



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.00 p.m. – 3.23 p.m.

Gibraltar, Friday, 24th June 2016

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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*]

PRAYER

Mr Speaker

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Clerk: Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the last meeting of Parliament, which was held on 25th, 26th February and 2nd March 2016.

5 **Mr Speaker:** May I sign the Minutes as correct? (**Members:** Aye.)

Mr Speaker signed the Minutes.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Standing Order 7(1) suspended to proceed with a Statement

10 **Clerk:** Suspension of Standing Orders. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, I beg to move under Standing Order 7(3) to suspend Standing Order 7(1) in order to proceed with a Statement.

15 **Mr Speaker:** Those in favour? (**Members:** Aye.) Those against? Carried.

Silence in memory of UK Member of Parliament, Jo Cox

Clerk: The Chief Minister.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, thank you.

20 Can I start, Mr Speaker, by reminding the House that it is the first time that this Parliament meets since the cruel murder last week of United Kingdom Member of Parliament, Jo Cox.

I propose therefore, Mr Speaker, that the House should hold a minute's silence before I commence my statement, to honour her memory.

Members stood in silence.

Hon. Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Congratulations to Mons. Carmelo Zammit
on appointment as Bishop Designate of Gibraltar**

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Now before I commence my address in respect of the Referendum held yesterday, may I also congratulate Monsignor Carmelo Zammit on his appointment as Bishop Designate of Gibraltar. He has long been a friend of Gibraltar and his appointment at this important time will be most welcome indeed.

RESULT OF REFERENDUM ON UK MEMBERSHIP OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Statement by the Hon. the Chief Minister

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, the people of Gibraltar yesterday voted by 96% to 4% to remain within the European Union. Members of this House will have noted the decision of the rest of the British people who were called upon to vote yesterday, which was to leave the European Union, by a margin of 4 percentage points. In a franchise of 46.5 million people, with 72% voting, our contribution did not even move the needle.

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This House was nonetheless united in campaigning for a vote to remain in the European Union. Unprecedented unity swept our nation in support of that cause and I want to thank the Members of the House who were genuinely committed to dropping our differences and uniting in working for Gibraltar's greater interests together.

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I call, Mr Speaker, on Members to sustain the spirit of unity that they have shown over the coming months as we adjust to the reality of change across the United Kingdom, Europe and most significantly Gibraltar itself, that the decision to pull Britain out of the European Union will bring.

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This morning I met with my Cabinet colleagues and later with the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition and the Hon. Messrs Hammond and Clinton. For the good of Gibraltar, we have agreed to work together in order to face the challenges that the vote to exit the European Union will bring. This is a time to put egos aside and work together, as some of our predecessors here did for the benefit of our community as a whole in the past. I have no doubt that Members opposite will do so.

50

We have also agreed the outline of the substance of what needs to be done, although this will no doubt require further work as events develop in coming weeks and months. I intend to discuss with my Cabinet the mechanisms and the formula through which this co-operation between Government and Opposition will take place. Later this morning I spoke also to independent Member, the Hon. Miss Hassan Nahon. I have no doubt we will also be able to count with her support as we deal with the issues that now arise.

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All of them backed the Stronger In campaign and the result that it produced for Gibraltar, and the Gibraltar results declared in the early hours of this morning have, in my view, served also to fully reinforce the unity with which we stood on this issue. Indeed our clear and unequivocal statement as a people will now be a critical element in helping us to better shape the political and economic interests of Gibraltar in the months to come. It is a mandate that I know that the British Government will not ignore.

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This morning, following the formal declaration of the outcome of the Referendum, I spoke to the Minister for Europe, David Lidington. I considered with him some of the many issues which will be thrown up by the result.

65 The British Government and the people of the United Kingdom have heard the clear message from the people of Gibraltar that we aspire to the continued freedom of movement of people, services and capital throughout the EU. The British Government are deeply aware of that and of the fact that it falls on them to help us mitigate the negative impact of leaving Europe, as we also will now be able to work with them on capitalising on the positives that might also emerge.
70 We have agreed that we will speak again later today.

After we spoke, the Minister for Europe made a statement to reiterate from London that the United Kingdom remains 100% behind Gibraltar. The double lock commitment on sovereignty has been specifically reiterated by him. Mr Speaker, we are of course not alone in being affected by the Referendum decision.

75 There are likely to be some tumultuous months ahead for Britain as it adjusts to the real impact of the decision its people have taken. Northern Ireland and of course Scotland are affected also as nations that voted to remain in the European Union. Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man did not vote in the Referendum, but have access to the single market in different degrees via the United Kingdom. Theirs is a model of success based on those different degrees
80 of access to the European Union, which is different to ours. I have already scheduled calls with the leaders of each of these nations and Crown Dependencies. In addition, I have been in touch with other overseas territories' leaders, with whom we will also work at this time.

The change which is heralded by this result will bring uncertainty – of that there is no doubt. But of course there will be benefits as well as burdens, and we are clear and determined to
85 capitalise on those benefits.

Mr Speaker, the Government has not been idle in the run up to this decision which cannot be described as unexpected. As we campaigned vigorously for a Remain vote, we were also working on the preparations for what has now happened. The top priority has been in working towards a sustainable alternative economic model and making best use of the time we have now, to
90 position Gibraltar's economy whilst the complex task of uncoupling the UK from the EU and building new trading political relations will start, it appears, to take place.

But let me be absolutely clear. Despite the noises that are bound to be made by some in the neighbouring nation – indeed, some have already been made this morning – this Government is confident in the support from the British Government that there will be no talks, nor even talks
95 about talks, against the express wishes of the people of Gibraltar in respect of the sovereignty of Gibraltar.

So let others make irrelevant noises about flying flags over our Rock, if they want to waste their breath. Such ideas will *never* prosper. Gibraltar will never pay a sovereignty price for access to a market. Gibraltar will never be Spanish in whole, in part or at all. So I ask all our citizens to
100 ignore these noises. Our work will be focused on the more pressing issues before us. Redirecting and protecting our economy are what we must all now focus on.

Let me tell the public today that we know that we are able to deliver on our manifesto commitments on economic growth in the lifetime of this Parliament. Of that, we have no doubt. It is true that doing so will be harder and that we will face new challenges. Of course we cannot
105 diminish the significance and potential impact that the decision to leave the EU may have on our community. But we are also entirely confident that the core elements of our economy and our Government's public finances remain sounder than ever. In fact, Gibraltar is better placed today than ever in our history to address a decision like that taken today by the British people.

Even if we face a perfect storm, to take a meteorological allusion, we are ready to weather it and we are ready to weather it well, Mr Speaker. This means that those areas we have long
110 identified as priorities for the community will not be affected as we move forward.

There will be many issues to address in the coming months which raise legal and even constitutional questions. For obvious reasons, some of these will be best shared with the Leader

of the Opposition in privacy. The last thing we need to do is to inform those who do not wish us
115 well of what we are doing to secure a good future in this new and game-changing scenario
which Brexit brings to Gibraltar and its people.

I will also look to forming working groups and committees which will include Members and
others, where these can help chart the way ahead in a new world outside the EU.

Mr Speaker, can I – and can I say this also with the greatest of respect – call on the public at
120 large to resist knee-jerk reactions or rushed reactions to what is undeniably a momentous
decision. As I stated earlier this morning, this is a time for reflection. As the drama of this day
recedes, we will enter a period where diligence and calm thought, action and diplomacy will be
required. We know that irrespective of their position on the Referendum, the British people are
hugely supportive of Gibraltar and its people. The people of Britain will not let us down.

125 Our ties with our friends in the British Parliament are strong. We have been working and will
continue to work closely with the UK Government Departments, including the Foreign Office and
the Treasury, to ensure that the partnership we have established will continue to flourish and be
productive for the good of Gibraltar. The strength of our inter-governmental relationships and
our strong, objectively verified reputation will greatly assist us as we move forward to protect
130 and promote our economic interests.

Mr Speaker, in this respect, the Government will over the coming weeks and months begin to
unroll a series of measures and strategies designed to guide Gibraltar through the new reality
before us. It is important that we work in tandem with the UK and that we take one step at a
time. I can assure this House that the Government is confident and ready to take all the steps
135 necessary to take Gibraltar forward and we shall do so.

This afternoon I will be meeting with the Gibraltar Gaming and Betting Association and the
Gibraltar Finance Centre Council. I have been hugely encouraged by the support already
expressed by a number of gaming companies, who confirm that the result today does not
change their commitment to remaining in Gibraltar. The market that matters most to them is of
140 course the United Kingdom, so the establishment of a common market between Gibraltar and
the United Kingdom has been the main issue we have long been working on with the UK. We are
confident that this is entirely achievable.

I will also meet today with the Federation of Small Businesses and the Chamber of
Commerce. On Monday, I expect to be able to meet with Unite, the Union, the GGCA and the
145 Gibraltar Teachers' Association. I also expect to meet with the *Grupo Transfronterizo* which
includes all of these groups and others from the Campo. It should be clear to all that after the
Prime Minister's statement today, no Article 50 Notice will be submitted by him next week. It
will fall to a new Prime Minister to do that in the autumn.

On that ground, Mr Speaker, there will therefore be no immediate changes to speak of in
150 respect of the application of rights and obligations between us and the rest of the European
Union.

Mr Speaker, the many cross-frontier workers who come to Gibraltar each day are an
important part of our success. They will continue to be welcomed by us and I trust that their
passage into Gibraltar and that of the tourists and others who they work for when they are here
155 with us will not in future be impeded. In this respect, I have today been in touch with both Juan
Franco, the Mayor of La Linea and Juan Carlos Ruiz Boix of San Roque in this regard. I expect to
meet both of them in the coming days and weeks.

Mr Speaker, it has been a tough 24 hours, but I have been humbled by the support of the
people of Gibraltar this morning for both my Government and for myself and the leadership that
160 we provide to our community in coming days, weeks and months. All in our nation can rest
assured that the Government has the energy, the ability, the capability and the commitment and
enthusiasm to steer a clear and steady course through the coming months and years.

Challenges there will be, but then again, Mr Speaker, haven't there always been for our
people? To an extent for Gibraltarians, this is business as usual: just one more mountain to

165 climb. And I, as no doubt all Members of this House, have great faith in the resilience and the spirit of the Gibraltarian to overcome such challenges.

Together, Mr Speaker, we will overcome. With hard work, Mr Speaker, we will overcome. We have done it in the past; we will do it again.

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

170

A Member: Hear, hear.

Statement by the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition

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

175 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, before I start, may I add my own voice to offer our congratulations certainly from this side of the House on the appointment of Bishop Carmelo Zammit. We would have wished that it would have been in more auspicious times but I hope certainly that he will be just as popular and just as loved as his predecessor was.

180 Mr Speaker, in 1980, Joseph Elliott Trudeau, the then Prime Minister of Canada and the father of the current Prime Minister of that country, reflecting on the Quebec Referendum said, and I quote:

‘It is obvious that these are historic moments. There are very few examples in the history of democracy of one part of a country choosing to decide for itself and by itself whether, yes or no, it wants to be part of a country to which it has belonged.’

185 In less than two years, Mr Speaker, the United Kingdom has faced not one such historic moment, in the Scottish Referendum, but a second, equally seminal moment in yesterday’s Referendum which ironically will test the resilience of the Union itself in the forthcoming years. And I pray, Mr Speaker, as someone who feels passionately about the Union and forming part of the British family of nations, that though undoubtedly tested, the Union will prove resilient over the next few years.

190 Sadly for us, the result has not been what we wanted in this House or what the people of Gibraltar have voted for in massive numbers. We could not have done more than we did in Gibraltar and I am proud of my fellow Gibraltarians who once again were not found wanting, Mr Speaker, when the chips were down in Gibraltar. **(A Member:** Hear, hear.)

195 It has not been indeed, the will of the people of Scotland or Northern Ireland who have also voted by a majority for Remain. But it is the will of the United Kingdom as a whole and in any democracy, one must respect that will. Every new chapter in life, and politics is no different, brings its challenges, but so too hope and opportunities.

We as a people are no strangers to adversity and have faced and overcome many challenges in the past. Our community has the strength of purpose and the resilience to overcome adversity again, and together we will again prevail.

200 There will be no despair, Mr Speaker, on this side of the House and I want the people of Gibraltar to know that we will be working hard to ensure that Gibraltar is kept safe, that Gibraltar is kept secure and that Gibraltar is kept prosperous in the years to come. In this House we must all now collectively deal in hope – realistic hope but hope nonetheless.

205 We need above all to develop a positive and workable road map for the future, and that is what we will concentrate on doing on this side of the House; hopefully, Mr Speaker, working alongside the Government to devise that road map as equal partners on a non-partisan and transparent basis. The creation of a non-partisan road map will help confidence and create a measure of certainty that our businesses and that the people of Gibraltar need at this time.

210 One of our main immediate focuses has to be to obtain from the United Kingdom guarantees that Gibraltar will be included in any trade deals that are negotiated with third parties, any re-negotiated access to the single market and unrestricted access to the UK market in areas such as insurance, financial services and gaming.

215 Mr Speaker, this situation is not of Gibraltar's making and the Government of the United Kingdom, particularly one led by Brexiteers in the future, owes a duty to the people of Gibraltar to ensure we are not left behind and that Gibraltar does not suffer economic damage over the next two years. Early guarantees from the United Kingdom will ensure that certainty and that stability in Gibraltar.

220 My message to Gibraltarians today is this: Gibraltar has always prevailed, even in the most difficult of circumstances and I am confident that working together, Government, Opposition and the rest of the population in Gibraltar that we can work through those future difficulties and that Gibraltar will prevail at the end of it stronger than ever before. And we will be able to maintain, Mr Speaker, that Gibraltarian way of life that we are all here in this House committed to defending and that with will and hard work, Mr Speaker, that we will maintain and we will protect over the years to come.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. *(Banging on desks)*

Statement by Mr Speaker

225 **Mr Speaker:** Before we conclude, as someone who was active in support of the In campaign, I would like to lend my support to all the elected Members in whichever way I can as they go about their business of securing Gibraltar's future.

230 I was reminded by the fact that we held a minute's silence for Jo Cox about something which Nigel Farage said in the early hours in his victory speech. He said that Britain's Independence Day today had been achieved without a single bullet having been fired. He was of course quite correct. Three bullets, not one were fired when Jo Cox was massacred.

The Hon. the Chief Minister.

235 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition for his words and you for your kind words. This is a time for us to work together for the good of our nation.

240 Mr Speaker, therefore, I am not going to proceed with further Government business today, I am going to propose that we adjourn the House now until Wednesday at 3.00 p.m. in the afternoon. But it is still my intention to proceed with the nation's Budget on Monday 4th July, which is certainly American Independence Day.

Business as usual.

245 **Mr Speaker:** The House will now adjourn until next Wednesday at 3.00 p.m. in the afternoon.

The House adjourned at 3.23 p.m.