



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

11.00 a.m. – 12.13 a.m.

Gibraltar, Tuesday, 19th January 2016

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 11.00 a.m.

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

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

Swearing-in Ceremony of the Governor and Commander in Chief of Gibraltar, Lt. General Edward Grant Martin Davis CB CBE

Royal Commission

The Clerk read the Royal Commission:

Elizabeth II. By the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and of Her Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

To our trusty and well beloved, Lieutenant General Edward Grant Martin Davis, Companion of our most Excellent Order of the Bath, Commander of our most Excellent Order of the British Empire, greeting Honourable.

We do, by this our commission, under our Sign Manual and Signet, appoint you, the said Lt. General Edward Grant Martin Davis to be our Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the Territory of Gibraltar during our pleasure with all the powers, rights, privileges and advantages to the said office belonging or appertaining.

And we do direct that your appointment shall take effect from the time of your taking and subscribing oaths in accordance with the Constitution of Gibraltar.

And we do hereby command all and singular our officers and loving subjects in our said territory, and all others whom it may concern, to take notice hereof and to give their ready obedience in accordance with the Constitution of Gibraltar and other laws enforced in our said territory.

And we do hereby direct that this, our commission, shall determine upon signification to that effect being given by us through one of our principal Secretaries of State.

Given at our Court of Saint James's, this Twentieth day of November 2015, in the Sixty-fourth Year of Our Reign.

By Her Majesty's Command
Phillip Hammond

Oath of Allegiance

Clerk: Oath of Allegiance.

The Chief Justice administered the Oath of Allegiance to Lieutenant General Davis as follows:

5 **Lt. General Davis:** I, Edward Grant Martin Davis, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors according to the law. So help me, God.

Oath for the Execution of Office

Clerk: Oath for the Execution of Office.

The Chief Justice administered the Oath for the Execution of Office to Lt. General Davis as follows:

10 **Lt. General Davis:** I, Edward Grant Martin Edward Davis, do swear that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors in the office of Governor and Commander in Chief of the City of Gibraltar. So help me, God.

An officer of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment presented the Keys of the City of Gibraltar to Lt. General Davis.

**Address by the Chief Minister,
Hon. F R Picardo**

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

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Your Excellency, on behalf of the people of Gibraltar, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar and as Leader of this House, I have the privilege of being the first to formally welcome you and your wife Lorraine to your new home in Gibraltar.

20 It is indeed a pleasure to also be the first person to have the honour to address you formally by your new style. You are now the Representative of Her Majesty in Gibraltar, and it is right, of course, that as the representative and embodiment of Her Majesty the Queen it should be in this, her Gibraltar Parliament, the beating heart of Gibraltar's democracy and the root of its civil institutions, that we should formally welcome and congratulate you.

25 Both your new style and your new home will no doubt be slightly unusual to start with, but I am sure that you will find it easy to live your new life amongst us. And I have no doubt that apart from making a home here on the Rock you will also soon make many friends in this community, because the sheer cliffs and the austere exterior of the Rock of Gibraltar betrays a soft and hospitable core fashioned by the warmth of the character of its great people, a people who have had their identity sculpted by sacrifice, not least in the last century, during the Second World War, when the women and children of the evacuation generation, described by one of your predecessors as 'useless mouths' were evacuated from their homes and cast into an international diaspora.

30 We have been commemorating the 75th anniversary of that evacuation in this past year. A poignant way of understanding the importance of that seminal event in our modern history is to understand that some saw it as the potential end of the civilian population of Gibraltar as a community. Instead, it was the making of us as a nation, a nation that enjoys a vibrant – some say too vibrant, if there is such a thing – democracy. And, indeed, you might wish to spare a thought for Mr Speaker, who sits next to you today, given that he is the one who has to corral all of that vibrancy into some element of order during our debates.

40

In fact, you will be aware, Your Excellency, that we recently held a General Election, which saw a robust debate on the choices for the future facing our people. That election has resulted in the 17 Members being here today in this Chamber. Tomorrow, we will formally start our work as a Parliament. The five new Members opposite will get the chance to question the Government and speak in debates for the first time in these coming days, and one of the most senior elected Members in the Commonwealth, the Hon. Joe Bossano, will continue his tireless work for the nation that he loves and has been an architect of building – work, incidentally, which he started 44 years ago in this place.

As a legislature – from our newest, least experienced Members to our veteran and most seasoned Father of the House – one of the most important aspects of the work we will do in this generation will be in this first month, when we meet to deliberate on the European Union Referendum Bill, because, Your Excellency, the decision of whether or not the United Kingdom should remain a part of the European Union is one which will in great measure be determinative of our long-term fortunes as a nation. Because it will be apparent to you as it is to all of us that Europe matters to Gibraltar. Not only are we a part of continental Europe; we also enjoy freedom of movement throughout the EU and we are also able to access the single European market from Gibraltar in a way that has been a catalyst to economic growth since we joined. Public opinion in Gibraltar is therefore broadly in favour of continued membership of the European Union, and that position I believe is also reflected in this Chamber. And I believe that we will see a unified Gibraltar position in this important coming referendum.

Interestingly, in the past days we have heard that the United Kingdom, that in the Treasury there and other departments are not doing any planning for the eventuality that the United Kingdom might vote to leave the European Union. Here, we are leaving nothing to chance and we are already in the process of undertaking an economic study for the purpose of analysing the different possible permutations of membership of the EU, EFTA or the EEA, including the potential effects on our export economy of membership of the Common Customs Union. Indeed, the EU has become such an important part of our national legal order that specific provision is made in section 47 of our Constitution that without prejudice to the United Kingdom's responsibility for Gibraltar's compliance with European Union law, matters which under the Constitution are the responsibility of Ministers shall not cease to be so even though they arise in the context of the European Union. In effect, that paragraph carves out EU matters from the otherwise purported catch-all reference to external affairs, which are one of Your Excellency's special responsibilities. On this side of the House we have been elected with a specific mandate to establish a Select Committee of this Parliament to consider what, if any, changes should be proposed to the text of this Constitution, and given the specific reference to the European Union within the Constitution itself, it is therefore particularly important that this work be done in the planning for a potential British exit from the EU. The Constitution, as presently framed, forms the basis of a relationship between the United Kingdom and Gibraltar, which, whether or not it is based on colonialism, has not seen us removed from the UN list of colonies and which, 10 years on, is now not as modern as it might have been 10 years ago. The previous Select Committee, in the run-up to the negotiations which led to the 2006 text, proposed certain reforms which remain outstanding. And so, if there are changes which we can agree with the United Kingdom to make the Constitution which would advance Gibraltar's removal from the UN list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, then that is something which every right-thinking Gibraltarian will wish to see pursued in the context of continued British sovereignty in perpetuity. This is work which must be communitywide and done in the most open and transparent manner. I expect to be constituting that Select Committee very soon indeed.

There will also be another Select Committee that will further consider the workings of this House and how best to further modernise its work. We have already done much in this respect. We have refurbished this Chamber and introduced cameras to provide broadcasts and online video streaming of its proceedings. These things might be taken for granted elsewhere, but are

our recent innovations here. I alert you to these technological steps on the road of e-government, because the advertisement that happily led to your appointment made much of the need for the representation of a modern image. We are certainly modern in this Chamber, and as a community of course we boast one of the most avant-garde industries in the online gaming industry, because as well as being economically sound and politically stable Gibraltar is a modern and socially advanced society which is mature in its outlook and in its attitude to the rest of the world.

Indeed, we have been working hard to establish strong commercial and political links with all our neighbours. We have successfully strengthened our relationship with the Kingdom of Morocco across the Straits of Gibraltar. We have not been so successful with the Kingdom of Spain, but not for want of trying. In the past four years, the political representatives of Spain have been determined to return to bilateral negotiations with the United Kingdom in respect of the sovereignty of Gibraltar, over the heads of the Gibraltarians. That, of course, has failed and will always continue to fail, because the only people who will ever be able to freely determine the future of Gibraltar will be the people of Gibraltar, and that unimpeachable right of self-determination is not one which admits of any reasonable accommodation of the illegitimate claims of others, because the sovereignty of our home – your home now, too – is exclusively a matter for the people of Gibraltar. Indeed, it was one of your predecessors, the distinguished and much loved General Sir William Jackson, who coined the very appropriate phrase that Gibraltar is ‘neither Spain’s to claim nor Britain’s to give’ – it is the Rock of the Gibraltarians. That is the position in a nutshell. We nonetheless continue to be strongly committed to a trilateral forum for dialogue in which Spain, the United Kingdom and Gibraltar will be able to consider together any matters of mutual beneficial interest without touching the issue of sovereignty. And there is much we could do together with our neighbours to further promote economic growth for mutual benefit.

This time last year, the Chamber of Commerce in Gibraltar disclosed the results of an economic impact study, which reflected just how great the impact of Gibraltar’s industries are in the area around us. One in four jobs – one quarter in the region around us – is attributed to Gibraltar, up from one in six in 2009. In fact, we are the second largest employer in Andalucía after the regional government – or the Junta de Andalucía, as it is known – and Gibraltar’s economy now counts for one quarter of the GDP of our neighbouring region in Spain, up from one eighth in 2009. All told, Gibraltar increased the GDP of the region by over £½ billion, which amounts to nearly €¾ billion, and all of that, Your Excellency, at a time when the Government of Spain has closed all doors to widespread economic co-operation and has seemed more intent on the pointless navigation of our territorial seas – those through which, in time-honoured tradition, you arrived this morning – than in any meaningful law-enforcement partnership.

But we believe that the interests of Gibraltar and the region lie in leaving behind the confrontation that some seemed to seek these past four years, whilst pursuing instead closer economic co-operation, which could enable the real potential for growth on both sides of the Frontier to truly flourish and produce even greater wealth – and all of that without the need for another potentially highly polluting refinery to be established in the Bay of Gibraltar.

But we are not limiting our vision for the development of our economy to the immediate landscape. Today’s globalised environment creates opportunities for Gibraltar around the globe. That is why we are now established in London, Brussels, Hong Kong and in the United States, and hope soon to be established in other nations too as we spread our commercial reach. And the private sector in Gibraltar is driving projects which will be of great interest to international investors in those and other locations: the World Trade Centre is nearing topping-out stage; we continue to positively progress our negotiations on the development of the Eastside Blue Water resort; and we are in advanced negotiations in respect of the potential for the redevelopment of the central site named after Admiral Rooke, one of the many sites being handed over by the Ministry of Defence as surplus to defence requirements, whilst the adjacent Midtown development, an old Navy playing field, is now being redeveloped, funded by a local consortium.

145 Previously, our economy was almost fully dependent on the Ministry of Defence's spending.
Today, that is a fraction of what it once was but that makes it no less significant, not least
because the United Kingdom is responsible for and guarantees the defence of our sovereignty,
and we have seen some fairly regular calls of larger naval vessels in the past months, asserting
British sovereignty over British Gibraltar Territorial Waters in that respect, but also because a
150 large number of Gibraltarians continue to provide loyal service to the MOD as locally employed
civilians. Their continued employment and the quality of that employment is a matter to which
we are committed to and on which I expect to soon be engaged in substantive and no doubt
positive discussions with the Armed Forces Minister.

A good moment to reflect, Your Excellency, on the fact that one of the happiest and proudest
155 parts of your role here will no doubt be the opportunity to work with the Royal Gibraltar
Regiment. The people of Gibraltar are rightly proud of the Regiment and you will no doubt enjoy
your association with a band of men and women who are a credit to the British Army. Their
motto, *Nulli Expugnabilis Hosti* – conquered by no enemy – is a fitting motto with which all in
Gibraltar associate. But we are no less proud of our association also with the Royal Marine
160 Corps, of which you have been Commandant General like our two former Royal Marine
Governors of recent memory. There is a long and enduring relationship immortalised in your
battle honour, which I know the Marines are equally proud of, for Gibraltar is today a place to be
proud of being associated with.

We are a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious community with an enviable
165 measure of political and economic stability, a nation that has just established a national bank
and a university, enjoying the third highest GDP per capita in the world and boasting
employment levels at record highs and unemployment levels at record lows, and enviably low
public debt by any measure. Our work in government will be to assure that continued prosperity
going forward, especially in these challenging times for all democratic nations. The threats to our
170 security, especially on the shores of the Mediterranean, are multi-faceted and can bring deep
economic consequences, and your undoubted experience in these fields is very welcome indeed.

Experience of Gibraltar is something which is certainly not lacking in the lady who has ably
held the fort in the interregnum between the departure of Jim Dutton and your arrival here
today. Alison MacMillan has, for over 20 years, been a friend of Gibraltar and of many
175 Gibraltarians from across the political and social divides. Her first posting here was now two
decades ago and I know that she, Julian, Alicia and Cameron cherish their time in Gibraltar. Your
Excellency could have no better guide for your early days in post, negotiating the difficulties
inherent in representation of the monarch in a modern Westminster-style democracy.

For now, it is worth remembering that section 49 of the current Constitution provides that
180 the Governor – that is to say you – will keep the Chief Minister fully informed of the general
conduct of those matters for which you are responsible. And section 52 provides that the
Governor and the Chief Minister – that is to say you and me, for now at least – shall confer on a
regular basis, and the Chief Minister shall brief and keep the Governor informed about the
policies of the Government and the public affairs of Gibraltar. We are clearly about to get to
185 know each other much better! I, for one, very much look forward to it, and that the time that we
will spend together will be working in the common public interest of Gibraltar. With good will
and hard work I have no doubt we will achieve the standard of each generation of our
predecessors and that we will greatly advance the general interests of Gibraltar and its people in
so doing, and as you undertake that work Gibraltar will take you and your wife to its heart.

190 So, all that remains for me to say is welcome home to Gibraltar. *(Banging on desks)*

**Address by the Leader of the Opposition,
Hon. D A Feetham**

Clerk: The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D A Feetham: Your Excellency, Mr Speaker, Chief Justice and other distinguished guests, it gives me great pleasure, on behalf of Her Majesty's Opposition, to formally welcome Your
195 Excellency and your lady wife, Lorraine, to Gibraltar.

In December 2013, when I first welcomed Sir James and Lady Dutton to Gibraltar in this very ceremony, I told them, and I quote: 'You come to Gibraltar at a critical time in our history.' Well, it seems that nothing changes, because you too come to Gibraltar at a critical time in our
200 history. For better or for worse, you will rapidly find that there is never a dull moment when it comes to the affairs of this small nation of ours. Be it the challenges we will no doubt face from Spain or the challenges that you will face in discharging the important inherent duty that your position carries to help the Government of the day defend or advance the reasonable aspirations of this community, including in its dealings with the United Kingdom government, where there may well be at times disagreements, you will no doubt feel like a batsman being
205 bowled bouncers from every direction – including, I have to say, the occasional unplayable delivery from some of us inside this House. I have no doubt that you will do so with a straight bat and that in the time that you will spend amongst us you will find yourself made to feel very much at home. And I hope that you will make lifelong friends in Gibraltar and win over the hearts of the people of this small community.

But it is a critical time for our small nation. The Prime Minister has promised an in/out referendum on Europe by the end of 2017. While in the United Kingdom there has always been a significant level of Euroscepticism in the Labour as well as the Conservative party, Gibraltar feels very much that its place is at the heart of Europe. The debate on Europe in the United Kingdom is a debate that we would rather not happen, but it is happening and we need to
210 protect our own interests.

For us, important as voting in an EU referendum is for Gibraltar, our vote will be but a drop in the ocean when it is added to the tens of millions of voters in the United Kingdom. The real challenge for us is in protecting our interest in any deal that the Prime Minister might be considering with our EU partners. That means, however difficult the task, attempting to identify
220 what impact that deal might have on important areas of business in Gibraltar and identifying too what opportunities there will be for Spain in trying to take advantage of the situation to exclude us from parts of that deal which might have an adverse impact on those areas of business. History has a habit of repeating itself, and it will not be the first, or probably the last, time that Spain uses the EU to advance its position in respect of Gibraltar, and vigilance is absolutely
225 essential. The Government is spending considerable amounts of money on a Gibraltar office in Brussels and these are the issues that I would expect them to be working on. This is also an issue that should be dealt with on a cross-party basis, and if that does not happen it will not be for want of trying on this side of the House.

The Government also wants to embark on a process of constitutional reform and says that it wants to set up a cross-party Select Committee for that purpose. I repeat in this House, Your
230 Excellency, what I said to the people of Gibraltar yesterday in my New Year's message. One of the cornerstones of GSD policy is that the 2006 Constitution granted us the maximum level of self-government short of independence and compatible with continued British sovereignty. Constitutional reform is therefore not a GSD manifesto commitment. I also do not believe that
235 there is an appetite in Gibraltar for further substantial devolution, even if it were possible or compatible with continued British sovereignty.

The Chief Minister has today said that we need constitutional reform in order to go with that new Constitution to the United Nations and try and persuade the United Nations to delist us. Our position is that our Constitution is good enough for the United Nations to delist us from the

240 list of Non-Self-Governing Territories and, despite that, the United Nations refuses to do so.
There is no guarantee that a new Constitution will lead to the delisting of Gibraltar from the list
of Non-Self-Governing Territories. That does not mean, however, that we are not prepared to
work with the Government to see whether the Constitution can in some areas be improved, but
we need to understand what the Government intends to achieve. Once we understand that, we
245 will then be able to put the matter before the Executive Committee of the GSD, which ultimately
makes policy decisions. I wanted to make it absolutely clear that no one on this side of the
House is trying to have the issue of Constitutional reform decided behind closed doors, but the
reality is that if the Government wants our support to advance *their*, not *our* policy, *their*
manifesto, not *our* manifesto commitment in voting for a cross-party Select Committee, our
250 executive will need to understand what the Government wants to achieve.

I remind the House that when we last set up a Select Committee for this purpose in 1999 it
was in response to an invitation to all Overseas Territories by the then Foreign Secretary, Robin
Cook, that all Overseas Territories should submit proposals for constitutional reform. That is an
entirely different situation to the one where one party in the House has a policy of constitutional
255 reform and the other does not.

I also believe that to talk about constitutional reform this side of an EU referendum may be
premature. If the people of the UK vote to leave the EU, however unlikely, our border with Spain
could become a non-EU border and an immediate, very dangerous pressure point will be
created. In those circumstances, we may need to re-examine our constitutional relationship with
260 the UK, and there may be those in Gibraltar who will argue that further devolution, however
minor, is ill-advised and that we can perhaps progress our relationship with less devolution or
greater devolved integration with the United Kingdom. I make absolutely no positive comment
about that at all, but what I do say is that none of it can be pre-empted this side of an EU
referendum. Again, for the avoidance of any doubt at all, and being the reasonable chap that I
265 am, (*Laughter*) I am prepared to be persuaded otherwise, but not in exchange of press releases
or in exchange of interviews. Let us be mature about it and let us meet and discuss the matter,
as we should, in order so that the Government can explain to us what it wants to achieve and
what are the objectives.

Your Excellency, relations with Spain will also continue to occupy much of our attention. No
270 doubt incursions will continue, whoever is in government in Spain, but it is our hope that the
dangerous incidents that we have seen over the last few years will be confined to the dustbin of
history. Otherwise, I fear that sooner rather than later there will be a serious incident leading to
serious injury or worse in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters.

The UK government too must understand that diplomatic protests of the sort that we have
275 seen over the last three years have not had the desired effect and the UK government needs to
rethink. The author and US lawyer, Andrew Vachss, once said:

“Life is a fight, but not everyone is a fighter. Otherwise, bullies would be an endangered species.”

Well, we are a community of 30,000 fighters, and if the United Kingdom followed our lead
and showed the fight that we are willing to show day in, day out, Jurassic bullying that we have
suffered over the recent years in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters would be truly extinct and a
280 thing of the past.

Your Excellency, that does not mean that there are no internal differences on these issues in
Gibraltar. A number of years ago, the Father of the House, the then Leader of the Opposition,
Mr Bossano, used this very same occasion in this House ,when we were welcoming Sir Adrian
and Lady Johns to these shores, to criticise the Córdoba agreements in very strong terms. In
285 2013, when we welcomed Sir James and Lady Dutton, I referred to the words of Benjamin
Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, that:

“If everyone is thinking alike, then no one is really thinking”

when I outlined the differences in approach in this area between the Government and the Opposition. I am happy to say that there are probably less differences today than at any time in our recent history between the Government and the Opposition on this issue. Both sides of the House are not only resolute in our resolve to maintain well-established red lines in relation to sovereignty, jurisdiction and control of our air space, our land and our waters, but there is an equal commitment to engaging with the Spanish government, of whatever political colour or persuasion, with constructive dialogue under the tripartite process. It is that process, which it has to be said remains one of the greatest achievements of this party, the GSD, in government, that underpins the policy of both sides of this House.

I hope that the new Spanish government understands that the sterile policy of the Mr Margallo era does nothing for Anglo-Gibraltar-Spanish relations and nothing for the ordinary man on the street – in particular, the ordinary working-class Spaniard. It is jobs in Gibraltar and business opportunities on both sides of the Frontier that will help feed their families, not repeating an empty slogan – *Gibraltar español* – yet again. The inexcusable queues at the Frontier do as much damage to those ordinary working-class people as anything else. Politics, at the end of the day, is about helping people, ordinary people. We are all here to improve the standard of living of ordinary people. That is what constructive dialogue seeks to achieve and it is the antithesis of everything that the Spanish government has done over the last four years.

For my part, I will continue doing what I have been doing for the last three years, and that is to take, in my own way, that message of dialogue to universities, debating societies and influential business groups in Spain in a confident, intelligent and also, it has to be said, measured way, which has always been the GSD way of doing things. I hope that here too it may be possible for the Government and the Opposition to work out a long-term strategy to deal with these issues collectively.

As Her Majesty's representative in Gibraltar, once again we wish you and your lady wife, Lorraine, a very warm welcome indeed from Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. (*Banging on desks*)

**Address by His Excellency the Governor,
Lt. General Edward Grant Martin Davis**

Clerk: His Excellency the Governor.

His Excellency the Governor: Mr Speaker, Chief Justice, Chief Minister, Leader of the loyal Opposition, thank you for your warm and generous welcome here in the Chamber of the Gibraltar Parliament, the heart of Gibraltarian democracy – a democracy that, as I look out over today's troubled world, stands proud as a bastion of the enduring British values of freedom, tolerance, responsibility and respect for the rule of law.

May I first take the opportunity to congratulate the Chief Minister and the GSLP Liberal Alliance on their recent re-election to Government. Having arrived at the outset of a new parliamentary term, I look forward to working throughout the current Government's tenure with the Chief Minister and the hon. Members of Government and the Opposition in the best interests of the people of Gibraltar.

Serving the United Kingdom is my passion. Being appointed as our Sovereign's representative in Gibraltar is a unique and singular privilege. It is a seminal moment in my life. Accordingly, it is with the utmost sense of honour and responsibility that I have just taken the Oaths of Allegiance and Due Execution to Her Majesty the Queen and been sworn in as the Governor and Commander in Chief of Gibraltar. In doing so, I pledge to do everything within my constitutional role to assure the sovereignty, the security and success of Gibraltar. Equally, my wife and I pledge to do everything within our collective capacity and resolution to help progress and

promote Gibraltar's vital advantages, its people and its environment – earnest undertakings that we both relish.

335 In making this joint commitment, Lorraine and I are particularly looking forward to sharing our lives with the open, friendly and compassionate people of Gibraltar, a few of whom we have been fortunate enough to meet during visits to the Rock throughout my 35 years of service in the Royal Marines. We are, however, both well aware that we have barely skimmed the surface of the true spirit and substance of Gibraltar. We have a great deal to learn about Gibraltar's
340 heritage, its culture, society and commerce. In short, we are very much looking forward to learning about the Gibraltarian way of life.

As our top priority, we want to get to know and listen to as broad a cross-section of the people of Gibraltar as is possible, so we can grow to understand their hopes and fears for the future – a much-anticipated prospect as, having spoken to a number of our predecessors over
345 the last four months, it is abundantly clear that to know the people of Gibraltar is to deeply admire, respect and enjoy them. Lorraine and I have no doubt we will feel exactly the same.

I am especially proud that, as another Royal Marine taking over as the Governor and Commander in Chief, I know that every man and woman in the Royal Marines Corps regards having a Royal Marine appointed as Governor as a source of great regimental pride. The word
350 'Gibraltar' is on the cap badge of every Royal Marine in recognition of the Corps' first great battle honour awarded for the capture and defence of the Rock over 311 years ago. And equally significant, the Corps is honoured to hold the distinction of being able to exercise the Freedom of the City – manifest proof that the people of Gibraltar and the Royal Marines enjoy the priceless bond of mutual understanding, trust and respect forged over a hundred years of shared endeavour. It is a bond I intend to strengthen in my role as Commander in Chief of the
355 Royal Gibraltar Regiment.

From all that I have heard and read about Gibraltar in recent months I judge the support of the United Kingdom for the Government of Gibraltar and its people has never been stronger or more openly expressed, a contention that was underscored by the Foreign Secretary when he
360 said recently that the people of Gibraltar have an inviolable right to remain British and the United Kingdom government would respect that right for as long as the people of the Rock wish that to be so. Nonetheless, I would like to use this occasion of my swearing-in as Governor and Commander in Chief to reaffirm the United Kingdom's assurances on sovereignty underpinned by the Gibraltarian people's right of self-determination. The constitutional commitment of the
365 United Kingdom is clear: Her Majesty's Government will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another state against their freely and democratically expressed wishes. Furthermore, Her Majesty's Government has also declared publicly and repeatedly that it would never enter a process of negotiation about the sovereignty of the Rock without the Gibraltar Government's consent. Accordingly, my
370 touchstone principles as Gibraltar progresses confidently forward will be the people of Gibraltar's inalienable right of self-determination and the upholding of the commitment to secure the people of Gibraltar's consent in all matters that pertain to the sovereignty of Gibraltar.

Mr Speaker, I have listened intently to the words of the Chief Minister and the Hon. Leader of
375 the Opposition from the day that my appointment was confirmed, and especially so here today in the Chamber. I share their view that Gibraltar has made remarkable progress over recent years in developing its system of governance, its security and environmental resilience and its prosperity. I also unequivocally support their keen determination to make Gibraltar's relationship with Spain as mutually respectful and gainful as it could and should be.

380 More widely, I look forward to working with all parties involved in the leadership of Gibraltar to ensure that Gibraltar remains on its metal to protect, progress and promote itself in a world of growing global threats to our values, freedoms, security and prosperity – risks that I know the people of Gibraltar will tackle with a characteristic resolve and innovation, risks that I know that

385 the Government of Gibraltar will continue to overcome with patient, pragmatic and persistent
enterprise and outreach. But we must not be complacent.

390 Since the moment my appointment as Governor of Gibraltar was confirmed, Lorraine and I
have become increasingly enthused and excited at the prospect of making Gibraltar our home
for the next four years. The truly moving and humbling welcome that we have received today
bears testament to the fact that our belief in the warmth and kindness of the people of Gibraltar
was indeed well founded. We look forward to continuing to enjoy and be enriched by this
warmth and kindness as we strive to serve the people of Gibraltar to the best of our ability, a
most special honour.

395 Mr Speaker, I am delighted to be able to conclude with a message from Her Majesty the
Queen, who has asked me to convey her continued gratitude for the loyalty of the people of
Gibraltar and her best wishes on the occasion of the swearing-in of her 22nd Governor of
Gibraltar during her reign.

Thank you. *(Banging on desks)*

The House adjourned at 12.13 a.m.