



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 9.15 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 21st June 2012

The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 9.15 a.m.

[MR SPEAKER: Hon. H K Budhrani QC *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: M L Farrell Esq RD *in attendance*]

PRAYER
Mr Speaker

Order of the Day

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Thursday, 21st June 2012.
Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the last meeting of Parliament held on 17th, 18th, 22nd and 25th May 2012.

5 **Mr Speaker:** May I sign the Minutes as correct?

It was agreed.

10 **Mr Speaker:** Thank you.

Clerk: (iii) Communications from the Chair.
(iv) Petitions.
(v) Announcements.
The Hon. the Chief Minister.

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**Appropriation Bill
To be taken on 5th July**

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, in order to make the life of Members of this House on both sides easier and to advise members of the general public, I wish to announce that the Appropriation Bill will be dealt with on 5th July.

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That is the Government's intention.

Mr Speaker: Thank you.

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Papers laid

Clerk: (vi) Papers to be laid.
The Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

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Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr. J.E. Cortes): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table a Command Paper on a draft Bill for the Smoke-Free Environment Act 2012.

Mr Speaker: Ordered to lie.

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Clerk: The Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano): I have the honour to lay on the table a Command Paper on a draft Bill for the Employment (Public Interest Disclosure) Act 2012.

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Mr Speaker: Ordered to lie.

Clerk: The Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port.

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Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table the following reports:

The Tourist Survey Report 2011 and the Hotel Occupancy Survey Report 2011.

Mr Speaker: Ordered to lie.

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And I have the honour to report that, in accordance with Standing Order 12(3), the Ombudsman's Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2011 has been submitted to Parliament and I now rule that it has been laid on the table.

Clerk: (vii) Reports of Committees.
(viii) Answers to Oral Questions.

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**40th anniversary of first election to House
Congratulations to Hon. J J Bossano**

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, before we start with Answers to Oral Questions, and taking my cue from the oath to lay aside partial prejudices – may I congratulate the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Mr Bossano, on his 40th anniversary of first being elected to this House.

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He was elected to the House, of course, on 23rd June 1972, so Saturday will be his 40th year since he was first elected, and we hope, certainly, that he remains a Member of this House for many years to come. *(Applause)*

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, it is very much on the agenda that that is a matter to be mentioned during the course of this meeting of this House.

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We have not yet got to that date and that is why the anniversary was not yet current but, certainly, an issue that the Government was – without consulting Mr Bossano, who would otherwise have *ensured* that nobody in the Government said a word... An issue that is very much on the Government's agenda but, given the opportunity that the hon. Gentleman raises the issue now, and in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition – which is unfortunate, because I am sure he would have wanted to join all of the House on this occasion – I want to record that there are few public servants in Gibraltar's history who have given as much for Gibraltar as the Hon. Minister for Employment, the Hon. Joe Bossano, has given.

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It is, indeed, incredible that somebody could have given 40 years of their life to be in this Parliament in an uninterrupted manner: not just because of the level of commitment that that reflects, on the part of the Member, but also in respect of the level of support that he enjoys in the community, as a result of the selfless way that he has conducted himself in politics since the very day that he was elected.

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In the time that I have had to prepare for my speeches at the United Nations – both as the Leader of the Opposition and as Chief Minister in recent weeks and, last year, as Leader of the Opposition, I had occasion to review the speeches made both by the now Leader of the Opposition and by the now Minister for Employment. In reading the speeches of the Hon. Mr Bossano, it became clear that his pull to politics was never about personal ambition and it was all about defending Gibraltar's place in the world. Part of what he said at the Quito seminar and part of what he said when he first addressed the United Nations, and made that a regular occurrence from 1991 or 1992, was to say that he was drawn to politics by the battle for self-determination in the 1960's.

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Anybody who works with him, or knows him well, will know that that is still the main motivation that drives him in politics, as well as protecting the rights of those who are less well-off in our society and those who are now the subject of his Ministry in respect of employment. I think everybody in this House is humbled by the contribution that Joe Bossano has made today, and will continue to make to the life of this community and to the life of this Parliament.

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I pause there, Mr Speaker, also to record that it is 40 years on the 23rd that Mr Adolfo Canepa was also elected to this House who, Mr Speaker will know that, given your own announcement about when you will be standing down, will, I hope, shortly be taking over as Speaker in the October session. That both Mr Canepa and Mr Bossano were elected on the same day in the same election, shows – and I say this for myself, not for anybody else – that the calibre of man that was elected to this House 40 years ago is much better than the men that find themselves here today – in my own humble opinion about myself... *(Applause)*.

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Hon. D A Feetham: If of course, I had been aware of the Government's agenda and the Government's intention to make a statement about Mr Bossano's 40th year of his election... *(Interjection)* I would, of course, have allowed the Chief Minister to lead on the issue – he can be assured about that.

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But, Mr Speaker, I also wish to add that, of course, I have discussed it with the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the Opposition wishes to associate himself entirely with my words.

Thank you very much.

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Mr Speaker: The Hon. Joe Bossano.

Hon. J J Bossano: Well, Mr Speaker, all I can say is that I am speechless for the first time in 40 years! *(Laughter)*

120 **Mr Speaker:** Incredible.

Hon. J J Bossano: And that certainly, if there was a democratic process the victim should have been consulted and I would have then exercised my right to veto this!

125 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** No collegiate government...

Hon. J J Bossano: This is the second time they play a dirty trick on me. The last time was when they put me in that chair. (*Laughter*).

130 I hope this is not going to be a sign of things to come, otherwise I will not stay the 20 years that I promised that I would! I am very grateful for the Opposition, in particular that, we can all consider that whether we agree with each other or not on every item on policy, we are all here to defend Gibraltar.

Thank you. (*Applause*).

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Questions for Oral Answer

TOURISM, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THE PORT

140 **Tourist Map of Gibraltar
Installation of map dispensers**

The Clerk: Answers to Oral Questions.

145 Question Number 486/2012, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, yes, now for more mundane matters.

Can the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port, advise when the initiative to install the Tourist Map of Gibraltar and location map dispensers was taken?

150 **The Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port.

Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, this initiative was taken by a company named Cityscape Maps Ltd of the United Kingdom in a proposal made to the previous Government in 2009.

155 The company continued working with the Town Planner and the Gibraltar Tourist Board on this project, together with the Ministry of Tourism, Public Transport and the Port and the Office of the Deputy Chief Minister. The licence to install and operate the map dispensers was approved and signed by LPS on the 1st February of this year.

160 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, just by way of a very short preamble can I congratulate the Minister for proceeding with what was, in fact, by the timeline that he has just enunciated to this House, a GSD initiative. But does he have any feedback from tourists and the like – is it possible to collate what the response has been to the maps and the map dispensers?

165 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker, so far the feedback has been quite positive. There have been the usual representations about spelling mistakes here and there, and the fact that the maps do not have a spot of 'you are here' at the location – that has been the recurrent criticism. But, other than that, the fact is that they have been quite well received.

170 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, are there plans to signal a 'you are here' point on the maps?

175 **Hon. N F Costa:** Well, Mr Speaker, following the production of the map and after having spotted a few spelling mistakes, and the absence of that spot, I have asked that, at the next run, the map is produced to the Ministry before it is actually printed. Not just for the spelling mistakes but for things like the spots, which indicates where the person is.

180 **Beach refurbishment programme
Details of work and cost**

The Clerk: Question 487, the Hon. D J Bossino.

185 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port provide details of the refurbishment programme to the beaches he announced would take place to include details of the beaches it encompassed, the start and end date of the programme, particulars of the works to be carried out at each beach and its cost, broken down in respect of each beach?

190 **The Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port.

Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa): Yes, Mr Speaker, the details of the refurbishment programme, particulars of the work carried out at each beach and its cost are provided in the schedule I now hand over to the hon. Member.

SCHEDULE TO QUESTION NO 487/2012

Beaches Expenditure 2012 (FROM JANUARY TO 13TH JUNE 2012)

	LITTLE BAY	CAMP BAY	EASTERN BAY	WESTERN BEACH	SANDY BAY	CATALAN BAY	ALL BEACHES	TOTAL
EQUIPMENT		£399.00					£2,604.82	£3,003.82
REPAIRS	£53,706.14	£26,438.20	£1,741.24		£6,303.14	£1,206.00	£1,321.10	£90,715.82
GENERAL				£20,000.00			£2,507.55	£22,507.55
SERVICES	£10,000.00	£300.20	£275.00		£540.00			£11,115.20
MATERIALS	£31.50			£535.00			£6,997.26	£7,563.76
TOTAL	£63,737.64	£27,137.40	£2,016.24	£20,535.00	£6,843.14	£1,206.00	£13,430.73	£134,906.15

The following are some of the extraordinary works/services included within the above schedule:

1 Lifeguard uniforms	£2,507.55
2 Repairs to lifeguard boats	£900.00
3 Repairs / servicing of outboard engines	£421.10
4 Binoculars for LGs	£299.50
5 First order of 1st Aid stock for LG posts	£1,298.50
6 Repairs to LG posts switches and sockets	£209.93
	£399.00

Cont.....

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CONT. SCHEDULE TO QUESTION NO 487/2012

7 Disabled toilet fittings Camp Bay	
8 Painting of pools at Camp Bay and Little Bay and necessary repairs	£28,001.84
9 Erection of new railings on bottom two tiers at Little Bay and extensive repairs to damaged promenade sections	£50,492.50
10 Beach lighting at Little Bay	£10,000.00
11 Pinewood planks to repair walkways (Eastern Beach, Catalan Bay, Western Beach)	£385.00
12 Relocation of Western Beach toilets (These works are to be charged as part of the reclamation programme)	£20,000.00
13 Repairs to verandas and beach access stairs at Eastern Beach facilities	£1,741.24
14 Transportation of LG post from W. Beach to Sandy Bay and placing on location	£540.00
15 Sandy Bay umbrella store, wooden stairs and closure of the concrete access ramp	£6,303.14
16 PVC cladding of toilets at Catalan Bay North	£1,206.00
	£124,705.30

Point no. 10 represents an approximate cost as GibElec still have additional associated works which need to be verified.

We have also been furnished with a new lifeguard boat store at Eastern Beach, capable of holding two vessels mounted on their corresponding trailers. This structure has been constructed as part of the on-going refurbishment and beautification programme of Eastern Beach. We have no costing for these works.

200 Whilst the schedule is being handed over, Mr Speaker, since the Government took office in December of last year, it has been working to improve the facilities that are available on Gibraltar's beaches. Innovations of this year include weekly cleaning of the beaches from 1st February of this year up to the Easter holidays. The beaches were cleaned twice monthly before, after 1st February, then three times a week from Easter until 28th April, when they have been cleaned daily since.

205 We have made provision and servicing of beach bins as from Easter. We have re-positioned the toilets at Western Beach to the entrance, where it was previously 200 metres away in a small car park. There has also been the laying of beach walkways at all beaches from mid May, which is earlier in the season than usual. There has been extra access at the beach at Sandy Bay. There has been the purchase of new lifeguard boats, that will, I am told, arrive in around two weeks time. There has also been the erection of new beach front railings at Little Bay, on both levels. There has also been the provision of street lighting in public areas at Little Bay, where none have existed before. There has also been the extra beach concession kiosk at the north end of Eastern Beach and the employment of senior lifeguards to improve the service.

210 Mr Speaker, the beaches on the eastern side have been operational since the Easter weekend whilst both Camp Bay and Little Bay are kept open all year round. This means that many of the refurbishment works carried out were of a routine nature, with a specific focus on building up to the official bathing season. With this in mind, many of the costs are shared by all of the beaches, which include items like paint, cement, sand, plumbing equipment etc. There is also generic refurbishment work carried out at all of the beaches and involves the relaying of buoys, walkways, refurbishment work by the GTB maintenance team that carry out the replacement cost of part of the toilets and changing rooms, lifeguards posts and store rooms.

215 Lastly, Mr Speaker, as I have just mentioned, there have been specific major works carried out that involve either Government or external agencies and contractors. These include, for example, the replacement of railings and the provision of street lighting at Little Bay or the re-positioning of toilets at Western Beach.

220 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, presumably the cost of the list of the items that the Minister has just given this House is set out in the schedule which he handed to me a few moments ago?

225 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

Hon. D J Bossino: Just by way of a point of clarification – I have not had a full opportunity to consider the schedule in the time available, but can he perhaps confirm to me that item no. 7, which is described as 'disabled toilet fittings Camp Bay' correlates with the last figure in the first page of the schedule which is £399, or have I got that completely wrong?

230 The reason that I raise that is because, on the first page, you have six items of expenditure but on the correlating column you have seven figures listed.

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, the way I read the table is, for instance, in relation to Camp Bay, there is a second column which reads repairs and it says £26,000: if we go to the item 7 on the second page which says 'Disabled toilet fittings Camp Bay', £28,001.84. If the hon. Member, whilst going through the table, notices any inconsistencies I will be more than happy to look at them and then get back to him.

240 **Hon. D J Bossino:** But he cannot at this stage, in this House, advise me what the expenditure of £399, Mr Speaker, is – which is the last item of expenditure on the first page of this schedule which does not have a correlating item description. Is he able to do that in this House now?

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, is the hon. Gentleman referring to Camp Bay £399 on the table, second to the right?

245 **Hon. D J Bossino:** After the table there is a sentence which reads

'The following are some of the extraordinary works/services included within the above schedule'

250 and then we have a list of six items, but the figures on the extreme right, in respect of which there ought to be a correlation between the description and the figure – there are *seven* figures. And it is the last one where we have a figure of £399 and I just wanted to know what that cost relates to – because there is not a correlating

description of that cost.

255 **Hon. N F Costa:** As I understand it, Mr Speaker, it is on item 6, on the first page of the schedule 'repairs to lifeguard posts, switches and sockets'. The figure of £399 relates to the equipment.

Hon. D J Bossino: I do not want to delve in pedantry, Mr Speaker, but it really isn't.

260 At the moment, even if that is true – and there is no reason to doubt the veracity of the Minister's statement – there is still a problem with the others because then it has a knock-on effect. There is basically still one figure which does not have a correlating description to it, even if you deal with the £399 item in the list.

Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, as I have told the hon. Gentleman I will look into it and get back to him.

265 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, fair enough, Mr Speaker. The Minister does not have that information available, I wish not to put him under the spotlight unnecessarily and maybe we can have a word later.

270 Mr Speaker, by way of further supplementary I wonder if I could probe the Minister in relation to one issue which was raised in the May session of Parliament, where my hon. and learned friend, Mr Figueras, asked him, by way of supplementary, a question in relation to beach replenishment at Sandy Bay. The answer came from the Minister, and with your permission, Mr Speaker, I will read the answer, it is a very short answer –

275 'there has been a lot of loss of sand during this last year. As you know, the previous administration did replenish the beach at quite considerable cost, but because of the absence of any groin or any other facilities stopping the sand from being taken away from the beach, there has been a considerable loss. But the public will certainly be able to access the beach'

and then, importantly, he says –

280 'works are currently being conducted or will start next week in order to facilitate that'.

Now that would have been at the end of May. Can the Minister advise this House whether the works, which I assume, given the nature of the supplementary and the context in which this line of questioning was raised – is he able to confirm that the replenishment of sand at Sandy Bay has, indeed, commenced?

285 **Hon. N F Costa:** No, Mr Speaker, the latter part of my answer related to the fact that there will be extra access to Sandy Bay.

290 There were wooden stairways set up during the length of Sandy Bay. But at its southernmost point there was not a wooden stairway access down to the beach. Because of the loss of sand, the stairway access that was there was no longer able to be of use: as a result of the loss of sand the step would have been too... and therefore, as a result, what we did, we installed an additional wooden walkway at that end of the beach.

295 In respect of the replenishment of the sand, as I pointed out to my hon. and learned friend, Mr Figueras, we will start looking at engineering assessments to be able to start beach replenishment works as from the end of this bathing season. If I recall correctly, I said there were various technical procedures that had to be satisfied and investigations carried out as to what sand etc to use, and what technique would be used, and that we also had to receive reports on what was the best form of breakwater or groin in order to avoid beach diminution, or sand diminution, once the beach was replenished with sand.

300 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, I am grateful for that clarification and that reply from the Minister.

**Bus and lorry theory tests
Details of training available**

305 **Clerk:** Question 488, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port provide details of the

training measures which are intended to assist applicants wishing to undertake bus and lorry theory tests?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port.

Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa): Mr Speaker, Schedule 4B of the Traffic (Licensing and Registration) Regulations introduced major changes to the manner in which theoretical tests for lorries and buses are conducted.

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These changes are intended to set and maintain higher standards of safety, knowledge and skills among drivers of these vehicles and improve road safety through better qualified drivers. In addition, the introduction of Traffic (Drivers' Qualifications and Training) Regulations 2008 requires *all* professional bus and lorry drivers to obtain a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence to be able to drive professionally, as well as passing their driving and theory tests. Therefore, every driver who intends to drive professionally, as well as passing the relevant theory and practical tests, must also pass a case study theoretical test and a practical demonstration test.

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These tests are aimed to improve driver knowledge and road safety among professional drivers. It was as a result of these more stringent, theoretical tests, which were introduced in the regulations that I have just cited, there has been a decrease in the number of applications for driving tests in these categories. It is in these circumstances, and in response to requests by employers in the transport sector that Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, in an effort to reduce unemployment, took the initiative of introducing training measures to assist applicants wishing to undertake both bus and lorry tests. So, at present, driving and vehicle examiners will be providing the training for the theoretical tests at no cost to the applicants.

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Consideration is also being given to the practical test for lorry drivers: practical bus driver training is already being conducted by the Gibraltar Bus Company. Government at present cannot provide assistance with the practical lorry driving test because the Government currently does not own a lorry that complies with the requirements of the test vehicle, as prescribed by law. The training modules are as follows: Module 1 is a theory test consisting of 200 multiple choice questions, Module 3 is a case-study consisting of multiple choice questions – it is for professional-only drivers – and Module 4 practical demonstration test, consisting of 70 verbal questions, again for professional-only drivers.

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Moreover, the Government will be subsidising the test fees and the licence costs for the registered unemployed. People in employment will be provided with the free training, but will have to bear the costs of the tests and the licence.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, I am grateful to the Minister for setting out all the requirements, as set out in the relevant legislation, but can he confirm or advise this House, whether the regulation transposes what are EU requirements, in any event?

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Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, I would have appreciated notice of that question but my understanding is, yes, that they do transpose EU requirements. But if he were to give me notice, or I can write to him to confirm the point, but I am quite sure that it does.

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Hon. D J Bossino: Well, I will just read back to the Minister the statement issued, I think conjointly, with the Minister for Traffic, Mr Balban, where they say these tests will enable drivers to drive professionally throughout Gibraltar and the rest of Europe, and have been developed as a requirement of an EU Directive which is designed to improve the knowledge and skills of professional bus and lorry drivers.

Really what I am driving at, Mr Speaker, is the Minister's confirmation that the regulation does not, if you like, impose more stringent requirements than are set out in the EU Directive which, of course, a national legislature or Government and executive in this case can do.

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Hon. N F Costa: Mr Speaker, I did not quite catch the last supplementary but, in answer to his second supplementary, simply to confirm that the regulations do transpose the Directives in question. I have the legislation in front of me.

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Hon. D J Bossino: I need to press this issue because it could lead on to another issue which I may raise, depending on the reply in a further supplementary. But I will repeat the question, which he may not have caught when I put it to him. Mr Speaker, all I want to know is whether the national legislation imposes stricter

requirements than are set out in the Directive itself?

365 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, as I say, I wish that I had notice of that question. My advice is that it does not. I remember having a very detailed discussion with a senior motor examiner and my Principal Secretary and my advice at the time was that the regulation simply transposes the requirements of the EU Directive.

370 I did not go any further. However, I would need to confirm that to be *absolutely* certain. But my recollection is that, no, it simply transposes the requirements of the current EU Directives and does not go any further.

Hon. D J Bossino: Does he accept, should that last answer be accurate, Mr Speaker, does he accept that it is an obligation of the Gibraltar Government to have to transpose this legislation, in any event – an EU obligation?

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Hon. N F Costa: Well, yes, if it is an EU obligation, of course we have to transpose it. Absolutely.

380 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Given that we have established that point, Mr Speaker, can he advise this House why it is – it may be an obvious question and I have had the obvious reply – but I just wanted to set it out for the record... how is it possible, then, that in the same press statement which was issued by the Minister he says that:

385 'as part of its manifesto commitments to reduce unemployment, the Government has introduced training measures to assist applicants which is to undertake bus and lorry theory tests'

Can he explain how he can make that political statement if it was an EU obligation, in any event.

390 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, in the first place, I do not think that the hon. Member has established any point. If it is an EU requirement that we have to transpose it into national legislation, I think that is the first point and I think it is fair to say. Secondly, what the press release says is that, as a result of the transposition of EU law into national legislation, there has been a decrease in the number of applications because the theory tests have become harder.

395 What we have done, in order to be able assist the reduction of unemployment, and for people to move into the transport sector, is for the Government too, at no cost, assist people who may wish to become lorry and bus drivers with free training. And, of course, the free training is not something that is required by either the EU directive or the regulations. This is an initiative that has been taken by this Government to make sure that we equip our home grown people with skills.

400 **Hon. D J Bossino:** I am grateful for that reply, Mr Speaker, and it does clarify, perhaps, an issue which was not clear on the face of the press statement issued by the Government.

Hon. G H Licudi: It was very clear to us!

405 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I cannot accept that premise.

Flights to Gibraltar in 2013 Details of new airline proposals

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Clerk: Question 489, the Hon. D J Bossino.

415 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port confirm whether another airline from East Midlands will commence flights to Gibraltar in the summer of 2013 and whether he is able to announce details further to those which have been made public in the press?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port.

420 **Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, yes, I can confirm that an airline is scheduled to operate flights to Gibraltar from East Midlands, in the UK, as from the summer season of 2013, but I am not able at this point to announce any further details. My Ministry is finalising operational details with the airline in question.

425 **Entitlement to Club Card**
Method of monitoring current holders

Clerk: Question 490, the Hon. D J Bossino.

430 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port, advise how the Government proposes to monitor continued entitlement to the Club Card by current holders?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port.

435 **Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker there are two mechanisms in place to monitor continued entitlement. The first is that the Club Card will expire up to 12 months from the date of issue. Therefore, holders of the card will have to validate their information before the card is re-issued. In the second place, the Employment and Training Board will inform the Gibraltar Bus Company when there is a termination of employment of the holder of the card.

440 *There was a long pause.*

Mr Speaker: I think we will have to move on to the next – Supplementary...

445 **Clerk:** Question –

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful for the reply, Mr Speaker.

450 The information which travels from the ETB to, presumably, the Gibraltar Bus Company Ltd, which is the entity which issues the Club Card: is the Minister satisfied...? I do not know the legal position: I am wondering whether he has received legal advice as to whether he is satisfied that there are no data protection issues which arise as a result of that travel of information, if you like.

455 **Hon. J J Bossano:** The information is a weekly return on the number of people who are no longer employed. I do not think there is anything there that... we get terminations from the employers. It does not give anything about the individual, other than he is either still employed or not employed. It does not give any other information about his income or age or anything else. It is just whether he is employed or not.

460 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, as I understand it, from my legal practice, the information which is handed over by the employer – just by way of clarification, as I understand the position, to the ETB – is the notice of termination of terms of engagement.

465 Now, the information which is set out in that form is in excess of what the Hon. the Minister for Employment has just set out in this House. So, for example, one thing that automatically comes to mind is the reasons for termination, which may be – which *will* be – a reason which the employer is relying on as a cause for the employees' termination, but that reason may be hotly contested by the employee and may be the subject, therefore, of Industrial Tribunal proceedings. So it is more information than the Minister has just given this House.

470 **Hon. J J Bossano:** None of that information is passed on to anybody. The only information that is passed on to the bus company is a list of names saying these people stopped working with us on such a date, so that they know that if somebody comes on a bus who is no longer working... that is the whole purpose of the exercise – and they only get the information that they need, which is just the names and the termination date.

The only problem is that, of course, not every employer gives the information within the seven days that is

475 provided by the law, so until the ETB gets the information, we cannot pass... we cannot say so. There will be probably a time lag between the actual termination and when the information is passed to the bus company, determined simply by how long employers take to inform the ETB that the person is no longer working. Some employers actually do it *before* the employment ends and some do it weeks later, or much later!

480 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, if I could home in then on that, Mr Speaker, I am not sure that I received confirmation as to whether the Government is satisfied that even the information, however limited, which is provided to the Gibraltar Bus Company by the Employment and Training Board does not breach the data protection legislation. Is the Government satisfied of that, in respect of that limited information which the Minister has helpfully told me is provided to the Gibraltar Bus Company?

485 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Yes. I am satisfied, being the provider of the information, that my Department is not breaking the law by saying that a person is no longer working in Gibraltar, which is the only thing we are telling the bus company.

490 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I am just going to... I have got a copy of the... Within the 12-month period of validity of the bus card, in the event of termination... let us say, within two months from issuing of the bus card, there is a termination of employment, how does that information then get fed through the system?

495 So I am an employee, I am employed now in Gibraltar – I live in Spain – I am therefore entitled, as a result of Government initiative to use the bus service free of charge, and issued to me is a bus card. Two months thereafter, my employment is terminated. The only qualification which entitles me, as a result of Government policy, to use the free bus service is employment. So therefore, if that criteria is no longer present, then I am therefore not... I think we all agree that that is the correct understanding of the position.

500 How, then, is that information fed through to the bus driver? Because I have a photocopy of the bus Club Card which is issued by the Bus Company, and on its face all it has is a photograph of the individual, a PCC number – I am not sure what that is – and the person's name. Other than that, it is in form – and I think pretty much in respect of a lot of the detail – exactly the same as a Club Card, which the GSD, when in Government, issued at the relevant time.

So I just wanted clarification in respect of that issue, which I think must be an important issue and must have been an issue which taxed the Government.

505 **Hon. N F Costa:** Well, Mr Speaker, it did not so much tax me, save that I did ask the question and, of course, if the information arrives at the administration office of the Gibraltar Bus Company, the way that the Club Card works is it is actually swiped through electronically. So if a person is no longer entitled for the Club Card, then I am not entirely sure what the terminological process is, but it will not be accepted, so the person will not be able to go onto the bus.

510

GibiBikes scheme

Progress with provider's contractual duties

515

Clerk: Question 491, the Hon. D J Bossino.

520 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port inform this House what progress has been made to ensure that the company which provides the facilities for the GibiBikes scheme complies with its contractual duties?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port.

525 **Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, Government officials met recently on 24th May with the suppliers of the scheme. At the meeting, all issues regarding the scheme were discussed. This included the problems that have been encountered to date and the proposed way forward.

530 The Government expressed its concerns at the problems that have been encountered and which the contractors undertook to rectify. My information is that the defects have now been rectified.

It was agreed that a contract was in place for the supply of the scheme and therefore the remainder of the contract would be carried out. The contractor is currently mobilising and works will commence shortly to finalise the project.

535 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, the Minister has just said that the defects have now been rectified. That certainly confirms the anecdotal evidence that I am receiving from people who are users of this scheme.

In his reply to one of the questions which was posed, again by my hon. learned friend, Mr Figueras, in a supplementary, there was a point made when we were trying to press the Government as to the level of commitment, if any, that they were lending to the GibiBikes scheme which was, of course, started by the previous administration. One of the points made by the Hon. Minister, Mr Speaker, as I understood it, was that no firm policy decision would be made until the commercial discussions and issues had been raised with the company which supplies the service.

540 Given that that seems already to have taken place, and that there has been a happy resolution, it seems, also – or am I going too far? – (**Hon. N F Costa:** A resolution.) a happy resolution of the issues which were plaguing the GibiBikes scheme and which the Minister set out in his reply at the last session of Parliament, is he able now to advise this House, what the Government’s policy decision is in relation to the scheme?

550 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, I believe I answered the question when I said that, given that there is a contract in place with the supplier of the scheme, and that taxpayers’ money had been spent to quite a large extent, in the way that I detailed in my last answer to the House, it was decided, as Government, that the remainder of the contract will be carried out. But, of course, we were not in a position to be able to carry on with the project until we were assured, and it was confirmed, that the work that the defects – the many defects which I listed on the last occasion – were rectified. Moreover, we had to receive assurances that the defects and software problems that literally plagued the system would not occur a week or two after the UK supplier had been over to rectify the problems.

555 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, in relation to the former of the points he has just raised, which is the rectification of the defects, he has already confirmed that that has been done, and they have been rectified, and presumably it is the latter point which he still needs to be satisfied on, which is that there will not be a recurrence. Is that a correct interpretation of the Minister’s answer?

560 **Hon. N F Costa:** Yes, it is, Mr Speaker.

We have, obviously, sought assurances that there will not be another systematic widespread failure of the system as happened just shortly ago.

565 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Okay, and the assurances that have been sought, Mr Speaker, presumably have not been received. Is he able to provide that answer?

570 **Hon. N F Costa:** I think, Mr Speaker, at this point, because I am still in discussions with the company, it is safe to say that I shall leave no stone unturned in making sure that Gibraltarians do not suffer at the hands of the defects that were previously experienced.

575 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, this side of the House is very keen that the GibiBikes scheme should continue. We think it is good for Gibraltar, and that is why it was launched under our watch.

So can I ask the Minister this question which is, given the defects are now rectified and once he has received the relevant assurances, can he confirm that he will be able thereafter to come to this House and confirm what the Government’s policy decision is, in relation to the further roll-out and continuation of the GibiBikes scheme?

580 **Hon. N F Costa:** Mr Speaker, as usual, the hon. Gentleman cannot help asking me a supplementary without first prefacing the question with remarks that really do demand an answer.

If the hon. Gentleman tells me that the Government was so keen with a bike scheme that had 15½ years in which to do it, and they only decided to roll it out on 27th November of last year, so they could not have been

that keen on an urban bike scheme.

585 To answer the question, yes.

Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful for the reply, Mr Speaker, and he can rest assured that I will continue pressing him on this issue, as we move along.

590 **Hon. N F Costa:** I very much look forward to it, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: There really must be supplementaries within questions, not statements to end a discussion.

Hon. N F Costa: I will take that point of order, Mr Speaker.
595

SPORTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND YOUTH

World War II blast wall at Grand Battery Demolition

600 **Clerk:** Question 492, the Hon. S M Figueras.

605 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Technical Services confirm the date on which works to demolish the World War II blast wall at Grand Battery began?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

610 **Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, this question will be answered by me in my capacity as Minister for Heritage.
The demolition of the wall commenced on Monday, 21st May 2012.

615 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, it appears that the Minister for Technical Services is somewhat surprised that the question was directed at him. Simply to clarify: I have raised the question so that it be asked of him, but it was the Government's decision to allocate the question to the Minister who has answered the question.

I asked the question originally to the Minister for Technical Services simply because it was in relation to the demolition of a wall, and I assumed – some may argue perhaps in error – that it was the responsibility of the Minister for Technical Services. It appears that it is not and I am grateful for the answer.

620 However, in relation to the answer, it is surprising, certainly to Members on this side of the House, that given the current Government's policy of openness, transparency *and* their stated policy of running certain Government projects through the DPC for consideration in the first instance and then approval at a later stage, that the demolition of the wall started on 21st May when, in fact, the application was set down in the agenda for a meeting of the DPC on 24th May. (**Several Members:** Ooh!)

625 Perhaps the Hon. Minister can answer this question: does he not consider (*Interjections*) that it is rather embarrassing in fact that, having this policy of running these projects to the DPC, having had that project on the agenda – a copy of which I have here, and could pass on to the Minister if he needs to have sight of it – that it was on the agenda, that works began without actually having had it considered, because it may well be that they did not seek the approval, but that the DPC did not even get the opportunity to consider it.

630 **Hon. S E Linares:** Well, Mr Speaker, on his first point, not only is it the prerogative of the Government who answers your questions, but you were directing it to the wrong person. It does not mean that Technical Services always demolishes all the walls in Gibraltar, and therefore there is a process in which demolition of walls take place.

635 But in answer to the second part of his supplementary, this project was started by Carl Viagas on behalf of Government's consultation with the Gibraltar Heritage Trust. The scheme was presented to the Board of the Heritage Trust on 10th May 2012, as required by the Heritage Trust Act, and confirmed that a consensus of

the approval of such a wonderful scheme was reached by the Board on the same day.

640 The scheme was also presented for planning approval, with approval issued by the DPC – and I am correcting him – on 18th May – ‘Ooh!’ then (*Laughter*) – by the Chairman of the Planning Commission and the demolition permit was issued on 21st May.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for those details. (*Laughter*)

645 The premise of the question in the first instance, Mr Speaker, was that the project was down for consideration by the full DPC, of which submitting applications to or projects to this Government is very fond, on 24th May. I certainly was not aware that these permits had been sought prior to the project being undertaken, nor that the Heritage Trust had been consulted.

650 Now, be that as it may, Mr Speaker, it is rather hypocritical of the Government to say, ‘We will run Government projects by the DPC’, albeit for consideration, if not approval, which is the subject of discussions that we have had in this House in the past, and then to say that it is okay to just do it by consulting with the Heritage Trust and not giving the DPC the opportunity to formally, in open session, open meetings which they themselves created, give the approval, or at least the nod, for the works to begin.

655 I also understand, Mr Speaker, that there were time constraints and that there were time pressures in respect of this particular project, and it is the prerogative of the Government – and it was certainly the policy of the previous GSD administration – that when Government needs to take action, it will take action and therefore no Government projects went to planning; but it is rather hypocritical to criticise that policy for many years in Opposition and then for the Government to do precisely the same, when they enter office.

Will the Minister not concede that it is, in fact, rather hypocritical of him to take that process?

660 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr. J J Garcia):** No, Mr Speaker, the Government will not concede.

I will not concede for the very simple reason that this project was conceived and started when his party was in Government without going to the DPC. We continued with the project, we then went to the DPC before the demolition started. So it is obvious, Mr Speaker, that the Member has not got his facts right, I am sorry.

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker –

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker – (*Interjections*)

670

Mr Speaker: Order, order!
I will allow the Minister –

675 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** – just an expansion on that: the project was, in fact, discussed... well, approved, by DPC by way of round-robin, previous to the – (**Several Members:** Aaah!) (*Interjections*) (**Mr Speaker:** Order!)

Absolutely, all members of the DPC were consulted and approved it, and then the decision was ratified although, as the hon. Member says, it does not yet require approval, but all members were consulted before the demolition and it was approved and then it was ratified at the next meeting – the next available opportunity, precisely because of the time constraints.

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So not only is my hon. friend correct, in that it was already a project conceived by the previous administration, but it actually resulted in the whole of the DPC having an opportunity to express its view before it started.

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Mr Speaker: The Hon. Selwyn Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Well, Mr Speaker, I am at a loss to understand how anyone in the public would have objected or posed any kind of objection to this project in the round-robin exercise. This, Mr Speaker – and I wonder whether the Minister will agree – (*Applause*) has shades of the North Gate of the dockyard.

690

Several Members: Hear, hear! (*Interjection by Hon. S E Linares*)

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: No, Mr Speaker, the point here is – (*Interjections*) Mr Speaker –

Mr Speaker: Order, order, order!

695 I want to hear the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister.

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: The point here is, Mr Speaker, that this project started and was conceived under his party when they were in Government, that they did not believe in going to the DPC, that we simply continued with the system that was already there, with a project that was already there which had not gone to the DPC, but we decided that it should go to the DPC as a round-robin. More than that, the Heritage Trust, GONHS and the Department of the Environment were all consulted and went on site to examine it before the demolition happened.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I hate to be the one to point out that it appears that the Deputy Chief Minister is confused at this stage because, upon taking office, Mr Speaker, their policy, as stated in this House, was to adopt the policy of the previous GSD administration and not run for the time being any Government projects by the DPC.

705 However, in this instance, that particular Government project was set in the agenda for the meeting of 24th May – and let us not forget, work started on 21st – and no consideration was allowed by the open meeting of the DPC prior to work starting. This, Mr Speaker, and I am certain he will not agree, but I will ask him whether he accepts that it is in stark contrast to the policy of openness and transparency, (*Interjection*) that you allowed this project to continue the way it did, without consulting the DPC. (*Interjections*)

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: The Government does not accept that. The Government accepts that there is a measure of confusion, but that confusion is not on the part of anyone on this side of the House, Mr Speaker.

I think the hon. Member has to understand that our commitment is that projects will go to the DPC for an advisory or for informational purposes at this stage, and that is within the term that the projects could be subject to planning, in the same way as any other application.

710 Now, at this particular juncture, this project was inherited from the previous administration, where they did not believe we should have gone to the DPC, so what is hypocritical is that the hon. Member should himself accuse us of hypocrisy when they themselves do not believe in the course of action they are now advocating, Mr Speaker!

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, notwithstanding the manifesto commitment of the now current Government, where on page 45, every person who has filed an objection to any development will be entitled to be heard by the Commission, will the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister confirm what the point was of putting the application through to the agenda of an open meeting of the DPC, if it had already been pre-approved?

725 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, the hon. Member does not understand that works had already started under his administration. We simply inherited the project that was already *ongoing!* (*Interjections*) So in other words, it goes to planning, it goes to the DPC, before work starts. Works had already started under his Government, when his party was in Government.

735 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, with all due respect to the Deputy Chief Minister, works for the demolition on the wall started on 19th May – five days before the scheduled meeting of the DPC.

Hon. S E Linares: No! Mr Speaker –

740 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Sorry, in your original answer –

Hon. S E Linares: Yes, 21st May.

745 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Sorry, 21st May. (**Hon. S E Linares:** Yes, yes.) I mean, Mr Speaker, the wall had been demolished before the matter went before the open meeting of the DPC!

I ask again: what was the point of even keeping the matter on the agenda, for a wall that had already been demolished?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, he does not seem to understand that – (*Interjection and laughter*) Is that a nervous laugh, from the person who does not even ask questions.

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Mr Speaker, in my supplementary, I actually said that the scheme was also presented for planning – *was presented for planning* – on 18th; not on 24th like he is saying. It was *approved* on 18th by round-robin. (*Interjections*)

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Mr Speaker: Order, order, order! The Minister is answering.

Hon. S M Figueras: [*Inaudible*]

Hon. S E Linares: Right, so it meant that everybody in the DPC had their say – *everybody*. Every member of the DPC was aware of this. And then it was ratified in the open on the 24th.

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So what I am saying is that it *did* go to the DPC, it did actually go to the DPC, unlike when your party was in Government – it did not go to the DPC, it did not go to the Heritage Trust. It was already an ongoing project, so we carried on with it.

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Hon. S M Figueras: But that, Mr Speaker, was the policy of the GSD at the time, and at least we had the political *honesty* to be consistent in respect of it – (**Several Members:** Hear hear!) (*Applause*)

What the Hon. Minister does not seem to understand is that *their* policy of openness and transparency contemplates the participation of the public in meetings of the DPC – and presentation on the 18th to the DPC itself, without the public being present, is not an observation of that commitment. That is what we are complaining about. What, Mr Speaker, was the point of the matter going before the open meeting of the DPC set down for 24th May, when the wall had already been demolished?

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Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: The hon. Member very clearly does not understand the process or the procedure involved in planning. Normally, an applicant comes with an application – in this case, it is the Government – the application is discussed and then work starts.

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In this particular case, works had already started (*Interjection*) under the previous Government. This was simply a continuation of the works which *they* had started and for which they did not seek planning. There have been many Government projects since we have been in office now that have gone to the DPC.

Recommendations have been made and those recommendations have been accepted by the Government, without being obliged to do so. So the hon. Member should not stand there and accuse us of being hypocrites because, really, the ones who are being politically hypocritical is them. They are asking questions on a totally false premise, that is to say, the works on the project as a whole had already started by the time this –

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Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I am at a loss to understand how they can continue to make that particular point.

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What was the point of the matter even so much as going before the open meeting with the DPC if the works had been completed, because they are saying that the works began – which they were not, because they were only begun on Monday, 21st May, as confirmed by the Minister in his original answer? I cannot understand how they seek to pursue this point of demolition.

Mr Speaker, I will say little more on this because the point has been made and it is obviously lost on the hon. Members opposite, but one last time: will the Minister not accept that it is... I will not say the height of political hypocrisy, because I don't want fisticuffs, (*Laughter*) but is it not at least *slightly* hypocritical to say that we are going to go to the open meetings of the DPC with Government projects and then do this exact thing in respect of something that was as high profile as it was?

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Mr Speaker: The Hon. Minister for the Environment is dying to say something.

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the object of having this at the open meeting was, in fact, openness and honesty.

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A decision had been taken without any objections by round-robin. It could have been easily hidden away, like used to happen in the case of the former administration, but, no, the Commission felt that it had to be consistent with its policy, that it had to be discussed at a public meeting – or a meeting in public, which is different to a public meeting. It was discussed and no objections were raised.

805 Had there been objections, then perhaps we would have been in some difficulty, or perhaps the works would have stopped and have been altered, but there were no objections because, Mr Speaker, the only people who could have objected had already been consulted by round-robin and had included all the non-governmental organisations who have a role in this, and they had all approved.

So the fact that it went to the open meeting was a logical consequence of openness and honesty.

810 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Daniel Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that, in fact, in relation to World War II heritage sites there is capable of being far more emotion attaching to World War II heritage sites than perhaps heritage sites that are much older, because there are, for example, retired servicemen or serving servicemen who may well take a different view to the position of the Heritage Trust?

815 In the light of that, doesn't he think that it is not acceptable, when you have a policy of consulting relevant stakeholders, when you have a policy of having an open, transparent planning system, which is *their* policy, of just simply consulting the Heritage Trust and not consulting the general public and therefore allowing servicemen or retired servicemen or members of the public to actually make any comments in respect of a project? Does he not accept that?

820 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, Government does not accept anything of the kind. While there may be an emotional attachment on the part of certain people to the World War II fortifications, the fact is that we did consult all the relevant stakeholders, both in the DPC round-robin and earlier when they went on a site visit to look at the project.

825 They must remember that this was started under their administration, Mr Speaker. This was a project that *they* started. *They* had a commitment to a secretive, closed planning process, and they conducted it in that way. We came in, we inherited the project, and we simply continued with what was already there, but we included an element of consultation which did not exist before.

830 **Hon. S M Figueras:** But, Mr Speaker, their administration entered office on 9th December 2011. They had every opportunity to consult the public on this project, which the GSD had allegedly chosen to do in secret and without consultation.

835 Isn't it the case, Mr Speaker, that the Deputy Chief Minister, or any other of the Ministers, *could* have brought this matter to the public's attention in an open meeting of the DPC if they had wanted to or they had not run out of time?

840 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the project was discussed by all the relevant stakeholders. They were all consulted, they gave their consent – primarily, the Gibraltar Heritage Trust, whose role and whose statutory duty it is. So that consultation did take place, so the element of consultation which the hon. Member is complaining about simply is not the case. There was consultation, the relevant bodies were involved in that consultation, and the works were carried out.

Again, he has to remember that this project started under *their* administration when *they* were in government, with the closed and secretive planning process that they had.

845 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, does the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister consider the public a stakeholder?

850 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, we consider the public a stakeholder. We give a far more serious approach to the views of the public as a stakeholder in the planning process over the last six months than they ever did in 16 years. (*Applause*)

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, with all due respect, that is really rather weak. (*Interjections and laughter*)

855 Their policy was at the other end of the spectrum to ours, according to them, and they are the ones who are all about consultation, consideration and the public's consternation. They are the ones who are about openness and transparency. Now, it is not appropriate, in my view, for the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister to continually refer to the practice of a previous GSD administration whose policy was in stark contrast to theirs – and we have no issue accepting it – to then say, 'We only did what the GSD administration was doing for 16

years and what we complained about for 16 years.'

860 Is the public, in the Deputy Chief Minister's eyes, a stakeholder –

Hon. G H Licudi: He has answered that point already.

Hon. S M Figueras: – and does this foreshadow –

865 **Hon. G H Licudi:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order, the hon. Member has asked the same supplementary previous to this one on a number of occasions, that very same one.

Now he is asking *again* the same supplementary as to whether this side of the House considers the public a stakeholder. That question has been asked and answered; we should simply move on.

870 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, that is not a point of order, (*Interjection*) and unless the hon. Gentleman wants to change places with the Speaker of the House –

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

875 The Standing Orders do provide that a question that has been asked and answered... However, I will allow the hon. Member to finish asking the question before I can rule on that. Now that he is on notice, he might probably phrase his question accordingly.

880 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, does the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister concede that this foreshadows a Government policy of not consulting the public in respect of the treatment of World War II heritage sites? (*Interjection*)

885 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the answer once again is the same: the Government attaches a considerable degree of importance to consulting the public in relation to planning applications. This is why meetings of the Development and Planning Commission are now held in public. This is why the minutes of the Commission and the agenda are now published online. None of this used to happen when I was sitting on that side of the House asking the questions, Mr Speaker.

890 The hon. Gentleman should consider, in relation to this particular project, it was a project which started under *their* administration, when *they* were in government, under the rules that existed at the time. When we came in, we simply took on the project and decided to introduce a greater element of consultation than had existed before by consulting all the relevant stakeholders and by consulting the Development and Planning Commission by round-robin. It was then included in the agenda of the DPC, for reasons my hon. friend, Dr Cortes, has already explained. So the answer is the same answer: yes, we attach a considerable degree of public importance, certainly much more than they ever did.

895 **Mr Speaker:** I think the subject has been thoroughly aired. A supplementary must be a distinctly different question now.

900 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Yes, Mr Speaker. I asked the question in respect of whether the public was a stakeholder. We got the answer; that much was granted.

Mr Speaker: It has been dealt with.

905 **Hon. S M Figueras:** The Hon. Deputy Chief Minister has said that they attach considerable importance to the views of the public. However, he has not answered the question in confirming whether or not they consider the public's views important enough to consult them in respect of the treatment of World War II heritage sites.

There simply was no answer, Mr Speaker, and that is all I am after.

910 **Mr Speaker:** Again, I must remind the hon. Member there must be a question in a supplementary. There is no point in standing up and making a concluding summary of what has been discussed. There was no question there, and I think that is very clear. There was no question there.

Next Question, please.

**Old airport building
Fire certificate**

915

Clerk: Question 493, the Hon. D J Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the Government advise when the fire certificate at the old airport building expired and when it was renewed?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, a fire certificate for the old terminal has never existed. The building had a certificate of fitness issued when it was built.

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Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, for the sake of clarification, the Hon. Minister said that, instead, what it had was a certificate of fitness. Can I ask the Minister whether that certificate of fitness has expired in the last few months, perhaps?

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Hon. S E Linares: No, Mr Speaker, because what happens usually is that a building gets the certificate of fitness and then it is maintained, and through the maintenance they look at how the building is. You do not get a certificate of fitness for a building and then it expires.

What has happened is that the old terminal has always had maintenance contracts to ensure that the fire extinguishers, the emergency lights and fire alarms are functioning and maintained properly. So once the certificate of fitness is given, then the rest is maintained adequately and checked, obviously, but it is not a certificate of fitness, as such. The certificate of fitness is given when the building is done at the beginning.

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Clerk: Question –

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Hon. D J Bossino: Is it the intention... Sorry, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Damon Bossino.

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Hon. D J Bossino: I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

Given the fact that we have the new airport building and both buildings are now currently operational, is it the Government's intention to continue carrying out these checks which the Minister is talking about, and for how long?

Really, the point I am trying to drive at is at what time will the operational aspects of the old building cease, if at all, once the new airport building is fully operational? Can the Minister answer that question?

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Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, I have not got the information as to when all the operations of the old building will be transferred to the new one, but what I can assure him is that whilst the old one is functioning the maintenance contract still exists. So that is as far as I can answer the question.

It implies, therefore, that when the functions of the old building move to the new building then the contract for the maintenance will not be necessary because the old buildings are not there any more... we do not use it any more as a terminal.

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**Civil Contingencies and Departmental Press Officer
Appointment**

Clerk: Question 494, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

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Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Civil Contingencies tell us who has been selected for the position of Civil Contingencies and Departmental Press Officer?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

970 **Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Yes, Mr Speaker, Mr Stuart Green has been selected for the post of Civil Contingencies and Departmental Press Officer.

Hon. P R Caruana: Surprise, surprise, surprise!

975 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, Mr Green is a retired Lieutenant-Colonel and former MoD press officer. He is non-local and he now takes up a new Gibraltar Government post. Were there no young locals looking for work suitable for the job who would want to start out a career as a press officer?

980 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, there were applicants and the board actually selected Mr Stuart Green. I can give her a little bit more information – Mr Stuart Green has been given a contract for three years in order to start a training process, or at least a succession programme, and he was obviously deemed by the board to be the person to do that job at this moment in time.

985 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, does not the Minister agree that it is the height of hypocrisy that, after years of his Government (Interjections) when in Opposition, criticising the GSD Government for employing retired and non-local individuals, that they are now doing exactly the same?
If it was wrong for the GSD, it is wrong for the GSLP.

990 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I do not agree with that at all, because the difference is that this gentleman is on a three-year contract to do that job, in order – as opposed to what the GSD used to do – to retrain people in Gibraltar so that they can do that job. So it is not a question of this gentleman getting a full-time job, like the previous administration used to do to every Tom, Dick and Harry.

995 **Hon. P R Caruana:** Tom, Dick, Harry and Stuart!

Hon. S E Linares: Or Stuart, yes, (*Laughter*) for three years, as opposed to... Yes, Mr Speaker, and Stuart, for three years. The difference with Tom, Dick and Harry, as opposed to Stuart, is that Stuart is for three years and Tom, Dick and Harry were *enchufao* by you. So let's not go any further.

1000 Mr Stuart Green also went through a process – as opposed to what the GSD used to do – of interviewing and selection, so that is the difference. So there is no height of hypocrisy at all.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, could I ask the Hon. Minister – because he did mention in his earlier contribution that there were other applicants who went for an interview, I think he said – could he tell us how many local persons went for the interview?

1005 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I need notice of that question and I have not got that information.

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: I should add, by way of additional information, that the Government has also appointed a deputy press officer who is a young Gibraltarian, who will be starting work on 2nd July.

1010 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, I acknowledge the fact that he might need notice of the question for him to be able to give me an answer but, if I were to write to him, perhaps, would he be able to tell me how many local people applied and whether, in the view of the board, they felt that the local people were either not qualified or not experienced enough?

1015 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I am willing to give him the numbers of applicants, but I am not willing to give him the second part. That is up to the board.

1020 I am not going to give him what the board has discussed or said about the actual interviews. That would be data protection in itself. So we cannot disclose. I will disclose the number, but not even the names of the people who applied. It is a data protection issue.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister tell us who the

local deputy press officer is who will be starting on 2nd July?

1025 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, it would not be appropriate to tell the House before the person actually starts. So, if the hon. Member would like to ask that question again next month, I am sure we will be able to answer it.

1030

**Culture and Heritage Agency
Details of trainees**

1035 **Clerk:** Question 495, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Culture and Heritage provide details of trainees presently assigned to the Gibraltar Culture and Heritage Agency, explaining the arrangements/terms and conditions under which training is taking place?

1040

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Yes, Mr Speaker, the total number of trainees assigned currently to the Gibraltar Culture and Heritage Agency are as follows. And this again, they are from the trainees... We are training them. They can come in and out, but the numbers are five Grade 1s, four Grade 2s and five Technical Grade 1 – maintenance.

1045

On the second part of his question, the terms and conditions are as the Gibraltar Training Scheme. Maintenance staff will carry out general maintenance courses at the Gibraltar Training Centre, and other staff – accounts, administration and reception – are carrying out on-the-job training.

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Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, would the hon. Member please clarify for me: he said there are five Grade 1s and four Grade 2s, for example, who come and go, so they are not people who are permanently attached there, but sort of can vary on a day-to-day basis as to who the individual is?

1055 **Hon. S E Linares:** That depends on the ETB. They are there for... they might be three or four months in the training and then we might have another few. It depends on the ETB and on what has already *extensively* been explained here in this House.

1060 **Hon. E J Reyes:** So, Mr Speaker, am I correct in assuming from there that what the Agency then is doing is, it is accepting trainees sent in from the Future Jobs Strategy and so on for an agreed period of time, and when that time is completed they go back and so on? It does not necessarily mean that those individuals are being trained so that after x number of months they will become employees of the Agency?

1065 **Hon. S E Linares:** It could well be, if the vacancies come out, and until the vacancies come out, no; so if there is a vacancy, I am sure that those trainees will be the first ones to apply, because they have already got the training, which is what has been explained previously.

What I am saying is that those trainees are there on the job and if ever the Culture and Heritage Agency brings out the vacancies, I am sure all those trainees who have had on-the-job training will be the first ones to apply. It is obvious. That is what has been explained *ad nauseam* in this House, how the system works.

1070

Hon. E J Reyes: No, Mr Speaker – I am a bit confused – what has been explained is that the trainees have entered into a sort of a contract with the company that is giving them training, and that company has to sign on a dotted line at the end of a period of which they have to employ them. Is this not also applicable, or am I just being confused?

1075

Hon. J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, the Government Departments where people are placed do not have to sign anything saying they will take on the trainee because, as I have made clear in answer to previous questions in previous meetings of the House, it is not the case that the people who are being put in Government

Departments are being put in the Government Departments in anticipation of joining the Government service.

1080 The reality, as will be obvious from the answers to the questions that are down to me to answer, is that the numbers that were taken on from the VTS Scheme included people who were in the private sector, where the employer in the private sector was not willing to enter into an agreement to give them a job. Therefore, rather than have somebody perhaps learning less in the private sector than he might be learning if he was in a Department, those people... I think there are only 88 now left who are still in the private sector because we have not been able to slot them elsewhere, but the bulk of the people who are slotted in Government areas are 1085 people who were originally in the Scheme but where the employers with whom they were placed were not prepared to give them a guarantee of employment. Therefore, they are no worse off because they have not got a guarantee of employment... and they did not have one before.

1090 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I am grateful for that, Mr Speaker. So, then, for the purposes of what the Minister for Employment has explained, the Culture and Heritage Agency is taken as any other Government Department and, therefore, when a vacancy arises, it will not necessarily go to this individual, he has to apply.

1095 However, Mr Speaker, I also implied, in explaining the arrangement terms and conditions... What I am trying to get at there is the Culture and Heritage Agency, by the very nature of its work, its duties and responsibilities, has to organise a series of events that mainly take place outside normal office hours so, if these trainees, in undergoing the training, attend these types of events and so on, they will be working alongside a normal permanent and pensionable employee of the Agency who, perhaps, is being paid overtime – there could even be a premium rate because it is a specific bank holiday and so on. Are these individuals then entitled to any sort of additional payment from the Agency as such, or how is the training scheme catering for that? 1100

1105 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, the employer is the Employment Training Company Ltd or the Graduate Company, depending on whether people have got a degree or not, and that employer only employs him for the basic week of 39 hours. If the person with whom they are placed wants them to do extra hours, then they have to be paid by the placement and not by the employing company.

1110 I am not sure whether instances like that occur in this area, but I can tell him, as a parallel example to what he is pointing out that, for example, in the case of the trainees that we have got in areas like the Care Agency, who are trainee carers, there the shift allowance that is paid to normal employees is paid by the Agency to the trainees from the ETB. The ETB does not pay them the shift allowance. The ETB pays them a basic wage because the ETB does not have, in their system of employment, provision for shift allowances for people. So where people are being asked to do something above the normal requirement that others are being asked, then it is a matter for the employment area to pay. Clearly, I would imagine no Government Department is going to be expecting people to work for free.

1115 **Mr Speaker:** I think the Hon. Daniel Feetham...

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, Mr Speaker, can I ask the Hon. the Minister for Culture... He said that it is obvious... I have a note of what he said: 'It is obvious that those people doing on-the-job training will be the first to apply.' I think that is what he said.

1120 Does the Government envisage that those people who it is 'obvious will apply' for the jobs that they have been doing in training will be given an advantage in the selection process?

Hon. S E Linares: No, there is no advantage at all. In fact, it depends on whether the vacancy comes out in the first place. If the vacancy does come out, there is no advantage given to anybody. They go to the board.

1125 What I am saying is that it is obvious that, if you have done the job, it is *probable* that within the selection board they will look at you in a different light, but there will not be anybody saying to them, 'Look, this is the person who...' It is part of the CV and it depends on the CV.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, I understand that it is part of the CV. I was not suggesting that the Hon. the Minister is going to be talking personally to any member of the board.

1130 What I am asking is about Government policy. Is it the Government's policy to actually give these trainees an advantage over those who may apply from outside the service by actually giving them that on-the-job training? Because that is what it appeared that the hon. Gentleman was actually getting at when he gave the

answer to my hon. friend, Mr Reyes.

1135 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, can I remind the hon. Member opposite that the view of the previous administration was that the VTS trainees had a better chance of getting a job precisely because they were being given training. There was no guarantee that they would get a job, but their prospects of getting it were improved. We believe that the prospects of those we have inherited are continuing to be improved as a result of the opportunity they are getting to be at work.

1140 Clearly, if we have got somebody, for example, who has not worked in an office at all before, he is less likely to impress the selection board than if there is somebody who has worked, in the space of a year, in half a dozen different offices. To that extent, one assumes that they are better placed, but it is the judgement of the people who do the interviewing, not of the Government.

1145 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, I quite understand that there cannot be any guarantee, and I repeat that I understand that the board undertakes the selection process, but I am asking about Government policy and Government intention. Is it the Government's policy and is it the Government's intention, bearing in mind that there are so many people who are under the Future Jobs Strategy Scheme, to effectively give them an advantage over somebody outside in relation to these particular jobs? That is the question.

1150 **Hon. J J Bossano:** It is a question, Mr Speaker, that seems to be contradicted by what the hon. Member understands, because if the hon. Member understands that they are not being given any indication that the job is waiting for them, guaranteed, or that... The only advantage that they have, in the view of the Government, is the advantage that they had when the previous Minister who was responsible for training claimed that there was an advantage.

1155

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Jaime Netto.

1160 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, I just really wanted to get some clarification from some of the comments of the Minister for Employment, because he did say, at some point earlier on, that some of the trainees are being sent to the Care Agency. From memory, I think some of the trainees were sent to the Calpe Ward in St Bernard's Hospital.

1165 He has also been mentioning the fact that this is just for the purpose of giving them an opportunity to do some training on site in the particular environment where they are working to gain at least some experience of the nature of the work that they are undertaking. As I remember – and I wish to be corrected if I am wrong – in the Calpe Ward they did send a number of care worker trainees, if I am correct. Do I take it, then, that part of the policy of the Government is that, while giving the opportunity to those trainees to be there, they will not necessarily be guaranteed a job, so that when vacancies do arise in the Care Agency in the future, everyone in the labour market will be allowed to compete for the particular job? Is that the case?

1170

Hon. J J Bossano: No, Mr Speaker, I think the reference that I made to the parallel with the question from the Hon. Mr Reyes was in relation to getting extra pay, not in relation to the employment prospects.

1175 In the cases, for example, where people are training to do the SRN or training to be carers, they are being trained because we know that they are needed and there are vacancies there, and the purpose of the training is that, at the end of the training, they will be taken on. But in places where there is no vacancy and we are not training people specifically for a vacancy, the position is about training them to give them skills that will improve their prospects of employment.

1180 So I think, outside the area of health and social care in the Care Agency or in the GHA, there are no people being trained for a specific job at the moment. There may be in the future – like there are in the private sector, there may be opportunities in the public sector – but, at the moment, the only two areas of the public sector where there is specific training designed to produce people with skills that will enable them to occupy vacancies that we know will exist in the future, are in those two areas.

1185 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, in the normal course of events, the vacancies that may come out in the Hon. Minister's Department – the Minister for Culture and Heritage – would be advertised and everybody would have an equal advantage in relation to that particular vacancy, depending on their experience. Does he not agree with me that by placing these individuals from the Future Jobs Strategy, which has become a

1190 necessity in actual fact, because you have so many of them and you have made so many promises to them in relation to guarantees of jobs... By actually placing them to acquire these skills in the hon. Member's ministry, are you not effectively giving these people an advantage in respect of others outside who may be applying for those jobs, and is it not as a consequence of a flawed policy – in other words, the promises that the hon. Member made at the General Election time to all these trainees and all these various people?

1195 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, the 'flawed policy' is flawed in the eyes of the hon. Member.
Presumably the hon. Member prefers that we should not be providing training to the unemployed, notwithstanding the fact that they justified what they were providing under the VTS as doing precisely what he says the present Scheme is doing, which is to provide people with training so that, as a result of the training, their prospects of obtaining employment would be increased over the advantage of those who were not getting the training.

1200 The only difference between what *they* were doing and what we are doing is (a) that we are paying more, and (b) that it is more specifically related, in the private sector in particular, to people not being used as free labour and then being returned back to the pool to be replaced by a new guy, and that was one of the big things that was undermining the credibility of the Scheme in the eyes of many of the users. They were being constantly rotated in the private sector because there was no real control over the fact, because simply these people were being removed from the books.

1205 Can I remind the Member once again that, in December, not only were there *x* numbers of people in the VTS, there was a waiting list of 70 who were not deemed to be either employed or unemployed or training or getting paid. I suppose he thinks that is a better system than the one we have got today, but I can assure you that people in the system would not agree with him.

1210 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, Mr Speaker, the difference between this side of the House and that side of the House is that you were the ones who guaranteed everybody a job at the end of their training. Hence why you are now left with the situation where you are having to park all these people in the public sector. (**Hon. J J Bossano:** No!)

1215 Mr Speaker, may I ask the Hon. the Minister for Culture, to whom the original Question was directed... I know that I asked this question to the Hon. Minister for Employment at the last session, but he gave me his own personal view. He did not give me a *Government* view. Can I ask the Hon. Minister for Culture whether it is the Government's intention to dumb down entrance into the public service, and in particular into the hon. Member's Department?

1220 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Member made a statement before he went on to question my colleague and, therefore, with your indulgence, I will answer what he made, which is completely false.

1225 The reality is that there is not an issue here of having to put people in places because of promises we made; it is because we inherited from *his* administration, the administration of which he is now so proud, a *huge* number of people who were in non-jobs in order to keep down the unemployment figures. Perhaps he would have preferred us to put them on the scrap heap, which presumably is what would have happened on 9th December if there had not been a change of Government.

1230 I can assure the hon. Member that those who are involved are clear in their own minds that the system that we are operating now is an improvement on the one we inherited, and every time he puts a question here he convinces me more that he wants to see it failing. He is due to be disappointed.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Hon. the Minister for Culture now answer my question?

1235 **Hon. S E Linares:** My answer is the same as the Minister has just answered.

Hon. D A Feetham: With respect, you have not answered the question.

The question is this, and I will repeat it: is it the Government's policy to dumb down entrance into the public service, and in particular the Minister's Department.

1240 **Hon. S E Linares:** That question has already been answered.

Hon. J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, I do not know what the hon. Member means by 'dumping down' –

Hon. D A Feetham: *Dumbing* down.

1245 **Hon. J J Bossano:** – but the position in respect of vacancies in the public sector is that vacancies in the public sector are advertised and the requirements for the jobs are no different from what they have been in the past.

1250 The fact that we are giving people the opportunity, who are unemployed, to be trained in order to be better equipped to get jobs is what the Employment Service exists for and what the taxpayer is paying for the Employment Service to do, and the end result will be, when the time comes, that we see the decline in the numbers of unemployed and the increase in the number of Gibraltarians in employment. I would have expected him to be looking forward to a situation where we have got more Gibraltarians working than we have had in the past. I cannot imagine why anybody in this House should not want to see that result.

1255 **Hon. D A Feetham:** This is turning into quite a curious *ménage à trois*. I ask questions to the Hon. the Minister for Culture and it is answered by the Hon. the Minister for Employment.

1260 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I will tell him why: (*Interjection by Hon. D A Feetham*) the Minister for Culture is not responsible for employment – I am.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can I ask a question?

1265 Maybe he can answer this. Does he agree with Mr Bossano's personal view that he expressed to me – because it was a personal view that he expressed – that if you are good enough you should be allowed into the public service regardless of the entrance requirement into the public service? Does he agree with that?

Hon. S E Linares: The question has already been answered, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Edwin Reyes.

1270 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, sir, can I take you back a little while?

I am grateful to the Minister for Employment, who explained to me that any extra hours worked was not going to be paid for. Therefore, can the Minister for Culture now answer me: is his Agency paying these trainees for extra hours worked?

1275 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I do not know exactly whether this is happening, but because they are not employees of the Agency I am sure they are not; but I will check on that and I can give him an answer if he gives notice of this question.

1280 **Hon. E J Reyes:** I have not quite understood the answer, Mr Speaker – because they are employees, or they are not employees of the Agency?

1285 **Hon. S E Linares:** They are employees of the Employment and Training Ltd from the ETB, employees from them. I do not pay them. The Culture and Heritage Agency do not pay these trainees. They come from the ETB and, therefore, because they come from the ETB, the overtime and all that is not paid by me.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, is that answer not contradictory to what the Minister for Employment has just said?

1290 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, it does.

Hon. E J Reyes: Could the Minister for Employment please enlighten me further?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, just a correction: it is not the ETB; it is the ETCL that pays them.

1295 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, the Employment Training Company employs people for 39 hours and places them with employers in the public or the private sector. Whether in one or the other, if the placement, if the place where they are working requires them to do above the 39 hours, then it is the training provider that

has to pay those hours.

1300 I do not know whether anybody in Culture is being paid extra or anybody anywhere else, but in terms of the application of the Employment Act, it would be in breach of that Act to expect people to work more than 39 hours for nothing. So, clearly, if anybody is working more than 39 hours, we do not know where they are, but if they are, they do not have to come back to the Employment Training Company to clear everything with us. If somebody wants somebody to stay *beyond* his 39 hours, they have to be paid, clearly, by the recipient, not by us.

1305

Hon. E J Reyes: Fine, Mr Speaker, I have understood that.

Therefore, given that answer and coming back to my original question, I was asking for explanations of the arrangements and terms and conditions, therefore are these trainees assigned to the Culture and Heritage Agency, whose very nature of work requires them to work many hours outside normal office hours and so on... My question was: are these trainees then being paid extra, like those who are in the permanent and pensionable establishment of the Agency, in receipt of overtime and so on?

1310

Can the Hon. Minister with responsibility for the Agency please explain that now?

1315

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, I need notice of the question because I do not know exactly the rate they are being paid or whatever. I need notice of that question.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, the notice was given. I asked for explanation of the arrangements, terms and conditions.

1320

Are arrangements in place so that these individuals receive overtime payments? I have given notice of the question, Mr Speaker.

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member gave notice of a particular question, which was answered both by the Minister for Culture and then the matter was expanded by the Minister for Employment.

1325

Now the hon. Member is asking for a very specific issue relating to overtime. What the hon. Member has said is that he does not *currently* have that information with him and if the hon. Member wants to give notice of that question then that question will be answered, but it certainly was not considered in the ambit of the original question. Whether that is right or not, the fact is that the hon. Member does not currently have that information before him and therefore he will need notice.

1330

Hon. E J Reyes: No, Mr Speaker, sir, specific is if I had, without due notice, asked him now to give me a breakdown of how much payment was made last month in overtime. I have not asked that. What I gave due notice of was for details of the arrangements, terms and conditions.

1335

Can the Hon. Minister for Culture confirm to me the arrangement is that when these individuals work outside normal hours, for example public holidays, remuneration will be paid? If I then want to know the exact details, then I will give notice for the next session, but at least confirm to me that there are provisions within his Agency to pay these individuals.

1340

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, details of the arrangements, terms and conditions were given, and details of the employment relationship have been given. Now the hon. Member is condescending to very specific details about overtime.

1345

We have already said that the hon. Member does not currently have that information. There is nothing we can do. The hon. Member can ask the same question 20 times: we do not have that information, but we will give it whenever the notice is given. What the Hon. the Minister for Employment has clarified is that the responsibility of the company is to pay what the Government has already said the company will pay, which is minimum wage for trainees for 39 hours. If a specific arrangement with the placing entity is different, then that will have to be taken into account by the placing agency and not the company. We do not have the specific information about *overtime* in respect of these individuals.

1350

Mr Speaker: I think, before anyone else rises, there is a danger we are running round in circles.

The original question asked about the terms and conditions and the original answer says the terms and conditions are as per the Gibraltar Training Scheme. That was further explained by the Hon. Minister for Training, so I think, in general terms, we have got the answer.

1355 The specific question about overtime being paid by the Ministry of Culture for the trainees in his particular jurisdiction, and his answer that he does not have the specific information about overtime being paid, so, in general terms, it has been explained by the Minister for Training that overtime must be paid by the placement area, and the Minister has said he has not got specific information.

I think that is as far as we have got. Rather than going round in circles, the next supplementary must be addressed to –

1360 **Hon. D A Feetham:** The answer suggested that... Just so that we understand, the answer is that the other side do not know whether, in principle, trainees are paid overtime, if they do –

1365 **Mr Speaker:** No, no, (*Interjections*) that is not my understanding of the answer. My understanding was they *should* be paid under the Employment Act. That is the answer.

When the Hon. Mr Reyes asked the Minister specifically whether trainees in his Department are being paid, he says he needs notice of that question. So I did not understand the answer as they do not know; the answer is they do know, under the Employment Act they should be paid. That is what I understood.

1370 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, I am grateful, Mr Speaker, and I accept that, but I am a bit confused in something the Minister for Culture said before. In keeping with what the Minister for Employment said, can he then confirm that arrangements are in place so that if these trainees are required to work extra hours, then the agency will actually cater the payments for them?

1375 **Hon. S E Linares:** That is the law! It has been stated.
I have not got the information with all the arrangements and the overtime and all that, so, yes, if they... that is the arrangement, it has to be. It is in law. It has been said.

1380 **Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority
Details of trainees**

Clerk: Question 496, the Hon. E J Reyes.

1385 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Sport and Leisure provide details of trainees presently assigned to the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority, explaining the arrangements/terms and conditions under which training is taking place?

1390 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, one trainee is in place since 1st May 2012. This person is being trained to carry out as many duties as possible as a sports and leisure officer. The terms and conditions are as per the Gibraltar Training Scheme.

1395 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.
When he gave me the Culture and Heritage one, he actually specified there were five Grade 1s and four Grade 2s. Under what grade would this one be?

1400 **Hon. S E Linares:** It is a sports and leisure officer, within the Sports and Leisure –

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, but there are grades within –

1405 **Hon. S E Linares:** No, this person is different, because the answer said the person is being trained to carry out as many of the duties as possible. So he or she is doing as many things, so there are different grades, she – it is a ‘she’ actually – is training in all aspects.

Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, Mr Speaker, but I have had... from previous schedules of written questions that I

1410 have had before, there are many different grades within the Sports and Leisure Authority, so is this person, for example, also being trained for Grade 1, who happens to be the Chief Executive, or is it being limited more to say the Grade 9 or Grade 11?

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, the answer is still the same.

1415 That person is attached to the Sports and Leisure Authority as an officer, and that person is learning – is on training – to do different things within the Sports and Leisure Authority. I cannot tell him whether she is at one point attached to a Grade 11 or attached the next day to a Grade 10 or a Grade 9. She will do what the managers ask her to be training on. One day she might be with a Grade 11, learning something and then a Grade 10 or a Grade 9. That is the answer to the question, Mr Speaker.

1420 It is not a question of her doing one specific job with a Grade 11 or... It is more holistic, what she is doing.

Hon. E J Reyes: That may be the answer, Mr Speaker, but certainly not consistent with the other one, where in one agency, they are attached to learn particular grades and here it seems that the trainee is being trained to become the next Chief Executive Officer!

1425 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, when you go into an office or a place of work, you can do different types of work at different grades. I am sure she is not sitting beside a CEO to learn how to run, as he is now implying, the Sports and Leisure Authority tomorrow. What she is doing is general office work and general work in the Sports and Leisure Authority.

1430 **Hon. E J Reyes:** And I take it, Mr Speaker, does the hon. Member have some information, or will he require further notice in respect of...? Because you see the sports and leisure officers, in their conditions of employment, have conditioned overtime and so on. Is this individual, this lady, also subjected to that; or would he require further notice?

1435 **Hon. S E Linares:** Exactly the same as I answered before.

Hon. E J Reyes: What, Mr Speaker, for my clarity?

1440 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, look at answers – go back to answers and look at what was done, but I am not going to go through the whole debate again.

Hon. E J Reyes: I will look at *Hansard* – but a rather ungentlemanly reply, Mr Speaker.

1445

**Children's play parks
Cleaning, upkeep and maintenance**

1450 **Clerk:** Question 497, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Sports and Leisure provide details, inclusive of recurring costs, of the arrangements currently in place for the cleaning, upkeep and maintenance of children's play parks?

1455 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Yes, Mr Speaker, the playgrounds and the ball-playing areas are cleaned and generally maintained through Government's (Ministry for the Environment) generic cleaning services' contract with Master Service Ltd.

1460 Currently a three-man crew, seconded from the Gibraltar Community Projects Ltd assist the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority, in providing for minor repairs which cannot be carried out by Master Service Ltd. These services are not being paid through the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority. The cost of spares,

tools, etc is, on average, £1,000 per month.

1465

**Gibraltar Rugby Football Union
Provision of facilities**

1470

Clerk: Question 498, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Sports and Leisure provide details of the facilities the Government/GSLA is planning to provide the Gibraltar Rugby Football Union in order to further develop the sport locally and ensure they meet requirements in respect of their pending application for membership of the International Governing Body for the sport?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

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Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares): Mr Speaker, the Government will be providing the Gibraltar Rugby Football Union with facilities which will enable them to have international tournaments locally, and further provide them with the training and development facilities which they require to develop the sport much better than they have had to date.

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Hon. E J Reyes: Yes, Mr Speaker, but my question was, can he provide details? He said they would provide, but there is no detail there in anything.

Hon. S E Linares: Mr Speaker, it says, 'to have international tournaments'. That means that we are providing the facilities, so the detail is that we are providing the facilities. There is no more detail than that.

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Hon. E J Reyes: There are no more details than that because he has no plans or because he does not wish to disclose them?

Hon. S E Linares: No, Mr Speaker, because we have very, very exciting plans.

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A Member: So what are they?

Hon E J Reyes: So, therefore, he does not wish to disclose them, Mr Speaker.

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Hon. S E Linares: No, Mr Speaker, because we have not decided on the plans yet. They are exciting because we have got about six or eight different ones and we do not know which one to decide yet.

Clerk: Question –

1505

Mr Speaker: No, the Hon. Damon Bossino.

Hon. D J Bossino: Can the hon. Member indicate to this House when the decision will finally come?

Hon. S E Linares: Very soon.

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ENTERPRISE, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

1515

**Married women's social insurance
Paying difference between reduced and full contributions**

Clerk: Question 499, the Hon. J J Netto.

1520 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Security say how many married women have registered an interest in the Department of Social Security for the purpose of seeking an assessment of the cost of paying the difference between the reduced married women social insurance contribution and the full social insurance contribution and, if so, could the total number of enquiries be broken down between those who are still working and those who are now retired?

1525 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, as at 12th June 2012, 134 married women have registered an interest at the Department of Social Security for the purpose of seeking an assessment of the cost of paying the difference between the reduced married women social insurance contributions and the full social insurance contributions.

1530 Out of the 134, 81 continue in employment, and the remaining 53 are either retired or not working.

1535 **Statutory Benefits Fund**
Employers' insolvency payments made since Question 365/12

Clerk: Question 500, the Hon. J J Netto.

1540 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Security and Employment provide a statement of the payments made from the Statutory Benefits Fund, in respect of employers' insolvency, since this question was last asked, in Question No. 365/2012 showing the amount paid due to redundancy pay obligations, the amount paid in respect of other sums payable to employees, and the number of companies involved?

1545 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, since the question was last answered, the total amount paid in respect of redundancy pay was £11,271.47. Only one employer is involved.

1550 In respect of annual leave, it was £92.02; in respect of notice of terminations, £2,990.40; in respect of arrears of wages, £322.07.

1555 **Statutory Benefits Fund**
Employers' insolvency payments made, January-May 2012

Clerk: Question 501, the Hon. J J Netto.

1560 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Security and Employment provide a statement of the payments made from the Statutory Benefits Fund, in respect of employers' insolvency, from January 2012 to the end of May 2012, broken down monthly, and showing the amounts paid due to redundancy pay obligations, the amounts paid in respect of other sums payable to employees, and the number and names of companies and numbers of employees involved?

1565 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the payments made are as follows: in January, none; in February, there was a payment in respect of a company called Straits Installations, which involved four beneficiaries. This was made up of a total, in respect of the four redundancies, of £3,948.96 and payment in lieu of notice of £1,586.88, making a total of £5,535.84.

1570 In March, the numbers of companies was five. Overseas Motors Ltd involved 16 redundancies. The cost of the 16 redundancies was £147,527.20. In respect of annual leave, the payment was £1,596.49. In lieu of

notice, payment came to £42,214.24. The total cost of the Overseas Motors payment was £191,337.93.

1575 There was a payment in respect of three employees of Zenith Promotions, in respect of redundancy, which came to £9,322.40. There were no other payments for Zenith Promotions.

In respect of Transport Services, there was a settlement of an award by the Industrial Tribunal which the company did not meet and which was claimed from the insolvency fund, which came to £46,004.80.

1580 In the case of Right Start Nursery, there was one employee that was paid £658.64 for redundancy, £589.77 in lieu of notice; £217.76 in lieu of wages. The total payment to that employee came to £1,466.17.

The fifth company was Pussers, with two employees. The redundancy came to £1,872.00, in lieu-of-notice payment came to £721.50, making a total of £2,593.50.

In April, there were no payments.

1585 In May, there was a payment to one company, Gibraltar Secretarial Services Ltd, which amounted to £11,271.47 for redundancy, £92.02 for annual leave, £2,990.40 in lieu-of-notice payment, £322.07 for arrears of wages, making a total payment to that one employee of £14,675.96.

The total payment from January to May, therefore, comes to a total sum of £270,936.60.

1590 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, given the amount of information contained in the answer that the Hon. Minister has just provided, I wonder whether it would have been better if he had just given in the schedule. It would have saved him the five minutes in giving the detailed amount of pounds and pennies and perhaps it would have been even better for myself, as used to be in the past, to be able to see it all at a glance than try to profusely write as much detail as possible.

So can I ask the hon. Member if he can ask the paper usher to photocopy his answer so I can have it all in one glance?

1595 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, as the hon. Member should know, and as you know and can corroborate, I am a very law-abiding Member of this House, and since the question is put down for *oral* answer, I have given him an oral answer. If he wants it in writing and if he puts it down for written answer, he will get it in writing.

1600 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, all I am trying to say is will he afford us the same treatment as we used to afford them when in the situation that we were in Government. That kind of information, as he is well aware, was provided to him when he was asking – well, he was not asking; it was the Hon. Minister, Mr Bruzon, who was asking – in a schedule form.

1605 That is what I am trying to say: could we have equal treatment in terms of passing the information?

Hon. J J Bossano: No, Mr Speaker, it is not a question of equal treatment.

1610 The fact that the hon. Members, when they were in Government, chose to say, 'I will answer Question 1 to Question 200 and I will now hand over a schedule,' which meant that nobody else in this Chamber had a clue what was going on, because nothing else was said, and that went on all the time, does not mean that I agree with that system.

Therefore, as far as I am concerned, if the hon. Member is putting down a question for Oral Answer, then I think the correct way to deal with the oral answer to the question is to provide the information orally, not simply to say, 'The answer to the question is that I now hand him a schedule.'

1615 **Hon. D A Feetham:** I do not think anybody disputes that. The question has been put for oral answer; therefore, you answer it orally.

What my hon. friend is asking is, because it has been a very long answer, could he please have a copy of the answer that is in front of you. That is all he is asking.

1620 **Hon. J J Bossano:** No, no –

Hon. D A Feetham: He indeed said could you, in future, hand over schedules...

I accept that. That is a matter for him as to whether he hands over schedules or he does not.

1625 In relation to this particular answer – which is a very long answer – what he is asking is, 'Could I please have a copy of that, and could you ask the paper usher to photocopy it for me?' That is all. If the hon. Gentleman refuses, he refuses.

1630 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, maybe the hon. Member heard what the Member said better than I did, because he is sitting next to him but, certainly, what I understood the Member to be saying is that I should follow the practice of the previous Government in saying, 'I will answer this question by handing over a schedule.' That is what I understood him to be suggesting that I should be doing. There is no problem with him, in fact, having *my* copy of the answer, and therefore he does not even have to wait for a photocopy.

1635 **Mr Speaker:** I think there was an invitation by the hon. Member to provide such answers in the future in the form of a schedule, but it is perfectly in the discretion of the Minister how he chooses to answer, whether in terms of a schedule or to provide a full answer as he has, and he has.

While the hon. Member is digesting the information, without wishing to make any ruling on this matter, *Erskine May*, 22nd edition, at page 305 – and this is not a ruling from me –

1640 'The Speaker suggested that lengthy answers should be circulated with the Official Report, instead of being given orally.'
– for what it is worth, but that Official Report will obviously come much later when *Hansard* is printed.

1645 **Employment and Training Company Ltd
Contracts signed**

Clerk: Question 502, the Hon. D A Feetham.

1650 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment please state how many companies have signed contracts with the Employment and Training Company Ltd since this question was last asked?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

1655 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Sixty-two, Mr Speaker.

Hon. D A Feetham: Is that 62 in respect of 62 trainees, or 62 in respect of more than 62 trainees?

1660 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, the answer that has been prepared for me is the answer to the question that he has asked, which is how many contracts have been signed. They do not tell me whether each of the 62 has got more than one.

I would suspect that the bulk of them would be one, because that is the normal pattern, but there may be the odd one in the 62 that has taken on more than one.

1665 **Employment and Training Company Ltd
Companies and trainees**

1670 **Clerk:** Question 503, the Hon. D A Feetham.

1675 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment please provide a breakdown of the activity of each company which has signed a contract with the Employment and Training Company Ltd, indicating the number of trainees placed with each company?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

Hon. D A Feetham: I hope I get an answer.

1680 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Exactly!
The breakdown is as follows, Mr Speaker: electrical supply, one company and one trainee; in the

1685 construction sector, there are four companies with one trainee each, two companies with two trainees each and two companies with three trainees each; in the wholesale trade, there is one company with one trainee and one company with two trainees; in the retail trade, there are 14 companies with one trainee and four companies with two trainees; in the hotel trade, there is one company with one trainee; in repairs of consumer goods, there are six companies with one trainee each; in sea transport and related services, there are four companies with one trainee each; in road transport and related services, there is one company and one trainee; in post and communications, there is one company with two trainees and one company with three trainees; in banking, finance and insurance, there are 20 companies with one trainee each, three companies with two trainees and one company with three trainees; in police and fire services, there are two companies and one trainee; in education, there are three companies with one trainee, one company with two trainees and one company with four trainees; in medical and health services, there is one company with two trainees and one company with three trainees; in other services, there are 14 companies with one trainee and one company with two trainees.

I will now ask somebody to make a photocopy.

1695 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Is the hon. Gentleman surprised that, in the construction sector, for example, there are only eight companies, in respect of six trainees, that have, in fact, taken... Well, it cannot be six trainees, it must be... Sorry, it is four... nine trainees. Is he surprised by the apparent low levels of numbers in the construction sector, bearing in mind that there are other sectors that have taken on more trainees?

1700 **Hon. J J Bossano:** This does not include, of course, the people who are in training in the Construction Training Centre. These are mainly people who are, if you like –

Hon. D A Feetham: On the job?

1705 **Hon. J J Bossano:** – on the job, in the sense that, in many cases, what we are trying to do is get construction workers who have been doing unskilled or semi-skilled work and give them an opportunity to upgrade their skills. Therefore we do that by providing an employer with an incentive.

1710 There used to be a system in the old days where there was a craftsman A and a craftsman B and the craftsman B was an adult who did not go through the official three-year apprenticeship schemes. The fact that that no longer exists means that there are people who may have been all their lives in the construction industry and actually cannot move into better paid jobs, simply because they have not got paper qualifications.

1715 This is something that we are now looking at to see if it can be addressed, but there are a number of local firms that have agreed to take on existing construction workers who were unemployed in an area where they are giving them the opportunity to move up, say from being a skilled labourer to being a bricklayer or a mason, and that is really where this group falls into.

In addition to this, of course, the construction industry is being encouraged all the time to take on unemployed construction workers who do not need to go through the training scheme because they are already trained.

1720 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Is he finding that, in relation to the construction sector, there is an uptake in relation to... We have seen there is a small number of trainees here, but in relation to the unemployed, for example?

1725 I can tell you the purpose of... the motive or the rationale behind my question. I am very concerned about the construction sector in Gibraltar. I think that... and I do not want this exchange to be controversial. In no way, shape or form, but I have been critical of how the Government just simply put a stop to all the projects, rather than phasing them out, and I think that the industry is going through a tough period of time at the present moment. What I am asking, really, is: is he finding that there is a lack of uptake from the construction sector of unemployed people? Perhaps not as many as he would have thought there would have been?

1730 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I think if I can first correct the incorrect impression that he has, Mr Speaker, the reality of it is that, although the construction sector is, in fact, saying that they are not getting enough work to keep their workforce, it is in the context that, of course, in 2007-08 the Government was spending £40 million and in 2011 it was spending £200 million, and that it is not possible to keep on spending £200 million a year on Government construction works.

1735 So I can tell him that the growth that has happened in the construction industry has been fed by importing workers. That is to say, in October of last year, the figure was something of the order of 3,500 people in the

construction industry, compared to 1,500 in 1996. So the truth of the matter is that, although there are less people working in the construction industry now than there were a few months ago, there are more Gibraltar residents in the construction industry now than there were a few months ago, and I assume that that is something that will be as welcome to him as it is to me.

1740

Hon. D A Feetham: It is certainly welcome that more Gibraltarians are employed in Gibraltar. We all welcome that on both sides of the House, but if construction companies go under, then neither Gibraltarians nor foreigners are going to be employed in those jobs because we are going to lose those jobs permanently.

1745

Is he at all concerned about the state of the construction industry? That is the question. Let me also add this, that yes, it is certainly true that you cannot keep up Government expenditure at the levels that we had because of the amount of projects that we had – the airport, the law courts, the prison, the number of projects that obviously contributed to the figures that the hon. Gentleman has outlined. The point that I was making is that there are other ways of, instead of switching the tap off completely and abruptly, which caused huge redundancies at the beginning of the year in the sector and has placed construction companies in difficulty – and let's not forget that there is a seep-down effect on other sectors of the economy that depend on the construction sector. The people who come to me are saying that that is causing huge hardship, and I was wondering whether, in fact, that had seeped through into the type of recruitment and figures for recruitment that the hon. Gentleman is seeing in his Department.

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Hon. J J Bossano: First of all, Mr Speaker, I do not agree with the analysis with which he prefaces his remarks. As I have already told him if, two years ago, the construction industry was smaller than it is today, then two years ago, when the previous administration was in Government, they were in a worse state than they are today. That is to say, although the level of employment has shrunk since last December, it is still well above what it was two years ago, both in terms of employment and in terms of the amount of Government work being paid out. That is to say, if we take the amount that was paid to the construction company doing Government work in 2007-08 and 2008-09, the figures in those two years, which is immediately after the preceding Election, were lower than they are today.

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There has been, historically, in the last 15 years, a building cycle, where there is a building boom just before Elections and a building decline just after Elections. What is happening this year is that, although it is smaller than it was before the Election, it is still higher than after the 2011 Election. So if they were all going bust now, they would have gone bust then.

1765

What is happening is, of course, that people build up and naturally they have a problem in that, having built up, they are having to adjust to the situation. I can tell the hon. Member that I have met with the industry and I have told them, 'Look, the level of work that is going to be available is going to be less,' and consequently, in reality, the industry has got two options open to it: either the number of players in the industry stays, but they are smaller and they share the work; or some will not stay and the work will go to the remaining ones.

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But that is no different from what has happened in the past, and I can assure him that there are currently – because I monitor this regularly – more people employed overall in the industry than there were up to 2008-09 and that there are now more residents of Gibraltar, including Gibraltarians, in the industry because the industry is co-operating with the Government, but they are not reflected in these figures because this is limited only to people that we are actually providing, paid for under the employment training schemes. The people that the industry has taken on, and paying them the CATA rates, are not reflected in the figures that he has asked for, because he has asked for the people who have been taken on as trainees specifically.

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Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, could I ask a supplementary question, bearing in mind that I was two minutes away from the Chamber and when I got back I saw this paper on the question of Question 503. I suppose that we are still discussing this one?

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Mr Speaker: Yes.

Hon. J J Netto: If the hon. Member looks at the first column, there towards the end, he has got 'Medical and Health Services' as an industry group. Does he mean by that the GHA on its own, or the GHA and the Care Agency?

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Hon. J J Bossano: Neither, because the question is about companies and it is limited to the question.

1795 **Hon. D A Feetham:** So really the answer to *my* question is that any difficulties that the construction sector is encountering is cyclical and the hon. Gentleman is not really concerned about the sector in terms of any difficulties that are out of sync or any abnormal difficulties that one would not expect in a cyclical situation? That is the answer, isn't it?

1800 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Yes, the answer to that is that the level of work at the moment in the industry and the level of employment at the level in the industry is no different from what it was. If anything, it is higher than the level at which it was after the 2007 Election.

1805 There is a tendency for a lot of the projects to get bunched towards the end of a term of Government – and that has happened before – and then, even when the new Government is returned, it goes down, and that has happened before. So even when the Government that comes in after an Election is the Government that was there before, there is less work provided immediately after the Election, I suppose because people have got time to be complaining for two or three years and then they get work in the final year.

I imagine that that is the explanation of the building cycle in Gibraltar, because it happens that we have a four-year term and there is a four-year building cycle. Presumably, if we had a five-year term, there would be a five-year building cycle.

1810 But the answer to his question is that it is not a question of being concerned or being unconcerned. What is happening is what has happened after every Election in the last 15 years, that the amount of work in the industry is, in fact, less *after* the Election than before the Election.

On *this* occasion, at present, the level of work is, in fact, higher than it was after the 2007 Election. The numbers employed are greater and therefore I cannot evaluate the situation as one where the industry is 'going down the tubes' because then it would have 'gone down the tubes' in 2007 and it would not be there today.

1815 What is positive in the situation is that, in fact, we have been able, because a lot of the companies have signed agreements with us, to persuade them of the necessity to build up a *resident* workforce for the industry, particularly because there is inevitably going to be a volume of increasing work in the maintenance of buildings, the more buildings that there are. So one thing is that you need to bring in people to do a specific contract on a new site, and they come in and they go; and the other thing is to have the capability in Gibraltar to maintain buildings without having to rely on imported labour. That is something we want to achieve and therefore I hope that I will be able to inform the House at some stage that we have been successful.

Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, can I ask a further supplementary question?

1825 I take on board the comment that the Hon. Minister for Employment said that we are talking about companies – companies which have signed a contract with the Employment and Training Company Ltd – but, of course... and perhaps this is an unreasonable question on my part because he would need notice of the question, and I appreciate that, but just in the same way that we are dealing with private companies here, there are also trainees who are being seconded, or placed rather, within various Government Departments, Authorities and Agencies, which probably would have signed contracts with the Employment and Training Company itself, just in the same manner as we have these.

1830 Therefore, could I perhaps, if I write, because I do not expect the Minister to have the information with him there, but if I were to write to the Hon. Minister in relation to trying to mirror image the information provided here but, instead of being in private sector companies, can he instead provide information with Government Departments, Authorities and Agencies? Will he be able to provide me with that information?

1835 **Hon. J J Bossano:** The difference is, of course that, in the case of the Government Departments, the information would only be true on the day that I provide it. That is to say, for example, the four construction companies that have got one guy each have got a contract with us saying the person they are training will get a job at the end of the training. The people we have got in different Government Departments are not there for 11 months; they are being moved around.

1840 So if you ask me today to give you a distribution, what I am saying is that that will be true of the day that the hon. Member gets the information, whereas this is true, as it were, until the training is finished. That is the difference between the two.

1845 **Hon. J J Netto:** I accept that, Mr Speaker.

**Employment and Training Company Ltd
Details of trainees**

1850 **Clerk:** Question 504, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Minister for Employment please state, on a month-by-month basis, details of how many people have been employed by the Employment and Training Company Ltd since 1st February 2012, identifying what training scheme they were on or whether they were unemployed before being employed by that Company?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

1860 **Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, in the month of February when the Scheme started, 331 were employed from the vocational training schemes that were in existence. Obviously, since those came to an end in January. In March, April and May there were no new entrants from that source.

In February, 69 unemployed persons came into the Company; in March, 54; in April, 53; and in May, 76.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the hon. Member repeat those last figures again?

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Hon. J J Bossano: Seventy-six unemployed persons were taken on in May.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes. February, 69. March?

1870 **Hon. J J Bossano:** In February, we had 69; in March, 54; in April, 53; and in May, 76. The only two sources are either people who are unemployed or people who were in the Scheme, but the ones who were in the Scheme all came in at the beginning in the first month.

Hon. D A Feetham: So, on 1st February it is 331, and they are accounted from the VTS Scheme –

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Hon. J J Bossano: That is right.

Hon. D A Feetham: The on-the-job training, effectively.

1880 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, no – everybody who was on the VTS Scheme means including, for example, the people in Gibdock and the people in the Construction Training Centre. All those people were paid as VTS. They are all VTS.

1885 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Does the hon. Member have the figure of how many trainees there are now, as at today's date, or at the beginning of the month, whatever relevant sort of date mark he may have there?

Hon. J J Bossano: I do not have a figure, but I would have expected that, in fact, the figure is very likely to be very close to the total of these figures, because, as far as I am aware, in the short time that this has been happening, we have not had people who have concluded their training and entered into full-time employment.

1890 There may be people who have not lasted the course, so the figure that is currently under the Employment and Training Company may not be as high as this because, in some cases, some people have abandoned the Scheme – not many, but some have. I do not think that any people have stopped being in the Employment and Training Company because they have now been taken over by their training provider. Of course, as I mentioned, I think, earlier, out of the 331 who came in in February, we still have 88 in the private sector, where the private sector is effectively telling me to take them away, but I have got nowhere yet to put them.

1895 So that is the position.

Hon. D A Feetham: At the time of the General Election, the figure that the hon. Member was quoting – and I think that it accorded with my figures at the time – was around 450 people in what he has described as the VTS, but it is VTS *plus* the Construction Training Centre and Gibdock.

1900 What has happened, between the General Election to 1st February, to those 450 people, because you have taken on 331? Is it that those people have actually found employment? What accounts for the lower level of recruitment into the Future Jobs Strategy?

1905 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I think, in fact, some of those would be included in the 69 because, between December and February, the six-month period ended and they came back and registered as unemployed.

 Therefore, the 331 were the ones who in February were still being paid the £400. We had people who had been paid the £400 at the time of the Election, but who completed the six-month cycle between the Election and February, and those people have been treated, for the purpose of the provision of this information, as being unemployed because that is what they were the day they were taken on.

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1915 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, because when I asked the same question – in February, I think it was – just before the start, or just after the start of the Scheme, the hon. Gentleman told me that the Scheme would not open for the unemployed until the summer and that it had only been started as of 1st February for those people who had been on the Scheme at the General Election. So my next supplementary would have been are those 69 effectively the people who were there in these training schemes at the date of the General Election?

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1920 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I suspect that that is the position. That is to say they were the same people, but they were not getting paid at the time. That is to say the 331, Mr Speaker, were people who, at the end of January, were still getting paid under the Scheme, and therefore, on 1st February, continued where they were but simply were paid the new rate.

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1925 In the 69, most of them, I imagine, were people who had ended the Scheme and therefore they were caught. Some people, because it was a six-month thing with no extension, we had situations where somebody, by a week... That is to say because they finished a week before, would not have been able to enter into the Scheme. What we did was, in fact, we took them in as unemployed, but technically they were unemployed at that point, but they had been in VTS maybe a fortnight before.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, because if you add 331 and 69, it is 400. It is very close.

 In relation to the figures – March, 54; April, 53; and May, 76 – are those people who also may have come from the VTS Scheme or are those that had been on the unemployment list prior to the General Election?

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1935 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I think it is a mixture of the two, in the sense that those are people who had been in schemes perhaps earlier in the year, not people who had finished between December and January, but people who might have been in the Scheme, say in August or September, and were now no longer in the Scheme. Because the Scheme was not, in fact, continuing after February, it meant that those people then were required to register. Under the previous system, those who went to Bleak House did not appear in the register of unemployment so, in fact, the register of unemployment picked up a number of people who were previously not working but previously not registered.

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1940 Where the figures of 54 and 53 and 76 come from is that the vacancies that have been opened in... The Department approaches a prospective employer to say, 'Well, look, we can offer you a trainee for this job because we have not got anybody trained with the specifications that you are setting out, and in order to encourage you to take the trainee, we will pay the minimum wage while the training takes place.' That has been offered to people who are... say in the 54, there would have been people who were unemployed but who might have been in the Scheme in the previous September or August. The numbers in the Scheme in those figures, of course, are now out of the system. I would say that, by the time we have got to the 76, they are all people on the unemployment list, period, but there would have been, as it were, returning VTSs in the two other figures.

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1950 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Does the hon. Gentleman have a waiting list of people who are unemployed, wanting to go onto the Future Jobs Strategy, and what is the criteria for allowing those people to go on?

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Hon. J J Bossano: It is not a question of allowing them. This is why we think there has been a better success rate with this scheme than with the previous one, because in the previous one, from the information that I have got from the employers that have still got 88, is that they were not involved in selecting the person. The person was selected by the Department and placed in what they thought was a suitable environment to

1955

learn.

What we do now is we give the employer a choice and we send maybe... For example, we have got a pool of people who are either existing construction workers because their employment shows that they have been in construction, or young people who have been interviewed and said they are willing to go into the construction industry. We have got a dedicated officer, who is the Construction Employment Officer, who only deals with construction workers and with construction companies, and his job is to make available to every construction company that has vacancies the opportunity of taking on trainees from this pool of people, but the individuals are not *selected* by the Employment Officer, although they are, in fact, if you like, shortlisted in the sense that, since the Employment Officer we have got is somebody who used to be in the Construction Training Centre and has got a lot of experience of construction, he knows the individuals, then he is in a position to send people that are likely to be suitable candidates, rather than sending everybody who is on the list and then the employer says, 'I have asked you for a driver; you have sent me somebody who has been a waiter.'

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So, what we do now is we send construction workers or people interested in construction to construction companies. The person who is responsible for doing that picks the people he thinks the employer is likely to find suitable and then the employing company decides who they want to take, and that is how the figure is arrived at. If you match this one with the answer to the previous question, the answer would be, in the example that I am giving him that, if there are four guys in four construction companies, it would be a construction company that picked the person they wanted from the sample that we sent them. But the only selection that takes place is a selection based on identifying the skills' suitability to match the skills on the supply side with the demand side.

Hon. D A Feetham: I have not done the calculation, but can he tell me what is the total number of trainees who are actually employed by private companies? Does he have that at hand, the total number?

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Hon. J J Bossano: I am afraid they have not put the total number on.

I think I told him the last time, Mr Speaker, that when we had 29, there were 39 employees in 29 companies. So I think the figure that we have now, with the extra 62, is probably not all that much different. That is to say if we have got an extra 62, we may have a total of something like 80-odd employers and maybe 90 or 100 employees.

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That would be the order of those figures. They are not exact, because I have not been provided with them.

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Hon. D A Feetham: I make it – I stand to be corrected by the hon. Gentleman – just over 40 employees employed in these private companies. If there are only just over 40 employees employed in these private companies and you have been recruiting effectively into the Jobs Strategy at a rate of 54 in March, 53 in April, and 76 in May, where are they going? Are they going into... For example, part of them are going into... Are they going into the public service, in Government-owned companies?

Hon. J J Bossano: They are not, no.

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Mr Speaker, the question has been dealt with by the Department on the basis of the way that it has been asked, and therefore the table is the table of companies, not necessarily private companies but certainly companies. In the total that we have, we have got people who are not placed with companies but may be placed with partnerships or placed with departments or placed with agencies or placed with somebody else. One is companies and one is not.

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Hon. D A Feetham: When I say trainees are placed with companies, the last person I would have thought would take a difference and a distinction between a company and a partnership is the hon. Gentleman opposite, who constantly argues and constantly says that we are stuck in this House with too many lawyers and too many legal arguments!

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Hon. J J Bossano: Well, maybe the Employment Service must be full of lawyers like him, then!

Hon. D A Feetham: It just strikes me that we have got about 42-44 trainees who are employed with companies, who have signed these contracts with Employment and Training Company Ltd, and that that is a small number in proportion to the number of people who appear to be going onto the Scheme – again, 54 in

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March, April, 53 and May, 76.

I do not know whether legal partnerships, for example, or accountancy partnerships, if there are any accountancy partnerships, have recruited anybody, but is the vast majority of these people being recruited into the public service or Government-owned companies?

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Hon. J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, I do not know what *[inaudible]* I mean. If the hon. Member says that there are 40 employees on this list –

Hon. D A Feetham: No, I said how many are there? A cursory glance at it seemed to be just over 40.

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Mr Speaker: I make it 117, if that is of use. You have got to multiply numbers by companies, so you get a larger number. I make it 117.

Hon. D A Feetham: So, shall we take 117, then?

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Hon. J J Bossano: This is why I said I thought it would be about 90 to 100, given the fact that there are 80 employers and the fact that when there were 29 employers there were 39 trainees.

So now if we have got 80 employers, I would expect that the figure would be of the order of 90 to 100. That is the answer that I gave the hon. Member. They have not given me the total, but that is the answer that I would expect.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, I did not quite collate the... because one has the column of the number of companies on the left hand side.

Does he accept that a significant proportion of the people who are being recruited in March, April and May are effectively being recruited into the Future Jobs Strategy but being placed in the public sector? Is that the position?

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Hon. J J Bossano: No, Mr Speaker, that is not the position.

The position is that if I have told him that there have been 62 employers, the 62 employers have taken on, in May, the bulk of the 76 employees, and if they have taken on more than one in May, then they account for almost all the 76. The hon. Member has to remember that, in the original figure, we are including, for example, 40 people who came in last year into the Construction Training Centre in one intake only. We are including the people who are in the nursing training. We are including the Elderly Care Agency. All those are part of the global figure, but if he actually looks at the number of private companies that signed a partnership agreement with the ETB and took on employees, there were 62 employers in May and 76 employees. The bulk of the 76 will be in those 62.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, but can he confirm this, then: I understand that, in terms of the public service, some of them would have gone into nursing, some of them would have gone to the Care Agency, but there has been no recruitment into the Future Jobs Strategy for the purpose of those individuals being placed, for example, in the, say, Culture Department, just for on-the-job training. If they have been taken on into the public service, they have been taken into very specific training areas – for example, trainee nurses or in the Care Agency – but not for just simply on-the-job training, which was what I have always understood the VTS to have done. It has placed somebody with an employer to do on-the-job training but there is no formal training done for that individual, with the hope that person is then taken on at the end of it.

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Can he confirm that, in relation to that, there has been no recruitment in March, April or May, to do that?

Hon. J J Bossano: First of all, Mr Speaker, it is incorrect to say that it is *in the hope* that they will be taken on. That is to say, it is in the legal expectation that they will be taken on, because the 62 people in May signed an agreement that if they did not take them on they would pay the money back, so it is more than hope.

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Secondly, within the system of the recruitment from the labour pool and the VTS pool, there have been some cases where trainees have been placed in areas of the public sector in order to give them training in those areas. This is an ongoing process that will continue to be the case.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, I quite understand structured training. That I understand and the recruitment by

2065 using the Future Jobs Strategy into structured training schemes. But what I am talking about is on-the-job training, just simply placing somebody in the Culture Department – learn the ropes under somebody doing whatever they are doing in the Culture Department – are people still being recruited for that purpose?

2070 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, they are still being recruited because they were being recruited before 9th December; that is to say, we had, throughout the Civil Service, VTS trainees on £400 per month. Those people are still in the system and the bulk of the people in the system are the ones that were there from the 331 that I have told him.

2075 Of the 331, there were people in dedicated training and people *not* in dedicated training, who were working in different areas as Vocational Training Scheme trainees. Those people are still in the Government, and that system has continued to operate, where a Department has said ‘well look, the trainees are now due to leave, can you send me somebody else?’

2080 The position has been that people have been offered either somebody from another place, preferably from the ones in the private sector, where we have been reducing, or from the pool of the unemployed. But they have been given a choice in the Departments, like they have been given a choice in the private sector – they pick who they want.

2085 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but you see, if you recruit somebody from the unemployment list with the idea of placing them in a private company, now there is a limited number of private companies that are going to sign these contracts, and, indeed, the number of employees, the number of trainees appertaining to these private companies in proportion to the whole, is actually lower than those that are placed in the public sector.

2090 But is it the Government’s policy to continue to recruit people from the unemployment list, then, for the purpose of actually placing them on on-the-job work experience, effectively, in Government Departments? And *how* does the hon. Member’s Department actually decide who to take from the unemployment list to place in those Government Departments? Because it seems to me, that if I were a trainee that is precisely the type of training opportunity, even though it involves no structured training, simply because once you are in system and once you in a Government Department and on-the-job training, it is going to be very difficult for the Government to get rid of me and I am probably going to end up in the system – as a Government employee.

2095 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, I understand where the hon. Member is coming from because that is what he said during the Election campaign was going to happen, that would ruin Gibraltar and, having made those crystal ball predictions, he is trying to do everything in his power to be able to say ‘I told you so before the Elections’.

2100 I know what he is up to – but the answer is he is wrong. He is wrong like he was wrong in counting the list because he cannot say the bulk of them are in the public sector, having just acknowledged that there are over a hundred in the private sector and that if you take the structured employment that was already there, and the fact that we inherited 331, the reality of it is that the new entrants from the labour pool is minimal. If there are a total of 400 I doubt if there as many as 40 that have come in through that – so it is not true that the 5,000 public sector jobs are going to be filled from the 40 people that have come from the pool of the unemployed.

2105 **Hon. D A Feetham:** You seem to know what the motive behind my question is but you are masterful in not answering the question.

2110 Now, the question was very simple – what is your Government Department’s criteria for taking somebody from the unemployment list and saying ‘you are the lucky guy, we are now going to be placing you in Mr Linares’s Department’. What is the criteria?

Hon. J J Bossano: The answer to that is something that I have already told him at least three times, Mr Speaker.

2115 I do not know how many times he can ask the same question to get the answer because he just rephrases the question and adds adjectives like ‘you are the lucky guy that I am picking’. Well, perhaps that is what was happening before 9th December, that there was somebody sitting in some Government office picking ‘lucky guys’, and in the run-up to the Election, promising them jobs after the Election!

What is happening now, as I have already explained to the hon. Member, is that, whether it is the public or the private, a pool of names is given and the recipient entity decides who they think is going to be the best guy

2120 to take, and they decide that. I have also told him that no more than 10% of the total, in the private and in the public, that is to say the people that he has mentioned in the Culture, were not people selected as suitable for learning in the Culture or in the Tourism by the people in the ETB. The only selection that is taking place in the TD at the moment – we will be able to do more in the future, because I want to go down that route – the only area where I have got the expertise in the Department to do pre-selection is in the construction industry.

2125 So in the construction industry it is the Construction Officer that used to be in the Training Centre, which is now in the Employment Service, and has got a lot of experience, that assesses the suitability of the potential candidates. In the other areas, when somebody says ‘have you got some trainees that you can place with me?’ we send them a selection of people and they pick who they want... And I have already told him that three times.

2130 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Who picks...

Hon. J J Bossano: The recipient. The entity that is asking.

2135 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Who within the recipient? Is it the Minister that picks them? Who is picking them?

Hon. J J Bossano: To my knowledge Ministers are not involved in interviewing applicants. I do not know whether that is a practice that was there that has now been discontinued.

2140 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Alright, so are you saying that... we are now getting somewhere. Are you saying that, effectively, there is an interview process in the Government Departments so you send them 20 people – they interview all those 20 people – and then they make a decision and that is done via a board. Is that what you are saying to me?

2145 **Hon. J J Bossano:** No, no, I am not saying that because these are not vacancies that are being filled and there is a selection board. They pick people on the basis of assessing if the people are going to benefit from the training.

2150 The hon. Member opposite is *determined* to make believe something invented by him and therefore trying to get me to admit to what he has invented. The answer is he is wrong. His invention is wrong. His prediction was wrong when he said we were going to put 1,100 people in the public sector and ruin Gibraltar. He was wrong then and he is wrong now. And he is still trying to prove the same thing, and time will prove him, as he sees the result and the effectiveness of this, that we are increasing constantly the number of Gibraltarians in the private sector, *not* in the public sector.

2155 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, don't blow a gasket but are these the same people...

Hon. J J Bossano: I will blow as many gaskets as I want. (*Laughter*). I am entitled to blow gaskets after he welcomed my being here for 40 years. (*Applause*).

2160 **Hon. D A Feetham:** The hon. Member is taking too many legal points. I should have really added a legal caveat at the end of my tribute to the hon. Member this morning!

But are these people, by any chance, card carrying members of the GSLP – those people who signed for the Future Jobs Strategy at GSLP headquarters during the General Election? (*Applause*)

2165 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I do not know whether they are or they are not because they are not selected on that basis but I would strongly recommend to all of them that, if they are not, they should immediately apply. (*Applause*)

2170 **Clerk:** Question 505, the Hon...

Mr Speaker: Would this be a convenient moment for a ten minute break?
The House will recess for 10 minutes.

2175

*The House recessed at 12.08 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 12.20 p.m.*

2180

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

**Barbary Macaque ‘threat’
Remedial action proposed**

2185

Clerk: Question 505, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment provide details of the action he is taking to deal with the threat the Barbary Apes represent generally and, specifically in light of the many daily complaints communicated to the Opposition by residents in the Gardiners Road area?

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Clerk: Answer the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

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Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, as explained previously, a plan has been compiled that can take account of the general situation regarding the macaques and will address many of these problems.

In the meantime, responses to call-outs are continuing, as in the past, with management staff trying to move the monkeys away and explaining to residents what action they need to take to discourage them. I would ask the Opposition to pass details of the ‘many daily complaints’ to Government to ensure that a response is initiated and that a proper record of incidents can be kept.

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Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the answer and I will certainly pass the message on and enquire as to the specific nature of the complaints and certainly advise them to pass them on. It is just that the complaints we are made aware of are those that are, essentially, duplicates of the many complaints that are already being lodged.

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In respect of the specific area of Gardiners Road, which is one that is very much in the limelight because I do not know whether perhaps the Minister will be aware, but there is this group on Facebook called the ‘Gibraltar Apes Problem’. I am not certain whether he is a member or not (*Laughter*) – it is apparent that, in this session of Parliament, Facebook will be quite a common feature. I wonder is the Minister aware of the nature and regularity with which complaints are lodged, published or talked about on the forum?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. Member should have the impression that I frequent Facebook at all. (*Laughter*). However, I am aware of the group and I am aware of the instances.

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This is something that has happened for years, in fact probably for decades. Splinter groups of the apes tend to move down into the Trafalgar Cemetery, St Jago’s area, on a regular basis – daily basis – and they move through Gardiners Road. So this is a problem that has been witnessed in the past.

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In fact, I remember when the Hon. Mr Reyes had an office there as Minister for Culture we had numerous conversations about tackling this. It is a problem which has been tackled as I described and will be caught, we hope, in the general management plan about which I have a question – 509. If he wants to ask any further questions on that, perhaps we can leave it until 509 shortly.

2225

**Control of seagulls
Management plan**

Clerk: Question 506, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment indicate to this House what action is being taken in respect of the control/management of seagulls and can he confirm whether reports of dead

2230 and injured seagulls recently frequently appearing around Gibraltar has anything to do with the deployment of seagull population control initiatives other than controlled culling?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

2235 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the ongoing gull control programme by local operators is continuing as usual, with much of the time at this point in the season being dedicated to call-outs in built up areas.

2240 In addition, the last phase of a four year programme for the management and control of the yellow legged gull population has only recently been completed by FERA, the UK Food and Environment Research Agency, who were initially contracted by the previous administration for four years. This final phase was conducted through a period of 23 days, with a total of 2,477 seagulls culled and 179 eggs removed.

I can confirm that no control initiatives, other than the properly controlled culling methods, have been carried out, to our knowledge.

2245 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Specifically in the area of Schomberg/KGV, we have had representations made to us from residents in the area of the particularly difficult situation in which those residents find themselves, in respect of the, what I understand to be, annual cycle of chicks and that particular aspect of seagull management.

2250 Is the Minister aware of the physical harm with which they are threatened and, in fact, that residents in the area have sustained as a result of that problem in that particular area?

2255 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Probably more aware than most. Of course, I am aware of the possibility of – I use the word ‘attacks’ with caution, because normally seagulls are trying to scare you off, and it can be quite scary, particularly if you do not have a knowledge of the way they behave. It is very, very rare that they actually have an impact on you but, of course, I am aware this is precisely the reason why culling is carried out now, as it was by the previous administration.

2260 It is a problem in Gibraltar, as it is in many other coastal cities around the world and, obviously, is one that is being tackled. We hope, as I think I may have said in answer to previous questions, we are going to be re-deploying resources that were dedicated by the previous administration to FERA, now that their programme is concluded, to enhance the local programme so that more resources are put into it in the coming years.

2265 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Does the Minister concede that, or rather believe that, it is satisfactory that, in recent weeks certainly, as communicated to us by concerned individuals, the contact number provided for GONHS in the directory, which people have been trying to contact, furiously in certain instances, has provided little more than an answerphone at the end of it, confirming that there will be no one available to take calls on that number for two weeks and offering an alternative number which then turns out to be the number for the Botanical Gardens... at the end of which there seem to be representatives who explain that seagull control actually has nothing to do with the Botanical Gardens!

2270 Now, I am aware, only today, that the number for GONHS is now re-directing, or was certainly yesterday, to the Botanical Gardens: no answerphone. Is the Minister satisfied that the access to experts, or access to people who can help, is satisfactory at this moment in time?

2275 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I suspect that, as those calls used to be directed to me personally, when I was working on contract with the Ministry for the Environment under the old administration, as I had been for many years, perhaps the link is still going to my old office. However, I am glad to say that I will be announcing, in response to the hon. Member’s question – the next question, in fact, on an environmental hotline – that this has now been resolved.

2280 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, in a previous session in this House where we talked about the seagulls – I believe it was the March session – there was reference to there being ‘enhanced resources’ provided to the local culling operation which the Hon. Minister has referred to again in previous answers.

The operation by FERA having been completed, is the Minister able to describe or explain to some detail what these enhanced resources for GONHS, the contractor I understand he identified at the last session, will in fact be?

2285 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Not yet, Mr Speaker. These are issues that are being considered and will be discussed with the operators, but we are not...

I have some personal ideas, through my own experience in the matter but, certainly, we have not yet decided exactly how this will work but, no doubt, when the decision is made I will be more than happy to share that with the Members opposite.

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Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware of any secret weapons, explosive, natural or otherwise, that GONHS may have been deploying in the last few weeks in the control of the seagull population?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: No, I am not, Mr Speaker.

I do not know what the hon. Member is referring to. I am aware that, as part of their programme this year, FERA, together with GONHS, were testing the use of laser, which is obviously not an explosion, it is a visual disturbance at night to nesting gulls which had the desired effect of displacing them from their nests. Therefore, if this happens regularly enough, particularly in the cooler period of the night, it could decrease nesting success.

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It may be, if sounds have been heard, that that could be FERA who do use shotguns and that may explain if any explosive sounds have been heard. That would be the FERA operation which, like in years past, have had shotguns licensed appropriately and that may be if some sounds are being used. Other than that, I have no knowledge.

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Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker I am fully aware that I may be letting the cat out of the bag and that there is a question in the Order Paper on cats later on but to let the secret out, the 'secret weapon' which has been referred to us in the Opposition, is the use of a hawk by members of GONHS.

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Is the Minister able to provide us with any further information in relation to this?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Yes, Mr Speaker. Sorry, I thought as he said 'explosions'... I was thinking of noise.

Yes, the use of falconry has now been carried out for five or six years and the falconers are licensed under the Nature Protection Act, as are the birds in question: and they are used to disrupt, again, disrupt the nesting of gulls.

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We all know how gulls do not like the presence of birds of prey so there are two purposes here: either a hawk is flown, then the gulls are displaced and, the more disturbance, the less likely they are to succeed in the nesting. But also in built up areas where they cannot use rifles and so on to cull, then the use of hawks is a preferred option, as is the case in other places, for example in airfields in other parts of the world.

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Hon. S M Figueras: Is the Minister aware – and, perhaps, I am calling upon his expertise when in GONHS prior to his current role as Minister for the Environment – is he aware of any negative effects, any potential dangers, for the population, the community as a whole, stemming from the use of the hawk?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: The community of wildlife?

Hon. S M Figueras: No, the human community.

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Any detrimental effect on the human population: these hawks are this small, I do not think they could carry you away! Sorry, I don't think they could carry the hon. Member away. *(Laughter)*

2330

If he is implying anything else, instead of implying it, if he asks it directly then I will attempt to answer it.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I was not talking about the British Aerospace Systems Hawk, the training aircraft, the Red Arrows, I was referring to hawks occurring in the natural context.

2335

By my question – and, perhaps, it was a little too general – I was referring to the appearance frequently recently of maimed animals, dead animals, on the road, in terms of the health hazard, in terms of animals falling on you. Perhaps some more details in that respect would be helpful.

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: No, Mr Speaker, certainly not from the use of falcons or hawks. In fact, I think, if they are still using the same bird they used to use when I was involved in the operation, they would be

- 2340 American Harris Hawks, captive, bred for the purpose.
They are specifically trained to attack or catch *only* gulls. They are trained by the operators, who are very well experienced in this sort of matter and they are specifically trained to take yellow-legged gulls. Once they have a specific search image, it is *highly unlikely* they will go for anything else.
- 2345 Any maimed animal or whatever would have to have other –
- Hon. S M Figueras:** Perhaps the Minister will give way... Just to clarify, I am not talking about risks, Mr Speaker, to the human population directly from the hawk but as collateral damage – and I was not even referring to that – but as collateral damage from seagulls being injured, then causing injury or risks to the general population.
- 2350
- Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Alright. There has been no change in the methods used to the previous administration and I am not wanting to make this a political point, I am trying to stick to the technical aspects.
Not from the use of hawks... perhaps if an injured gull, which may be injured by whatever reason, either naturally by one of the wild hawks, for example, or falcons or perhaps as a result of another operation, like shooting or whatsoever: if a gull is injured it might fall on the ground in front of somebody. That might be unpleasant. Those situations have occurred particularly when FERA has been here, with the use of shotguns, and it is regrettable, but that is not going to happen again because they will not be coming back. But certainly not from the use of birds of prey.
- 2355
- Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, not meaning to delve into the political pre GSLP-type discussion that we have had very often in this House recently, is the Minister satisfied that this approach, as one of the solutions for the seagull management and control, is an appropriate and perfectly acceptable measure for this Government to undertake.
- 2360
- Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** The hawks? (**Hon. S M Figueras:** Yes.)
Yes, it is not going to solve the problem. It can reduce breeding success in built-up areas, which is a problem because they cannot be approached in any other way, particularly if the nests are not accessible to the operators. Therefore, if it reduces nesting success and does take out certain pairs, then the long term benefit will be that those pairs would not be there next year and perhaps they will be discouraged from nesting in particular areas. It is a legitimate method.
- 2365
- Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister explain whether the hawks would be successful in clearing gulls from the airfield in terms of air safety?
- 2370
- Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, how long has the hon. Lady got for this answer?
Yes, the view is, yes. Again, purely on the technical side and from the experience I have in my previous occupation, not to say profession – I hope the profession continues beyond your occupation – there have been initiatives in the past to introduce falconry in the airfield. In fact, the latest initiative was in conjunction with the development of the new air terminal, but the previous Government did not approve those proposals.
- 2375
- Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, will the Minister be consulting with air traffic control about the introduction of the use of lasers in order to disperse gulls?
- 2380
- Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker.
- 2385
- Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Daniel Feetham:
- Hon. D A Feetham:** It is just out of interest – the hon. Gentleman and I share an interest – him more than me, obviously, in wildlife, particularly in the Upper Rock, but he may recall the conversation that we had, that the red fox had been re-introduced into Gibraltar. Does he think that the red fox population is going to be impacting on the population of gulls? Is that the idea and can he provide some information to the House as to how he believes the population of red foxes are actually doing since they were introduced?
- 2390
- Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I think next time I will bring a PowerPoint presentation and I am sure

2395 we would all enjoy what I have to say on the wildlife.

It is not particularly... well, it is relevant – the success of the re-introduction programme of the red fox of some years ago is in question. The experts tell me that they are not sure whether it was successful or not so, therefore, I cannot really answer whether there has been any impact or not. It is a matter that will be taken into consideration as we develop an Upper Rock plan.

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**Upper Rock feral cat population
Method of management**

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Clerk: Question 507, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment confirm what, if any, action is being taken to control/manage the feral cat population in the Upper Rock?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment,

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, Government is currently considering what action can be taken to deal with this matter since it is committed to the protection of the natural environment of the Upper Rock.

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Government is committed to the enhancement of the biodiversity of the Upper Rock Nature Reserve. It is currently considering, in this context, what action can be taken to deal with the feral cat population and, before I am asked any supplementary, the answer is we are *considering* it: we do not at the moment have a defined plan.

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Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, in this context, does the Minister – I suspect he will, but I will ask the question just to be on the safe side – accept that the Barbary Partridge is an iconic species for Gibraltar?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Hon. S M Figueras: And further in that context, does the Minister accept that the feral cat population is responsible for the decimation ongoing of that Barbary Partridge population?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, with this – in replying to the affirmative – I know that the hon. Member next to Mr Figueras shares this concern, as a resident of the Upper Rock.

2435

**Reporting of environmental issues
Hotline and central e-mail address**

Clerk: Question 508, the Hon. S M Figueras.

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Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for the Environment confirm whether an environmental hotline and central e-mail has now been established for the purpose of reporting environment related matters?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment,

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Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, I am going to slightly change my prepared answer because of developments today.

I was going to say Government will *shortly* be issuing... I am now going to say the Government will, within the next 24 hours, be issuing a press release that will provide details of the counter address, telephone number and e-mail address that will be provided so that the public can register any environmentally related issues.

2450 The public will also be reminded of the various contact details already at their disposal in respect of specific matters. The press release, as I say, is going to issue very, very shortly.

2455 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, does the press release cover and, in that event, will do away with the need for the Minister to answer the question in substance; does it cover the response, reaction, action that will be taken in response, to matters lodged with that hotline?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, it is a short press release. I am happy to read it – I am not sure it answers all the questions.

2460 'The Department of the Environment has set up an Environmental Complaints Section for the purpose of providing the general public with a one-stop shop in respect of the reporting of environmental matters. The Section's core function is to gather information received from members of the public and pursue action directly from the respective service providers. A register of all issues raised will be established that will assist with monitoring the services provided. Feedback will be crucial to this process.'

2465 And then it goes on to explain when it will be manned, when there will be an answerphone, the telephone number and an e-mail address.

2470 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for reading the press release, as it does answer a number of questions that I had. However, it omits to deal with one or two particular issues that I would like to raise in addition by way of supplementary.

When will the hotline be manned is one question and, more importantly, perhaps, is what will the public be able to... or what can the public count on, in terms of the response where there is an emergent situation?

2475 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** The line will be operational immediately. It already exists. It is just that it has not been publicised, until this press release issues.

2480 The unit that is dealing with this, which is the Environmental Monitoring Unit at New Harbours, will log and refer the complaints to all the respective operators. For example, if there is a complaint to do with gulls then they will call the people for dealing with gulls. If it is a complaint which is more related to the Environmental Agency, they will continue with their numbers and so on but then they will be directed to the Environmental Agency or they will take the call and process it themselves.

Obviously, it is a new system which, as it develops, will mature, but the intention is that anybody who has an environment related concern will have one point of reference.

2485 **Hon. S M Figueras:** I commend the speaker for establishing the system because it is certainly something that there is no doubt the public will be able to avail itself of and benefit significantly from.

2490 However, there is one omission in the answer which I would just like to probe that little bit further, which is what will happen in the emergent situations where there is a current emergent need for some kind of assistance by the relevant officer? I know that officers have been loath in the past to be available on a 24-hour basis, to publish their mobile phones even, but I just really wish to put on record the concern of some residents that there is little or no response in specific instances of danger.

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Well, it really depends on what it is. What is 'urgent' is hard to define: something that is clearly urgent and, in other cases, it is more a matter of opinion.

2495 Certainly, the 24 hour on-call Environmental Agency Officer will remain. The Police is always a point of contact that furthers contact. Those things will all remain and, as I say, as we develop this system and see what problems there are then, hopefully, we will be able to, as I say, develop it and improve it, but all the existing emergency support for environmental matters, which *essentially* is the Environmental Agency – they remain in place.

2500 **Hon. J J Netto:** Can I ask, in order to try and clarify some of the things that the Hon. Minister has said, because he did say that the environmental hotline would be based in New Harbours, where the office is of the environmental monitors? Now, to my recollection, they normally work normal working hours, but what happens, for instance, where someone is calling to the hotline after normal working hours or even the silent hours? How is this system going to work?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: At the moment there will be a voicemail that will operate.

2510 Clearly, the options that are being considered is whether, during the silent hours, the call could be diverted, for example, to the Environmental Agencies call or to the Police but that is something that we are considering at the moment. This is not meant to replace any emergency situation, this is meant to provide people with ongoing concerns a point of contact and we will develop it and, hopefully, it will be an improvement.

2515 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, just one supplementary, I hope, because I really hate to labour the point. It is just that the Hon. Minister has said that, initially, the hotline will be a voice message. Now, in emergent situations who will be on hand to listen to the voicemail to determine whether or not it is an emergent situation, in the first place?

2520 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** As I said, this is not supposed to be dealing with emergency situations. I understand the concern. I have not heard the message yet, but it can be made clear in that, that emergencies can be referred elsewhere or we re-direct. I will take that up right away.

Clerk: Question five...

2525

**Beach refurbishment programme
Details of work and cost
Revised schedule**

2530 **Minister for Tourism, Public Transport and the Port (Hon. N F Costa):** Mr Speaker, before we move on to the next Question, with your indulgence, perhaps we can move back to Question 487/2012, where the Hon. Mr Bossino asked me about a discrepancy on the schedule that I handed him and the hon. Members opposite.

2535 Just to say that I have had the situation rectified. Essentially, there was a misalignment on the right hand side of the schedule that had the figures mismatching with the items. I have shown the revised schedule to the hon. Gentleman: he is satisfied that it is now correct.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for pointing it out and I now hand over the revised schedule to the hon. Gentleman opposite.

SCHEDULE TO QUESTION NO 487/2012

Beaches Expenditure 2012 (FROM JANUARY TO 13TH JUNE 2012)

	LITTLE BAY	CAMP BAY	EASTERN BAY	WESTERN BEACH	SANDY BAY	CATALAN BAY	ALL BEACHES	TOTAL
EQUIPMENT		£399.00					£2,604.82	£3,003.82
REPAIRS	£53,706.14	£26,438.20	£1,741.24		£6,303.14	£1,206.00	£1,321.10	£90,715.82
GENERAL				£20,000.00			£2,507.55	£22,507.55
SERVICES	£10,000.00	£300.20	£275.00		£540.00			£11,115.20
MATERIALS	£31.50			£535.00			£6,997.26	£7,563.76
TOTAL	£63,737.64	£27,137.40	£2,016.24	£20,535.00	£6,843.14	£1,206.00	£13,430.73	£134,906.15

The following are some of the extraordinary works/services included within the above schedule:

2540	1 Lifeguard uniforms	£2,507.55
	2 Repairs to lifeguard boats	£900.00
	3 Repairs / servicing of outboard engines	£421.10
	4 Binoculars for LGs	£299.50
	5 First order of 1st Aid stock for LG posts	£1,298.50
	6 Repairs to LG posts switches and sockets	£209.93
	7 Disabled toilet fittings Camp Bay	£399.00
	8 Painting of pools at Camp Bay and Little Bay and necessary repairs	£28,001.84
	9 Erection of new railings on bottom two tiers at Little Bay and extensive repairs to damaged promenade sections	£50,492.50
	10 Beach lighting at Little Bay	£10,000.00
	11 Pinewood planks to repair walkways (Eastern Beach, Catalan Bay, Western Beach)	£385.00
	12 Relocation of Western Beach toilets (These works are to be charged as part of the reclamation programme)	£20,000.00
	13 Repairs to verandas and beach access stairs at Eastern Beach facilities	£1,741.24
	14 Transportation of LG post from W. Beach to Sandy Bay and placing on location	£540.00
	15 Sandy Bay umbrella store, wooden stairs and closure of the concrete access ramp	£6,303.14
	16 PVC cladding of toilets at Catalan Bay North	£1,206.00
		£124,705.30

Point no. 10 represents an approximate cost as GibElec still have additional associated works which need to be verified.

We have also been furnished with a new lifeguard boat store at Eastern Beach, capable of holding two vessels mounted on their corresponding trailers. This structure has been constructed as part of the on-going refurbishment and beautification programme of Eastern Beach. We have no costing for these works.

2545 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, just to point out, for the sake of the record and, therefore, for the sake of *Hansard*, I think, if my memory serves me correctly, the £399 expenditure, in fact, relates to disabled toilet fittings at Camp Bay and not to repairs to LG posts, switches and sockets, which I think is the explanation which the Minister on his feet offered to me.

Mr Speaker: Well, I think the *Hansard* will disclose that, but the Minister at this stage rose to rectify the answer given to Question 487 with an amended schedule.

2550 **Hon. N F Costa:** That is correct.

Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman states the position correctly. The amount relates to disabled toilet – Camp Bay – fittings. As a result of the misalignment, I thought it related to item 6, which were repairs to lifeguard posts. Now that the schedule has been revised, it does correctly refer to disabled toilet fittings at Camp Bay.

2555 I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

**Barbary Macaque Management Plan
Re-drafting and re-costing**

2560

Clerk: Question 509, the Hon. S M Figueras

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, my last question for the Hon. Minister.

2565 Can the Minister for the Environment now state, following his planned meeting between last month's session of Parliament and the present one, whether the Barbary Macaque Management Plan has now been re-drafted and re-costed and can he give an indication as to why this exercise has been necessary?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

2570 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, work is still in progress. The exercise has been necessary in order to extend the plans and incorporate elements that were discarded by the previous administration and include new elements brought on board by additional expert advice.

2575 The Barbary Macaque Management Plan is currently being re-drafted with international NGOs, sorry, and with input from international NGOs and Professor Agustin Fuentes, following his recent visit, and will be discussed with local experts before it is adopted.

2580 The re-drafting will include a re-costing exercise. I hope this process will be complete by the end of the summer. The exercise has been necessary due to shortcomings of the former management regime under the previous administration which was under-resourced and under-supported. This meant, for example, a lack of supervision at the sites, a lack of interpretation, no support for research, failure to discourage illegal feeding, lack of financial support to improve facilities at the site for the monkeys and visitors, slow or non-existent decision making.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I am grateful.

2585 The Minister explains that the BMP – and I make no apologies for any innuendos that may come out of that – but he refers to re-costing of the BMP, that previously it was under-resourced and that there were failings under the GSD Administration.

2590 One would imagine that if the re-costing exercise is revealing, or certainly it was clear to the Hon. Minister that it was under-resourced before, that there is going to be a need for more resources going forward. Is the Hon. Minister able to give an indication of those resources that will be required and, further, whether provision for that has been made by the Government already?

2595 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker, I am not able to say what resources are going to be needed and, therefore – I am just trying to remember – provision has not been made for the *full* Plan because we still do not know what provision we will require.

2600 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister having understood, for as long as he had been involved in GONHS in a professional context, prior to taking up his role as the environmentalist Minister for the Environment, one would imagine that a certain provision *would* be made, on the basis that there is an understanding that some extra resources will be required and even though the exact number is unknown as yet because the re-costing exercise is taking a long time to be done, that some provision would be made. Has none at all been made or has some of it been included?

2605 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I think this discussion should be more appropriate during the Budget session, when I will have the information at hand and not rely on memory as to whether or not a token or otherwise... I would rather, and I would be happy to discuss this at the appropriate time. I do not have all the information available.

2610 **Hon. S M Figueras:** I am grateful for the confirmation that he does not have the information available and I look forward to discussing the matter at the relevant session, as he says.

Now you mentioned that there has been consultation with many NGOs, international, and that there will be consultation with local experts' as well. Could the Minister confirm whether there has been cost involved to the Gibraltar Government or to GONHS in respect of the advice received by all those NGOs, including Professor Fuentes?

2615 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the only costs that one could relate directly or indirectly to this was the fact that I met with the Born Free Foundation and the International Primate Protection League in London as part of a visit to different environmental departments and organisations, so it would be my travelling costs for

that.

2620 Professor Agustin Fuentes had his flights and accommodation – I think it was for two nights – paid for his visit, but he is not charging any fee for this service.

Hon. S M Figueras: I am grateful and I commend the Hon. Minister for being able to leverage that kind of resource on a *pro bono* basis. It is certainly welcome.

2625 However, have any local experts, of which there are some certainly, been consulted during the re-drafting, or would they only be consulted once it is completed?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: They have been consulted during, and they will be consulted at the latter stages of, the drafting. In other words, the revised draft that Professor Fuentes will provide will be presented to local experts before the final version is presented to Government.

2630

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, I expect the re-drafted plan will be circulated in a round-robin-type exercise, as was the case (*Laughter*) with the World War II Blast Wall.

2635 However, would the Minister be able to enlighten us as to the identity of the local experts who have been involved, if it will not take too long?

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Yes, certainly. The local experts who have been involved include... Let me just think. Apart from GONHS, which has several, Mr Brian Gomila, whom I assisted at the time of the previous administration in getting funding for a Masters. I have not yet spoken to John Fa, but I will be doing so. I was hoping to be able to visit him, but time did not allow. So, apart from those, within the Natural History Society... I am just trying to think. Other people who have an interest in the Upper Rock have also been consulted, but at the moment I think the only name I can remember is Brian Gomila.

2640

Hon. S M Figueras: One final supplementary, which may inevitably lead to another one or two: the Hon. Minister mentioned illegal feeding as one of the failings of the previous administration, and one would assume that, being a failing, it is one of the matters that are being dealt with actively in the newly being re-drafted plan, which is still under consideration. Is the Minister able to provide this House with a little more information as to how they propose, how he himself would propose, or GONHS or whoever the NGOs are, to deal with this particular matter moving forward?

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Hon. Dr J E Cortes: On dealing with illegal feeding? Again, it is a complex issue which will involve the co-operation of different users of the Upper Rock so, at this moment, I would just like to say that there are ideas on how this could be done but, certainly, there is a law that has to be enforced and we hope that all – we *know*, in fact, that all – the stakeholders will be happy to go along with it.

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2655 Obviously, there will always be individuals who will choose to do differently – individual tourists who might want to feed monkeys and so on – but, hopefully, we will be able to control that by supervision at the site, and so on, but as I say, it is a developing process.

I cannot really say any more because I cannot be held to any more, because we are still developing the programme.

2660

Hon. S M Figueras: Granted, Mr Speaker, but in relation to... and in the avoidance of doubt in respect of the identity or nature of the stakeholders in this particular process, will the Government be consulting the public in relation to those measures in relation to the feeding, given that the public themselves are users of the facilities?

2665

Hon. Dr J E Cortes: Mr Speaker, the public has been consulted in relation to the Upper Rock management, which is a parallel process to the Barbary Macaque. There have been representations made by the public on the Barbary Macaque, and those are being shifted sideways to be part of this process, yes.

The answer is, yes, they have been, and any other comments will always be more than welcome, either directly to my office – or even on Facebook.

2670

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move that this House do now adjourn until three o'clock.

Mr Speaker: Is that convenient to all the hon. Members?
This House will adjourn until 3.00 p.m. this afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1.00 p.m