



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

MORNING SESSION: 10.35 a.m. – 12.51 p.m.

Gibraltar, Friday, 4th July 2014

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 10.35 a.m.

[MR SPEAKER: Hon. A J Canepa GMH OBE *in the Chair*]

[CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P E Martinez Esq *in attendance*]

Order of the Day

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Standing Order 7(1) suspended to proceed with the laying of a Report and Government motions

Clerk: Mr Speaker.

5 **Mr Speaker:** Before I call on the Chief Minister, I would like on behalf of all Members to wish the Hon. Jaime Netto a very happy birthday. (*Applause and banging on desks*)
The Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I beg to move under Standing Order 7(3) to suspend Standing Order 7(1) in order to proceed with the laying of a Report on the table and Government motions.

10 **Mr Speaker:** Ordered to lie...no. My apologies, my mind was elsewhere.
Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

PAPERS TO BE LAID

Clerk: Papers to be laid, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

15 **Chief Minister (Hon F R Picardo):** I have the honour to lay on the table the Annual Report of the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority for the year ended 31st March 2013.

Mr Speaker: Ordered to lie.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Honorary Freedom of the City of Gibraltar – Conferred upon Sir Graham Watson – Motion carried

20 **Clerk:** Government motions.
The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my name, which reads as follows:

'This House resolves that the Honorary Freedom of the City of Gibraltar be conferred upon Sir Graham Watson for his outstanding defence of the interests of Gibraltar and promotion of the wishes of the people of Gibraltar in the European Parliament and elsewhere.'

25 Mr Speaker, I think that Sir Graham Watson needs no introduction to anybody in this Parliament and indeed anybody who may be watching the proceedings of this House. He has been a stalwart defender of the rights of Gibraltarians in his capacity as one of the representatives of the people of Gibraltar in the European Parliament.

30 He is of the Liberal Party, but we know that those that represent us in the European Parliament of all the political parties that we have the choice of electing in European Parliamentary Elections do an excellent job. There are some that go further than others in discharging their obligations to the people of Gibraltar and I think Sir Graham is one such person. He has distinguished himself in the way that he has looked out for Gibraltar. Once we became his constituents, he has been careful to ensure that issues which relate to Gibraltar are referred back to Gibraltar to the Government of the day, to those in Gibraltar who he knew he could take clear soundings from on how issues might be relevant to Gibraltar and of course, in particular, he has had a very strong relationship because of his partisan affiliation with the Deputy Chief Minister, who is the Leader of the Liberal Party in Gibraltar and has therefore become his first port of call and his representative in Gibraltar.

40 But it was obvious to those of us who were able to observe the recent visit of a number of Gibraltarians to Brussels of all political denominations that Sir Graham was there for them throughout the period of their important visit, and that really represented what Sir Graham has been doing for Gibraltar. He really has been going beyond the call of duty, beyond his obligations since he became our representative and since we became his constituents. Now that unfortunately he will no longer be representing us in Brussels as an MEP, it is right that the people of Gibraltar should recognise his stalwart efforts by the bestowing of this award of the Honorary Freedom of the City.

45 Mr Speaker, if I may, before I sit down, the hon. Members will have seen that there are a number of motions bestowing the Freedom, the Medallion of Honour and then the Medallion of Distinction. We have not done many of those since we were elected. We were concentrating on issues related to the politics that we discussed yesterday – let us not go back into that debate – and we have now had an opportunity to look at the question of the honours that this House bestows. People watching and listening should see this lengthy list that the Parliament will be considering today as a catch-up in respect of the Medallions of Distinction that we feel should be awarded and the Medallions of Honour that should be awarded. We do not expect always to be coming back with a long list, although there may be instances where worthy individuals are brought to our attention that we will be bringing to this House for distinction, but today that is why we are dealing with all of these motions together.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

60 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, yes, the Opposition will be supporting the motion. I am not sure whether Sir Graham Watson – I will be corrected or I will be told no doubt in the Chief Minister's reply – is in fact a member of the Liberal Party... I mean the *local* Liberal Party. It makes absolutely no difference, Mr Speaker, because the Opposition does not look at these things in terms of membership to any political party associated with local political party partisanship. At the end of the day really, the test is to look at whether somebody has defended Gibraltar, whether somebody has made an outstanding contribution to the defence of Gibraltar, to the defence of the rights of the people to self-determination, to defence of our sovereignty, and certainly this is an individual who really has gone out of his way to do precisely that.

65 I have to say, as I have said publicly when the result was announced of the European Elections, that I was very, very sad indeed to see that somebody who has worked so hard to advance the interests of this community was not elected at the European Elections – that was a very, very sad loss for Gibraltar.

70 But I am happy, on behalf of the Opposition, to support this motion today.

Mr Speaker: I now put the question... oh, sorry.
Does any other Member wish to contribute?

75 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Mr Speaker, I thank the hon. Member for his support and for his words. I would be grateful also for the opportunity to say a few words on the motion.

80 Sir Graham was an MEP from 1994 until 2014, which is 20 years. He was one of our seven MEPs and then six MEPs from when Gibraltar voted in the European Elections for the first time in 2004. But even before he became our MEP, I remember in 2002 going to there was a congress in Bath of the European Liberal Democrats. This was a time when we were fighting against the joint sovereignty campaign and there was a motion which was tabled in that congress supporting the right to self-determination of the

people of Gibraltar and supporting our European Union rights as well, and it was Sir Graham Watson then, before he became our MEP, who actually chaired that particular meeting. So even before he was elected for this constituency he took an interest in Gibraltar issues.

85 I think the Chief Minister has made the point very well. What Sir Graham has done is to go beyond the call of duty and while there have been many MEPs and MPs, and there still are, who are friends of Gibraltar, I think Sir Graham took it a step further and he went beyond what would have been expected of him. There is an example of that in 2006, where for the first time we managed to overturn a civil aviation measure, which sought to exclude Gibraltar from its application. There was a vote in the European
90 Parliament, which Graham organised by tabling an amendment, and it was to do with disabled air passenger rights. We won the vote and for the first time the Parliament took out a clause which sought to exclude Gibraltar from the application of a new measure. What happened after that is that Cordoba came into play within a few weeks and obviously that meant the new measures would apply to Gibraltar automatically, but this was the first time that something was done in the Parliament where we actually managed to overturn
95 the exclusion of Gibraltar from EU, a new aviation measure, and it was largely due to Sir Graham Watson's efforts.

In 2014, as the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition has said, in May of this year the European Elections took place. Graham won the Gibraltar vote with 66% of those who voted actually doing so for him and for his party, and unfortunately, regretfully, because of the situation in the United Kingdom and because of the way that we are as a joint constituency, he was not elected to represent us.
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But certainly I think it is very fitting and very welcome that the Chief Minister has chosen to move the motion and I certainly will be supporting it.

105 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Would you give way please?

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Yes.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I should also have said during my contribution, also in response to a contribution that the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister made during his speech, that I think that it is a good
110 idea for this individual to somehow be kept on, on behalf of Gibraltar. I note that that is the intention on the Government side and it will have support on our side. I think that we cannot afford to lose...

Provided it is obviously done transparently and all the rest of it, leaving all that aside, I think that it is important that individuals, such as these, with the wealth of experience and the contacts in Europe to be kept on, on behalf of Gibraltar, and certainly I think that the choice by the Government of keeping Sir
115 Graham Watson working in some capacity in Brussels on behalf of Gibraltar is a good decision and we will also support that.

Hon. Deputy Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the hon. Member for his words of support and this is something the Government is looking into. Obviously there are two sides to the equation and we need to see what emerges from it, but he is right that Sir Graham is very well connected. He has managed to facilitate meetings for us and attendance at events and conferences, which would simply not have happened without his contacts, and so I am certainly very grateful for that support.
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Mr Speaker: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak?
125 The Hon. Dr John Cortes.

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): If I may, Mr Speaker, just some very brief words.

I have got to know Sir Graham over the last two and a half years. His attitude in private is as enthusiastic in favour of Gibraltar as it is in public. He hosted a visit that I paid to Strasbourg about a year and three months ago and facilitated meetings with Commissioners, with MEPs and so on, and the doors that he was able to open were quite impressive.
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But just one point that I would like to make, the Freedom of the City of Gibraltar is conferred by this House on behalf of the city, but the fact that the Liberal Party, clearly because of Sir Graham, did so well in the recent European Elections, means that on this occasion that the conferring of the Freedom of the City is almost by public acclaim by the city and I think that says it all, Mr Speaker. (*Banging on desks*)
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Mr Speaker: The Hon. Steven Linares.

140 **Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, just to say through the years as a Liberal Member, a member of the Liberal Party, I have gone to many, many conferences in which Sir Graham has been present. He was not only a politician; he was a personal friend

of mine. I had gone to his house. I had eaten – (A Member: He is.) Yes, he is, sorry. Yes, okay. Sorry. He is a personal friend of mine and I have lots of contact with him, with Dr Garcia, and like I said, he has invited me to his home and I have met his family and so it is not only the fact that he has done a lot for Gibraltar, but he is very close to us as friends. Therefore this motion is very, very fitting to Sir Graham and I am really pleased that the people of Gibraltar now recognise all the sterling work that he has done.

Thank you very much. (*Banging on desks*)

150 **Mr Speaker:** Any other Member?

Yes, the Hon. Albert Isola.

Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola): Mr Speaker, just very, very briefly.

155 I have only known and worked with Sir Graham for the last 12 months, since my election to this House, and I think it is absolutely crucial that we understand and recognise, as we are doing today, the importance of people like Sir Graham and others before him and hopefully many others after him, with the good work of the Gibraltar office and hopefully an office in Brussels will deliver in times of need, because at the end of the day, Mr Speaker, Gibraltar needs desperately to have friends. In our times of need, as indeed in 2003 and 2004 and in this past 12-month period when the going gets tough, we need our friends and Sir Graham Watson has certainly been standing aloof and above all others in standing up for us at every possible juncture and difficulty.

160 For me, Mr Speaker, I find that Sir Graham has been an absolutely exceptional individual and an exceptional friend of Gibraltar and I am delighted to support the motion, Mr Speaker.

165 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am grateful that the Members of the House who have spoken have indicated their full support for this motion. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the partisan aspect of this and said it was not relevant, and he is of course absolutely right.

170 The House has conferred the Freedom on members of the different United Kingdom political parties who have shown their affection and their support for the people of Gibraltar in the discharge of their functions in different Parliaments, some of them in the House of Lords, some of them in the House of Commons, and Sir Graham now in the European Parliament, regardless of political affiliation and it is right that we should continue to do that. And just springing to mind, Lord Bethell of the Conservative Party and Andrew MacKinlay of the Labour Party to think of only two of the many who have rightly had the Freedom bestowed on them by different generations of Parliamentarians in Gibraltar.

175 I am grateful for the indication from the hon. Gentleman about the work that Sir Graham might do for Gibraltar in the future, and of course any such arrangement is entered into transparently. Whether the details are to be published is another thing, for the reasons we have discussed before in relation to another person who has given equally distinguished service in the European Parliament, and that is Glyn Ford, who represented Gibraltar's interests in the European Parliament even before we were his constituents. But he will excuse me for jibing at him, that we are considering a £¼ million package with an allowance for his children's education and some housing allowance in Brussels. I am delighted to see that he supports that, even though there is only one Sir Graham Watson and we cannot interview for another one.

185 **Mr Speaker:** I now put the question, in the terms of the motion moved by the Hon. the Chief Minister. Those in favour? (Members: Aye.) Those against? Carried. (*Banging on desks*)

**Gibraltar Medallion of Honour –
Bestowed upon Ernest Montado CBE –
Motion carried**

Clerk: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

190 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

'This House bestows the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour upon Ernest Montado CBE, who has served and contributed to the interests of Gibraltar and its people in an exceptional manner that is particularly worthy of recognition by this House on behalf of the people of Gibraltar and in particular, for services

to the public service in politics; Mr Montado having served as Chief Secretary under four successive Chief Ministers.'

Mr Speaker, the contribution that Ernest Montado has made to the public life of Gibraltar has been recognised already to a great extent by the bestowing upon him of the award of Commander of the British Empire, the CBE, which is indeed a very high honour bestowed by Her Majesty on those who have shown exceptional service in whatever walk of life they may have pursued.

The Government considers that people like Ernest Montado must also be recognised directly by the people of Gibraltar for the work that they have done. To an extent, to many the recognition by this Parliament of the work that they have done is perhaps, dare I say, as important, if not more so than recognition by the award of CBE in a *different* way, because of course an honour from Her Majesty, such as being made a Commander of the British Empire, is hugely important, but a grass roots recognition of that work – and I say grass roots, because this Parliament represents the *people* of Gibraltar – is an honour from the people up, rather than from the sovereign down and it can mean just as much.

Mr Speaker, the trajectory of Ernest Montado in the Civil Service is one that is well known to all Members of the House and it is clear that people should not be bestowed honours for doing their jobs as Civil Servants, and there is no question of this being a reflection of simply an honour being bestowed because Ernest Montado did his job. This honour is being bestowed because Ernest Montado did *more* than just his job, and having served four Chief Ministers in itself is no mean feat, in the sense that he was able to enjoy the trust and confidence of four different Party Leaders of *three* different political parties at different times in Gibraltar's history, spanning Chief Ministers of different generations. At least he served four different generations of Chief Ministers as well. If I may say so: Sir Joshua, representing the first Chief Minister, yourself the second – a different generation of Chief Minister – Mr Bossano the third and Sir Peter Caruana the fourth.

And in that service, I am very jealous to say, you had somebody who was not just the Head of the Civil Service, able to run the administration entirely admirably with the support and respect of every civil servant, who thought of Ernest Montado as a just and equitable leader of the Service, but also you had a political advisor with a small *p*, who understood the political issues between Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar, who understood the issues with the Kingdom of Spain and all the surrounding issues, and therefore was not just somebody who might turn up to take a note. He was somebody who was very useful to have available in the service of Chief Ministers and I daresay that the work that he did is as important a part of the advancement of the people of Gibraltar as the work done by the Chief Ministers that he served, and I can put it no higher than that.

I have had the pleasure of working with Mr Ernest Montado in private practice, but not with him serving as a civil servant. After I became Chief Minister, he made himself available to me so that if I needed anything he would happily, at absolutely no cost, assist the Government of Gibraltar. He has on two or three occasions done so and we have been very grateful indeed for him doing so in a way that seeks absolutely no reward, but as he says, simply to continue his service in the service of his people, the people of Gibraltar.

Therefore it is absolutely right in my view that it should also be the *people* of Gibraltar who recognise the service given by Mr Montado by the bestowing of the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour, which short of the Freedom is the highest recognition that this Parliament can award for a lifetime of service.

I therefore, Mr Speaker, commend this motion to the House.

Mr Speaker: Does any hon. Member wish to contribute to the debate on the motion?

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, yes, very shortly.

Mr Speaker, we are absolutely delighted and certainly from a personal perspective, *I* am absolutely delighted in being able to rise today to support this motion to bestow this honour on Ernest Montado.

The Hon. the Chief Minister said that we do not bestow honours on people just simply for being civil servants, but this is a man who has actually been a Chief Secretary with distinction. He has served the people of Gibraltar with absolute distinction and he is one of the most distinguished Chief Secretary's, the most senior person within the Civil Service we have ever had here in this community. A man who has always been, even after he retired as Chief Secretary, at the end of a telephone, extremely, extremely approachable.

A man who has always been a fountain of knowledge, and in the same way as the Hon. the Chief Minister has had dealings with Mr Montado professionally, I have also had dealings with Mr Montado professionally. In the same way as the Chief Minister has been able to draw upon his knowledge when he has been a Chief Minister in an informal, as I understand it, consultancy terms, I have been, as Leader of the Opposition, also been able to telephone Ernest in moments where there has been or I have had some doubt about any particular issue or I have wanted to bounce something, use him as a sounding board, and he

250 has always been somebody who has been there at the end of the telephone or been prepared to meet with me to always give me very sound advice, impartial objective advice.

I think that he is a man who thoroughly, thoroughly deserves this particular honour and we are certainly delighted in supporting it.

255 **Mr Speaker:** Does any other...?
The Hon. Joseph Bossano.

260 **(Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety) Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, I do not want to say a great deal, because I think we all know Ernest very well... those of us who have been around in politics for a long time, but I think there is something about what he was able to contribute which was directly the result of his own progression within the Service.

265 He built the Statistics Department which we have today. He started off there and in fact the increasing sophistication of our numbers, which other people do not seem to enjoy as much as I do, I think he is responsible for having put us on that road. Of course it is very important that because he was from that part of the business, he was able then to take on the role of Financial Secretary, and take on the role of Chief Secretary and on occasions acted as Deputy Governor. So he actually brought when he was finally in Convent Place, having had a career within the Service, that touch on all the important bits of the business. He dealt with the United Kingdom, as the Chief Minister has mentioned, and he had a great deal of knowledge of how to deal with people in the Foreign Office and in Government Departments in the United Kingdom. He was often able, certainly in the ages that I was there, to go off and doing it on his own without the need for a political directive as to what the policy was because he instinctively knew what the policy was.

270 And he, himself, of course was at a very early age in the young AACR, so he had also that instinctive political element as you know, because it was in the old days of the AACR that he had that instinctive element of feeling nationalistic about Gibraltar, feeling that the protection of our people and our country had to be the very core value of everything that we did, and that if we had to have differences of opinion with London in order to defend our homeland, then so be it. And I think he brought that in, in a way which did not in any manner or form dilute his basic commitment that he had to be a completely impartial civil servant and therefore he gave the advice, whether the recipient was getting the advice he wanted to hear or not, which he felt professionally was the correct advice, but I think it came with the kind of commitment he would have had, had he chosen to be a politician in defence of Gibraltar. So I think it is a good opportunity that we remember just how much he has done for Gibraltar.

280 **Mr Speaker:** Does anybody else wish to contribute?
Mr Edwin Reyes.

285 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I rise to make a very small contribution as well. I think we all share the same thoughts about Mr Montado's qualities and as a Parliament we are above all highlighting his contributions towards politicians on whichever side of the House they have sat.

290 But I am sure I also speak on behalf of my hon. colleague, Steven Linares. We have both had the pleasure in the past of being Presidents of the Gibraltar Teachers Association and Mr Montado had this ability to offer us sound and impartial advice that we obviously both took advantage of at some stage or another. Whether it be at social functions or whatever, we used to pick his brains, and say, 'How do you think a politician will react when we come up with this claim?' and so on. I must say that Mr Montado always remained faithful to all the politicians, but you could see at heart that he was a worker. He was a civil servant and would really have made a very good trade unionist had he not had such a wonderful career within the Civil Service itself and perhaps would have become one of the leading personalities had he chosen that path.

300 So I wish to record on behalf of all trade unionists, and I know Mr Bossano and Mr Netto would also wish to join me, thanks, Mr Montado, for your contributions and above all for your sincerity every time you offered any advice.

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker, very few words.

305 I think I must be one of the few people in this House at the moment who actually served as a civil servant while Mr Montado progressed in his career from statistician to Chief Secretary, and I recall those days well, back in the mid to the late 1980s.

I served in the Civil Service, both as an EO and then as Manager of the Health Authority at the time and I have great memories – a theme that has been said across the House this morning about him – of the guidance and advice that he could give and the fact that he bestowed great confidence. When you knew that

310 Ernest Montado was dealing with a matter, then you knew that it would be dealt with fairly and that the problem, if there was one, would be resolved.

He was and continues to be a man, as I say, who bestowed great confidence and a man of great wisdom and I think that that is a quality that is all too rare, and therefore I am very, very happy to support this motion.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am grateful to Members on both sides of the House for their support of this motion.

If I can just deal with one of the things that the Hon. Mr Reyes said, accepting everything he said, but just reminding him that politicians are workers too and if Ernest Montado had decided to become a politician and he had stayed on this side of the House, certainly he could have done so without forgetting that he was a worker. *(Laughter)*

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Mr Speaker, I think one of the things I omitted to say when I was presenting the motion is that one of the qualities that I identify in Ernest Montado – and I think the Hon. the Minister for Employment, Mr Bossano, who as Chief Minister served with him, as you did, encapsulated – was that he would give the opinion that he believed was right, whether it was or not what the politician wanted to hear. That on some occasions is expressed as having the courage to speak truth unto power and it is one of the most important functions that civil servants fulfil and I think that Ernest Montado represents that quality. He does not shy away from giving an opinion, which he believes is the right opinion, simply because of the standing that the person he may be expressing that opinion to may have and the fact that they may obviously think the opposite.

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I think it is also true to say, although I stand to be corrected, but I think it is true to say that Ernest Montado is probably the Gibraltarian to date who has attended the most sessions of the United Nations where Gibraltar has been represented, because he did all of those which involved Joe Bossano and he did most of those that involved Peter Caruana, whilst Sir Peter went to both of the Committees, and that is indeed a distinction. I think he, in his period will have attended meetings – you will be better placed to confirm this or not – with delegations that attended Brussels and Airport Agreements, now discussions, all the way up to the discussions in Cordoba that led to the Trilateral and the Cordoba Accords, and if he was not there, he was certainly in the background involved in the preparation for those meetings etc.

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In fact, I seem to recall from my discussions with Ernest that there was one occasion when he was not just Acting Deputy Governor. I think there was one occasion that for one reason or another there was even a need for an Acting Governor, and he was an Acting Governor. I do not think he was the first Gibraltarian or the only Gibraltarian to have filled that function, but he was certainly one of the few Gibraltarians to have fulfilled that function. And in keeping with the bestowing of the CBE on him, I think the fact that at the time of an older constitution he was able to enjoy the confidence of the United Kingdom Government, such that he might be entrusted with the Office of Governor of Gibraltar, demonstrates the sort of man that we are bestowing the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour on today.

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Mr Speaker: Before I put the question, may I ask leave of the House to associate myself with what has been said?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Yes.

Mr Speaker: Ernest Montado was economic advisor of the Government during the years when I was Minister for Economic Development and Trade, and in 1986 when Joe Pitaluga retired, Sir Joshua and I persuaded him – and we had to persuade him – to take on the job of Chief Secretary because he had set his heart on being Financial and Development Secretary. But we pointed out to him that we had no doubt that he would be able to do much more for Gibraltar in the post of Administrative Chief Secretary than he would as Financial and Development Secretary and I think events have proved that that has indeed been the case.

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The Chief Minister is quite right that there has been one other Gibraltarian to have acted as Governor and that was Sir Howard Davies, and in fact my last comment is to say that I regard Ernest Montado as the greatest civil servant that Gibraltar has had since Howard Davies. *(Applause and banging on desks)*

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Hon. Chief Minister: Would you give way? *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, there is one thing which I have omitted to mention, which your intervention has prompted me to, which is that Ernest Montado has sat in this House and very few civil servants have sat in this House. But when he has acted as Financial and Development Secretary in the days of the 1969 constitution, there have been some occasions when the Financial and Development Secretary was absent from Gibraltar and therefore he stood in his place and came to this House to represent him. So he has also been a Member of this House, something which is highly unusual for a civil servant.

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Mr Speaker: I am now going to finish up with an advert. He is collaborating with me now in the writing of my memoirs (*Interjections*) so he is still someone that I cherish enormously.

I now put the question in the terms of the motion moved by the Chief Minister. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried. (*Applause and banging on desks*)

**Gibraltar Medallion of Honour –
Bestowed upon John Alcantara CBE –
Motion carried**

375 **Clerk:** The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

'This House bestows the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour upon John Alcantara CBE, who has served and contributed to the interests of Gibraltar and its people in an exceptional manner that is particularly worthy of recognition by this House on behalf of the people of Gibraltar and in particular, for services to the law and politics; Mr Alcantara's main achievements being his time as a puisne judge of the Supreme Court of Gibraltar and his service as Speaker of the House of Assembly.'

380 Mr Speaker, John Alcantara is very well known to the community, but I want to start with something that I found out only when I read *Gibraltar: The Making of a People*, the book by the Deputy Chief Minister, which stands as one of the necessary tomes that anybody wanting to understand our politics must read. What I found out there was that the John Alcantara that I knew as a law student as a judge had actually been a firebrand young politician in the AACR in the years after the war and that he took the route of the law only after deciding not to take the route of politics; but he was to come back to politics in a
385 different guise much later in his life.

John Alcantara is not a man who covets any honours and I wonder whether we will be able to persuade him that the recognition of his people must result in him accepting this Medallion of Honour. I am sure we will be able to because he has demonstrated all the best qualities that Gibraltarians have... the ability to discharge functions that had not previously been associated with Gibraltarians, to sit in judgement over
390 other Gibraltarians and to do so entirely dispassionately as the law requires was something that others believed could not be done by somebody from this community and required the importation of skill from outside, and John Alcantara demonstrated that that was not in fact the case. Today, we have a Chief Justice, who is a Gibraltarian, and after him, of course, very distinguished service by Felix Pizzarello, both as magistrate and as Supreme Court puisne judge also.

395 I came to know John Alcantara, in my own legal practice, as a Judge of the Supreme Court and then also as a magistrate. He went in his retirement back to the Magistrates' Court when he was asked to do so because Gibraltar had a long interregnum between the appointment of a magistrate and a successor and we needed somebody to fill the role and the then Government asked him to come back to the Magistrates' Court and he did as good a job in the Magistrates' Court as he had done years before when he was
400 magistrate before being elevated to puisne judge.

He and Nati moved away from Gibraltar to Belize for some years so that he might be able to obtain the experience necessary to become a puisne judge in the Supreme Court of Gibraltar and having done that, and having served with such distinction in the Supreme Court, he was bestowed his CBE. He came back to politics, Mr Speaker, late in his life to become Speaker of this House. He was Speaker when I was elected
405 and he discharged also then the function of Mayor as you are doing now. And Speaker of this House I found him always to be affectionate for all Members and assisting in as much as he could, advising Members on both sides on how they could make their contributions better, which usually involved the word 'shorter' (*Laughter*) and always kind in his approach to all of us.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to say anything about the reasons why John Alcantara stopped being Speaker, those are recorded in *Hansard*. I often come across the passage when I review... in preparation for my
410 Budget debate, my discipline is to review all the Budget debates before, read again what Chief Ministers have said before and what Leaders of the Opposition have said before, and I come across that difficult passage, which I think marked all of us a little bit who were here in the House that day.

415 But John was good enough to stay as Speaker for a very special session of this House, which was the session in August when we celebrated the 300th Anniversary of a British Gibraltar, which he presided over as Speaker of this House, and he presided over other functions that day as Mayor.

Mr Speaker, John Alcantara is regarded by people in this community with the very, very highest regard for the work that he has done for this community in every function that he has undertaken. He recently lost Nati his wife, and I hope that the people of Gibraltar will be able to demonstrate to him the affection in which they hold him and the regard in which they have, the work that he has done, by the bestowing of this Medallion of Honour. *(Banging on desks)*

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I had hoped to be able to rise to say I associate myself with every single word the Chief Minister says and then perhaps to say a few words and sit down. I have to say that he has injected an element of controversy that has been unnecessary by reference to the passage in *Hansard* in relation to the reasons why Mr Alcantara decided to leave. I have to say, Mr Speaker, unnecessary... but nonetheless, we are delighted to be able to support this motion in the same way as we supported the other motions.

I did not have the privilege of either appearing in front of Judge Alcantara, as he then was. I was a barrister in England from 1992 until 2000 and also I never coincided with him in this House when he was Speaker of the House, but I have had dealings with him on a social basis, in the sense that I have met him I have spoken to him. He has always been extremely, extremely courteous. He comes across in my mind as a very patient man, a man who is able to listen, and a man that again, as with Ernest Montado, is able to impart on an objective premise advice that is always useful.

But anybody, Mr Speaker, that is able to serve this community with the distinction that Mr Alcantara has been able to serve this community by actually holding three of the most important positions that you can hold as a member of this community, including Speaker and also a Judge of the Supreme Court, I think that deserves recognition, and for all those reasons, Mr Speaker, again the Opposition is happy to support this motion. *(Banging on desks)*

(Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety) Hon. J J Bossano: Well, Mr Speaker, like most people who have been around, and they have been around for as long as I have been around *(Laughter)* we have had a lot of things in common and things on which we disagreed.

Certainly, at a personal level I have always thought of him as a good close friend of mine and in his rulings in this House, there were rulings that I was not happy with, but the whole purpose of having a Speaker is that the Speaker is the one who decides the ruling. I remember at one stage where he decided that we were asking too many supplementaries and he would ration us to two supplementaries each and then he made an exception for me because I was the Leader of the Opposition, and so he allowed me to have three. *(Laughter)* Perhaps because not everybody thinks mathematically like I do, the result of that was of course that we immediately increased the number of questions and then we were entitled to put as many questions as we did as supplementaries to a bigger number of questions in the first place.

But the decisions that he took were the decisions that he wanted to take in order to make sure that the Parliament did not degenerate, frankly, into Members wrangling with each other, as opposed to getting on with the business, which is what the Parliament exists for and what we are being paid to be here for. It is inevitable that frequently, because we have got strong views, we forget what it is that we are supposed to be doing and question the opinions of each other. I think he did a very good job as a Speaker. We supported him throughout the time that he was here when he was doing things that we enjoyed and when he was doing things that we did not enjoy, because at the end of the day... clearly, I never appeared before him as a judge *(Laughter)* and it would have been a very bad thing if I had because I am not a lawyer. *(Laughter)*

So I am happy to associate myself with this and I wish John all the very best and he knows how much affection I have always had for him and how much respect I have had for him as our Speaker. *(Banging on desks)*

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the indication of support from the Leader of the Opposition. I do not see how a reference to a historical fact can inject an element of anything that is partisan...

I did not make any remarks about what happened and how it came about. I am just saddened by what happened. I am sometimes saddened by some of the things that I do, let alone things that others do. So I do not think I injected any partisan element at all, but if hon. Members feel that I have, I invite them to go back to read the *Hansard* for the Budget debate in respect of the Chief Minister's reply for 2004, and then they can make up for themselves what it is that happened that day and see what partisan aspects might arise.

But, in any event, what is important is that we are jointly telling John Alcantara that the people of Gibraltar consider that he is worthy as a recipient of the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour and we are all doing that together. I sincerely hope that he will appreciate that on behalf of the people of Gibraltar we believe that he is worthy of this distinction.

Mr Speaker: Again, before I put the motion to the vote, may I associate myself with the remarks of someone who occupied this Chair for eight years? To discharge the functions of Speaker and Judge in a community, such as Gibraltar, is no mean task and I am very happy to see the House recognising the contribution which Judge Alcantara has made to Gibraltar.

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I now put the question in the terms of the motion moved by the Chief Minister. All in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) All against? Carried.

**Gibraltar Medallion of Honour –
Bestowed upon Aurelio Montegriffo CBE –
Motion carried**

Clerk: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

'This House bestows the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour upon Aurelio Montegriffo CBE, who has served and contributed to the interests of Gibraltar and its people in an exceptional manner that is particularly worthy of recognition by this House on behalf of the people of Gibraltar and in particular, for services to politics; Mr Montegriffo's main distinction having been his services as Minister for Health.'

Mr Speaker, Mr Montegriffo did a lot more than just be Minister for Health. He was, people often say, a very distinguished Minister for Health, who in the old days with a different type of Health Service, with a different numbers of beds, would make a point *every* day of visiting *every* patient and coming to their bedside and asking them how they were and how the service was being provided.

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He was of course a Minister in the time that he was in the House of Assembly and in the City Council before us. He was a representative of the Association for the Advancement of Civil Rights, the AACR, the party of which then you became Leader and represented as Chief Minister.

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I am reminded, Mr Speaker, that he was actually one of the members of the AACR that represented that party at the Constitutional Conference of 1969, chaired by Lord Shepherd, which achieved the preamble, the famous preamble to the Constitution on which many of us relied for many years in respect of the continued British sovereignty of Gibraltar and the Gibraltarians' rights to influence that.

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He is a man who is now very advanced in years. A politician of another generation, Mr Maurice Xiberras recently told a Gibraltarian publication that Mr Montegriffo had been able to say that he had held Mr Xiberras in his arms when Mr Xiberras was a baby, and that is how many generations back we are going in respect of Mr Montegriffo.

There is a reference in the national archives, which I have been trying to obtain in time for today, but I have not been able to receive so I only have the tantalising reference that the entry for Mr Montegriffo in the national archives in the United Kingdom in document FCO83/50 is this:

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'Remarks made by Aurelio Montegriffo, Association for the Advancement of Civil Rights (AACR), Member of the Gibraltar House of Assembly, regarding independence for Gibraltar'

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The reference suggests that it might have been something said in the 1950s, so he must have at some stage also been a firebrand in his day. Mr Montegriffo served Gibraltar with absolute distinction and that is recognised on Her Majesty having bestowed on him the CBE.

In my legal practice Mr Speaker, one of the photographs that dominated our dining room for many years was the photograph of Her Majesty the Queen when she visited Gibraltar, and flanking Sir Joshua and Her Majesty is Mr Montegriffo. He was the Minister designated by the Government to receive Her Majesty up the Rock and show her certain of the views that she was seeing from there.

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When we had the proud occasion to receive in Gibraltar Prince Edward whilst we were in Government, one of the things that we organised, because I think that was the particular anniversary of the visit to the Rock by Her Majesty, was that Mr Montegriffo should see him where he had seen Her Majesty and show him and his wife Sophie how the views that Her Majesty had seen almost 60 years before had changed in that time and he was very happy to assist us, almost 60 years later, as he had done 60 years before when Sir Joshua had asked him to do the same thing.

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Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Health Authority has been revolutionised over and over again, and every Government claims to have done that; but the Gibraltar Health Service, along the lines of the National

Health Service, was only created once and Mr Montegriffo had an important hand in that and we all take the benefit today of it in different measure.

525 So I hope the House will be united in my moving of this Medallion of Honour for Mr Montegriffo, who I am sure will appreciate that the CBE that Her Majesty was happy to bestow upon him is now also supplemented by the people of Gibraltar bestowing upon him the Distinction of the Medallion of Honour.

530 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I have never had the privilege of meeting Mr Montegriffo and never had the privilege of speaking to him, but everybody that I have spoken to, and I have spoken to a few people about this... about not only this one, but the others, but this one in particular, because I have never met Mr Montegriffo, and the former politicians that I have spoken to about this all tell me that he is one of the most distinguished Ministers that has ever served this community.

535 On the basis of the advice that I have been given and obviously listening to the Chief Minister, we are absolutely delighted to support this particular motion and to support the bestowing of Mr Montegriffo with such an important honour by the people of Gibraltar to supplement as well the honour that Her Majesty provided him a number of years ago in the award of the CBE.

540 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, as the current Minister for Health, I think that it is only right that I should lend my support to this motion, but also because I remember Aurelio well. He was a good friend of my late father and in fact they served together on a number of Boards at the time, including the Board of the then Medical and Health Department.

545 Mr Speaker, when I had the pleasure of serving as a member of the staff of the Health Authority back in the 1980s, Aurelio Montegriffo was remembered well and with great affection by the employees of the time. He is a special person and was a very special Minister, showing great care and affection for staff and patients alike. Mr Speaker, he was a very special man of that very special generation and I am very, very pleased to support this as the current Minister for Health. (*Banging on desks*)

550 **Mr Speaker:** Does any other hon. Member wish to contribute before I call upon the Chief Minister to reply?

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the indication of support from the other side of the House and I have nothing more to add.

555 **Mr Speaker:** Again, may I be permitted, having served in this House with Aurelio for so many years, to associate myself with what has been said about him?

The Chief Minister is quite right. Aurelio Montegriffo was the prime mover of the concept in the AACR of the right to our land where he used to speak about the need for Gibraltarians to have a concept of nationhood buttressed by an independent attitude of mind.

560 I, myself, personally owe him a great deal. He was my mentor in politics and helped me tremendously in my personal life and why not... even in my spiritual life. I owe him a great debt of gratitude and I am very, very happy that I should be in the Chair today when the House, on behalf of Gibraltar, is honouring him in this very suitable fashion.

565 I now put the question in the terms of the motion of the Chief Minister. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

**Gibraltar Medallion of Honour –
Bestowed upon Albert Poggio OBE –
Motion carried**

Clerk: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my name, which reads as follows:

'This House bestows the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour upon Albert Poggio OBE, who serves and has served Gibraltar and its people in an exceptional manner that is particularly worthy of recognition by this House on behalf of the people of Gibraltar in particular, in his representation of Gibraltar in the United Kingdom and amongst other UK Overseas Territories.'

570 Mr Speaker, Albert Poggio has served three Chief Ministers of Gibraltar, starting with the Hon. Mr Bossano, spending fifteen and a half years with the Hon. Sir Peter Caruana and now has been working under my Administration for the better part of two and a half years.

Mr Speaker, in debates in this House I have indicated that as far as I am concerned Albert Poggio can continue to serve the people of Gibraltar for as long as he wishes and it is my pleasure that he should do so because the work that he has done since he was entrusted by the Hon. Joe Bossano, with the representation of Gibraltar in the United Kingdom, has been second to none.

Mr Poggio is unfortunately getting advanced in years and he looks much better than he ages, because his age is now 70 or almost 70 – those who are almost 70 are very insistent that they are not yet 70, but 70, I understand, is the next birthday – and we therefore unfortunately may find that Albert himself tells us that he does not want to continue representing Gibraltar with the level of energy that he has been showing until now. Therefore it is hugely fitting that we should start the process of recognising the work that he has done.

He has already an OBE from Her Majesty the Queen, but there is a more fundamental aspect to this motion perhaps than there has been in respect of some of the others and it is this that when the time came to mount the campaign for Gibraltar to continue to be British, facing a joint sovereignty threat from the United Kingdom and Spain where the relationship between the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the Prime Minister of Spain became so close that they thought that they could do a deal over the heads of the people of Gibraltar, of course things had to be done by Gibraltarian politicians, which included a referendum which included a huge amount of work outside of Gibraltar. Only yesterday we were talking about the cost in lobbying etc at that time, but the relationships that Albert Poggio had built between 1988 and 2002-03 with representatives in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords became the key factor in politically stopping joint sovereignty short of the final say, which the people of Gibraltar had in the referendum, that stopped the whole idea in its tracks.

And recognition by the Sovereign of the work that he has done is therefore important and he has it; but in particular recognition by the people of Gibraltar of the role that *he* played in that campaign for the Government of the day, I think is long overdue. It is I think impossible to imagine that Gibraltar could have achieved what it achieved if we had not had that fire power in the Commons and in the House of Lords that Albert Poggio represented then and represents now and I hope will continue to represent for many years in the future.

If we had a House of Lords then I certainly would be putting Albert Poggio in it. He moves within the House of Lords and within the House of Commons with its senior Members just like a duck in water and, Mr Speaker, it is quite something to see. It will probably be very few people beyond higher office holding Gibraltarian politicians who see that because... for those of us who get to access the Commons and the Lords with Albert, but it is quite something to see a Chancellor, to see a Prime Minister and to see any other Minister of the UK Crown or an ex Minister immediately recognise Albert Poggio as Albert, and say, ‘Hi Albert, how are you doing? Who is that bloke who is with you?’ Like the old joke of somebody standing next to the Pope and someone saying, ‘Who is that standing next to Danny?’ for example. *(Laughter)*

Well, Mr Speaker that is the sort of recognition that Albert Poggio has in the Commons and in the Lords. The Chief Minister of Gibraltar is very well recognised in Gibraltar, but walk down the corridor of the Commons with Albert Poggio or down the corridor of the Lords with Albert Poggio and you become the bloke that is standing next to Albert, and that recognition by Members of the Commons and the Lords of Albert is a recognition of Gibraltar. It is a recognition therefore of the work that he has done and of the importance of the work that he has done. It demonstrates in my view that Joe Bossano was absolutely right to entrust him with the job, that Peter Caruana was absolutely right to entrust him with the job. I know that towards the end there were issues there, but I am right to continue to entrust him with the job and it is why I would like to see Albert continue to do this work for as long as he wishes and as long as he is able.

And it is important that in this case, not just Albert know that the people of Gibraltar recognise the work that he has done, but that the rest of the world realise that the people of Gibraltar recognise the work that Albert has done and continues to do for Gibraltar.

620 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, yes, the Opposition again will be supporting the motion and I have to say, because we are all in such a convivial mood and such a forgiving mood, that I forgive Albert for retweeting a tweet from the hon. Gentleman, the Chief Minister, and I quote:

‘Brilliant Joe Bossano reminds the House GSD called him “an economic illiterate”. So much for “statesmanship” from the GSD... Same Old GSD.’

Mr Speaker, it was a retweet by the Hon. Albert Poggio, but as I say we are supporting this motion and we forgive him for doing so, Mr Speaker.

625 Mr Speaker, Albert Poggio is somebody that I have known for many, many, many years in a personal capacity, not quite since I wore short pants, as the Hon. the Father of the House always wants to remind me,

630 but certainly when I was a young barrister in Manchester and I had to travel to London to appear in the Royal Courts of Justice. I always, *always* used to pop in to the Gibraltar office in the Strand and he would always update me about the situation in Gibraltar. We would talk about politics and about the issues that were affecting Gibraltar. He was always extremely, *extremely* well informed and he was, in my view, very, very patriotic about Gibraltar. He is somebody that not only is doing a job, but he feels the job too. He feels what he is doing and he puts his heart and he puts his soul into his job.

635 The Hon. the Chief Minister said that his work has been, in relation to the joint sovereignty, was second to none. I think that politicians apart and certainly leaving aside the contribution that was made by the hon. the backbencher, then Chief Minister, Sir Peter Caruana, that shall forever go down in history as one of the most courageous, intelligent defences of Gibraltar *ever* in the history of this community, and I think that for a non-politician he is probably right, that no non-politician did more to assist Gibraltar in that campaign than Albert Poggio, because the relationships and the contacts that he developed in the United Kingdom were second to none.

640 And if the Chief Minister... and I do not know I have not spoken to Mr Poggio about this. I do not know what his personal feelings are about continuing or not continuing, I have not discussed it with him, but if the Chief Minister can persuade Mr Poggio to remain to do the job that he is doing and to continue to serve Gibraltar in the United Kingdom, I think that it would be an important step for Gibraltar, because I do think that he plays a pivotal role in what he is doing currently and what he has done indeed going back to the 1990s, for all the reasons that the Hon. the Chief Minister has outlined.

645 So I have no hesitation, Mr Speaker, in supporting this motion.

Mr Speaker: Does any other hon. Member wish to contribute?

650 The Hon. Mr Bossano.

Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety (Hon. J J Bossano): Well, Mr Speaker, the next time I see Albert when he comes to Gibraltar, probably sometime next week or the week after, I shall have to tell him that he ought to know better at the age of 70 than to go around tweeting! *(Laughter)* I do not tweet. I leave that to youngsters, who will eventually grow out of it.

655 Albert actually was involved in doing something important for Gibraltar well before he was involved in the Gibraltar office, because he was involved during the siege years in organising travel arrangements with chartered aircraft between Gibraltar and UK. He had a lobby already, which he organised, of London-based Gibraltarians, who were constantly going round – as we were doing, for example, in the London branch of the integration party – going round ensuring that wherever there was somebody speaking about Gibraltar anywhere, there was always a group of Gibraltarian to intervene or heckle the guy or whatever was required to redress the situation.

660 When we came in we thought that it was important for Gibraltar to have more than the tourist office, which is what it used to be before. I recruited Albert at zero pay, as the House would expect me to – *(Laughter and interjections)* Zero pay. He came into the office and he gave it the political content that the office needed and he actually converted what was already there, which had been started by the AACR. As you know, Mr Speaker, initially with people in the Labour Party, who were close to George Jeger and us, people like that, who were the initial lobbyists in the House of Commons, but he actually made it a much more professional lobby. He gave them much more support, in terms of feeding them information which we wanted them to be aware of from London, and in effect the Gibraltar lobby, the Friends of Gibraltar in the United Kingdom Parliament in the Lords and in the Commons, I think became and continues to be the best organiser and the most powerful lobby that there is in terms of any dependent territory and sometimes in terms of other interest groups that have got a declared lobbying function there.

675 Everybody recognises that if anybody in the United Kingdom starts toying with the idea of behaving in a way which is detrimental to Gibraltar's interest, that lobby can be mobilised at short notice and has a lot of support within both Houses of Parliament beyond those who are individual Members – well beyond. They have proved it by their ability to call for motions and for the participation that has been in debate. All that work is the result of Albert's involvement. If Albert had not been involved in moving from having a tourist office to having in effect a High Commission with him as the High Commissioner, then [*de facto, it not de jure*] then we would not have been able to mobilise the support in Parliament that we have been able to and that it is there and I think the most important thing in terms of Albert at some stage deciding to pass the mantle on to somebody else. I have advised him that he should stay there with me until we are both 90, but he still has not given me an answer.

680 But the important thing is of course that this transfer and these contacts and this knowledge cannot happen with somebody finishing on Friday and somebody else starting in on Monday. It is as simple as that. So there has to be and there is a need to have somebody that has a lot of learning to do from Albert and a lot of involvement in the personal contact. What Albert can do in Parliament he can do, not because he is the representative in London of Gibraltar, but because he has developed a personal relationship with MPs and

690 he continues to do it every time there is an Election when new MP's come in and others go, and the ones that stop being MPs continue to support us within their involvement in the political parties in the United Kingdom. So it is a lobbying function that has been there from the day that Albert took over in the Strand and continues to grow in strength.

695 And therefore he deserves this and much more than this, but the job that he has done in Gibraltar initially *ex gratia* and eventually paid (*Laughter*) can only be paid by the affection that the people of Gibraltar have for him. (*Banging on desks*)

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Edwin Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

700 I rise again to take the opportunity because I do not want the occasion to go without being recorded that Albert Poggio also made his services always available to the trade union movement. Sometimes successes or failures from trade unions can end up having political consequences, so I think Albert saw his role in the biggest and widest sense of the word.

705 I am very grateful to Albert and I concur completely with the Chief Minister. I have had the privilege of walking into Westminster with Albert Poggio, and yes, one can only remain shocked at the way... I even at some stage thought that Mr Speaker might even stand up in the Chamber to say good morning to Albert. He does have that ability, that charm, that personality, that sincerity, that gift of being able to get along with everyone. He is at a personal level a very generous man as well. He will not let you go off without ensuring that you have had a meal and so on and if he is around he would even contribute. I do not know how on earth he manages it, but he certainly gave us a very good lunch that someone paid for, and so I am grateful for that, Albert.

710 But, yes, on behalf of all those of us who have been involved with the trade union world, we must record as well our grain of gratitude towards Albert and the contributions that he has made in facilitating our lobbying when needed in the United Kingdom.

715 **Mr Speaker:** The Hon. Albert Isola.

Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. Albert Isola): Mr Speaker, I have had the pleasure of working with Albert in a number of different ways over these past 20 years and I have got to know him and I consider him a very good friend.

720 I think that what Albert has done for Gibraltar, not just in the lobbying sense as my hon. Friends, the Chief Minister and the Father of the House have so eloquently described, which is of huge importance, but he has also done much more than that of course. He has assisted commercially. Only some two months ago he arranged a meeting for me to meet and brief a whole group, a huge group of Parliamentarians in the Deputy Speaker's Office on the gaming situation. I know he has worked at the Chamber of Commerce and I know he has obviously worked, as has been mentioned, in the tourism sector, but he has also done a huge amount for Calpe House and for those Gibraltarians who are in need of the help and assistance when visiting London at such a difficult time, he has always been there for each and every one of them and I think that is also worthy of merit.

730 Mr Speaker, I associate myself with the comments. I think Albert is an exceptional Gibraltarian who has given us all exceptional service and it is absolutely right and proper that we should commend him for that work.

Thank you Mr Speaker. (*Banging on desks*)

735 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am even more delighted to be moving this motion now that I know that Albert knows a good tweet when he sees it and retweets it, even if other tweets might be disappointed. (*Laughter*)

But the hon. Member opposite has on his twitter feed, the following:

740 'Leader of the GSD and H M Opposition Gibraltar, partner of Hassans. Any retweets are not to be taken as an endorsement of the views expressed.'

So by his own measure it may be that Albert was not entirely supporting what I had suggested and he might assuage his conscience in that way.

745 I am delighted, Mr Speaker, that Albert Poggio looked after him when he went to see him in London in those days when he was a barrister in the United Kingdom and no doubt also treated him to a great lunch as he does all of us when we have been to London to see him, whether or not in Government, as Mr Reyes has confirmed. In those days obviously he was receiving him as a staunch supporter of the GSLP, no doubt in

those years when he was a barrister in the United Kingdom, but Albert treats us all the same whatever partisan affiliation we may have.

750 Mr Speaker, I said that Albert Poggio had coordinated efforts in London under the Government at the time. I was not pretending that it should be otherwise, but of course I cannot associate myself with the remarks that the hon. Gentleman made about that time. Sir Joshua Hassan played an important role, a *hugely* important role in Gibraltar's history when the Frontier was closed and strategising and getting us through that time was equally important. I mean for goodness sake, General Elliott was hugely important in
755 the defence of Gibraltar at the Great Siege. I do not know that I am prepared to accept that the hon. the backbencher had the same effect, but anyway...

Mr Speaker, I am also delighted to have heard this morning that the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition agrees with me that Albert Poggio should continue to do this work for as long as we are able to persuade him that he should, given that I put him back in the role when I was elected, because he had been removed
760 from it, and I am delighted to have taken that step. I am vindicated by what the hon. Gentleman has said during the course of the more acrimonious debate that we have had on the Appropriation Bill. I have been able to show that from having been unfit to govern, the hon. now the backbencher considers that he can congratulate me for the economic performance of the Government and that I have confounded my critic in respect of that.

I am therefore delighted that my greatest critic today, as democracy requires, the Leader of the Opposition, agrees with one of my decisions, which was to put Albert Poggio back into the role from which he had been removed by the hon. the backbencher and I am grateful to the Hon. Mr Bossano for having reminded us of the work that Albert Poggio does with the Overseas Territories, because in the same way as he strides as a Colossus through the Palace of Westminster, he is a Colossus also in the Overseas Territories
770 world. He is the longest standing of the UK representatives and the most experienced of the UK representatives. Other UK representatives of the Overseas Territories look to him. He has really exemplified what the role of a UK representative of one of the Overseas Territories should be to such an extent... and it was an issue that the Hon. Mr Bossino, who is absent from the Chamber at the moment – I am sorry I am going to speak about this in his absence – picked up, that on one occasion Mr Poggio had
775 been referred to as 'His Excellency', which is the moniker that is used to describe Ambassadors and High Commissioners in the UK, and Albert portrays the importance of Gibraltar in the United Kingdom to such an extent that people consider him to be an Ambassador and refer to him as such.

Mr Speaker, Gibraltar House was bought... the present Gibraltar House was bought under the previous Administration and the role that Albert Poggio played in obtaining that property was huge. This
780 Government at the time from Opposition supported that acquisition, if not the style and manner of its internal decoration, but we certainly supported the acquisition. We think it was an excellent acquisition to make and it stands as an important investment for Gibraltar and a very good shop window of what Gibraltar is today.

785 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Will you give way?

Hon. Chief Minister: No, let me finish. I will give way before I finish.

And, Mr Speaker, the important role that Albert Poggio has played in respect of Calpe House also cannot be understated in any way and I am very grateful to Mr Isola for having reminded the House of that.
790 I think it is important to say that he has not just played a role in Calpe House in the past. He is playing today a hugely important role in the developments that Calpe House is seeing in the improvement of the service, but this is exactly the sort of thing that one associates with Albert Poggio.

Whether it is the Chief Minister of Gibraltar that arrives in London for meetings with the Foreign Secretary or the Prime Minister or it is a citizen who arrives in London, low and not looking forward to
795 medical treatment and having to go through a difficult time in their lives, Albert Poggio is there in equal measure for all of us and that is the measure of the man.

The hon. Member wanted to say something, so I will allow him to do so now.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, Mr Speaker, it is not true to say that the Hon. Sir Peter Caruana when he was
800 Chief Minister *removed* Albert Poggio from the political role and the lobbying role – that is simply not the case. What he did was – (*Interjection*) No, he sent an office manager to deal with the administrative side, but he continued with the political lobbying and the political side, which is effectively what this House is actually saying Mr Poggio does best, because his contacts in those areas are second to none. I just wanted to make that position clear.
805

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker that is not true.

What happened was that Albert Poggio was removed from his role as political representative of Gibraltar. Somebody else was sent in his place and it eventually became clear that only Mr Poggio could be

810 political representative. Mr Speaker, this happened very shortly before we were elected and given that the
 hon. Member wants to refer to it, there was a blazing row at No 6 Convent Place. It really descended into
 something which was not edifying at all for a Chief Minister to have done, which was not uncommon at the
 time. Unfortunately he has opened the door. People were shouted at and screamed at and Albert Poggio was
 815 shouted at and screamed at and he was sacked. Thereafter, Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister thought again
 and instead of sacking him changed what he was doing in London and sent somebody to do his job. But
 nobody can do the job that Albert Poggio has done in the way that Albert Poggio has done it and therefore,
 Mr Speaker, I was delighted to be able to reinstate him and I am very grateful that the hon. Member got up
 and said what he said so that I could...

820 He has opened the door. I would not otherwise have gone down, but it gave me great pleasure to put
 Albert Poggio back from where he had been *removed* wrongly by the Hon. then the Chief Minister, and the
 record reflects all of this and I am sure that there are memos and notes that reflect it.

Mr Speaker, Mr Poggio unfortunately at the time felt very hard done by and even had to instruct
 solicitors at the time.

825 But the truth prevails, Mr Speaker, and right prevails. We won the Election and we put him back where
 he should be, which is where he is today and where I hope he will stay for as long as he is able and now we
 recognise properly everything that he has already done and I am sure will continue to do, but the truth
 shines through. (*Banging on desks*)

830 **Mr Speaker:** May I say that on two occasions when my wife and I have had occasion to visit the United
 Kingdom in rather difficult circumstances, I immediately received, on both occasions, a telephone call from
 Mr Poggio making himself available should I need his assistance, and that I think is an indication of the
 kind of person that he is. I am very happy to be associated with the comments that have been made.

I therefore put the question in the terms of the motion moved by the Chief Minister. All in favour?
 (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

Gibraltar Medallion of Distinction –

**Bestowed upon Mr Ernest Lima; Mr Dennis Mathews; Mr Fortunato Azopardi;
 Ms Adelaide Canessa MBE; Mr Kevin Dobson (deceased); Mr Lionel Perez;
 Mr Julio Alcantara MBE; Mr Eugene Howes MBE ED; Mr Dennis Figueras MBE RD;
 Mr John Desoiza; Mr Melvyn Farrell RD; Ms Annie Risso MBE; Mr Charles Conroy BEM;
 Mr Charles Flower MBE BEM; Ms Heloise Mañasco; Mr Nathan Stagno; Mr Joseph Hernandez;
 Mr John Gonçalves MBE; Mr Christian Santos; Mr Elio Victor MBE; Mrs Marisa Desoiza MBE;
 Mrs Tobie Roosevelt –
 Motion carried**

835 **Clerk:** The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my
 name which reads quite lengthily as follows, and I crave the House's indulgence whilst I read it:

*'This House resolves to bestow the Gibraltar Medallion of Distinction upon the various individuals
 named hereunder for the respective following achievements, namely:*

- (1) *Mr Ernest Lima, for services to public health, in recognition of his pivotal role in the establishment
 of the Gibraltar Health Authority and its administration and functioning over 25 years;*
- (2) *Mr Dennis Mathews for services to the people of Gibraltar, in the establishment with others of the
 Self-Determination for Gibraltar Group and in particular the work done to establish the celebration of
 National Day on 10th September each year;*
- (3) *Mr Fortunato Azopardi, also known as Forty Mr Speaker, for work he has done as a founder
 member of the Self-Determination for Gibraltar Group, as a result of his commitment to the application
 of the principle of self-determination of the people of Gibraltar in establishing, organising and
 promoting celebrations of Gibraltar's National Day on 10th September each year, and in particular the
 now annual Gibraltar Fair;*
- (4) *Ms Adelaide Canessa MBE for services to education and having worked tirelessly in the education
 of generations of Gibraltarian women, in particular in recognition of her work at Westside
 Comprehensive School;*

- (5) *Mr Kevin Dobson, sadly, Mr Speaker, deceased, for services for education in Gibraltar, having been a teacher since his arrival in Gibraltar and having left a lasting legacy in the education of generations of Gibraltarian men;*
- (6) *Mr Lionel Perez, for services to education and culture, in particular for his role as a teacher in the Boys Comprehensive School and the establishment and direction of various dance and drama groups;*
- (7) *Mr Julio Alcantara MBE, for services to the administration of education in Gibraltar and in particular the transition from Grammar to Comprehensive education;*
- (8) *Mr Eugene Howes MBE ED for public service and in particular for his works as presiding and then senior presiding officer in every Election between 1976 and 2000;*
- (9) *Mr Dennis Figueras MBE RD, for public service and in particular for his works as presiding officer at every Election and Referenda since 1967, initially as polling/counting clerk, but later presiding officer, and Returning Officer;*
- (10) *Mr John Desoisa for public service and in particular for his works, presiding every Election and Referenda since 1967 initially as polling/counting clerk, later Counting and Senior Counting Officer up to 2007;*
- (11) *Mr Melvyn Farrell RD, retired, for public service, and in particular for his services to the Gibraltar Parliament and as returning officer in Elections;*
- (12) *Ms Annie Risso MBE for her work in the establishment and development of the Special Olympics movement in Gibraltar and the representation of Gibraltar internationally in that field;*
- (13) *Mr Charles Conroy BEM for his work in the establishment and development of martial arts in Gibraltar and the representation of Gibraltar internationally in that field;*
- (14) *Mr Charles Flower MBE BEM for services to sport over sixty years, in particular in recognition of his role as the first Gibraltarian athlete to compete in the Commonwealth Games, then the Empire Games, his work in promoting sport amongst young people and his work as President of the Gibraltar Commonwealth Games Association;*
- (15) *Ms Heloise Mañasco for her outstanding sporting achievements in air rifle shooting, a sport in which she has competed internationally and won numerous gold medals for Gibraltar in various competitions;*
- (16) *Mr Nathan Stagno for his outstanding achievements in the international umpiring in the final of the Hockey World Cup in Holland earlier this year... in fact, Mr Speaker, just last month;*
- (17) *Mr Joseph Hernandez for services to all sports in Gibraltar and his work on the development of the Strait Games;*
- (18) *Mr John Gonçalves MBE for service to basketball in Gibraltar and the international recognition of Gibraltar within that sport;*
- (19) *Mr Christian Santos for services to popular culture, in particular for his authorship of a large number of popular Gibraltarian plays and dramatic works;*
- (20) *Mr Elio Victor MBE for services to young people in Gibraltar;*
- (21) *Mrs Marisa Desoiza MBE for services to Cancer Relief charities in Gibraltar;*
- (22) *Mrs Tobie Roosevelt for services to Gibraltar in the Gibraltar American Council, of which she is President.'*

840 Mr Speaker, we are dealing now with the Gibraltar Medallion of Distinction. The Medallion of Distinction is in the hierarchy of honours below the Medallion of Honour.

In some instances, Mr Speaker, there are people who are worthy of recognition, who are not recognised with the Honours from Her Majesty that one might consider is appropriate for them, because of course although we are a thriving community of 30,000 people, Mr Speaker, it is not the case that there are simply honours that one can pick for those that deserve them that we can then see bestowed upon them.

845 The number of honours available, 'State Honours' available as they are known, is spread in the United Kingdom and throughout the Overseas Territories and therefore Gibraltar's quota is a very small amount. There may be a very worthy recipient who does not receive a State Honour because unfortunately the quota is not there and the person that does receive it may not be more worthy than the person who does not, although all would be equally worthy of receiving them.

850 The previous Administration prepared for the House these two Medallions – the Medallion of Honour and the Medallion of Distinction – so that they could be used in appropriate circumstances. We think that the list of people that we have brought to the House is a list of people who deserve that recognition, and the fact that they deserve recognition does not mean that others do not deserve recognition who we will bring to the House for the House's consideration in future.

855 Mr Speaker, each of these has a small citation. I could speak on all of them for a very long time. I do not intend to do so. I think everybody knows who the people we are dealing with here are, and therefore I would simply say that each of them is in the view of the Government worthy of this Medallion of

Distinction for the work that they have done, which is reflected in the paragraphs that follows in respect of each.

860 Mr Speaker, I am happy to say if the hon. Member at some stage in the future wishes to have Government support for others that he might think are also worthy of recognition, he only needs to notify me. There are people in our community that reach different Members of this Parliament in order to be able to put suggestions to us. I formally say today to the public within the same way as they are invited to make
865 any of the media of communication that people can use to contact me, whether it be by snail mail, i.e. a letter, or a more modern use of technology, they should feel free to get in touch with my office if they believe that somebody is worthy of nomination for the Gibraltar Medallion of Distinction or indeed the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour.

870 Mr Speaker, I do not intend to say anything else about the individuals as set out in this motion. Each of them I think has a citation that demonstrates that they are worthy recipients of recognition by this Parliament by the bestowing of the Gibraltar Medallion of Distinction.

875 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, it is the last opportunity that I have of rising today, and perhaps before I –

A Member: There is another motion.

Hon. D A Feetham: Is there another motion? Well, I will say it now in any event.

880 Mr Speaker, certainly I hope that I speak for all Members of the House in wishing the Clerk a happy birthday for tomorrow. I know that it is his birthday tomorrow and Jaime Netto's birthday today, and I wanted to mention that before I get one last opportunity.

Mr Speaker, the Hon. the Chief Minister has said that there are other people who are equally as worthy of receiving recognition for this community, I agree. I am grateful to the Hon. the Chief Minister for his indication that he will take those on board.

885 I think that there are some worthy recipients. For example, in relation to the Medallion of Honour, I think that Mr Joe Pitaluga, who was Chief Secretary for many, many, many years and one of the greatest civil servants that Gibraltar has ever produced, is somebody who is worthy of that particular recognition. (*Banging on desks*) and I hope that that is something that the Chief Minister perhaps will take on board the next time that these Honours are also bestowed.

890 In relation to this particular honour, the Gibraltar Medallion of Distinction, William Serfaty, for example, who was one of the founders of the SDGG, and not only one of the founders, but he is the first member of the Self-Determination Group that actually addressed the United Nations, I think that I am right in saying – the Hon. the Father of the House can correct me if I am wrong – and over 10 years he was Chairman of that organisation.

895 Dr Leslie Zammit I think is also worthy of recognition posthumously. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) Mr Robert Balban for youth and charity. Dr Rene Beguelin for medicine and diabetes charities.

900 And indeed, despite the fact that I am often at the end of not his waspish tongue, but certainly his waspish pen, the father of the Hon. of the Deputy Chief Minister, Joe Garcia for services rendered to journalism. And indeed, I think that Dominic Searle the Editor of the *Gibraltar Chronicle*. Those are the ones that come to mind and perhaps the Hon. the Chief Minister can bear those in mind the next time that he comes to focus on these issues.

Mr Speaker, I am not going to talk about all of these. I note the citation. We will be voting in favour of this motion and I would like to just simply highlight a couple of these.

905 Melvyn Farrell for example, I think that... I am extremely glad that the Hon. the Chief Minister has brought this motion in respect of Melvyn Farrell. I foreshadowed something myself when I addressed the House on the occasion of Melvyn's retirement as Clerk of the House. I really cannot think of anybody who is more worthy of this particular distinction than Melvyn Farrell, somebody who has served Gibraltar, and indeed this House, for many, many years.

910 Lionel Perez is somebody that I hold in high personal esteem. He was my drama teacher for many, many, many years. I think he was the only person in the world that has forced me to wear tights, Mr Speaker, (*Laughter*) but I do not hold it against him. I still remember his words ringing in my ear, [*niño te voy dar una piña*] He used to say to me [*niño te voy dar una piña*] He was an excellent, excellent, excellent teacher, *excellent* teacher, and I have to say that somebody whom even still today I really enjoy sitting down and talking to and exchanging opinions, very worthy indeed of this distinction.
915 Those really are the only two that I wish to simply perhaps give a special mention because in Mr Perez's case, he was a teacher, one of my favourite teachers at the Boys Comprehensive, and Melvyn Farrell because of the high esteem that everybody in this House holds Mr Farrell.

920 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the words of the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition, and indeed with the introduction of the motion by the Hon. the Chief Minister.

I would also associate myself in particular with what the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition has said in relation to Mr Joe Pitaluga. There has been a lot of reference to the sterling work which has been undertaken and discharged by another senior civil servant, in Mr Montado, but I think it has to be recognised on this side of the House and I am sure it will not be controversial on the other side of the House
925 to also particularly recognise the sterling work undertaken by Mr Joe Pitaluga when he was Head of the Civil Service before Mr Montado. I think Mr Montado was Mr Joe Pitaluga's successor. And for many, many years, spanning many Chief Ministers, but in particular Sir Joshua Hassan.

I think the Hon. the Chief Minister when he was referring to Mr Montado made a reference to Mr Montado's visits to the UK in relation to the Brussels process and then Brussels Agreement.
930 Mr Joe Pitaluga's work in relation to that I think also has to be recognised and acknowledged. He was an extremely hard worker. I have heard anecdotal references of the light in his office at Secretary's Lane flickering away and being on for many hours in the night and he was also a highly intelligent man, and I think that ought to be recognised in a motion at some point in the future by everybody in this House.

Mr Speaker, I, like the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, wish to make a reference to some of those
935 individuals who are listed in the motion before us. By mentioning them I wish not to exclude anybody and I hope that they do not take it badly if I do not mention them particularly by name, but I mention them because they have had either an influence in my life or I have got to know them over the years.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned Mr Perez as being influential when he was at school. I would make a reference to Mr Kevin Dobson in particular. As the Hon. the Chief Minister knows when we were in English class with him, I always have very fond memories of the debates that he would organise,
940 and there was one or two in particular which I am sure the Hon. the Chief Minister will immediately recall, and unless I am mistaken – and the Hon. the Father of the House will be glad to hear this – I think I participated in that debate either as Chief Minister or perhaps as leader of the Opposition, but as leader of a GSLP Government or a GSLP Opposition, whilst the Hon. the Chief Minister was... he was more of an establishment guy in those days and he led the AACR. No doubt he will recall who won the debate. I think I won the first one – he is nodding his head – and he may have won the second one. *(Interjection)* No, I do not think so. *(Laughter)* There is well – *(Interjection and laughter)* There was a recording *(Interjection)*
945 because if the Hon. the Chief Minister will recall Mr Dobson actually took his video camera to school and to class on that particular day and recorded the proceedings. Goodness knows where that may be now, but I wanted to make special reference to that. A reference to the motion which says that, 'for having left a lasting legacy in the education of generations of Gibraltarian men', and I am sure that both the Chief Minister and I can vouch for that.
950

I also wish to associate myself with what the Leader of the Opposition said in relation to Mr Melvyn Farrell. We have all said what we had to say in relation to him already, but I think a special mention on the occasion of this motion ought to be made. The man is in many, many respects and in more ways than one a gentleman. He has provided I think all of us with assistance in our endeavours whilst conducting our affairs in this House and I can certainly vouch for that personally, Mr Speaker.
955

Finally... or penultimately actually, I would like to make a reference to Mr Dennis Matthews, who I know personally as a friend. I associate myself personally with the services that he has made to the people of Gibraltar, particularly in relation to his fighting the Self-Determination corner, which was started during the time that Mr Bossano, the Hon. the Father of the House was Chief Minister. Again, one of those gentlemen who does not look his age and still finds the energy and the time to write those speeches and travel all the way to New York as he has done recently on two occasions. I think that ought to be quite rightly recognised by the Members of this House.
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Finally, Mr Speaker, a very special mention I think ought to be made of Mr Elio Victor for his services to young people in Gibraltar, and of course Mr Victor was also a candidate – if it is the Mr Victor I am thinking of, and I think I am right in that – with the GMP with me in the 1996 General Elections. The Hon. the Chief Minister and indeed the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister who led that party in those Elections will recall the fun I think that we had in particular... oh yes, and the Hon. the Minister for Sports, absolutely.
965 The fun I think that we had during the course of that campaign.
970

I remember very vividly when we thought that we were going to get at least the Leader of the party into the House and the opinion poll suggested that we could. In the event it did not happen. I think we all received a shock when we saw the results of the exit poll, which were accurate in the event, and we achieved less than 5% of the vote.
975

But despite the very disappointing result, Mr Victor was always there as a source of good fun, good advice and just really a good chap indeed. And I do welcome the fact that Mr Victor features in this motion. I am grateful.

Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes): Mr Speaker?

980 **Mr Speaker:** Mr Edwin Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

985 If I may, I am very glad that the Chief Minister in presenting this motion has nominated persons from a very wide range and different type of contributions and activities in the community, and particularly pleased, as I am sure is the Minister for Sport, that there are good and very worthwhile sports personalities nominated on this, above all, Mr Speaker, because I do not think we will have another opportunity. In the same way that we have got the Father of the House, the Father of the Commonwealth Games, Charles Flower, is nominated here, and that prompts us I think to call upon this House to unanimously wish the best of Gibraltarian luck to all our worthy sports men and sports women (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) (*Banging on desks*) who will be representing us in Scotland in the forthcoming Games.

990 Also, Mr Speaker I know that the Chief Minister has to keep the citations succinct and so on, but I have to mention that in respect of the educational list, there is something that at least in my personal professional life as a teacher should also be recorded. Mr Julio Alcantara as the first Gibraltarian Director of Education had the uneasy task of implementing in Gibraltar the National Curriculum that had been introduced in the UK. I am sure the Hon. Steven Linares joins me as well in thanking Mr Alcantara in the way that he handled that and discussed that with us in the trade union movement, because what we did was we actually cherry picked what we thought was best to ensure that our children received a good education, but we did not fall into the trap of what later on they learnt in the UK were the mistakes of all these league tables and so on and so glad that alongside Mr Alcantara, who had also been involved in implementing what we called in the trade union world the 'Baker Agreement', the 'Blue Book', all those different terms that were used for the implementation of new pay and conditions, Mr Alcantara had to oversee that, the changing of a certain number of working days and so on, and he was very ably supported and we had no problems in entering negotiations with the then Headmistress of Westside School, affectionately known to us as Lally, Lally Canessa was there and of course my other personal friend Dr Bernard Linares at Bayside School. So I am really grateful, Mr Speaker, that the Chief Minister found it fit to recognise these people and in the record it will show that they also had a particular contribution to make to the introduction of both the national curriculum and the new terms and conditions for teachers.

Thank you.

1010 **Hon. S M Figueras:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to rise to just add my two pence worth to the discussion on the motion, and in particular in relation... I associate myself of course with all the comments of hon. Members present in relation to all those on the list certainly, but I would like to just add a couple of comments in respect of a couple or three of them.

1015 Starting with Mr Fortunato Azopardi, obviously a man for whom I have close personal affection and whom I also understand, and it may well be common knowledge, but I certainly only learnt it this morning, that he was indeed the originator of the idea of the 30,000 red and white balloons being deployed on National Day – (*Interjection*) from what I understand, yes – and which, of course, depending on the prevailing winds on any given National Day would have sent the community's message really very loudly and very clearly to precisely the people in a very targeted fashion that we would otherwise prefer to ignore such strongly held local sentiment.

1020 In relation to the former Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Melvyn Farrell, I had the opportunity of only a short year and a half or two of working with him, but I was always very grateful to him for always being happy to provide guidance and assistance, despite the differences that there may have been in relation to the posing of questions and whether those are accepted or otherwise. He was always the messenger and I tried my hardest not to be the one to shoot him.

1025 Finally, Mr Speaker I am gratified personally as well to see Mr Christian Santos on the list, a person with whom I have had the opportunity over many years of sharing the stage and like other Members, I am sure, being entertained by the very original and the very entertaining works which he has brought to this community.

1030 I would also like to take the opportunity of specifically to record on *Hansard* that I associate myself with the wish expressed by my Hon. and Learned Friend the Leader of the Opposition in relation to our wish, and my personal wish as well, that Dr Leslie Zammit be recognised by the Hon. the Chief Minister. As a person who I spent many, many summers working in the Bayside drama studio to deliver annual plays, which were frankly a significant part of my teenage years here in this community and make up for a lot of who I am today, and that certainly is something I wish to record. He was taken tragically too soon, depriving this community of so much more that I am sure he would have been able to (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) contribute. I therefore just want to place on record that he would certainly be a worthy recipient and certainly an honour that I am certain his wife Olga would be only too proud to hear of his receipt of.

1040 That concludes my contribution. Thank you. (*Banging on desks*)

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker I am grateful for the indications from the hon. Members that they will be supporting this motion.

Can I just say to them, Mr Joe Pitaluga already has the Gibraltar Medallion of Honour. I am surprised that Mr Netto, Mr Reyes and Mr Feetham have forgotten. We actually bestowed it in 2008 (*Interjection*) on Mr Pitaluga for all of the reasons that Members opposite have said. It was unanimous and so we have in effect re-run that debate and it has been a pleasure to hear. (*Laughter and interjections*)

But anyway, Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman has given us a list of people who we associate ourselves with the things that he has said. Many of them are already or were already on the Deputy Chief Minister's running list for December. I have given an indication to the Leader of the Opposition, which I am happy to give to the whole community, that I intend to bring these motions both in June and in December... or rather in July when we have the July session, and in December and the names they have mentioned I think absent, one or two of them were already on our list and so it is a pleasure to see that we will be able to see them unanimously supported.

William Serfaty, I have always got on with very well as a member of the SDGG and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is right, he is the first Chairman of the SDGG to have addressed the UN. The reason we did not move on this occasion that he be included is because Mr Matthews has indicated that he is leaving the Chairmanship of the SDGG and we are therefore honouring him on this occasion, but Mr Serfaty will be honoured by us on the next occasion.

Mr Leslie Zammit has been mentioned and Mr Zammit, who unfortunately passed away very early in his retirement, was Deputy Headmaster of Bayside whilst I was there. (*Interjection*) Well, in the time I was there he was Deputy Headmaster. He is to a very great extent responsible for my having been able to access Oxford University, because he organised for me all the exams I had to do, outside of the run of the normal organisation of the school, and if it had not been for him in his position and the manner that he organised them, I do not think I would have been able to do those examinations. I remember it was unfortunate that I had to do three entrance papers and they were all scheduled for the same time on the same day and therefore the only alternative I had was to sit the three of them one after the other and do nine hours. And if I may say so, figuratively, he held my hand through that period, which was also a period when construction was going on at Bayside School and therefore it was a particularly difficult time and he was extraordinarily helpful to me personally, and therefore they find me very happy to support the proposal that Leslie Zammit be honoured in this way.

Mr Speaker, the Government will amongst others also be proposing that Ralph Heskett be bestowed the Medallion of Distinction. He leaves us this weekend, having been our Bishop, and he is therefore going to be one of the names we move after he has left.

Mr Jose Netto, who has an important role to play in the history of trade unionism in Gibraltar will also (*Interjection*) Sorry? You are right. He has got the Honour, not the Distinction.

So, Mr Speaker, there is a list of people in this community who have not been recognised because of the absence of State Honours, or enough State Honours in the way that we think is appropriate and therefore we will certainly be moving that they receive this Distinction.

Mr Speaker, of those who are being bestowed these Honours, I did not intend to say anything more than the paragraph said, but Members opposite have said something and I want to associate myself with the things they have said about the people they have said it.

Melvyn Farrell, Mr Speaker, was at No. 6 Convent Place an important tool in what a Chief Minister did until 1996 when he was moved and No. 6's gain was our loss eventually when he came to this Parliament and he therefore started to fulfil an important function here. As the present Clerk will know now, they are at the heart of our democracy. They are at the heart of our political battles. They have to steer a very difficult course between both sides, and all Clerks have... and Mr Melvyn Farrell did of course steer that course very carefully and very elegantly so that we all felt that we could confide in him when necessary.

Mr Speaker, Kevin Dobson has a place very close in my heart, as he does in the heart of the hon. Gentleman opposite. He prepared us for this life that we lead today with his instruction in the language. It is unfortunate that the hon. Member has blacked out that I beat him in all of those debates (*Interjection*) when the hands went up and that he has not yet beat me in any Election that we have stood for, even if it is just an argument over a constitution when we were aged 16. I hope that will continue for many years and Kevin would be very happy to see us – (*Interjection*) Kevin would be very happy to see us having this argument today, because I know he held us both in great affection, as he did everybody who he taught.

Mr Speaker, Lionel Perez taught in a different less gentle way (*Laughter*) but just as effective. I was very pleased to hear the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition say that he remembered Mr Perez threatening him with a [*piña*] Mr Speaker, I suppose because he is taller than Mr Perez, he remembers Mr Perez threatening him with a [*piña*] Those of us who were about his same height remember the [*piña*] (*Laughter and banging on desks*) and a very, very important part of our education it was too, Mr Speaker. I do not know that he would get away with it today, but that probably accounts for why kids are such a riot these days. If Lionel Perez had his way, we would all be back on the straight and narrow, whatever our ages.

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to hear that the hon. Gentleman recognises the importance of the release of balloons on National Day. There are environmental issues that we have to consider for the future unfortunately, but I am very pleased that he has understood what that signal means.

1105 I was I think 19 years old when I was in the lobby of this place on the first National Day having been called up by Marielou Guerrero having been in a few meetings of the SDGG already, to come down early to start inflating balloons on the day that this was first done. When there was no red and white organised other than I think the Chief Minister or one of the Members of the SDGG having said on television, ‘Tomorrow is the 10th September. We will be releasing balloons. It would be good if people wore red and white’, and it was quite incredible to see the flood of red and white that emerged. We thought we might just see the girls from Westside wearing burgundy and white, but actually the whole of Gibraltar turned out with some aspect of red and white on that day, which was not a holiday, just with a red tie and a white shirt and the like.

1110 It was the then Chief Minister, Mr Bossano, who declared the holiday as the result of the enormous success of what the SDGG had done on that day and I am very pleased that we are able together to recognise that and I hope that even on the days when they have not attended the political rally at Casements, they have happily seen the balloons send the message quite where it has to be sent.

1115 Mr Speaker, all of these people are worthy of this recognition and I am delighted that the House will Honour them unanimously. *(Banging on desks)*

1120

Mr Speaker: I now put the question in the terms of the motion proposed by the Hon. the Chief Minister. Those in favour? **(Members: Aye.)** Those against? Carried.

**Suspension of Standing Order 19 –
Motion carried**

Clerk: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

‘That this House approves pursuant to Standing Order 59 the suspension of Standing Order 19, but only to the extent that at least five days, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, notice is required of a motion which has been notified by the Hon. the Chief Minister on 2nd July 2014 and circulated by the Clerk on 2nd July 2014.’

1130

Mr Speaker: This is just a procedural motion. Does any Member wish to contribute?

I propose a question in the terms of the motion moved by the Chief Minister, and I have to say it should be noted it is a procedural motion because it has not been possible to give the necessary number of days. *(Interjection)* I put the question?

I now put the question in the terms of the motion proposed by the Hon. the Chief Minister. Those in favour? **(Members: Aye.)** Those against? Carried.

**First World War –
Commemoration of 100th anniversary –
Motion carried**

1135

Clerk: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows:

‘This House:

Notes that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War;

Recalls the sacrifice made by the United Kingdom and the British Empire, including Gibraltar towards the War effort;

Recalls that the Bay of Gibraltar was an important assembly point for naval convoys during the First World War; and

Takes note that the Memorial in the Lobby of Parliament remembers the role played by some Gibraltarians during that conflict, including the Battle of Bournon Wood. These are Lieutenant S Benzecry; Leopold Bossano; Joseph Gustavino; J Briggs; Lionel Harrison; Albert Jones; Edward Oliveri; A Wallace; Michael Pitman; Daniel Francis Piri; Harry Reading; Alfred J Ruggier; Andrew Ryan; Stewart Thomas and John Undery; and

Hereby resolves to honour through this motion the memory of all those members of the Armed Forces and also those civilians who gave their lives in the service of their country during the First World War. '

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Mr Speaker, as hon. Members know, there will be celebrations in Gibraltar to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

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It was proposed to the Government, and the Government has accepted, that one of the things that should happen during the course of those celebrations is that a motion of this Parliament should be read, and this is the motion that we propose for the purposes of those further commemorations, including not just Ministry of Defence aspects and not just aspects from the Government of the United Kingdom, but also an aspect of representation of the people of Gibraltar through a motion of the legislature of Gibraltar, commemorating the role that some Gibraltarians played in that war, which is called the 'Great War', and which is being commemorated this year.

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Mr Speaker: I now propose the question in the terms of the motion moved by the Hon. the Chief Minister.

The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, yes, we are delighted to support this motion, as indeed we would be delighted to support any motion that remembers all those who have not only made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and for their community, in this case Gibraltar, but have also contributed in some way to that, in this case the war effort on behalf of the community and therefore contributed to the existence and the enjoyment of liberty by everybody in this House and everybody within the community.

1160

I do not know how many of these, Mr Speaker, were casualties of the First World War. I do not know the history, but there could be fallen warriors amongst them that never came back to see their families and their friends; but even warriors that do not lose their lives in a war, everybody that participates in a war no doubt comes back touched by it. It must be horrendous. A horrendous way to spend part of your life being involved in that way in a war and quite frankly liberty is such a precious, precious, precious gift, that I think that anybody that contributes to the existence of liberty, in the way that these individuals and others have contributed, deserve that recognition.

1165

I am glad, Mr Speaker, that the Hon. the Chief Minister has focused on Gibraltarians, and not just the war effort generally in the First World War. I am not suggesting for one moment that it is not worthy of remembrance, but we have got our own people who have also contributed to that war effort and in that context I also note the comments made recently by Baroness Warsi, that the United Kingdom should also recognise not only the fallen British soldiers from mainland United Kingdom and those that contributed in the two Great Wars, but also the Commonwealth as well, and those that contributed from the Commonwealth to the United Kingdom, the British war effort and the existence of liberty in the United Kingdom and indeed Europe. People who came from the far flung corners of the world that may have had absolutely no connection to Europe or indeed the war in Europe.

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Mr Speaker, I always on these... not occasions, but when one comes to consider remembering people who have fought in both World Wars, I always remember the poem by Laurence Binyon, the very well-known poem by Laurence Binyon for the Fallen, and indeed it is the last line of the *Ode of Remembrance* from that poem, which reads, 'We will remember them'. I think that that is what we are doing today in this motion. We will remember. We will remember not only those that have given their lives for this community, but indeed those who perhaps did not give their lives, but who went through that war effort so that we could have the liberty and enjoy the liberty and the democratic values and institutions that we enjoy today. For all those reasons, we are delighted, certainly on this side of the House, to support the motion.

1180

(Banging on desks)

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Mr Speaker: Does any other hon. Member wish to speak on the motion.

The Hon. Mr Bossano.

1190

Hon. D J Bossino: No, I give way to –

Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the second name on the list is a Bossano – *(Laughter)* not a Bossino. *(Laughter and interjection)*

1195 I think one of the things that is significant about those who went to fight to defend King and Country is in fact that they were Gibraltarian volunteers. Like they came from other parts of the British Empire, the Gibraltarians were volunteers and in a way is what Gibraltarians have done or the ancestors of the Gibraltarians have done, because way back in the 18th century there was the Italian Contingent that defended Gibraltar against sieges and then subsequently there was the Gibraltar Defence Force, which eventually got the recognition that it deserved as a Regiment and then as the Royal Gibraltar Regiment.

1200 What we are doing here is recognising in one particular period in our history what a group of Gibraltarians were doing when the time came to step forward to defend the British Empire in the process of defending British Gibraltar at the same time, because clearly one would not subsist without the other. Certainly, in my own family, my father had 12 brothers and sisters, which was the kind of families that existed at the time of the First World War and I do not think he lasted very long after volunteering.

1205 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I am glad he has made a reference to Leopold Bossano in that because I think actually it is that particular paragraph in the motion which for me certainly is perhaps the more poignant or important one, and it is the fact that there has been such a contribution to the war effort by Gibraltarians. This is the point, and the point was made by the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition when he referred to what Baroness Warsi has said recently when she launched the project called the First World War the Commonwealth Contribution, Gibraltar as part of the Commonwealth did make a contribution to the First World War. Their names are there. Their names are on the memorial set out in the lobby of the Parliament and it is in fact one, which I was mentioning it to the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister as we were walking up before this session started, that that was particularly one of the acts during Armistice Day, which we celebrate in November, which we were always very keen to attend when it was less popular to do so. Everyone would go to the Cross of Sacrifice, but he and I would always make the point of coming here and laying the wreath at the lobby of the House because it was in recognition of the sacrifice made, whether by their lives or otherwise, by the Gibraltarian contingent.

1210 The Second World War, because it is closer in time and it in fact impacted directly in some cases... some Members of this House were impacted directly by it, but at least I think for most of us perhaps the exceptions may be the younger Members of the House, the Minister for Social Services and the Minister for Tourism may not fall under this category, but I think all of us will have had parents who were actually probably born during the Second World War.

1225 In relation to that point, just by way of anecdotal reference, the Hon. the Minister for Employment will recall when about four years ago I told him, and I think I sent him the information I had come across as a result of some research I was doing for a case and I had occasion to go to the Gibraltar Archives, and Mr Beiso very kindly pointed me to the direction of a box which contained the passenger lists of the ships which took the Gibraltarian evacuees.

1230 And just to delve... or to dwell rather on the Second World War for a moment, I came across this particular document, which refers to Ship D, the Athlone Castle, which set sail on 26th July 1940. Amongst that list there is a Jaime Bossino, who at the time was two years and five months and a Mary Padiña who at the time was one, those are my parents, my mother and my father. If you go further up the list where the Bossino surname features, one comes across a Joseph Bossano, who was one year old and one month and Theresa Bossano, who I assume was the hon. Member's late mother. So had that particular vessel been torpedoed successfully, neither a Bossino, nor a Bossano would have been present in this House today.

1235 **A Member:** No rainy day fund.

Hon. D J Bossino: No rainy day fund.

1240 In fact that point was made by Baroness Warsi when she launched this particular project and she made a reference to the fact that we all know about the Second World War. We would all have had fathers or grandfathers... she referred to them as the brave men who would have participated in it, but it is for that reason I am quoting from a speech she says:

1245 '... I have always known something of British India's role in that conflict. But for many years I was unaware of the role their fellow countrymen played 30 years earlier. The one and a half million from modern day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who served, fought and fell for Britain in the Great War.'

1250 In the first World War... so I think it is absolutely right, Mr Speaker, that equally as Baroness Warsi has done in the United Kingdom, that us here in Gibraltar we should recognise the very valuable contribution made by Gibraltarians in particular to the Great War and we are very happy to be supporting this motion indeed.

Mr Speaker: If there is no other contributor, I will call upon the mover, the Chief Minister, to reply.

1255 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am very grateful for everything that everybody has said about this motion and in particular for the things that the Hon. Mr Bossino said about the Second World War, although we are dealing with the First World War, but I do appreciate that it does help to put things in context.

1260 Mr Speaker, the things that Baroness Warsi has said are going to be recognised in a Service of Remembrance organised in Glasgow on 4th August, which will be presided over by Prince Charles, and to which the Government of Gibraltar has been invited in recognition of the role played by Gibraltarians in respect of the First World War. So we are delighted to see that Gibraltar is going to be included amongst those recognised for inclusion on that important day where the whole world will be remembering from Glasgow what happened during the course of the Great War.

1265 Mr Speaker, I do not think there is more to add, except to tell the Hon. Mr Bossino that some of us have parents who were born during the First World War. My father was born in 1917 and he unfortunately passed away in 2010.

Mr Speaker: I now put the question in the terms of the motion proposed by the Hon. the Chief Minister. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

1270 **Clerk:** Adjournment.

1275 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, so fair and foul the session of Parliament there is not as the one that considers the Appropriation Bill, and then goes on to consider in unanimity measures, like the ones that we have considered this morning, we have argued, we have laughed and we have worked together on Bills and not worked together on much else.

Mr Speaker, it is now my pleasure to move that the House adjourn *sine die*, with a wish that all Members enjoy the summer break. We will see them again in September.

1280 **Mr Speaker:** I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn *sine die*.
I now put the question 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 sine die at 12.51. p.m.