



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.00 p.m. – 4.46 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 19th March 2015

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.00 p.m.

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

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

Questions for Oral Answer

CHIEF MINISTER

Q264/2015

No. 6 Convent Place –

Completion of works; estimated cost

Mr Speaker: Questions to the Chief Minister, beginning with Question 264.
The Hon. Mr Figueras.

Clerk: Question 264, the Hon. S M Figueras.

5

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister say when works at Convent Place are expected to be completed and the estimated cost of these works?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the current works at Convent Place are programmed for completion in June, 2015. The total estimated cost of these works have not yet been finalised and therefore final costs will be available in the course of the next financial year.

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Hon. J J Netto: Mr Speaker, could I ask, I mean taking into account what the Chief Minister has said, does the Government have a kind of order of cost as opposed to a definitive amount of what the cost would be?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, we have had these debates in the past and I have indicated that it is not in the taxpayer's interest that we give an order of cost. Because, for example, in respect of this project in particular and because I am obviously involved with it, as is the Deputy Chief Minister as we are living on the site, although I have had to move out for a few days because of the works there are sub-contractors still being engaged and negotiations are ongoing with some sub-contractors in respect of some works and therefore we do not want to give any indication of what the approved costs are so that we can continue to drive a hard bargain with the contractors, but of course the total final cost will be disclosed during the course of the Budget debate I imagine.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, may I ask the Chief Minister if at least he can give us some further information to this extent, as he has already gone on record as saying that this particular project is going to cost around £4.5 million. I mean that is the original estimate that he has quoted as having said in the press. Does he envisage that it will come in at less than that, around that or more than that? At least perhaps he can provide us with some further information.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am very happy to report that the costs estimated at £4.5 million at the time that the project was envisaged are likely to come in on target – in other words, what was going to cost £4.5 million is going to cost £4.5 million. But Convent Place is a very old building, Mr Speaker, and therefore as works move on new issues arise and a refurbishment or aspects of a refurbishment are leading to new works which are being required.

40 It may be of interest to the House to know, for example, that the floorboards in some parts of No.6
Convent Place are riddled with termites and therefore there will have to be work done in respect of that
work which has now been uncovered and which will require replacement because of course earlier
refurbishments did not deal with that. They dealt with chandeliers and curtains, but they did not deal with
the infrastructure of the building which is what is now being uncovered.

45 Therefore it maybe that there will be additional costs, but not because the £4.5 million is not going as
far as the £4.5 million should have gone.

Q265/2015
Europa Point Stadium –
Government expenditure

Clerk: Question 265, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Government please state what money has been paid either
50 directly or indirectly by the Government, a Government-owned company, authority or agency in respect of
the proposed Europa Point Stadium and/or Europa Stadium Limited?

Clerk: Answer the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the sum of £104 has been charged to Europa Stadium
55 Limited to date.

Hon. D A Feetham: So, Mr Speaker, the answer – so that I get it absolutely clear and so there is
absolutely no doubt moving to the future – is that taxpayers' money, the extent of the expenditure by the
Government to date in relation to Europa Point and in relation to this particular company is just the figure
60 that the hon. Gentleman has just provided to this House now.

Hon. Chief Minister: Yes, Mr Speaker. Following exactly the words that he has used, the cost to the
taxpayer is exactly the figure that I have given.

Q266-272/2015
Sunborn floating hotel –
Government costs; registration; Certificate of Fitness

Clerk: Question 266, the Hon. D A Feetham.
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Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Government confirm whether the Sunborn floating hotel is registered as a
ship or a hotel in Gibraltar, and if not, where is it registered?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.
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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions
267 to 272.

Clerk: Question 267, the Hon. D A Feetham.
75

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, what has been the total indirect or direct cost to Government or any
entity for which it is accountable of the Sunborn floating hotel, including but not limited to any cost of
dredging a passage to allow the hotel to be berthed at its current site?

Clerk: Question 268, the Hon. D A Feetham.
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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, has the Sunborn floating hotel been awarded a Certificate of Fitness
by any authority in Gibraltar and please provide details of the same?

Clerk: Question 269, the Hon. D A Feetham.
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Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Government confirm that it is not contractually responsible for any maintenance costs in respect of the Sunborn floating hotel?

Clerk: Question 270, the Hon. D A Feetham.

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Hon. D A Feetham: What payments have been made to the Government of Gibraltar or Credit Finance Company Limited in respect of loans provided by the latter to the owners of the Sunborn or any other entity associated with it?

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Clerk: Question 271, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Government confirm that no further loans have been provided to the owners of the Sunborn floating hotel or any entity associated with it in respect of that hotel since June 2013?

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Clerk: Question 272, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Government confirm the owners of the Sunborn floating hotel or any other entity associated with that hotel have paid Credit Finance Company Limited all repayments due in respect of loans provided in respect of that hotel on their due date without the need to reschedule, renegotiate or otherwise postpone the original date of payment?

105

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, as previously stated in my answer to Questions 210 to 223 and 428/2014, and in other instances I believe, the Sunborn hotel is a private facility and it is the responsibility of the owners and operators to ensure it complies with any requisite regulations and laws and the Government has no involvement in this. Furthermore, there is no maintenance agreement between the Government and the Sunborn floating hotel.

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The Sunborn floating hotel is not a building subject to building control and so it is not captured by building regulations and the Government's Building Control Department are not called upon to determine whether a Certificate of Fitness should be awarded or not. The Government nonetheless understands that the Sunborn is registered as a vessel in Finland.

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The Government will not bear any costs associated with the Sunborn project. Although the benefits of those works have accrued to Ocean Village and Sunborn, the cost will be shared by those who have taken the benefit of said works. Government is in the process of agreeing with both Ocean Village and the Sunborn what proportion of the works each is liable for and how they will reimburse the Government.

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Mr Speaker, as I have said repeatedly in answer to questions of this nature, the loan of monies to the Sunborn by Credit Finance Company Limited is not a matter on which the Government will comment as it is commercially confidential.

125

Hon. D A Feetham: Well, Mr Speaker, starting with the question of the Certificate of Fitness Mr Speaker, does the Government feel comfortable with a situation where the Sunborn floating hotel does not have a Certificate of Fitness here in Gibraltar?

My understanding of the position is that any hotel in Gibraltar would need to have a Certificate of Fitness and presumably the reason why this particular hotel does not have a Certificate of Fitness is because it falls between two stools – in other words, it falls between regulations pertaining to hotels and regulations pertaining to ships. But one way or the other I would have thought that it would have been advisable for this particular hotel to also have a Certificate of Fitness, as indeed do all other hotels in Gibraltar.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, before I answer, can I invite the hon. Gentleman to declare his interest in respect of these questions?

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I am certainly not the owner of the hotel and so I am not sure what interest he wants me to declare. Perhaps he would care to clarify the situation.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman is a partner in the law firm that advises the Sunborn floating hotel. As I understand it, given previous rulings, it is incumbent upon him to declare his interest in that respect.

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We were required to do so during the course of the Budget debate in 2011 and during that session... in fact not in relation to the Appropriation Bill – simply because Mr Licudi and I were going to vote on a

matter in respect of which a client of Hassans had an interest. We were not going to speak. We were going to vote on a matter in respect of which a client of Hassans had an interest.

150 So I invite him to declare his interest here as a partner of the law firm that advises the Sunborn floating hotel in respect of which he is now asking questions of the Government as to what might and might not be advisable.

Hon. D A Feetham: Well Mr Speaker, he appears to know more about the business of Hassans than I do. I have to say that is the reality. He appears to know more about the business of Hassans than I do. I certainly was not aware that Hassans had been advising the Sunborn hotel in relation to these particular issues, if that is what he is suggesting.

155 But to the extent that I must accept the hon. Gentleman's word for it, that Hassans are somehow involved with the Sunborn floating hotel, to the extent that that is so, Mr Speaker, I have absolutely no problem in declaring that is so, accepting *his* word for it that Hassans are acting on behalf of the Sunborn floating hotel, because of course he appears to know more about the business of Hassans than I do.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, it is not that I know more about the business of Hassans than he does, it is that lawyers from Hassans come to see me about the Sunborn floating hotel and they appear to have advised that the Sunborn does not need to apply for a Certificate of Fitness. It may be, given everything that he has said, that he takes issues with the views expressed by some of his partners and the associates working in his firm.

Hon. D A Feetham: No, Mr Speaker look I do not take issue with the advice provided by any lawyer. I am asking the Government questions because they are accountable at the end of the day to this House and to the people of Gibraltar.

170 I am the Leader of the Opposition. I also happen to be a partner in Hassans. But look, the fact that somebody from within Hassans, which is a massive organisation, has been advising the Sunborn is neither here nor there. I am asking the Hon. the Chief Minister whether he, as a Government, as Head of a Government, feels comfortable with a situation where you have a hotel that does not appear to have a Certificate of Fitness. That is all I am asking. Now surely that is capable of a very simple answer.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, the fact that Hassans is a massive organisation was not relevant when Mr Licudi and I were simply going to vote on a Bill, which we were not even speaking on, and he and the then Leader of the House were sitting on this side of the House and insisted that we had to declare an interest simply to say 'aye' or 'nay' in respect of a Bill. So it appears that this is the embodiment of the hypocrisy that the hon. Members opposite have displayed as to how they acted when they were on this side of the House and how they act when they are on that side of the House something which has manifested in just about every single thing that they do.

185 For example, Mr Speaker, when they are on this side of the House they agreed to pay increase electricity charges by 5% a year and when they are on that side of the House they say they have no intention of passing that on to the people who consume electricity. Well, never mind.

190 Mr Speaker, it is not that the Government feels comfortable or uncomfortable in respect of a Certificate of Fitness, it is that the Government is advised that the hotel does not require a Certificate of Fitness and obviously the law firm that he is a partner of feels exactly the same way, otherwise they would have applied for one.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I do not care what advice – I am not here in my capacity as a lawyer – what advice has been provided by Hassans, nor was I aware that Hassans had advised the Government in relation to this particular issue or advised anybody else about this particular issue.

195 But, I ask the question because clearly there must be a lacuna in the law, because if you have a situation where a floating hotel does not require a Certificate of Fitness, presumably because it is classified as a ship and therefore does not come within the regulations appertaining to hotels, but then also does not come within the regulations appertaining to the registration of ships or yachts in Gibraltar because it is not quite that.

200 There must be a lacuna within the law in relation to this and all I was going to ask the Chief Minister, before he got on his high horse in relation to this, was whether the Government intends to perhaps change the law in order to deal with that lacuna. That is all. Perhaps he might care to answer that question.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I have never been known for my equestrian skills. There is a champion jockey sitting on this side, but it is Mr Licudi not me. So I do not do high horses. *(Laughter)*

What I will say, Mr Speaker, is that if the Government felt that there was a lacuna in the law... Mr Speaker, the hon. Members says he is not here as a lawyer, but he uses legal terms – a lacuna means a gap. If I thought there was a gap in the law the Government would have filled it.

But we are perfectly happy, Mr Speaker, that his clients are operating legally in Gibraltar.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, just perhaps for the benefit of viewers and those that do are not quite understand the intricacies of this, can he confirm that the reason why this this hotel ship is registered in Finland is because under current law it cannot be registered in Gibraltar because it does not quite fall under the relevant definitions for the purpose of ship registration in Gibraltar?

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Hon. Chief Minister: No, Mr Speaker, because I do not know why his clients have chosen to register in Finland and not in Gibraltar.

Hon. D A Feetham: Well, Mr Speaker, let us move on with another supplementary.

220

Mr Speaker, I have asked about Credit Finance and I have asked a question, which is an important question, and it is an important question for the purposes of allowing the Opposition to properly examine the Government... well indeed the Government because the Government guarantees the money – exposure in relation to the loan provided to the owners of the Sunborn.

225

I have asked whether the Government has had to, or Credit Finance has had to reschedule that debt since the time that it entered into those loans with the owners of the Sunborn because of course if the Government has had to reschedule that debt because the owners of the Sunborn have not paid on their due date because they have not been able to, that obviously raises other questions and would lead us into a trail of enquiry, which is quite legitimate, Mr Speaker, in our role as in Opposition holding the Government to account and in making sure that the Government does not over-expose this community.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I have made clear the position of the Government on a number of occasions before and he knows. He is asking this question knowing exactly the answer he is going to get which is that we will not disclose the details of the loan book of Credit Finance Company Limited, other than to disclose the full extent of the loan books – in other words, to say how much money has been loaned, but not in detail what has been loaned to whom to them.

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But, Mr Speaker, I am prepared to take a completely different line in respect of this loan to the Sunborn. If he confirms to me that his client, Sunborn Limited, have authorised that, I give that information across the floor of the House. If he has instructions from Sunborn Company Limited to authorise the Government to disclose that information about the details of what they have paid and what they have not paid, if he wants to check with his clients whether he has those instructions so that I can disclose that confidential information in this House, then I am happy to do so. But he needs to make clear to me whether he has those instructions from his clients.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can I make it absolutely crystal clear for the Hon. the Chief Minister and indeed anybody else that is listening out there, I could not care less, not one jot do I care about the views of the Sunborn floating hotel. Whether they are clients of my firm or they are not clients of my firm, I am here discharging my duties as Leader of the Opposition, which I will discharge to the best of my ability. And therefore, if I feel that there is a question of relevance to the taxpayer, of relevance to the people of Gibraltar, I will ask it, whether they are clients of Hassans or they are not clients of Hassans and If the owners of the Sunborn have any complaint whatsoever against me, they can make a complaint to the Admissions and Disciplinary Committee and no doubt that will be considered in due course. I am perfectly comfortable with the questions that I am asking.

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But, Mr Speaker, there is a conflict of approach in the way that the Chief Minister is approaching this particular question 272 and the way that he has approached it in the past, which gives rise to a suspicion on my part that the situation has changed because in the past, last year, I asked this question and he said that there had been no rescheduling of the debt and that the owners of the Sunborn had paid on their due date. Today, he refuses to provide the answer that question. Why is that?

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Hon. Chief Minister: No, Mr Speaker, it is just that I have asked him whether he has had instructions from his clients that I could disclose that confidential information and he appears not to have those instructions.

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But, Mr Speaker, clearly there are conflicts here. There are conflicts which have just been disclosed as to his commercial interest in the position that he is taking here. But there is also conflict, Mr Speaker, in respect of the executive of the GSD because I have a letter here from Mr Rafael Benzaquen which appeared in the *Gibraltar Chronicle* on Monday 3rd November of last year, and I do not pay much attention to what that gentleman tends to say, but on this particular occasion he said something which caught my interest.

265

Talking about whether the Sunborn had received a loan from the Government or not, he said of my statement in this House, “true, that Government is not providing a loan to the Sunborn out of the Consolidated Fund,” in respect of the things I had said. “But a Government-owned company is from public money.” Well apart from the fact that this man obviously does not know what is and is not public money, at least he certainly accepts that what I said in the House was true.

So, Mr Speaker, he has got the conflict of interest between the clients of his firm and what he is advocating in this House. He has got the conflict in his executive as to whether what I said in the House in the past about the Sunborn is true or not. His position is riddled with conflict. Is it not about time he got his act together?

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, the only person that is floundering and fumbling in relation to this issue – as indeed he is fumbling and floundering in the management of Gibraltar’s public finances and indeed who will be found wanting in the management of those public finances – is the hon. Gentleman and no one else.

Mr Benzaquen again, even on the way that he has read that particular letter, it has absolutely nothing to do with the point that I am making. I want to know whether the owners of the Sunborn have paid back the instalments on that loan on their due date. I am not even asking, because I know that he is not going to give me the information, what the size of the loan is. I am asking him have they paid on their due date and look, just simply...

There are going to be people out there listening to the Chief Minister and the evasiveness that is quite patent in the way that he answers the question who are going to be believing and are going to be saying to themselves, ‘Well he has got something to hide’. Is it because, is it because the owners of the Sunborn have not provided, have not paid on their due date? I do not know. He may be doing a to the owners of the Sunborn. I do not know.

On that last point let me say this so that people outside also understand it, that he continues to be a partner in Hassans and no doubt he knows what happens at Hassans more so than I do.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, I am just better liked than him on most occasions so people tend to talk to me more. But let us start from the very beginning because, as Julie Andrews said, that is a very good place to start. *(Laughter)*

He says that I am fumbling and floundering and that I will be found wanting. I am delighted that he has said that, Mr Speaker, because I have yet to hear him make a prediction that comes true. Even if it is about the turnout in the by-election or the result of the by-election, he is probably one of the few politicians that allows himself to make predictions that he knows are one day going to be judged at the end of a campaign with empirical returns and numbers. He has always got them wrong, so I am delighted that his prediction is that I am the one who is going to found wanting because by the standards of the past we know that prediction is going to end up as an omelette all over his face.

As to evasiveness, Mr Speaker well look, the only person who is evading the issues here is the man who represents the Sunborn Floating Hotel and is yet trying to make capital in this House of what he appears to think may be a short coming in respect of the hotel, whether that is in respect of its Certificate of Fitness or whether it is about his client’s paying their loan liabilities etc. Look Mr Speaker, frankly I think what he has said about his firm, which also happens to be the firm on which I am on a sabbatical, leaves a lot to be desired because nobody in this House has ever said I represent those people corporately, but here I do the opposite of what might be in their interests.

Everybody in this House has declared interests when they have had to. They have been clear about how they represent the people of Gibraltar in the way that does not conflict with their commercial interests, and where there might be a conflict they allow another Member of the Parliament on their side to deal with those issues so that the community is not in any way let down if there were issues to be followed up, but those personal conflicts are not highlighted and in the way that he has really brought to the forefront of what it is that he does professionally and what he does here.

There is absolutely no evasiveness on the part of the Government. The Government has said what it has said repeatedly about the loan book of Credit Finance. I am very happy, Mr Speaker, that Credit Finance is doing an excellent job. The returns being produced are absolutely excellent and, Mr Speaker, I have absolutely no desire to continue down the road of a debate that the hon. Gentleman wants to have, which he may think is very much in his interest today, but he might think – sooner than he thinks – was not perhaps the right argument to be pursuing for so long because there may be more than one omelette flying in his direction.

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Hon. D A Feetham: I quite enjoy omelettes. I have to say, I have six eggs a day.

330 Mr Speaker, the Sunborn hotel... because I would not want anybody out there to be misled by what the Chief Minister is saying – are not my clients. I have never spoken... I do not know who there are. (*Interjections*)

No, they may be clients of the (*Interjections*) firm and I have to accept and I have to accept the Hon. the Chief Minister's word for it, Mr Speaker. (*Interjections*)

335 Mr Speaker, may I be allowed to continue?

Mr Speaker: [*Inaudible*] Let me repeat what I said, because I am on camera now.

For over an hour at the last meeting of this House there were some very heated exchanges between the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, and to a certain extent I was conscious of the fact that I was allowing them perhaps too much leniency.

340 Subsequent to the meeting I was approached by a number of people, one in particular with very inside knowledge about the proceedings of Parliament, as to whether I had not been too lenient. I said, 'Yes. I admit I had been too lenient'. I was lenient because I wanted to lay down a marker and that marker is that between now and the General Election I am not going to permit exchanges in this House at Question Time to become a slanging match.

345 If hon. Members want a slanging match, they had better put somebody else in this Chair, not me. I am not going to play that game. Okay? But I am conscious of the fact that I allowed too much leeway, but I am not going to allow it today. Okay? If necessary, I will suspend the sitting of this House for half an hour so that temperatures can cool down, but I am not prepared to go through that again. I do not see why I should. I am at an age when I do not have to, when my blood pressure might dangerously... and I might not be here

350 after the next General Election if it is that Members would want me to be here.

So having laid down that marker, let us see whether common sense can prevail and let us get on with the business of the House which is what we are all about. (*Banging on desks*)

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I certainly would not want your health to suffer as a consequence of any questions or any exchanges with the Chief Minister during Chief Minister's Question Time.

355

Mr Speaker, all I want to ask the Chief Minister is this, perhaps this can cut across it – what his objection is to me standing here, because my firm appears to be acting, according to him, for the owners of the Sunborn? I do not know. What if the hon. Gentleman my friend, Mr Bossino were to ask exactly the same question 272, in terms of whether the owners of the Sunborn had paid on their due date or if there has been any rescheduling of that date, would the Chief Minister answer the question in those circumstances?

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, he should put it at the next meeting of the House.

But Mr Speaker, let us be very clear. The hon. Gentleman has said that he is taking my word for the fact that the Sunborn is a client of Hassans... that he was not aware of that.

365 Well, Mr Speaker, I accuse him of misleading the House. I accuse him of misleading the House and I am prepared to move a motion for that purpose, because in a press release, well in the *Chronicle* newspaper, an article of 4th July 2013, we had an exchange. He will recall it in this House, which is reported in the *Chronicle*, that I made reference to the fact that the Sunborn is a client of Hassans. We followed that up with a press release on 3rd July 2013, which was a Government press release setting out that the Sunborn was a client of Hassans. We followed that up again on 22nd July 2013 with a Government press release that set out that Hassans was the lawyer for the Sunborn. I therefore believe that he has misled the House, unless he tells me that he forgot those exchanges and if he does, then I will relent from my accusation that he has misled the House.

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375 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, he can bring whatever motion he wants to bring and I will answer and I will meet whatever motion he wants to bring, and if he wants to, he must act in the manner that he feels in his own judgement he has to do. If he brings a motion, I will deal with it. The issue of Hassans acting on behalf of the Sunborn has arisen in relation to the question of the Certificate of Fitness.

I have absolutely no clue about Hassans acting in respect of the Certificate for Fitness and advising the Government or anybody else as to whether a Certificate of Fitness was necessary in this particular case, but look that is irrelevant. He brings whatever motion he wants to bring and I will meet it head on.

380

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, my mistake. My own microphone was on which means that the camera has been on me for the last few minutes. I apologise.

385 But having regard to the fact that the six questions, which were answered together by the Chief Minister, does the Leader of the Opposition or any other Member of the Opposition have any other supplementary on these questions before we move on? (*Interjection*) Then I will ask the Clerk to call Question 273.

Q273/2015

**Number of people naturalised as British in Gibraltar –
Housing waiting list; applications received**

Clerk: Question 273, the Hon. D A Feetham.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, how many people have been naturalised British in Gibraltar since December 2011 and how many of those have applied to join the housing waiting list?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, since December 2011, 992 have been naturalised British in Gibraltar. Of these, 192 have applied to join the housing waiting list.

Q274/2015

**Residency permits –
Discrimination against Gibraltarian men married to foreign women**

Clerk: Question 274, the Hon. D A Feetham.

400

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, does the Government intend to end the current discrimination against Gibraltarian men married to foreign women in the issue of residency permits for their partners under the Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Act?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

405

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, at present the position of the alleged ‘current discrimination’ is that established by the previous GSD administration. The present Administration is considering a change to the rules and we expect to be in the position to make an announcement shortly.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I do not mind talking to the hon. Gentleman behind the Speaker’s Chair in relation to this particular issue, but of course until the Government amends the legislation – and I accept it is a legislation probably going back many, many years – the current discrimination against men who are married to foreign ladies- is going to set to continue.

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I believe that I have found a way in which that can be dealt with in a manner that will allow applications to be dealt with by men in a way that is not discriminatory, because the present position is that if a Gibraltarian woman married to a foreign man, if the foreign man applies for a residency permit, there are not the limitations in terms of the length of the permit that can be granted when one takes into account the position of men married to women. At the moment if you are a man married to a foreign woman, the foreign woman, when applying for a residency permit, will get six months at most a year and that difference is obviously discriminatory.

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I think that I have found a way in which– I do not propose to deal with this across the floor of this House – in which it can be dealt at a discretionary level until the Government changes the law, and I wonder whether he is recipient to talking to me about this particular issue? I have also expressed it, I have to say, to the Chief Secretary. I do not know whether the Chief Secretary has spoken to the hon. Gentleman.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I think I know what case he is talking about. It is a case that has come to me too and I believe I know a way of dealing with this discrimination as well which will enable us to deal with that case in particular. I believe that there may be ways of dealing with the whole issue very quickly; it is an issue that I am looking at. But we have of course before we act to look for advice on whether there are consequences to our actions and what the flood gates might bring, although my instinct is that there will not be any flood gates opening.

430

But the Civil Service is very good at making those checks and ensuring that when we act we act properly, and in a way that is not going to cause a problem that we might not envisage. I am quite happy for him to write to me if he wishes, but I think we have determined the way in which to do it already.

EDUCATION AND JUSTICE

Q246/2015

**Marrache & Co –
Company's collapse; cost to taxpayer**

435 **Clerk:** We now move back to Question 246, questions to the Minister for Education and Justice, and the questioner is the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Justice provide an update to this House of the total running cost of the taxpayer on all matters, criminal and civil, arising from the collapse of the law firm Marrache and Co in 2010?
440

Clerk: Answer, the Minister for Education and Justice.

Minister for Education and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, the total running cost to the taxpayer of all matters, criminal and civil, arising from the collapse of the law firm Marrache and Co in 2010 is £7,012,070.65.
445

Mr. Speaker: £7,012,070.65.

Q247/2015

**H M Prison –
Up-to-date occupancy figures**

Clerk: Question 247, the Hon. S M Figueras.

Hon. S M Figueras: Can the Minister for Justice provide up- to-date prison occupancy figures further to answers given to Question 669/2014?
450

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education and Justice.

Minister for Education and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, the daily average prison population expressed on a month-to-month basis from November 2014, rounded to the nearest person is: November 2014 – 49; December 2014 – 48; January 2015 – 48; February 2015 – 55.
455

Q248/2015

**Small boats marina –
Annual recurrent running costs upon completion**

Clerk: Question 248, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Government please state what is envisaged to be the annual recurrent cost of running the small boats marina when it is completed?
460

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Education and Justice.

Minister for Education and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi): Mr Speaker, I assume that the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition is asking what is envisaged to be the annual recurrent cost *to the Government* of running the small boats marina when it is completed, and the answer to that question is zero.
465

Hon. D A Feetham: Can he explain why it is going to be zero if we are talking about effectively what is a Government facility built by the Government for small boat owners? My understanding of the project was that the Government was going to be providing these berths, but effectively the facility itself continues to belong to the Government.
470

Now for a facility like that, effectively at sea, there would be quite a high level of maintenance I would have expected in relation to something like that, unless of course the Government intends to subcontract for example or provide a contract to a third party for the running of the entire facility. Can he explain that?

475

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, the explanation is quite simply by analogy to the other small boats marina which they built whilst in office, and the annual recurrent running costs to the Government of running that other marina, The Cormorant Camber marina, as I understand it, is also zero. Even though it is owned by the Government, that other marina is run on the basis of a club. People pay berthing fees and people pay membership fees and out of the berthing and membership fees the running costs are met.

480

It is envisaged that whatever fees are charged per boat in respect of the 700 berths that will be available in the small boats marina, whichever way it is run, whether it is a club or some other entity, it is certainly not going to be run by the Government. But whichever way it is run... and we have the example of the other marina which is right beside and the cost of that is zero and in the same way the cost of this will be zero.

485

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, the Camber marina is a much smaller marina. So that I can do the calculations in my own time, what other kind of fees are the Government going to be charging, or the club, in relation to the berthing facilities that will then allow to make it self-running?

490

Also, can I also ask him this: does the Government have any figures in terms of what it believes would be the maintenance costs, obviously not to the Government, but to whatever entity it is, because I presume that the Government has made the calculation of, 'Well we are going to be getting X amount or the club is going to get X amount from all these berthing fees and the maintenance a year is going to cost X'? So it is going to be within that budget self-generated through the generation of fees.

495

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, the hon. Member asks what fees the *Government* will be charging. The Government will be charging no fees at all. This will be a matter for whoever is running the marina. The marina is being built and berths have not yet been allocated. They will be allocated in due course and at some point there will be a committee of representatives who will decide how the club or the marina is going to be run.

500

The analogy... the hon. Member mentions the other marina and says, 'Well, that is much smaller'. Well, precisely. That is to the benefit of this particular marina because there will be double the number of boats and potentially double the amount that will be collected, but presumably not double the amount that will be incurred in costs because if you have one person dealing with all the admin, whether it is for 300, 400 or 500, you get more fees out of 400 or 500, but you still have one person doing the admin.

505

So the economies of scale are such that this particular marina should in fact be more efficient in terms of running costs than the other marina which is smaller. So, no, the Government will not be charging anything. The Government will simply be engaging with the representatives of those who are allocated berths in due course to see how it is proposed to run that marina, but the Government does not get involved in the running or charging of anything in respect of the Cormorant Camber marina. That is run by them at no cost to the Government and that is exactly the same as will happen in this particular marina.

510

Hon. D A Feetham: I understood the hon. Gentleman the first time, but I would have expected – and if he has not then I am not going to press the hon. Gentleman – that in the Government's plans to build this particular marina, and bearing in mind that all sorts of things can go wrong... I mean things do go wrong sometimes and in any event, even if things do not go wrong I would have expected the Government to have had in mind calculations in terms of how many fees this marina was going to be generating and how much it would cost for the maintenance to make sure that the fee generation would cover the maintenance.

515

So does he have those figures? If he does not, then he does not. But does he have those figures... the annual recurrent cost and the fees that he would expect would be generated through the fees for the berths?

520

Hon. G H Licudi: Mr Speaker, it is not a question of the Government not having these costs. These figures are irrelevant for present purposes because the Government has taken the view that the cost of running that marina is zero to the Government.

525

Now if the hon. Member wants to insist that the Government should take money out of its pocket and pay for that then that is another argument and is something that perhaps the hon. Member might take up. He says things do go wrong. Yes, of course things do go wrong. In the Cormorant Camber marina things have gone wrong. In October – was it 2008 or 2007? – there was a massive storm and there was damage, but there is insurance.

530

So if people are running a marina then they will have insurance for things that go wrong. As I understand it the damage that occurred again resulted in no cost to the Government, because you expect

whoever is running the marina to have insurance to cover these things. So I reiterate there is no cost. There will be no cost to the Government.

535 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, in relation to this particular small berth marina, it is going to all be taken up by small boats and there is not going to be any usage at all by the Government in any way, shape or form, which will mean that the Government will have to make a contribution in relation to the maintenance? Can he just confirm that?

540 **Hon. G H Licudi:** Mr Speaker, it will all be taken up by small boats. There are six-metre berths and seven-metre berths. We have not envisaged keeping an allocation of those berths for the Government if that is what the hon. Member means.

545 But if there is, for example – and I do not know if there is and I will just use this is a hypothetical example – a boat which the Department of the Environment runs, if there was another similar situation whereby a Government Department needed a berth and applied for a berth and was granted a berth, then that Department would contribute whatever the berthing fees are, in the same way as anybody else that is allocated a berth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Q249/2015 Gibraltar Savings Bank – Locations; details

Clerk: Question 249, the Hon. D J Bossino.

550 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Minister for the Gibraltar Savings Bank please state which locations the bank will be operating from?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

555 **Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, the Savings Bank will be operating from 104 and 206 – 210 Main Street.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes, Mr Speaker, just to clarify it is 104 and then it is 260 and 200 (*Interjection*) Ah, 206 –

560 **Mr Speaker:** It is 206 – 210.

Hon. D J Bossino: Yes.

565 Just by way of assistance, and I will explain why in the supplementary of its relevance, because I do not exactly know where these are. Is 104 the one which is just opposite already open and launched, opposite the cathedral? (*Interjection*) the old Marrache building or is that 206 to 210? Whichever one it is, which one is the other one?

570 **Hon. J J Bossano:** The opposite. The Cathedral is 206 to 210. I would have thought the hon. Member worked sufficiently near to Main Street to know what the numbers are. (*Interjections*)

Hon. D J Bossino: Mr Speaker, I can confess that I am absolutely terrible with these things. The 104 is then which one? Is it the one that used to be the Lloyds Bank building? I'm going the other way (*Interjection*) No, I should be going the other way shouldn't I?

575 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Number 104 is the Post Office in Main Street which also operates a savings bank.

Hon. D J Bossino: Okay, Mr Speaker, thank you for that clarification.

580 I think from answers that I have had in this House before, we have been told that the location where the old Lloyds Bank used to be opposite the John Mackintosh Hall was also going to be an outlet for the Gibraltar Savings Bank and I see that he has not mentioned that. Can he provide any further information in relation to that specific location?

585 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Yes, Mr Speaker, the original plan was to use the Main Street Savings Bank location where the Post Office is to expand the role of the present main office of the Savings Bank. At a later stage when the building where Lloyds Bank used to be became available, that was looked at as an alternative to the Post Office location which was where the expansion was going to take place and I was informed that the cost of converting the Lloyds Bank building and amending the plans of the Post Office to adjust them to the other location would be of the order of a £¼ million and I gave the go ahead for that to happen and then at a
590 later stage I saw some correspondence that indicated that the £¼ million had become £1½ million and in line with the way that I discharged my responsibility I immediately put a stop to it.

Hon. D J Bossino: So, Mr Speaker, that then must be the explanation which I have seen with my own eyes as to why there has been absolutely no works in the Lloyds Bank building, but works to the value if I understand his answer correctly works more or less to the value of £1.5 million have already been undertaken in respect of that particular site. Is that correct?
595

Hon. J J Bossano: No, Mr Speaker, that is not correct and it would be extremely stupid if I had stopped it after the work had been done. I stopped it before the work was done obviously, otherwise there would have been no savings.
600

Hon. D J Bossino: So the actual expenditure was £¼ million. Is that the case?

Hon. J J Bossano: Well I cannot tell you what the actual expenditure was. I can tell him that the budget was a £¼ million and when I saw the budget ballooning, and this had not been cleared politically, I put a stop to it. I am not prepared to take responsibility for expenditure in excess of approved budgets unless I have taken on the responsibility for taking the decision. This was done at the level of the officials, who, you know, appeared to think that what was worth investing £¼ million was equally worth it if it cost £1½ million. So the answer is that work has been stopped because in my judgement there was no justification in terms of the value to the building to us if that kind of money was being spent on a building that is rented by the way –
605

(Interjection) Yes, rented. Not even our own property.

It is much better if you are going to spend that kind of money to spend it on a property that is ours which is where it was originally intended to be. So the building will be put to another use, because we are renting it and paying rent, and we will see you know how much money we can save between what was originally budgeted and what was intended to spend.
615

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, may I congratulate the hon. Gentleman for not allowing himself to be brainwashed by consultants and may I commend his example to the rest of his Parliamentary colleagues.
620 *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, what about the Lloyds building? Are there any plans for the Lloyds building? I know that he says it is rented. It is not owned by the Government, but are there any plans? Does the Government have any plans in relation to that particular building?

Hon. J J Bossano: Well, there is a strong possibility that it may finish up as the Ministry for Economic Development. *(Laughter)*
625

Q250/2015

Community Care –

Household Cost Allowance extended to disabled persons

Clerk: Question 250, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services say when the eligibility for quarterly Household Cost Allowance payments through Community Care will be extended to disabled persons, as outlined in the Government's manifesto?
630

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the matter is under discussion with Community Care.
635

Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond: Mr Speaker, can the hon. Minister say if it is likely to happen before the end of this Parliament?

640

Hon. J J Bossano: I can say that I would expect it to happen before the end of the Parliament to the extent that if it is in my power to make it happen, it will.

645

Q251-252/2015
Construction Trades Training Centre/Engineering Training Centre –
Trainees currently enrolled; details

Clerk: Question 251, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Training provide updated details in respect of all trainees currently enrolled at the Construction Trades Training Centre, listing the specific discipline or course being followed, as well as indicating at what NVQ level?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, I will answer together with Question 252.

655

Clerk: Question 252, the Hon. E J Reyes.

Hon. E J Reyes: Can the Minister for Training provide updated details in respect of all trainees currently enrolled at the Engineering Training Centre, listing the specific discipline or course being followed, as well as indicating at what NVQ level?

660

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): The updated details are Construction Training Centre: Carpentry, 8 at Level 1, 2 at Level 2 and 4 at Level 3; Bricklaying, 5 at Level 2; Plastering, 5 at Level 2; Tiling, 2 at Level 2; Plumbing, 5 at Level 1; Painting and Decorating, 5 at Level 1.

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Gibdock: Fabrication and Welding, 4 at Level 2 and 4 at Level 3; Mechanical Engineering, 5 at Level 3; Electrical Installation, 7 at Level 2; Motor Mechanic, 7 at Level 2.

670

Q253/2015
Public service employees –
Increase in permanent staff

Clerk: Question 253, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, what permanent increases have there been in numbers of employees in the public service since 1st January 2012, broken down by reference to the Civil Service, the GDC and any other Government company, public authority or entity for which the Government is accountable?

675

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the increase in the number of employees since January 2012 has been Civil Service 277, Agencies, Authorities and Companies 211.

680

Clerk: Question 254 –

Hon. D A Feetham: May I, Mr Speaker?

685

Mr Speaker: Yes.

690 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker look, I may be missing something here, but my calculation in terms of the increases in the public service was 500... I think it is 511 or 521. I cannot remember. I have got to look at my notes, but it is roundabout that figure. The Chief Minister in communiques has denied that that is the apposite figure.

695 Well the figure that is... with the implication that it is much lower, the figure that the hon. Gentleman has provided me is close to 500 and so we are not too far apart am I? or am I missing something in the... well the figure he has provided me with is 277 plus 218 is 388 – (*Interjection*) 211. And so it is basically 488. Exactly, 488, and I was saying 511 and so it is only a difference of 20. Am I missing something here because to have an argument over 20 does not seem to me to be a reasonable point for the Government to be making?

700 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, the difference is bigger because in fact when he was quoting the 513 he was not quoting it up to now. He was quoting it up to the figure of six months ago. Obviously it could not have been 513 six months ago because then it would have had to decline quite dramatically in the last six months which is not what has happened.

705 I think he should take note of the fact that 197 of the increase are the dinner ladies, who were at the time that he was in Government employed by a private company and supplied to the Government and who were converted into Government employees after the General Election. Others are increases that have taken place in the Civil Service because of the supply teachers that were made permanent teachers. So in fact this is not 488 more clerical grades, this is 488 more public servants.

710 I think to put it in context so that it may help him in discharging his duty to see whether the growth is successive or not. It may help him to note that in the three years between December 2011 and December 2014 the growth has been 8.9%. In the three year preceding – that is the last three years when he was there – the growth was 12.9% and so we have still got a margin of 4% to catch up with him.

715 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Can I examine whether we get to that margin, accepting that his figures are correct of course? Do these figures actually take into account the 70 Customs Officers, the extra recruitment within the Customs Service that we know is going to be taking place or indeed is in the process of taking place at the moment?

Hon. J J Bossano: Mr Speaker, this is the figure as at the end of December last year and therefore a proportion of those will be counted, but certainly nothing like 70. It might be that 20 have come in so far.

Q254/2015

Skills Enhancement Training Company Limited – Employees paid by GJBS

720 **Clerk:** Question 254, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Government explain why some employees of Skills Enhancement Training Company Limited are being paid by GJBS?

725 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the information implied by the question is not correct.

730 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, let me tell him that a couple of people have been to see me just before the notice for the questions, concerned that they are being told by the Ministry of Employment, as it happens, that their wages... and they are employed by this particular company, Skills Enhancement Training Company in order to do short-term courses. I think it is about six weeks, five or six weeks in order to be trained in relation to Mount Alvernia and provide services there and elsewhere within the Care Agency. They are being told that the company that was to pay their wages, what was owed to them – these people had not been paid for two months and so in other words they had finished their course and two months later they still had not been paid – was GJBS.

740 This seems extremely odd to me. I have to say I saw their employment contracts and I could see that the employment company was Skills and Enhancement Training Company, but I could see nothing in relation to GJBS. That is the information they were being provided. Indeed, when they went to GJBS they were being told by GJBS that the Government had not put GJBS in funds to allow them to be paid.

Hon. J J Bossano: I know that the hon. Member has not been in politics as long as I have been, but he should not believe everything that he is told. (*Laughter*)

745 First of all, GJBS does provide a service to the training companies in that they produce the calculations for us because it is cheaper for us to use their payroll system than to fabricate one of our own and duplicate services which would cost more money, but of course the employer pays the employee even though they may outsource the function of preparing the wages.

750 Secondly, everybody that goes on the five-week course is told at the beginning of the five-week course that it will take 10 days after they have finished the course for them to receive their wages and they do not receive their wages until after the five weeks because otherwise we are not in a position to ensure that the people have done the five weeks for which they get paid.

755 Thirdly nobody has ever had to wait two months at the end of the five weeks to get paid and in fact if they did there would have been a backlog because every five weeks there is a new cohort of people coming in. So clearly, if everybody had to wait two months there would not have been two people, there would have been 48 people without payment because there are 24 in each intake.

So the information is wrong on every single count. People do not wait two months, they wait 10 days. They get told they will wait 10 days before they start and they never get paid before the 10 days. These people have been paid within 10 days. The people that went to him also came to me. I investigated it and the 10 days were not yet up.

760 In any event, GJBS is not the entity responsible. GJBS just happens to be the entity that has a section of its administration which prepares pay for 500 construction workers and therefore for a small fee they do the calculations for the trainees, which is a cost effective way of doing it.

That is the explanation, Mr Speaker.

765 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I am very grateful for the explanation. Can I tell him that actually the people that came to see me are his own supporters? They voted GSLP and are GSLP supporters, not GSD supporters. But of course I discharge my duties in relation to everybody, not just people that are going to be voting for the GSD, but of course that is my responsibility.

770 So when I speak to these two individuals tomorrow – I am going to be telephoning them – what I will say from the hon. Gentleman, a communique from him, is that you should have been paid within 10 days and that if you have not been paid within 10 days, and it happens not be the two individuals that have already been to see the hon. Gentleman, to go and knock on the hon. Gentleman's door. Because of course if it is true that these people have not been paid after two months then I have no reason to doubt the fact that that is so from what they have told me, then of course under the hon. Gentleman's explanation they should have been paid and they will be paid.

780 **Hon. J J Bossano:** That is absolutely correct. If anybody has not been paid for two months after finishing their course, it is something that should not have happened and I am assured has not happened. The fact that they should be GSLP voters that went to him surprises me not in the least because it is the hallmark of the GSLP members that they always complain.

Q255/2015

Approved contractors list – Number of companies approved as at 1st December 2011

Clerk: Question 255, the Hon. D A Feetham.

785 **Hon. D A Feetham:** No doubt they will soon feel at home within the GSD. Mr Speaker, how many companies were on the approved contractors list as at 1st December 2011?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

790 **Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, the number on the list on 1st December 2011 is not known. At the close of that month – that is at the end of December 2011 – the total was 91.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, do you have... does the hon. Gentleman (*Problem with microphone*) I think the hon. the Chief Minister said '*ni el microfono lo traga*'

795 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** That is right, absolutely. Would you like me to repeat it, Mr Speaker?

Hon. D A Feetham: I am afraid that I have to put up with – (*Interjection*) But anyway, let me get on with the serious politics that I and the Father of the House want to be engaged in and leave the infantile behaviour (*Banging on desks*) to the playground, Mr Speaker.

800 Mr Speaker, does the hon. the Father of the House have the figure for the end of November so that I can see what really the position was when we were in Government? Because we know what the position is today. That is really what I am getting at. Does he have the figure as at 30th November?

805 **Hon. J J Bossano:** No, Mr Speaker, because I think I have told him in the past, the alleged approved contractor list that was supposed to exist in the Technical Services Department where there were companies identified for different kinds of work and for different volumes of work in terms of size of contract, was in complete disuse and had not been touched for years and included a lot of dead companies. That was not the list that was being used by the Employment Service.

810 The list that I have given him was the list that was compiled by me in December from the people who were getting work and who were then in existence, even though they were not identified as being approved contractors *de facto*. They were being given work as approved contractors and therefore I started off with the list made up of the people that were getting work at the time and I can certainly give him a copy of that list if he wants it, the 91 that were there in December when we took over.

815 But the list was compiled by me getting information on different entities doing different work in different places because in fact when the announcement was made in 2010 I think the subsequent evolution of that policy in 2011 happened on an *ad hoc* basis, on the basis that instead of there being a compiled list from which people were invited to submit a price for work, people submitted a price for work and I think joined the list subsequently as it were.

820 But I can tell him that the list that I have got from December, plus the one subsequent to December of the new incorporated companies, is the one that operates today. So I think almost all of the 91 there are still in existence. I think there may be one or two who have fallen by the wayside, but I would think most of them are there. Therefore these would be the people that were available to do work for the previous Government going from December backwards.

825 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, I would appreciate it if the hon. Gentleman were to provide me with a list. My recollection – and I have to say that I have looked back at *Hansard* and I have not been able to find it – was that on the actual approved list, and I understand what the hon. Gentleman is saying, that what he is taking... these are not people on the approved list. These are people who are doing work for the Government as at December 2011, the 91.

830 On the approved list, as far as I can remember, there were some 45 companies on the approved list as of that date. That is my recollection, but I have not been able to find anything in *Hansard* to substantiate that. If he could provide me with a list I would be very grateful.

Q256/2015

Government-owned buildings/housing estates – Lift installation and maintenance contractors

835 **Clerk:** Question 256, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Government please provide a list of companies or individuals who have the benefit of a contract with either the Government, a Government-owned company, Government authority or agency, for which the Government is accountable for the installation or maintenance of lifts in Government-owned buildings including housing estates?

840 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, the companies are Schlinder, General Lifts, Otis, Embarba and Fain.

845 **Hon. D A Feetham:** These are names of companies?

Hon. J J Bossano: These are the five companies that I have been told are doing work either in installation or maintenance, yes.

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Hon. D A Feetham: These are the companies that the Government is contracting directly with. In other words, what we are not dealing with is a situation whereby, for example, Otis is engaged to provide maintenance facilities or installation of lifts by a third party.

855

In other words the Government contracts with a third party and the third party contracts with Otis. We are talking about direct contracts between these five companies and the Government or Government agencies or entities.

Hon. J J Bossano: That is the information I have got. There is no intermediary. These are the people who are doing the work and the people who have a contract, yes.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, does he have the details of the estates in relation to each one of these five companies?

Hon. J J Bossano: Some of these companies have just been contacted to come in and put in a lift.

865

I can tell him that in terms of the ongoing maintenance of the estates, Otis has got 55 lifts, Embarba has got lifts at Bishop Canilla and Fain have got the lifts at Albert Risso. (*Interjection*) So the 55 lifts are the lifts that are not in either Bishop Canilla or Albert Risso.

Hon. S M Figueras: Yes, Mr Speaker, just a point of clarification. I think he has been talking about five companies, but I have jotted down four. Is there one missing? We have got Schindler, Otis, Embarba and Fain. (*Interjection by Mr Speaker*)

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Mr Speaker: Schindler, General Lifts, Otis, Embarba and Fain. [*Inaudible*]

875

Clerk: Question 257, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, I think that my hon. Friend, Mr Figueras, has a supplementary in relation –

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Hon. S M Figueras: Apologies, Mr Speaker, it only just occurred to me.

Of the five lift companies that were mentioned, four are well known. Four are very recognisable. Is General Lifts another non-Gibraltar registered lift operator?

Hon. J J Bossano: To my knowledge, the only one that is registered in Gibraltar and employs people in Gibraltar is General Lifts. All the others have people in Spain and send them out to do the work.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Is General Lifts – and I have obviously not been able to do any company searches in this because the information has just come now – a company that has been incorporated relatively recently over the last two or three years?

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Can he provide us with information in relation to who the people are behind General Lifts, as indeed I asked the Hon. the Minister for Sport to provide some information in relation to that and he kindly provided it this morning?

Hon. J J Bossano: Well, no, Mr Speaker I don't think. I know that it would appear to me that the hon. Member is biased against Gibraltar companies because he wants to know who is behind a local company, but is quite happy not to know who is behind Ortis, Embarba, Fain or anybody else that is based in Madrid or Algeciras. The answer is no. I am not here to give him who is behind the company.

895

We do business with a company which is a legal entity. We do it with Spanish companies because we do not had Gibraltar companies. I wish there were more Gibraltar companies, because I want the work that the taxpayer pays for to stay as much as possible in Gibraltar to provide economic activity in Gibraltar, and profits for Gibraltarians and work for Gibraltarians.

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Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, he does not need to get upset about the question. I fully agree with the aim of providing more employment for Gibraltarians and attracting Gibraltar companies and allowing businesses to stay here, but I am also perfectly entitled to make the observation which is an observation which is quite clear, that all of these are well-known lift companies and there is one which is not.

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The information that we have is that this particular company is associated with well-known GSLP supporters (*Interjections*) and that is where the question arises. Of course we are perfectly entitled to

910 examine that and no doubt we will come back and ask about these contracts, whether they went out to tender, whether they did not go out to tender etc.

Hon. J J Bossano: The hon. Member expects me not to be upset about the fact that he prefers the work to go to Spanish companies than to a Gibraltarian who happens to vote for the GSLP. That does upset me. (A Member: Hear, hear.) (*Banging on desks*) I can tell the hon. Member that as far as I am concerned, I 915 prefer a GSD supporter to get the work than an outsider. (A Member: Hear, hear.) (*Banging on desks*)

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, Mr Speaker.

920 Can he assure the House that we are not dealing with a situation where contracts for the maintenance or installation of lifts go to a particular company who then just simply subcontracts to one of the other four who are recognised as suppliers and installers of lifts? In other words, what you are not doing is adding another layer to the taxpayer of Gibraltar simply to award a contract to your own supporters. (A Member: Yay)

925 **Hon. J J Bossano:** I will tell the Civil Servants in the Procurement Office that the Leader of the Opposition suspects that they are awarding contracts to create a layer for GSLP Members to skim off an additional profit. Certainly I have not been involved in awarding the contract because this is not a political decision.

930 I can tell the hon. Member that the rules that exist are that if somebody gets a contract, the subcontractor has to be approved by the Government. In all the contracts that come my way I make sure that there is a constant supervision of the use of subcontractors to ensure that they are people who are properly registered, that their employees are registered with the ETB, that they are up to date with their tax and they are up to date with their insurance. There is no question of somebody skimming off a layer of profit and providing no value in exchange for that profit. So if the hon. Member suspects that is the case here, I will investigate it and satisfy myself that it is not.

935 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, if I might, I think it is incumbent on the Government to clarify that the only instance where we have found evidence of layers being added of cost to the taxpayer are in high profile expensive contracts granted without tender by the previous Administration to companies owned and operated by supporters of the GSD on the basis of cost plus. Namely, contracts granted to 940 Colour Works, contracts granted to Kings Bowl, contracts granted to Master Services, contracts granted to GLRC. All of them companies owned and operated by what were then high profile supporters of the Government, who achieved those contracts without tender and which contracts were based on the cost being charged to the taxpayer with an agreed increase on the cost of 10%.

945 In other words the more the contract cost, the more it cost the taxpayer with the obnoxious 10% cost plus added. That is the layer of fat added by a Government to the taxpayers' cost to its own supporters companies of which there is only evidence *once* in the history of Gibraltar and that is in the 16 years that they were in Government. (*Applause & Banging on desks*)

950 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I do not know whether any of those companies or the people that he has mentioned are supporters of the GSD – (*Interjections*) Well, no. I have to say (*Interjections*) he is more informed – (*Interjections*) He is more informed –

Mr Speaker: Order.

955 **Hon. D A Feetham:** He is more informed on who votes for the GSD than I am. I have to say that I did not know that the people associated with Colour Works were GSD supporters – (*Laughter*) No, I did not. No I did not. I did not (*Interjections*) but no doubt, if they are, they are welcome to continue supporting the GSD.

960 But, Mr Speaker (*Interjection*) is it true that those behind this particular company are well-known GSLP supporters, such as Mr Cardona and Mr Elliot? Is that the case?

965 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, it is the case that the hon. Gentleman seems not to know any of the things that he ought to know to prevent himself from getting up and appearing as if he had a red nose in this House, Mr Speaker (*Laughter*) because he does not want to know the things that demonstrate that he and his Party are the ones who have been responsible for the greatest level of nepotism and cronyism which Gibraltar has ever seen at a huge cost to the taxpayer.

Whether it has been in the award of contracts for the development of the Airport, for the cleaning of Gibraltar or for the operation of parts of the Kings Bastion Leisure Centre –

970 **Mr Speaker:** I am going to interrupt the Chief Minister if he does not mind, because we are going to move on. Who would have thought that such a simple answer was going to generate so much heat. We go on to the next question. (*Interjection*) No, no, we are moving on.

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Q257-261/2015
Gibraltar Savings Bank –
Cash reserves; aggregate debt; debentures

Clerk: Question 257, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, yes can the Chief Minister please state what the Government cash reserves were as at 1st March 2015?

980

Clerk: Answer the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): I will answer the question with Questions 257 to 259 and 261?

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Clerk: Question 258, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please give a breakdown by bank and amount, of that part of the aggregate public debt which comprises bank debt, as at 1st March 2015?

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Clerk: Question 259, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister provide this House with a breakdown by debenture issue of that part of the aggregate public debt which comprises Government Debentures as at the 1st March 2015?

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Clerk: Question 260, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Chief Minister please provide details of the value of Gibraltar Savings Bank Debentures or other debt security as at 1st March 2015?

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Clerk: Question 261, the Hon. D A Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Can the Chief Minister please provide a breakdown of where and how all the monies deposited in the Gibraltar Savings Bank have been invested and the rate of return on each of these investments as at 1st March 2015?

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Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, I answer in my capacity as Minister for the Gibraltar Savings Bank and Economic Development.

The Government cash reserves for February were £73.48 million. (**Hon. D A Feetham:** £73.48 million.)

At the end of February, the aggregate debt, consisting of bank debt, was Barclays Bank plc, £150 million and Nat West Offshore, £50 million.

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The Government Debentures by maturity date were as follows: 2017 Debentures, £5,993,500; one month's notice Debentures, £241,879,600.

The value of Gibraltar Savings Bank Debentures and other debt securities by maturity date was: one month, £31,658,300; 2015 Debentures, £8,990,600; 2016 Debentures, £22,935,600; 2017 Debenture, £97,389,600; 2018 Debentures, £163,777,600; 2019 Debentures, £154,454,600; Other Debentures, £147,614,246; Bonds, £98,054,400; Deposit Accounts, £226,536,300.

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The average yield of the different categories of investment vehicles by the Savings Bank for the month of February was as follows.

On-call accounts with the Bank of England, the Crown Agents, the Gibraltar Banks at an average yield of 0.55% the Gibraltar Banks being the Royal Bank of Scotland, Barclays Bank, Nat West, Jyske Bank and Lloyds Bank.

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1030 Floating Rates Notes quoted on the London Stock Exchange at an average yield of 0.98%. The Floating Rates Notes were issued by the following: European Investment Bank; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Neder Waterschapsbank; KfW; Republic of Finland; Volkswagen Financial Services; Dexia; GE Capital UK; Westpac Securities; Australia and New Zealand Banking Group; Centrica plc; ASB Finance Ltd; Royal Bank of Canada; BG Energy Capital plc; Suncorp Medway Ltd; BMW Finance; National Grid Gas plc.

1035 Monthly Income Debentures at a 6% return and preference shares from Credit Finance had an average dividend of 5.6%. As previously explained, the quoted stocks and call accounts fluctuate marginally on a daily basis, but these fluctuations are not significant.

I now hand over the Savings Bank statement listing the investments for February 2015.

P.T.O. for handout.

Answer to Question 261 - Schedule to Question 261
SAVINGS BANK FUND
STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS

DESCRIPTION OF STOCK	NOMINAL VALUE	MARKET PRICE ACCRUED INTEREST %	MARKET VALUE ACCRUED INTEREST	TOTAL MARKET VALUE ON 28/02/2015
EIB FLOATING RATE NOTE 22/02/17	£20,000,000.00	100.296	£20,059,115.80 £2,094.88	£20,061,210.68
EIB FLOATING RATE NOTE 05/01/16	£20,000,000.00	99.981	£19,996,253.20 £18,741.11	£20,014,994.31
INTERNATIONAL BK RECON & DEV FRN 19/01/16	£4,235,000.00	100.001	£4,235,062.81 £2,774.14	£4,237,836.95
NEDER WATERSCHAPSBANK FRN 09/04/18	£12,200,000.00	100.000	£12,200,000.00 £12,366.12	£12,212,366.12
KFW FRN 09/03/15	£17,000,000.00	100.000	£17,000,000.00 £24,696.59	£17,024,696.59
REPUBLIC OF FINLAND FRN 25/2/16	£5,000,000.00	100.023	£5,001,169.80 £252.59	£5,001,422.19
VOLKSWAGEN FIN SERV NV FRN 12/10/15	£5,000,000.00	99.996	£4,999,776.80 £5,540.59	£5,005,317.19
DEXIA CREDIT LOCAL FRN 15/4/16	£4,000,000.00	100.020	£4,000,787.40 £3,810.52	£4,004,597.92
GE CAPITAL UK FUNDING FRN 20/3/17	£2,000,000.00	99.764	£1,995,688.88 £2,644.10	£1,998,332.98
WESTPAC SECURITIES NZ LT FRN 2/10/17	£5,000,000.00	100.000	£5,000,000.00 £7,570.21	£5,007,570.21
AUST & NZ BANKING GROUP FRN 4/2/16	£5,000,000.00	100.179	£5,008,959.25 £2,741.92	£5,011,701.17
CENTRICA PLC 5.5% 24/10/16	£8,000,000.00	106.608	£8,396,509.64 £114,821.92	£8,511,331.56
ASB FINANCE LTD LONDON FRN 13/03/17	£5,000,000.00	100.254	£5,012,707.10 £11,714.90	£5,024,422.00
ROYAL BANK OF CANADA FRN 4/6/19	£5,000,000.00	100.079	£5,003,954.35 £11,224.18	£5,015,178.53
KFW 5.5% 7/12/15	£5,000,000.00	103.925	£5,196,250.00 £61,875.00	£5,258,125.00
VOLKSWAGEN FIN SERV NV 2.375% 13/11/18	£5,000,000.00	102.712	£5,135,591.65 £34,811.64	£5,170,403.29
SUNCORP-METWAY LTD FRN 06/10/17	£5,000,000.00	100.131	£5,006,526.45 £8,453.21	£5,014,979.66
CANADIAN IMPERIAL BANK FRN 15/1/18	£5,000,000.00	100.000	£5,000,000.00 £4,518.68	£5,004,518.68
THAMES WATER UTIL FIN 4.9% 30/6/15	£1,800,000.00	101.419	£1,822,711.58 £12,923.08	£1,835,634.66
GOVERNMENT DEBENTURES	£230,700,000.00	100.000	£230,700,000.00	£230,700,000.00
BANK OF ENGLAND	£22,410,889.30	100.000	£22,410,889.30	£22,410,889.30
CFC SHARES	£400,000,000.00	100.000	£400,000,000.00	£400,000,000.00
GSBA	£5,000,000.00	100.000	£5,000,000.00	£5,000,000.00
GIBTELECOM	£37,798,895.33	100.000	£37,798,895.33	£37,798,895.33
ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND GBP CALL A/C	£4,681,904.33	100.000	£4,681,904.33 £12.83	£4,681,917.16
LLOYDS BANK GBP CALL A/C	£408,046.71	100.000	£408,046.71 £116.27	£408,162.98
BARCLAYS BANK	£73,019,710.33	100.000	£73,019,710.33	£73,019,710.33
NATIONAL WESTMINSTER OFFSHORE	£34,549,380.77	100.000	£34,549,380.77	£34,549,380.77
JYSKE BANK	£21,342,475.80	100.000	£21,342,475.80	£21,342,475.80
CASH	£4,000,000.00	100.000	£4,000,000.00	£4,000,000.00

1040 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, yes I note that the hon. Gentleman is answering the question as Minister for Economic Development, and not as Chief Minister, although I have to say that we would all feel much, much safer if you were answering the questions as Chief Minister for Gibraltar because at least you understand what we are talking about. *(Interjection by Hon. Chief Minister)* Mr Speaker – *(Laughter)* *(Interjections)* the figure for debt and the figure for cash reserves is for 1st March 2015.

1045 Bearing in mind that we are just a month away... well a month from that particular date away from the end of the financial year and bearing in mind the Government's commitment to reduce the public debt, the gross debt by half, unless the Government has a significant increase in revenue in this month – in other words, and these are the figures for 1st March to end of March – the gross public debt is not going to be cut by half, certainly in this financial year and therefore we will not see that at the next Budget.

1050 It may well be that the hon. Gentleman says, ‘Well, actually we do expect it before the end of the month because, for example, the sale from the premiums on the Eastside development is going to reach over £100 million and perhaps increasing the sale of tobacco, we are going to plough that into a reduction of public debt’. But does he expect the Government’s target of a reduction of public debt, gross public debt, by half to be met before the end of this financial year?

1055 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, I am at a loss to understand why he should ask me if I expect that to happen when in fact he has got the book that we approved in this Parliament a year ago, where the expectation in that book is that the debt should now be £450 million and it is £448 million. In fact the expectation of the Government was that there would be a debt of £450 million at the end of March and there is £448 million at the end of February. So a month ahead we are already £2 million below the figure we expected. So I do not know why he thinks I am expecting it to be £260 million by the end of this month when that is not what the book says.

1060 What we have said is that we expect it to be £260 million in the term of office of the Government, which maybe he regrets is not going to be at the end of this month. We are still going to be there on 1st April. **(A Member:** Hear, hear.) So he was expecting us to disappear at the end of the month and I have to tell him he is an April fool of the 1st – *(Laughter)*

1070 **Hon. D A Feetham:** So, Mr Speaker, the question of the reduction of the public debt by the gross public debt by half is a commitment that the hon. Gentleman stands by, by the end of this year. Can I ask him whether he expects to fulfil that, bearing in mind that the only way that he can do so is through the influx of extra capital generated by the Government, because it is not going to happen just simply on the basis of the income that the Government generates on a current basis? This is going to have to be done from some extra sale of some Government asset and that is why I spoke about the Eastside development.

1075 Can he provide us with some information as to how the Government intends to fulfil this manifesto commitment of reducing the public debt by half by the end of this term in office?

Hon. J J Bossano: No, Mr Speaker. I do not think that there is any obligation to assist the education of the Members opposite by telling them how things can be done.

1080 We commit ourselves to do things and we do them or we do not. Sometimes we fail in our targets. Sometimes we succeed in our targets. I have in the past, may I remind the hon. Member, predicted levels of economic growth which were considered impossible under the previous Administration, even though they actually succeeded in doing it themselves and were considered impossible when we had the first debate when he participated and he was not yet Leader of the Opposition in 2012.

1085 All the participants there were saying it was impossible to do. *(Interjection)* So the answer is the target is still there. I am confident that we can achieve it in the timescale we set ourselves. The timescale was not three years but four.

1090 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, Mr Speaker, but can I ask him this, because you see it may be possible for the Government to reduce the public debt by half if it receives significant premiums – as I say, Eastside development, over £100 million – and it goes directly into paying, for example, the revolving loan from the banks and there is an increase, an influx in tobacco revenue which the Government has projected, bearing in mind this increased price, and that again goes into the repayment of the public debt. But does he not agree with me that actually that is going to be, if he does it that way, a very short-term measure, because you can reduce public debt by half by doing that, but effectively what you are doing is starving yourself of the cash flow that will be necessary in the future?

1095 So inevitably what will happen is that the Government will pay off half the public debt tomorrow... let us say for arguments sake on a particular date, two months later – and I hope it is not after the General Election, but two months later, three months later it then has to borrow another £200 million because of course it was not possible for cash flow reasons to actually just simply pay half the Government debt without getting yourself into a problem with respect to cash flow, although I have to say the Government is cash flow rich in the sense that it is using £400 million from Credit Finance.

1105 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, first I would like to correct the inaccuracy in the element of the question he put that I can just pay off the revolving debt from the banks because the revolving debt no longer revolves, because when he was in Government he did a swap agreement *(Laughter)* which means that I cannot repay them until 2019. *(Laughter and interjection)* maybe he didn’t know it.

The reality of this is that we make a statement when we go to an election of what the target is. The target is that we will come down from £520 million to £260 million in the gross debt. That is the commitment that we gave, a commitment which he thinks is irrelevant anyway because he has kept on

1110 saying since then, and before then, that the level of the gross debt is irrelevant. So as far as he is concerned whether it is £520 million or £260 million does not matter. What matters is the net debt.

At one stage he was saying something which seemed to suggest that by some miracle comparable in physics to anti-gravity we could have net debt higher than gross debt, which I pointed out recently in a press release was not a physical possibility. So the answer to his question is.

1115 He has asked me whether I think we are going to be able to do it and my answer is yes and what our targets will be in our next term of office when we are elected by the people who vote for the GSLP, even if they complain to him about me (*Banging on desks*) will be produced at the time the manifesto is published. I hope he does the same thing and publishes what he is going to do with debt and other things. (*Interjection by the Chief Minister*)

1120 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman, may I reassure the hon. Gentleman, so that he is not as sensitive about the issue as he appears to be, that the complaints actually were not against the hon. the Father of the House. The complaints were against the Chief Minister, because it was a complaint against the Head of the Government. So perhaps he can rest assured that they are going to be voting for the hon. Gentleman. I do not know whether they are going to be voting for the Chief Minister.

1125 Mr Speaker, I never suggested that the net debt could be higher than the gross debt mean look... I have been in this game long enough to understand the basics of what I am talking about and indeed I have demonstrated that I know what I am talking about by the way that the Government constantly reacts in a defensive manner to everything, all my criticisms, in relation to the public debt.

1130 But, Mr Speaker, when is the Government – and I understand that if Mr Speaker wants notice, Mr Speaker would be right, but perhaps he might want to answer this question. When is the Government expecting to receive, for example, a premium for the Eastside development, which I believe is what the Government is going to be using in relation to reduce the gross public debt?

1135 **Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, first of all it has absolutely nothing to do with the level of debt or the level of reserves that there are in February when the Government expects to receive money from the lease of these sites and secondly, if I knew the date I would not tell him.

Q262/2015
PAYE tax system–
Increase in December 2014; details

Clerk: Question 262, the Hon. D A Feetham.

1140 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, can the Government explain why according to table ITO.6 PAYE tax collected for the month of December 2014 is approximately five times the average collected for each month over the previous two years?

I think it is about £50-something million for that particular month, compared to roughly an average of about £9 million for all the previous months or the previous two years?

1145 **Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Economic Development and Telecommunications.

Minister for Economic Development & Telecommunications (Hon. J J Bossano): Mr Speaker, I regret to say that a computer glitch gave us £60 million more than we actually received in December 2014. (*Laughter*)

1150

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

Q263/2015
Eastside project –
Expressions of interest; details

Clerk: Question 263, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1155 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Further to Question 774 of 2014 and recent public statements, can the Deputy Chief Minister please confirm to this House how many expressions of interest remain in relation to the Eastside project?

Clerk: Answer, the Hon. the Deputy Chief Minister.

1160 **Deputy Chief Minister (Hon. Dr J J Garcia):** Mr Speaker, the Government is now in discussion with two entities in relation to the Eastside project.

1165 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Deputy Chief Minister for the answer. After I filed this question there have been further announcements by the Chief Minister in relation to this.

Can he give me an indication as to when he expects or the Government expects to be in a position to make a public announcement in relation to the projects which are going to go ahead on this particular plot of land?

1170 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I think the answer to that question must be that as soon as we are able. The Government is pursuing, as I said on GBC, detailed discussions now with two of the bidders. We want to make sure that we clarify certain of the new answers in their applications. We want to make sure that the details are absolutely right before we make the awards and we want to do that of course as soon as possible. We expect to be in a position to do that shortly.

1175 But you know in negotiations it is never possible to say, however well they are going, that you are there until you have signed on the dotted line. But I am sure he will be very pleased when we make the announcements, because we are of course trying to look for a project that deals with everything that Gibraltar needs, that preserves the area for Gibraltarians, that actually gets off the ground and that we see economic activity on – exactly what we have not seen in the past 16 years there.

1180 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Thank you for that.

There is a quote in the *Gibraltar Chronicle* article. I also watched his the Chief Minister's interview, where he says, and this is quoting from the *Gibraltar Chronicle*:

1185 'We want to see the development bring something special to the whole of Gibraltar.'

Is it perhaps not an answer that he can provide because it will have an impact on negotiations, but can he give us an indication of what he would like to see there?

1190 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I think the official notice for expressions of interest set out exactly what it was that the Government wanted to see there, but these are not issues that will affect the negotiations because they are red lines for the Government. This has to be an area near access to the Waterfront where Gibraltarians can have access. We are not going to create gated communities where Gibraltarians cannot have access to the Waterfront and cannot enjoy that area as a leisure area. I am sure that across the floor of the House would all agree that that is essential and that is not going to affect our negotiations, neither have any of the parties who have made proposals to us knowing that that is a red line for us, having seen that in the expressions of interest, suggested anything to the contrary.

1200 The projects that we are discussing are very, very exciting projects for Gibraltar. As they can imagine they would be a transformation of an area which they used to call when it was a GSLP...what is it? They call it reclamation. A rat infested area, but no sooner had they taken over and it was *their* reclamation, it was a Sovereign Bay. We would rather not give it a name. We would rather just see it in Economic Development.

1205 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Will it entail any of the projects... will it entail an extension of the reclamation or is it what there is now?

1210 **Hon. Chief Minister:** I think what he has seen from the expressions of interest, Mr Speaker, suggest that there is to be a marina. So obviously we are not going to dig into the reclamation to create a marina. The marina is going to come out of the existing area of reclamation and there is no intention to reclaim further in that area.

Questions for Written Answer

Questions W24 to W36/2015 tabled

Clerk: Answers to Written Questions, the Hon. the Chief Minister.

1215 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to lay on the table... sorry, to table the answers to Written Questions numbered W24 to W36/2015 inclusive.

ADJOURNMENT

Clerk: Order of the Day. Bills – First and Second Reading.

1220 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to move that the House do now adjourn to Monday 30th March at 3.30 p.m.

Mr Speaker: We are not going to deal with Bills?

Hon. Chief Minister: No.

1225 **Mr Speaker:** No?

Hon. Chief Minister: No, to Monday 30th March at 3.30 p.m.

1230 **Mr Speaker:** I now propose the question, which is that this House do now adjourn until Monday 30th March at 3.30 p.m.

I now put the question which is that this House do now adjourn to Monday 30th March at 3.30 p.m. Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against?

This House will now adjourn until Monday 30th March at 3.30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 4.46 p.m.