



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.30 p.m. – 4.05 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 26th July 2012

## The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 3.30 p.m.*

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

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

## Questions for Oral Answer

### ENTERPRISE, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

#### **Employers' insolvency since Q500/2012 Payments made from Statutory Benefits Fund**

**Clerk:** Sitting of Parliament, Thursday, 26th July 2012. Answers to Questions continue.  
Question 605/2012, the Hon. E J Reyes, on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Good afternoon, Mr Speaker, sir.

5 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. 500/2012, showing the amount paid due to redundancy pay obligations, the amounts paid in respect of other sums payable to employees, and the number of companies involved?

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

**Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** I will answer the Question together with Question 606, Mr Speaker.

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**Employers' insolvency since Q501/2012  
Payments made from Statutory Benefits Fund**

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**Clerk:** Question 606.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Social Security 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. 501/2012, showing the amount 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?

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

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**Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, since Question 501/2012, no payments arising from the insolvency of employers have been made out of the Statutory Benefits Fund.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** And the same applicable for anything paid after the question asked at No. 500/2012?

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Yes, there has been no insolvency since then.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** I am obliged for the answer, Mr Speaker.

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**Department of Social Security  
Breakdown of employees**

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**Clerk:** Question 607, the Hon. E J Reyes, on behalf of the Hon. J J Netto.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Following the presentation of the new Estimate Book for 2012-13, can the Minister for Social Security provide a breakdown of all employees currently in the employment of the Department of Social Security, giving a breakdown by grade, location and nationality as at the end of June 2012?

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

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**Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, following the presentation of the new Estimates Book for 2012-13, the location of the employees of the Department of Social Security in June 2012 has not changed and is at 14 Governor's Parade and they are all of British nationality, as they were in 2011-12.

The grades are as follows: one Senior Officer; one Senior Executive Officer; one Higher Executive Officer; five Executive Officers; 23 Administrative Officers; and two Messengers.

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**Young people with Special Educational Needs  
Courses at Bleak House**

**Clerk:** Question 608, the Hon. E J Reyes, on behalf of the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

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**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Training tell us when the following courses were stopped at Bleak House: (a) OCR levels 1 & 2 for numeracy and literacy; (b) basic ICT courses; (c) basic life skills courses; all attended voluntarily by about 30 to 40 young people with Special Educational Needs, who have left school at 15 with no qualifications, and will the Government be providing a new scheme to replace it?

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

**Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, my understanding is that the courses in question ended at the normal time this year. That is the time they end every year.

75 At present, there are no plans to change the system.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** When he means 'no plans to change the system', that means that no plans to start a new one, or plans as in the past to start a new one in the new academic year?

80 **Hon. J J Bossano:** If the system is that it re-starts every year in September, there are no plans to change that.

85 **Employment and Training Company Limited**  
**Number of companies signing new contracts**

**Clerk:** Question 609, the Hon. D A Feetham.

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

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

95 **Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this Question together with Questions 610 and 611.

100 **Employment and Training Company Limited**  
**Activities of companies signing new contracts**

**Clerk:** Question 610.

105 **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 Employment and Training Company Limited, since he last answered this question indicating the number of trainees placed with each company?

110 **Employment and Training Company Limited**  
**New employees since May 2012**

**Clerk:** Question 611.

115 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment please state how many people have been employed by Employment and Training Company Limited since May 2012, identifying what training scheme they are undertaking and whether they were unemployed before being employed by that Company and, if so, for how long?

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

125 **Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, the total number of companies that have signed contracts with Employment and Training Company Limited, since this question was last asked, is 29 companies. These companies provide training for 37 trainees.

The breakdown requested is as follows:

Construction Industry: one company, with one trainee providing construction training, previously unemployed one month.

Wholesale trade: one company, with one trainee, providing training as a driver, unemployed previously three months.

130 Retail trade: five companies, employing seven trainees, undertaking retail training, one unemployed one month, one unemployed five months, one unemployed six months, two unemployed eight months, one unemployed one year, one unemployed four years.

Sea Transport industry: one company, two trainees, both seaman training, one unemployed two months, one unemployed one year.

135 Post and Communications: two companies, five trainees, all undertaking administrative training, one unemployed two months, one unemployed three months, one unemployed eight months, one unemployed 10 months and one unemployed three years.

Banking and Finance: six companies, providing training for eight trainees, all engaged in administrative work, two unemployed two months – *[Technical interruption]*

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**Mr Speaker:** Would the Hon. Minister please pause there? We are trying to sort out the electronics.

*There was a pause in proceedings due to technical difficulties.*

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**Mr Speaker:** Would the Hon. Minister please resume his answer from the beginning of Post and Communications? We may have lost some of that answer.

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Yes. Post and Communications: two companies, five trainees, all undertaking administrative training, one was previously unemployed two months, one unemployed three months, one unemployed eight months, one unemployed 10 months and one unemployed three years.

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Banking and Finance: six companies, eight trainees, all doing administrative training, two unemployed two months, one unemployed four months, one unemployed five months, one unemployed six months, one unemployed nine months, one unemployed 11 months, one unemployed one year and one month.

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Education Sector: two companies, two trainees, both doing nursery training, one previously unemployed four months and one unemployed one month.

Medical and Health Sector: two companies, three trainees, carer training, one unemployed one month, one unemployed three months, one unemployed four months.

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Other Services: seven companies, seven trainees, undertaking miscellaneous training projects, one unemployed for one year, two for one month, two for two months, one for one year and two months and one unemployed for four years.

Bars and Restaurants: two companies, two trainees, catering training, one unemployed one month, one unemployed three years.

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**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, the hon. Gentleman mentioned ‘Other Services’. Can he elaborate what he means by ‘Other Services’ please?

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, that is the category that is used in the breakdown of labour in the Employment Survey reports. Those are the categories into which these companies are slotted in the records for the Employment Service. They include hairdressers, gardeners, couriers – those are the key areas.

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**Borders and Coastguard Agency  
Successful candidates for security/immigration posts**

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**Clerk:** Question 612, the Hon. D A Feetham.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment please provide a breakdown as to whether the successful candidates for the security and immigration posts advertised with the Borders and Coastguard Agency earlier this year were: (a) people who were already employed in the private sector; (b) people already employed in the public sector; (c) unemployed and, if so, for how long; or (d) Future Job Strategy trainees?

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

**Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, the breakdown of the successful candidates for the security and immigration posts advertised with the Borders and Coastguard Agency is as follows: private sector, nine; public sector, none; unemployed, five; Future Job Strategy trainees, none.

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**Job vacancies  
Number filled since 30th April**

195 **Clerk:** Question 613, the Hon. D A Feetham.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment state how many job vacancies have been filled since 30th April and how many of those vacancies have been filled by people who were registered as unemployed between: (a) 0 to 3 months; (b) 3 to 6 months; (c) 6 to 12 months; (d) 12 to 24 months; and (e) above 24 months?  
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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

**Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, the number of vacancies filled is as follows: 0 to 3 months, 1,122; 3 to 6 months, 43; 6 to 12 months, 15; 12 to 24 months, one; over 24 months, one. The total is 1,182.  
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**Registered unemployed  
Breakdown as at 31st May and 30th June**

210 **Clerk:** Question 614, the Hon. D A Feetham.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment state how many people were registered unemployed, as at 31st May and 30th June 2012 between: (a) 0 to 3 months; (b) 3 to 6 months; (c) 6 to 12 months; (d) 12 to 24 months; and (e) above 24 months?  
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**Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment.

**Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** The number of persons registered as unemployed at 31st May was as follows: 0 to 3 months, 412; 3 to 6 months, 130; 6 to 12 months, 62; 12 to 24 months, 24; above 24 months, 60.  
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On 30th June 2012 the equivalent figures are: 0 to 3 months, 499; 3 to 6 months, 122; 6 to 12 months, 62; 12 to 24 months, 28; above 24 months, 58.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister provide, perhaps, his view as to why there appears to be a resistance in terms of the very long-term unemployed, 12 to 24 months and above 24 months?  
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There is an increase in the 12 to 24 months from 24 to 28 and there is a decrease of two from 60 to 58 in relation to above 24 months. Can he just give his own view about that?

**Hon. J J Bossano:** I think the increase is simply because there were people who were below 12 in May and who passed the 12 mark in June. If they do not get a job, they clearly move into the higher category with every passing month.  
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**Hon. D A Feetham:** I understand.  
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**Hon. J J Bossano:** I think there is a greater reluctance on the part of employers to take people who have been unemployed for a very long time, on the premise that, if they have not been employed for so long, if they have not been with a job for so long, then there must be something wrong with the candidate. It is a regrettable fact that when we send candidates to be interviewed for vacancies, it is the people who show that they have only recently left work are the ones that tend to get picked.  
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We try and persuade, through the training scheme, employers to do it the other way round, that is to say... So the hon. Member will see that I have got, in fact, in the previous answer that I gave him, people we have been able to place in training with a job guarantee at the end, who have been two, three and four years unemployed, but it is very difficult without some kind of incentive, like paying their wages for a few months, to get employers to... If they have got a choice, they choose the people who are younger and less time out of work.  
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**Hon. D A Feetham:** Has he done an analysis as well of – or has his Department done an analysis of – the profile of these individuals? Not necessarily does one, for example, have to not have qualifications to be in this kind of situation. I was reading an article over the weekend, for example, there was an  
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accountant in the UK and there is a story on his situation: an accountant in the UK who has been unemployed for, I think it is about four years or three years.

255 Has he done a profile of these individuals, as to whether, for example, these are individuals that may have criminal convictions that are not spent and therefore they are at a disadvantage in the labour market; that these individuals have no training and therefore it is much more difficult to place them, so that the Government can then focus, obviously, on what it is that they need to do in order to get these people into employment. Has that analysis been done?

260 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I think it has not been done, but from my knowledge of... I look at these cases, almost on a weekly basis, just to see how the market is moving, and the reality of it is that it is not related to anything specifically wrong with the individual; it is just that some people have been out of work for a very long time, frankly because people were not...

265 We have the peculiar situation at the moment that, although the numbers of Gibraltarians and other residents in employment is going up every month, the numbers who are registering is also going up every month. So the fact that I have got some people in the register who appear, in the answer to the question, as having been out of work for four months, it does not mean they have actually been registering for four months. In many cases we are getting people registering for employment who were previously getting social assistance and not bothering to turn up to look for work, because of what I have mentioned in  
270 previous meetings of the House of this very high rate of passing through. People went there, they were sent to a job and when they went to the job, the job did not exist, because in fact there was a practice that was prevalent – particularly in the private sector, but not uniquely in the private sector – that they did the recruiting outside the ETB and after they had selected the individual, they opened the vacancy. Therefore, it is in my view, possibly that 300 or 400 people who ought to have been registered were not registered  
275 previously. Some of them have been out of work for a very long time, but there is nothing identifiably justifying their unemployment, except that they have not been successful in the past and have given up looking for work and now they are coming back.

I think we should encourage their coming back and encourage employers to take them on.

280 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, that has always been the case and I do not want this to turn into a debate about the former... the practice of ETB before the hon. Member became a Minister, or the former Minister for Employment. I am not trying to be controversial here in making that point, but it has always been the case that there are going to be people who are unemployed and economically active in the sense that they are actively seeking employment and registering with the ETB. There are people, who, for  
285 whatever reason, may be unemployed, not registered, not seeking employment, or indeed that they may have decided to give up on registering at the ETB. There are many reasons.

But can I commend to the hon. Gentleman and will he undertake at the very least to consider undertaking an analysis of these individuals – at the end of the day we are talking about a significant number, we are talking over 80 who are effectively unemployed for longer than 12 months, there are 58  
290 unemployed for longer than two years – to do an analysis of precisely why they are in that kind of situation?

I accept that somebody who has been unemployed for a long period of time will always be at a disadvantage, because the employer will always ask the question, why has this person been unemployed for so long? That is obvious. But there may be very specific reasons why people are unemployed, very  
295 specific reasons that can actually be dealt with and the Government can target assistance to those individuals, bearing in mind the reason why they are unemployed.

I would just ask, commend to the hon. Gentleman that perhaps somebody in his Department undertakes an analysis. It is not a lot of people; it is 80-something, so it is manageable, the analysis and I  
300 hope that perhaps the hon. Gentleman, leaving aside our political differences, can consider the validity of that suggestion and undertake that analysis.

305 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, it has nothing to do with political differences, or wanting to go into the past or anything else. I am actually providing the hon. Member with facts. The facts are that, if I tell him that the number of local residents, predominantly Gibraltarians, who are working, goes up by 30 every month and yet the unemployment does not come down by 30 every month, it is because there are people constantly being added to the register and it is not people who are losing their jobs in the last two or three months. It is people, who, having been *absent* from being registered for a very long time are now coming back, in the knowledge that we are taking a very forceful line in persuading employers to take on local workers.

310 I will take on board what the hon. Member is suggesting and ask the Department to have a look to see if there is any identifiable reason why there are 80 –but we are talking about 80 out of 1,000 –

315 **Hon. D A Feetham:** No, no, no. If the hon. Member will give way, it is not why there are 80; it is looking at the individual circumstances of those 80 to do an analysis as to whether... There may well be 20 of those 80, the reasons why they are long-term unemployed are very specific to those 20. There may be others in a different category, different reasons. By analyzing... I would have thought that it is by analysing the reasons why some of these unemployed long term, that is the first port of call, in considering what the remedy is.

That is the only thing that I am suggesting to the hon. Gentleman.

320 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Yes, I accept that that is what he is suggesting, but he is concentrating on 80, presumably only because of the time they have been out of work and not for any other reason. I am telling him that this is not that there are 80 individuals who have been seeking employment for 24 months and for some identifiable reason they have not been able to do it. The numbers that have been registered in that category in December would have been much lower.

325 So if he looks at the figures that I gave him earlier, I pointed out to him where we are already making an impact on the long-term unemployed and what we are doing is we are effectively... in the areas where we are providing money, to encourage employers to provide training for somebody local, as well as trying to take on somebody local, they try and take somebody who is local *and* in the 'over a year' category already. That is already happening. That is already reflected in the answer to the previous Question.

330 I believe that continuing that policy will see in the future a declining level in this figure, unless more people turn up who are not registered today, but have not been working for the last 24 months.

335 But I will certainly ask them to look at the individuals, because we have got their names and addresses and their whole labour history in the computers of the ETB, to see if there is anything particularly that explains why they have been out of work for so long – but we are talking about 80 out of 1,000 and I want all the 1,000 in jobs, not just this 80.

**Clerk:** Question 615, the Hon. D A Feetham.

340 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Sorry, coming back, he says over 1,000, but over 1,000, did you include all the trainees that are employed by the Employment and Training Company? Because the figures that you have given me, in terms of the unemployed, 0 to 3 months, 3 to 6 months, do not amount to 1,000. You are including within that the people that are trainees.

345 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I am including all the trainees that have not yet got a job guarantee, because those people are still, as far as I am concerned, *available* for work.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, the difference between this side and that side is how to define unemployment.

350 Thank you very much for that clarification.

**Board of the GDC  
Meetings since 1st January**

355 **Clerk:** Question 615, the Hon. D A Feetham.

360 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment please state how many times the Board of the GDC has met since 1st January 2012, together with the dates of those meetings?

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

365 **Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** Yes, Mr Speaker: on 21st May and on 16th July.

**GDC Information Officer posts  
Number of applicants**

370 **Clerk:** Question 616, the Hon. D A Feetham.

375 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can the Minister for Employment please state how many people applied for the four Information Officer posts recently advertised within the GDC?

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

380 **Minister for Enterprise, Training and Employment (Hon. J J Bossano):** The number of applicants was 183.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** There were two other posts that were advertised at the same time: one within accounts and the other one within the coach park, I think it was. Does he have the figures as to how many people applied for those two other jobs?

385 **Hon. J J Bossano:** No, because I only asked for this information which was the one in the question.

390 **ADJOURNMENT**

**Procedural  
House adjourned *sine die***

395 **Clerk:** The Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

**Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** I have the honour to move that this House do now adjourn to Thursday, 2nd August at 3.30 p.m.

400 **Mr Speaker:** I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Thursday, 2nd August 2012 at 3.30 p.m.

I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn to Thursday, 2nd August 2012 at 3.30 p.m. Those in favour. (**Government Members:** Aye.)(**Opposition Members:** No.) Defeated.

405 **Hon. J J Bossano:** If we do not adjourn to then, we will adjourn *sine die*! Or do not adjourn at all; we sit here for the next four weeks! (*Laughter*).

**Hon. P R Caruana:** Could the Hon. Deputy Chief Minister at least explain to the House why we are parting with the tradition that the House does not sit in August?

410 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the adjournment to that date is when Mr Licudi is available, back in Gibraltar, to answer questions.

415 **Hon. P R Caruana:** Mr Speaker, does the hon. Member know when the last time was that the House met in August? And does he really think that it is justified that Ministers should not organise their agendas in a way that avoids breaking with Parliamentary tradition, not just in this country, but indeed in the United Kingdom too?

420 **Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I think the hon. Member knows that the Government has been very flexible to him, particularly, whenever he has requested adjournments or changes even of Chief Minister's questions. So I do not think we are asking anything extraordinary to change.

425 **Hon. P R Caruana:** [*Inaudible*] for the adjournment if he wants the Opposition to vote in favour of it, or secure his majority from the Government benches. The Opposition is *not* supporting an adjournment to August.

430 **Mr Speaker:** Well, I think, (*Interjections*) I understand the debate here, but in practical terms, do we sit here until 2nd August, when the hon. Members...? (*Interjections*) Because we either carry on the business or we adjourn, but we cannot carry on the business because the Member is not here. (*Interjections*)

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, if they don't want to [*inaudible*].

**Hon. Deputy Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, can... I have the honour to move the House do now adjourn *sine die*?



435 **Mr Speaker:** But there are questions unanswered yet. Is the Opposition content with that?

**Hon. P R Caruana:** Well, Mr Speaker –

440 **Mr Speaker:** Because in theory, you can ask on day one... On day one, you can have an adjournment *sine die* –

**Hon. P R Caruana:** – the Hon. Minister Licudi is not present, as I understand it, in Gibraltar – (**Mr Speaker:** Exactly.) is that right? Or is he sitting in his office doing something else?

445 **Mr Speaker:** He is away.

**Hon. P R Caruana:** If the Hon. Minister is not here, he cannot be *dragged* here. (**Mr Speaker:** [*inaudible*]) Therefore there is no point in the Opposition insisting on an adjournment that facilitates him being here to answer questions, when he is not physically here. That would be absurd. We are not making a stand against the fact that Mr Licudi cannot organise his diary to be present in the House.

450 At the last sitting of the House, the Hon. and Learned Chief Minister interspersed his interventions consistently with a reminder to people that I had not been present in the House during parts of the Budget debate. Well, what is sauce for the goose, is sauce for the gander. We are now making a point of that too. Our protest is not about the fact that Mr Licudi is not here, much as we regret that; our protest is against the adjournment of a House unconventionally to August *for that reason*, which is not an emergency reason.

455 If there were an emergency of some sort, then a sitting in August would be justified. If there is not an emergency, if it is all up to Mr Licudi's diary, then frankly, I do not think this House ought to part with the tradition that it does not sit in August and *that* is the reason why we are objecting to the adjournment to August.

460 If the hon. Member now is moving the adjournment *sine die*, we will support that and we will expect Mr Licudi to answer these questions next time. I do not think there are any questions there that cannot wait for –

465 **Mr Speaker:** No, if the Opposition is content to have these questions not answered in this sitting and is happy to put them for the next sitting, well...

I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourns *sine die*.

470 I now put the question, which is that this House do now adjourn *sine die*. Those in favour. (**Members:** Aye.) Those against. Passed.

This House will now adjourn *sine die*.

*The House adjourned at 4.05 p.m.*