. Major R. J. Peliza):

I have the honour to move that the appointment of Mr. William Thomson as Speaker of the House of Assembly be confirmed.

Mr. Thomson has been able to accept this appointment unfortunately for a limited period only. We are glad, however, that he will be here in this House to guide us at least through the first few months of what promises to be a lively and interesting session.

I commend the motion to the House.

The Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Sir Joshua Hassan):

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a great pleasure for me to support the motion.

On the Clerk putting the question to the Assembly all Honourable Members voted in favour.

MR. SPEAKER:

I wish to thank you all for the great honour you have just done me without a dissenting voice among you. It is very encouraging to open this House of Assembly with such a great opening, and I hope that when the day comes when I shall retire, I shall at least carry the same favour that I have today. If it is not I shall be the only one at fault and I hope that will not happen. In the meantime thank you very much indeed.

Address by His Excellency Admiral of the Fleet Sir Varyl Cargill Begg, G.C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C.

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HIS EXCELLECY THE GOVERNOR:

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy and honoured today to be opening this first House of Assembly of the City of Gibraltar — the first Assembly elected under the Constitution which has recently been brought into force.

This Constitution, as is well known, came into being as a result of all-party discussions held in Gibraltar just over a year ago under the chairmanship of the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Lord Shepherd, who happily has been able to be with us today.

Under this Constitution this House of Assembly has been created to replace the former Legislative Council. It has four more members than that earlier body, reflecting the increased working load and responsibility which will fall on this House with the merger of the functions of the City Council with those of the Government of Gibraltar.

And for the first time in a number of years it also has an Opposition. I need hardly remind Honourable Members that an active and responsible Opposition, capable of providing the cut and thrust of robust and reasoned debate, is an essential feature of Parliamentary democracy. There are almost certainly differences dividing the two sides of the House, and these differences will not doubt in due course be given free expression within this Chamber.

But I am confident that, under Mr. Speaker's wise and expert guidance, your debates will be conducted in the best Westminster tradition with dignity, with vision and with compassion: and that whatever differences of opinion may exist, you can be relied upon to display respect and understanding for other members' points of view, and for their right to express them, even if you do not agree with their conclusions.

Honourable Members, many matters of domestic concern, some of them of pressing importance, will come before you in the life of this present House of Assembly. I am sure that however opinions may differ on these matters within the Chamber, the corporate aim of this House will always be to strive for the general well being of Gibraltar as a whole.

And may I just add this — this is not the aim in Gibraltar alone. As has repeatedly been made clear, Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are determined to safeguard the interests of the people of Gibraltar, to support their free institutions and their way of life and to sustain the economy.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I declare this House of Assembly open. I pray for God's blessing and guidance on your deliberations.

HON. MAJOR R. J. PELIZA:

Your Excellency, it is a pleasure and an honour to stand up here today and convey to Your Excellency on behalf of Honourable Members on this side of the House our appreciation and thanks for your wise words of advice and encouragement. Your Excellency has been with us only a short time but, from the beginning none of us has been left in any doubt of your complete commitment to the solution of Gibraltar's problems and of your great friendliness towards our people.

We are also very glad that Lord Shepherd, the Minister of State, is here today to witness the opening of the House of Assembly which marks the beginning of the new Constitution in which he played such a great part. We wish to pay tribute to him for his wisdom and goodwill to Gibraltar as reflected in the success of the constitutional talks last year. We welcome his abiding interest in Gibraltar and are grateful that, at our request, Lord Shepherd will be returning to Gibraltar on the 5th September for official discussions as a preliminary to further discussions in London later.

Sir, as you are aware we have only held our ministerial posts for just over a fortnight, in fact 18 days, and perhaps Your Excellency, better than anybody else, is aware that we are doing everything within our power to get under way.

Our first steps must clearly be to assess carefully the present position in each Department of Government so that we may formulate an overall plan of action for the future.

One major complication with which we are faced right away arises, of course, from the changes which will be made in the administrative structure of the Government following the merger with the City Council as agreed at the constitutional talks. We welcome this challenge which we believe, will result in the greater efficiency of the Government machine.

The immediate problem facing Gibraltar is that of manpower and skills. In our minds we have a clear idea of what course ought to be followed to solve it.

The Beeching Report, which we are in the process of studying, appears to run very much in line with our views. It contains a number of guidelines that could be very useful to us, for the gradual reshaping of our society, in order to meet our economic needs and improve the quality of life in Gibraltar.

Basically, it is a question of transforming a low wage, low productivity economy to a high wage, high salary, high productivity economy, and to achieve this we may require both financial and technical help from Her Majesty's Government.

This is perhaps one of the best and most lasting ways for Her Majesty's Government to support and sustain Gibraltar.

All the other questions that have been raised before the elections will be actively considered in an order of priority with a view of achieving as many of these objectives as possible before this House of Assembly comes to an end.

At the same time we shall do our utmost to make the present constitution function smoothly and effectively, so that we may advance further to our final objective. In this respect, we have two aims. One is to attain United Kingdom citizenship without the impediment of the Immigrants' Act and the other is to include Gibraltar within the territorial definition of the United Kingdom. We must not lose sight either of the possibility of Britain joining Europe and we must not find ourselves left out of this great venture.

We shall take good account of everything the Opposition has to say and I feel confident that, our political differences aside, we shall all work together for the good of Gibraltar.

We shall allow nothing to delay the completion of such tasks as are urgently necessary to strengthen the economy of Gibraltar and better the standard of living of all the Gibraltarians.

To achieve this we shall seek the full cooperation of employers and employees and of traders and workers alike, because only genuine understanding and mutual confidence can bring wealth and prosperity to Gibraltar for all to share and enjoy.

I have no doubt that we, your Ministers, with the support of Your Excellency and that of Her Majesty's Government, will succeed in getting through these difficult times. If I may use a nautical term, we intend to keep the ship on an even keel. There will not be any quick changes of course with hard-a-port followed by hard-a-starboard. We shall set our compass and make sure that we do not drift with the tide.

We are grateful for the stand Her Majesty's Government has taken in the United Nations and would like to take this opportunity to remind the world that we the Gibraltarians expressed

our desire to remain British in a British Gibraltar in the Referendum held on the 10th September 1967, and that these elections have shown, through the unanimity of all candidates on this issue, that there has been no change of mind.

In fact, if anything, the Gibraltarians have even strengthened their link with Britain, and a good many of us wish to get even closer still.

We thus hope that the United Nations will come to respect the wishes of the people of Gibraltar so clearly expressed so many times by unquestionable democratic means.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Your Excellency I am greatly honoured and privileged to reply to your address on behalf of the Opposition.

The new Constitution gives legal form to the conventions which have been developed in the working of the 1964 Constitution.

Whatever their contents, constitutions are made or marred by those responsible to work them. It is our hope that as in the past we have given life and shape to prior constitutions, making them work smoothly, in the interests of the people of Gibraltar, the same will happen with this new one which is being ceremonially inaugurated today. We shall certainly do our share in this respect.

I have already made clear in public what will be the attitude of the Opposition which I have the honour to lead.

We shall certainly do our utmost to maintain the best traditions of democracy that we have inherited from the mother of Parliaments.

In the best interests of Gibraltar, we shall keep a close watch on the actions of the Government and will be prepared to take over at any given moment. We shall be constructive in opposition. We will criticise whenever criticism is deserved—and praise if they do anything right.

We shall indicate what in our view are the right policies to follow and endeavour by all the means at our disposal to see that our electoral manifesto is put into effect.

There is one matter on which we will not compromise. We were elected by those who supported our policies, one of which was to oppose integration. We will honour this pledge in the certainty that in this vital matter, we represent the wishes of the majority of the people.

As regards our association with Britain, we feel that the preamble to the Constitution has formalised the solemn undertakings to the people of Gibraltar given by successive British Governments both inside and outside Parliament about which, despite serious criticisms at the time, I personally never had any doubts, nor did any member of my Party.

The British Government has upheld, both in the new Constitution and in the United Nations, the principles of the Charter, that the wishes of the people of Gibraltar are paramount. In whatever way our association with Britain is to be developed further, it must continue to be based on mutual trust and respect and no solution motivated by fear or despair can ever succeed.

Insofar as matters outside our province are concerned, particularly foreign affairs, which are so intimately connected with our future, we expect the same element of consultation as has been the practice since the difficulties with Spain arose. We are particularly glad that Lord Shepherd is here present today to see this child of his come to life.

We formally pledge, within the Constitution, to support Your Excellency personally in the high responsibilities of your office.

#### ELECTION OF MAYOR OF GIBRALTAR

##### *Motion re:*

HON. MAJOR R. J. PELIZA:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 78 of the Constitution I have the honour to move that Mr. William Thomson be elected Mayor of Gibraltar.

I should add that, as Honourable Members will recollect, the Constitution provides that the person elected shall hold office upon such terms and conditions, and shall perform such functions (being ceremonial functions of a civic character), as may be determined by the Governor, acting after consultation with the Gibraltar Council. These matters are now under consideration but it seems to us appropriate that the election of Mayor should take place at this Ceremonial Opening of the House of Assembly.

I commend the motion to the House.

HON. SIR JOSHUA HASSAN:

Sir, I have much pleasure in supporting the motion that Mr. William Thomson be the Mayor of Gibraltar.

On the Clerk putting the question to the Assembly all Honourable Members voted in favour.

##### *Adjournment:*

The House then adjourned.