



PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

AFTERNOON SESSION: 3.04 p.m. – 4.25 p.m.

Gibraltar, Thursday, 21st March 2019

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The Gibraltar Parliament

The Parliament met at 3.04 p.m.

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

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

Condolences to the people of New Zealand

Clerk: Meeting of Parliament, Thursday, 21st March 2019.

5 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, before the Parliament commences its deliberations this afternoon, as it is the first time we sit since the massacre we saw in New Zealand, of innocent people in their place of worship, I think we will all want to reflect our condolences to the people of New Zealand, in particular the Muslim community of New Zealand, and I would invite the House to reflect those condolences by a minute's silence.

The House observed a minute's silence.

Congratulations to Jewish community on Purim

10 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, on a happier note, before I continue with the Government's business today, I note that it is Purim, a Jewish feast. We have a Jewish Member in this House, many important members of our community are Jewish and an important part of our community is the Jewish community, so I extend to all of them the congratulations of Purim. *(Banging on desks)*

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

15 **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 Government Statement.

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

**EU withdrawal developments –
Statement by the Chief Minister**

Mr Speaker: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

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Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, last night the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom addressed the nation about the Brexit options facing the UK. With eight days to go, the options are becoming more and more limited and starker and starker.

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The options bear little similarity – if I may say so, I think on behalf of all Members of the House – to the false prospectus that was presented to the British public by the Leave campaign at the time of the referendum in 2016. The land of milk and honey which was presented to the voters has not materialised. We all knew it would not materialise. As all hon. Members of this House knew, the options that the EU were going to be prepared to put on the table were always going to be those that are now available. The options that work for the EU on the departure of the United Kingdom must rightly, from the point of view of the EU, protect the integrity of the single market and the certainty of EU law.

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Mr Speaker, one of the greatest unfairnesses I hear is the criticism of the UK's negotiating team that have agreed the Withdrawal Agreement. That team, led by Oliver Robbins, has done a magnificent job for Britain and for Gibraltar and history will reflect that. The same is true of the Gibraltar officials who have negotiated or supported us in the negotiations for Gibraltar. In fact, as we all know and agree, the best trading relationship, the best deal that can be secured with the EU is clearly, of course, continued membership of the United Kingdom and, through the United Kingdom, for Gibraltar. We all in this House agree on that.

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But let's be clear: the UK voted, in a flawed referendum, to leave the EU. The UK, in a general election held thereafter, voted majoritarily for parties that committed to honour that vote to leave the EU. The Parliament then voted to activate the Article 50 notification. And things have now moved on even further. The same Parliament has now voted to rule out a no-deal Brexit, so the net effect of that is that the UK is now in a situation where its Parliament either votes for the Prime Minister's deal or seeks to negotiate a different one via an extension of membership. That extension of membership can only happen if there is an agreement with the EU. The EU has made clear now that it will only countenance extension for a good reason, not to keep up the paralysis and the pain of the Brexit negotiations.

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Mr Speaker, for us, the position is particularly clear: we voted to remain and we want to remain with the United Kingdom, but if that option is gone and leaving is the only option we will want to leave in a managed way with a deal. That deal is the Withdrawal Agreement. If the UK does not agree a Withdrawal Agreement next week – and that must mean *the* Withdrawal Agreement before the Parliament – and if it cannot agree an extension with the EU on terms that are acceptable to both the United Kingdom and the EU, then the only way to honour the vote of Parliament to avoid a no-deal Brexit is to revoke the Article 50 notification. I said as much last week in this House and I have been saying so since last year. Even if a person is a Brexiteer, other than a no-deal zealot, then revocation is still the best way to deliver a managed Brexit if there is no agreed extension.

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This House will recall that in March 2017 the EU pushed the UK to give the Article 50 notification by saying it would not negotiate the withdrawal, let alone the future relationship, until the notice was received. Well, having negotiated with them for the past two years, the EU's cards are all on the table. By revoking the Article 50 notice we will, even if we go back with a further notice in future, take back control of the negotiations. It will allow the UK to come to its collective senses one way or the other: to see the Withdrawal Agreement is good and support it as the managed way out of the EU; to see the Withdrawal Agreement is bad and plan how to renegotiate it; to see that leaving is a bad idea and forget about it; or to put the Withdrawal Agreement or other options to a new referendum – although let's be clear a new referendum is just a new procedure, a new role of the dice, not a new destination. But through the mechanism

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of the revocation, if MPs do not support the Prime Minister's Withdrawal Agreement, the UK can unilaterally take back control of the process of leaving the European Union. It is now the only unilateral option left to the United Kingdom. And that works for every shade of Remain or Brexit opinion, except for the minority no-deal or WTO zealots that I referred to earlier.

Mr Speaker, it is also important that we do not overhyperbolise any argument with one week to go before our departure. Never has it been truer that a week is a long time in politics. So I would say to everyone watching our proceedings: even leaving without a deal is not an existential crisis for Gibraltar. Yes, it is not our preferred option, but it will be worse for the UK and for the EU than it will be for us. The sun will rise next Saturday even if we have left the EU without a deal, because in Gibraltar the Government has done its job. We are ready to leave with or without the Withdrawal Agreement, for an extension, for a revocation or for a new referendum. In every one of those scenarios, we have protected Gibraltar's position or planned how we will react in the best interests of Gibraltar and its people. The unrelenting hard work that we have done in the past three years is paying off now. As Gibraltar can see, we have covered all bases going forward. Whichever way the UK Parliament and the Prime Minister now finally decide to go, whatever extension the EU may or may not agree, we have a route map forward for Gibraltar. That was our key job. It is what we have successfully done.

I want to say something about this House also, Mr Speaker. We have many disagreements in this place, it is right and natural that we should, but we have done our jobs here also, even if it is just by dint of the House allowing us to do our jobs in the executive because of our inbuilt majority. Via the Brexit Select Committee, via the Government's negotiating team and with the support of our community and our businesses, we have secured the future, whichever of the options develops after the end of next week. Whatever happens next week, we know what we will do and we will continue to prosper and grow this community. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) (*Banging on desks*)

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

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, the political theatre being played out 1,091 miles away from our shores continues to wreak havoc and shake confidence in Britain. We on this side of the House would welcome, of course, an extension to exit day.

The Prime Minister's very public reprimand of UK parliamentarians last night showed a one-track, single-minded vision for the future of the United Kingdom which 96% of our people rejected conclusively in the 2016 referendum – a fake prospectus, as referred to by the Chief Minister, and a flawed referendum I think the Chief Minister referred to.

Our position on Europe could not be more different than the UK. None of us in this House or outside this House desired the outcome. All of the peoples of the British family have the right to a thoughtful and careful leader in the form of the Prime Minister at this time, but putting the same bad deal before the Commons time after time without putting it to the people is wrong. The Prime Minister's disregard for the United Kingdom's Members of Parliament in the context of putting again a bad deal before the Commons is equal to our Government's circumventing parliamentary scrutiny of the agreements the Government has negotiated on our behalf.

In the meantime, today the Chief Minister had an interview, as is known, with Sky News, in which he demonstrated another shift in the Government's position. It will be recalled that the Chief Minister described the Prime Minister's deal in the United Kingdom as good for the UK and therefore good for Gibraltar. Now the Chief Minister is saying it is a wrong deal for the UK and not the best deal for Gibraltar. Mr Speaker, which is it?

All outcomes and the outcomes described by the Chief Minister in his address are still on the table, as are the risks, and we wait to hear from a Parliament 1,091 miles away as to how our future will be shaped. All of us are trying to do what we can to reassure members of our community of the outcome, which is increasingly, as the Chief Minister pointed out, uncertain; but we must hold firm as we approach the wire and hold a collective breath.

120 And whilst our community reserves its judgement on the Government's handling of our negotiations in the context of a bad deal, we have to expect that our Government has secured all of our objectives and prepared us for all risks. We say 'expect', Mr Speaker, because the Opposition has, we repeat, had no meaningful participation in this process. We repeat that should the Government call upon us to assist in any way as the clock is run down on this most important moment in our history, we will do whatever we can in the national interest to protect our community.

Hon. Chief Minister: Well, Mr Speaker, given that the only response that is allowed to a Government Statement is the asking of questions for clarification, I am going to take the hon. Gentleman's lack of a questioning inflection as just an inability to reflect the grammar of what he was reading, and I will take a lot of what he has said to be questions, which I will deal with now and clarify.

130 Mr Speaker, absolutely it is true that what we are seeing in the United Kingdom would appear not to be good for business confidence; it would appear also not to be good for citizens' confidence. It is described by the hon. Gentleman as political theatre. Well, it is a matter for him. This is probably not anywhere near theatre; this is far too close to reality, and that is what concerns us all.

135 But it is also true that those of us who have argued for Remain as the best option for Gibraltar and the best option for the United Kingdom have to accept that the United Kingdom has just reported more jobs than ever in its history in a remarkable turnaround. One would think, as an avowed remainer, that there would have been even more jobs in the United Kingdom economy if the United Kingdom had voted to remain, but as I said to the House a moment ago, I think we have to avoid overstating any case now with eight days to go. Overhyperbolising is not going to help anyone.

140 The hon. Gentleman then says that 96% rejected the vision of the UK Prime Minister for the future of the United Kingdom, in Gibraltar, because we voted to remain. Well, no, Mr Speaker, that is absolutely not the case: 96% of the voting public in Gibraltar voted, in the referendum on the issue of whether we should leave or remain in the European Union, to remain in the European Union. The hon. Gentleman has to be careful not to extrapolate that 96% and use it for whatever purpose he might wish at any particular time, because he has no right to do so. The 17.4 million people who voted to leave are, in my view, having their opinion and their vote traduced by politicians when politicians say 17.4 million people voted to stop immigration from the European Union. Well, not necessarily. Some of those people might have voted for completely different reasons to leave the EU, because one of the things that the Leave campaign talked about was EU workers continuing to be able to come to the United Kingdom. In my view, so many lies were told during the referendum campaign that it is not possible to interpret what 17.4 million people voted for or against, and anybody who pretends to do so is traducing them here.

145 Here, we have to be very careful to understand that 96% of our voters voted to remain in the European Union, but I would not say that they voted to remain in the European Union because they love the European project and they believe in it. I would say – quite the contrary to what Mr Phillips has said now – that 96% of people voted to remain in the European Union because that was the safest way of ensuring that we could continue with Britain, because our vision is that we want to continue with Britain. And so he has to be careful to say that the Prime Minister's vision for Britain is what 96% of people voted against. That is just not correct, and if he thought of that or it was thought of for him, whoever put pen to paper, he must remember that he is the one who is on the *Hansard* as having said these things.

150 Then he went on to make a characterisation of Mrs May – I have been very careful not to do any of that in what I have been saying in my statements – as a person who is not thoughtful or caring. Well, I am not going to characterise Mrs May one way or another. I know her and others know her and they characterise her in different ways, but characterising a politician in the way

that the hon. Gentleman has can, of course, cause a difficulty should he need to engage with that politician in the future. I do think that the people of Gibraltar are going to give him that opportunity, but given that he thinks that they should and therefore that they might, he might
175 want to be a little careful in the way that he characterises people. Mrs May has been written off every week in the newspapers since September and I have no doubt that she will be written off tomorrow and that she will be written off in the newspapers this weekend and that one day her political career as Prime Minister will come to an end, but if he is going to continue in this career in politics he needs to remember that the people he might be badmouthing today might be the
180 people he might have to deal with tomorrow. It is what they reminded me of when I first talked about the second referendum in July 2016, when they told me that I should not talk about a false prospectus because I might have to negotiate with a Brexiteer. I think they have tried to forget that.

Mr Speaker, the only point I will make is this: when it has come to Gibraltar and when we
185 have needed Theresa May, she has been there for us. She has been thoughtful and caring about Gibraltar when we have needed her to be. That is important to us because we are elected to represent the people of Gibraltar and when we have had to call upon her she has been there for us. For political reasons they say what they say about the Withdrawal Agreement, but I have been the one dealing with these negotiations and I can tell him that when it comes to Gibraltar,
190 the people we are all here to represent, she has been thoughtful and caring.

Then the hon. Gentleman goes on to talk about what will happen if this deal is put again before the Commons. I thought he incurred in just political commentary ... Look, we can all do political commentary, but this is not a television studio and we are not here as commentators; we are here as legislators. So, if the meaningful vote on the Withdrawal Agreement is put
195 again – and a Minister of State for the Department for Exiting the European Union *quasi quatem* has said that it is likely to be put on Tuesday – then whether or not the Commons votes for it is a matter for the Commons. To say that that is a contempt of the Commons is a matter for the Speaker of the Commons. The Speaker of the Commons has ruled that it would not be possible to put the same question again without there being a material change. If it is put, it is because
200 there is a material change. If there is a material change, it is not a contempt to put it again, because if hon. Members agree with the analysis that leaving without a deal is a bad thing they either just say, ‘Well, all we are going to do is put our heads in the sand and hope for remain,’ or they have to accept that there are those who will want to see a managed deal put in place, and the Withdrawal Agreement is a way of dealing with a managed deal. A contempt equal, Mr
205 Speaker, apparently, to my not putting the Tax Treaty with Spain to the Parliament for approval before it is ratified. Well, Mr Speaker, I do not know whether hon. Members have realised this – and I have a lot to say, when it comes to it, on the Tax Treaty, something I am not going to get into today – but there is nothing in our laws, in our Constitution or in the Standing Orders of this House about how we ratify international agreements, because we are not empowered to ratify
210 international agreements.

If it is a simple issue of democracy, then hon. Members should know that we were empowered by 68% to 32% to run the affairs of this nation and nonetheless we have put the Tax Agreement on the table. The first publication of the text of the Tax Agreement is the motion I sent to you with the text of the Tax Agreement – that is how it is published – and we will have a
215 full debate on it and we will hear what they have to say about it. It is a motion to note, although today I have seen in a press release that there is an attempt to amend the motion to note and that hon. Members say that I should not even lay the Tax Agreement – at least that is one of the things I have read in a press release; no doubt we will hear more about that later on.

Mr Speaker, this morning on Sky News I did not change my position on the Withdrawal Agreement. I have not changed my position on the Withdrawal Agreement. My position on the Withdrawal Agreement is very simple: it is the agreement by which the government of the United Kingdom is attempting to deliver leaving the European Union, an objective that all of us agree is not as good as staying in the European Union, which is what we all prefer and which is

225 what 96% of people voted for, but it is a good agreement for the United Kingdom and for Gibraltar given the very bad outcome that leaving the European Union is.

Hon. Members can try and pretend to people that I have changed my position – that is fine; most of what they say about my politics is pretence. Most of what they try to persuade people with is not an argument related to the truth. I have to be careful how I express that particular bent when it comes to the way that hon. Gentlemen present things. They can do that, but they
230 know – or at least I would expect them to know – that what I am saying in respect of the Withdrawal Agreement is not to suggest that it is better than remaining in the European Union. So, if I now say with eight days to go it is either the Withdrawal Agreement or revoke, because the alternative is no deal, then at least what is happening is that the point of view that I was expressing in November is at least becoming clearer to them.

235 Yes, we are waiting for a Parliament 1,500 miles away to determine its future and therefore its knock-on effect on our future. I thought that was obvious. I thought it was obvious that in the hierarchy of our Government unfortunately some of these issues are out of our control. Some people like to describe those relationships with a word that we do not like that starts with a C, but that is the reality of our relationship with the United Kingdom.

240 Then the hon. Gentleman says that he wants to try and reassure people about what is going to happen next. I do not know what it is that they are trying to reassure people with, because they should be joining with the Government in telling people that on 30th March, if there is no Withdrawal Agreement and if the United Kingdom, and with the United Kingdom Gibraltar, falls off the cliff of membership of the European Union, okay, it may legally be quite a dramatic event
245 but actually on the ground it is not going to be a dramatic event because we have made the arrangements.

Hon. Members say, ‘Well, you haven’t involved us in the arrangements.’ Well, as I have to repeat every time they make that statement, Mr Speaker, they have Members in the Brexit Select Committee and they are told in the Brexit Select Committee what is happening. In the
250 Brexit Select Committee, Dr Garcia has repeatedly, carefully and at every meeting asked the same question: ‘Are we doing anything that you disagree with, and is there anything you think we should be doing that we haven’t done?’ Apart from one or two instances where Mr Feetham has given us some ideas and others may have mentioned something which we have pursued and reported to them on, they have not come up with any ideas – so what involvement would they
255 have had if we had done it in a different way? What would they have brought to the party that we have not enjoyed the benefit of? Nothing that I believe has produced a detriment to the people of Gibraltar in any way.

It is, for me, very clear that if hon. Members want to help this community now, if they do want to provide reassurance, what they need to say is, ‘We understand that we are not in
260 government, but we have a Government that is always going to want to ensure, as we would if we were in government, that everything is going to be okay the morning after we leave the European Union without a deal, if that sad eventuality comes about which all of us have fought to see not happen.’ Mr Speaker, they should join us in that. That would be of assistance to this community. Otherwise, many years from now when historians look back at who did what in this
265 time, I put it to them that they will not enjoy reflecting on that history because they will not have covered themselves in glory.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Marlene Hassan Nahon.

270 **Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon:** Mr Speaker, last night we waited with bated breath for a clear sign of direction from the Prime Minister, and while many will identify with the frustration and emotion she unfurled, there is still no sign of the direction we are all desperate for. It was unfortunate to witness her attack on MPs, which has only served to alienate her further from the very people she needs on side to deliver the Brexit deal the people of the UK –

275 **Mr Speaker:** Could I ask the hon. Lady not to delve too far into that point because it is a matter for the Speaker of the House of Commons and not for this Parliament to deal with. She can make a reference, as she is making, but do not develop the point.

Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, thank you; I was not going to anyway.

280 And on that note, I have to caveat that I include that Gibraltar did not vote for what the UK voted for, as I just said. Unfortunately, this means that the uncertainty for Gibraltar continues. Therefore, I take this opportunity to urge and ask the Government to continue with their efforts to plan for all the possible scenarios, of which there seem to be many and it is anyone's guess as to which one of them will transpire. For my part, I stand ready to collaborate with any efforts
285 needed to ensure that our community is ready for the future.

At this point I also believe we should be lobbying for a revocation of Article 50; or, failing that, another referendum or people's vote. In parallel with these efforts, I repeat that we need to focus our energies on ensuring that Gibraltar is future ready for any eventuality. It is our obligation to ensure that our contingency planning is robust and ready for a post-Brexit scenario
290 because, as we have seen over the last three years, the future is anyone's guess right now.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. the Chief Minister.

295 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to deal with those points the hon. Lady has raised.

You rightly say that it appears that Speaker Bercow is addressing some aspects of what the Prime Minister said outside –

300 **Mr Speaker:** What I would not want is any suggestion by anybody that this Parliament is interfering in what ultimately are matters of privilege of the House of Commons, purely that.

Hon. Chief Minister: Absolutely, Mr Speaker, although I think it is absolutely right that Members of this Parliament are able to express their views about the Withdrawal Agreement –
305 whether I agree with them or not – and how Members of Parliament should or should not vote, because those things will have an effect on Gibraltar, the people whom we all represent.

Of course, I would say this, Mr Speaker: that the mover of a motion to have something approved criticising those who have not voted with her in that respect should not catch anybody by surprise. I think it is absolutely normal in the context of the political debate and we do it to
310 each other all the time – that if somebody moves something, they passionately believe it should be approved because it is for the good of the nation, and if others do not support it then of course they are subject to criticism.

The hon. Lady says Gibraltar did not vote for what the UK voted for. Absolutely right. We voted with the 16.8 million who voted to remain and not with the 17.4 million who voted to
315 leave. Interestingly – and this brings me to the point that the hon. Lady raised the last time that we unfortunately had to spend time with statements on this issue – the Prime Minister voted with all of us. Mrs May voted to remain in the European Union and so it must be put in that context also: that she is having to now deliver not against her own vote in the referendum but against her manifesto in the last General Election.

320 The hon. Lady can rest assured that every Member of Parliament that I have spoken to – and that is not all of them, but certainly people representing all of the shades of opinion and groupings in the British Parliament – know exactly what our position is in respect of the Withdrawal Agreement, why that is our position in respect to the Withdrawal Agreement, the 96% vote of Gibraltar to remain in the European Union and indeed the much more nuanced
325 position that we have to take now going forward in respect of revocation, new referendum, etc. They are all fully aware of that, including the leading lights that hon. Members will be seeing in

the Parliament and indeed in the news channel debates talking about issues now, in the last eight days, including relating to revocation.

330 In terms of future proofing Gibraltar and being robust and ready, she has my assurance that that is the case. I know that she has raised one issue on which we have had an element of dispute, as I have said in response to the statements that she made in that respect, where I told her that there were zero issues in the past and she was concerned that in fact there might indeed be issues. I can assure her and she can assure all those who go to see her that there are minus zero issues now and that those issues have all been entirely dealt with, as I indicated to
335 her that they were. She can have the comfort and everyone in this community can have the comfort that we are not just ready, we are more than ready for the unfortunate potential eventuality that might materialise on the morning of 30th March if our advice on revocation is not taken in the event that the Withdrawal Agreement is not approved.

340 **Mr Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to raise any ...? Yes, the Hon. Daniel Feetham.

Hon. D A Feetham: Yes, Mr Speaker, two questions if I may.

The first question – and I would like to drill down with the Chief Minister this aspect ... It would have been an absolute calamity, I think, for the United Kingdom to have had a Withdrawal
345 Agreement that would have allowed an orderly withdrawal from the European Union, an extra two years, and for Gibraltar not to have had any, so Gibraltar falls off a cliff on 29th March and the UK continues for another two years. But what the Withdrawal Agreement effectively does – and I have expressed this view on a number of occasions – is it effectively buys the United Kingdom and us an extra two years within which to negotiate a permanent deal, and I think that
350 is going to be extremely difficult for Gibraltar because Spain is going to, at that stage, insist on significant concessions for Gibraltar's inclusion. Gibraltar is going to say no, so ultimately I have always said the probabilities are that we will be out of the European Union, except that that will not be today, it will be in two years' time. Contrasting with that position, in circumstances where the UK may be out without a deal and therefore Gibraltar will also be out without a deal, and in
355 circumstances where Gibraltar will effectively be the only jurisdiction that has access to the United Kingdom's markets – for example, in financial services – how difficult and how ... I hesitate to use the word 'disastrous', but how difficult does the Chief Minister think that that scenario would be for Gibraltar? And does he not agree with me that in fact it may not be as bad as some people may believe it to be? That is the first question.

360 The second question is in relation to the statements that the Hon. the Chief Minister has made in relation to the Tax Treaty today. I have read in a communique that has been issued by No. 6 Convent Place that a future government would only be able to terminate the Tax Treaty in very limited circumstances. Therefore, does he not agree with me that in circumstances where this Government is effectively binding future governments in that way – in other words, to be
365 bound by a Tax Treaty which a future government cannot come out of except for in very limited circumstances – the fact that the Government has a 68% majority, which is a very handsome majority that it won at the last election, really is tempered by the fact that it is binding future governments in that way and therefore it would have been the right thing for the Government to have done to come to this Parliament prior to the signing of it in order to get consent of this
370 Parliament, which of course they would have because they have got the majority, but they would have at least had the consent of the Parliament prior to the signing of it? And does he not recognise that that is an important distinction?

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

375 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I will deal with those points with the caveat that we will have a debate on the Tax Treaty when it comes. I will just deal with that discrete point now, but in a limited way. I will say more when we have the debate on that.

Mr Speaker, a little blue birdie tells me that he is going to be at a demonstration on Saturday in support of a new referendum. I think it is very good, as I have said throughout the time that we have been debating these issues in this House, that as an individual he is taking that position. He will have the ability of saying to everyone there that the Government of Gibraltar believes that the referendum is not a final resolution of the issues facing the United Kingdom in respect of Brexit but it is a step in a better direction than leaving the European Union, as he knows.

It would have been, yes indeed, an absolute calamity for Gibraltar to be outside the net of protection that businesses will enjoy in the United Kingdom if the Withdrawal Agreement is passed and there is a transitional period of two years before new arrangements enter into effect between the United Kingdom and the European Union. It would have been the most calamitous result for Gibraltar businesses and it would have been the most treacherous way of the 96% vote in Gibraltar being recognised by the European Union at the suit of our most, usually, unfriendly neighbour. That is absolutely the reality and indeed the main reason why the Cabinet was clear in Gibraltar that we had to engage in a process of ensuring that we extended to Gibraltar whatever protections – however inadequate – a Withdrawal Agreement provided for the United Kingdom, that they should also extend to Gibraltar and I think he recognises that in the gist of his questioning.

He then takes me to whether in fact enjoying as we do – also as a result of a separate strand of Government activity – continued access to the UK market in services, whether or not there is a Withdrawal Agreement ... whether or not that creates a disadvantage or an advantage for Gibraltar. Of course, it creates a potential huge advantage. In a scenario where the Withdrawal Agreement is not approved and the United Kingdom leaves on WTO terms, then the flow of services from the United Kingdom into the European Union and from the European Union into the United Kingdom might be curtailed, but the flow of services from Gibraltar to the United Kingdom would continue to be as it is today, and that is potentially hugely advantageous.

Hon. Gentlemen may have heard me talk of the preparations we were making also, and are making and are ready for, to ensure that we do not drop the ball if there comes a rush of applications for people to do business from Gibraltar to the United Kingdom, whether that is in the gaming sector, in the insurance or financial services sector or other sectors. It may only be a handful of companies but they will be important ones if they come and we must be ready to assist them to have that continued access to the United Kingdom. I think he is rightly pointing to the fact that there are some of our what one might call common enemies who were soon to trumpet the demise of Gibraltar as an attractive place from which to do business, and in fact their throats have gone a hoarse and Gibraltar continues to be vibrant, strong and robust when it comes to the offering that we make in any of the service sectors that have become important to our economy, and we continue to see growth there in particular because of the security there is in access to the UK market going forward through what one might call the transitional period and indeed beyond that.

On the issue of the Tax Treaty I want to be clear with hon. Gentlemen: I do not think that it is possible for anybody to make the argument that one simply ends a treaty for no cause at all. If they were to win the next general election and if their much trailed general meeting were to result in the passing of a motion of their party that, once elected, they would seek to terminate the agreement, one would think that they would want to give a reason why they did that. So they must have cause to do so. Or is it that they suggest that they would not? I would have thought they would want to terminate for cause, whatever the cause may be. Enough of us in this room are lawyers to know that cause is something that one sits down and thinks about, determines and then acts upon.

I do not recall having received an advance notice of the Airport agreement done at Cordoba. Indeed, I do not recall having received advance notice of the arrangements done in relation to telephones and pensions and the other matters that arise. I see that from a sedentary position the hon. Gentleman says those were administrative. Well, a few weeks ago they were the greatest agreements done in the history of Gibraltar and they were agreements. Now they are

430 just administrative arrangements. Well, Mr Speaker, they might have been administrative
arrangements; the hon. Gentleman knows our view about them. They were administrative
arrangements that conceded jurisdiction, sovereignty and control at Gibraltar Airport.
Gibraltarians would be subject to the control of a Spanish Guardia Civil officer by the surrender
of our jurisdiction and our sovereignty, and when Joe Bossano in a leaders' debate said, 'Look,
435 we are not going to continue with this. We are going to seek to renegotiate a very nuanced
position,' – not abrogation, renegotiation – he was faced with the argument from the man that
he has described as the greatest Gibraltarian of all time, the former backbencher Sir Peter
Caruana, which related to the picking of fruit. The lesson sayeth at that time, from St Peter's
chair, that one is not able, if one is going to be seen to be mature in international relations, to
440 simply go back and pick the bits that one likes about an agreement – except, of course, that the
Spanish state demonstrated the complete opposite the minute they were elected. So, the
argument about cherry picking was not a good one when it was put here to the Hon. Sir Joe
Bossano because the less honourable individuals who took over the government of Spain in
2011 then proceeded to do exactly that, to cherry pick.

445 I think in international law and in international diplomacy it is absolutely appropriate to say, 'I
will seek to renegotiate a treaty. I will seek to renegotiate an agreement.' I think it is absolutely
fine. One might find that politics may have changed enough by then that you might find a willing
participant in the renegotiation sitting opposite you. One might say, 'I am going to terminate an
agreement,' – of course one might say that, it is absolutely okay to do that in the context of the
450 ability that there is determining, but one must say why.

Hon. Gentlemen need to give cause. They should not be afraid to be asked to give cause for
their purported putative future termination. (*Interjection*) No, in a moment, let me finish the
sentence. But I will say this to the hon. Gentleman, because in a moment he is going to want to
jump up like nobody's business. (*Laughter*) Mr Speaker, I hope that the GSD pass a motion
455 saying that they will terminate this agreement if they are elected and I hope that they make that
explicit in their manifesto, because one of the key planks of the next GSLP-Liberal victory at the
next election will be the fear in the finance centre and in the population generally that hon.
Members, if elected, might terminate that agreement – because this is such a good agreement
for Gibraltar, as I will demonstrate when we debate it fully, that even hon. Members will try and
460 find a way of quietly resiling from the position that they have put.

Before I sit down I will give way to the hon. Gentleman. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) (*Banging on
desks*)

465 **Hon. D A Feetham:** And he was doing so well, except when he decided to overextend himself
in his arguments.

Mr Speaker, he has not really answered the question because the question that I am asking
is: is it the view of the Government that you cannot terminate this treaty unless there is
substantive cause – in other words, there is a good reason in law to terminate? Or is it what he is
saying, that yes you can terminate but politically I would expect you to give a reason? Those are
470 different things and it was a serious question that I was asking. Leave aside the politics. What
caught my attention in a Government press release was a statement that appeared to indicate
that as a matter of law you cannot terminate the Tax Agreement without having a substantive
reason.

475 And finally, Mr Speaker, because I cannot resist the temptation, I will say that of course it is
also within the gift of the Government to say very clearly that it will never implement all the
Cordoba agreements that we negotiated should a future Spanish government say, 'We are
prepared to implement them.' But in fact that has not been the position of the Gibraltar
Government because the Gibraltar Government has said, 'Well, look, despite the fact that we
don't like them, we will honour them.' So, I suppose that in argumentative terms what is good
480 for the goose is good for the gander.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Roy Clinton.

Hon. Chief Minister: No, Mr Speaker, I gave way.

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Mr Speaker: You want to answer that?

Hon. Chief Minister: I gave way.

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Mr Speaker: Very well.

Hon. Chief Minister: Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker: I have allowed you to give way and I have allowed the hon. Member to interrupt in a situation in which we are not in a debate, but hon. Members I am sure will have noticed how liberally I am using my discretion on matters to do with Brexit, notwithstanding the fact – and they should take note – that there is not a word in these Standing Rules and Orders about such a thing as a Ministerial or a Chief Ministerial Statement. It does not appear in these Rules. I cannot understand why, but that is a fact and therefore I am just going on the whim of what I think I should allow on a particular day. Given the exceptional circumstances of Brexit, of course, I have been very liberal, but I will not allow hon. Members to cite this as a precedent in the future when a statement might be made because there has been a burst of a water mains in Main Street: that is another kettle of fish altogether.

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The Hon. the Chief Minister.

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Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am very grateful for the latitude that you are showing the House.

If I may say so, one of the things that I alluded to before – just before I deal with the points the hon. Gentleman raised – is that this House, despite our many disagreements, I think has behaved in a fairly exemplary fashion in these past three years and has delivered the exchanges in the debate that people expect with the result not impaired in any way, maybe because of, as I said before, the inbuilt majority that we have, or for other reasons, but having these debates and your allowing us to have them I think is a hugely important part of how the community is informed. Not ‘debates’, Mr Speaker – I should not have used that word.

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The hon. Gentleman said I was doing so well until I overextended myself. I will always remember him saying that to me during the course of the last General Election campaign – and didn’t we do well in the end, Mr Speaker? (*Laughter*) (**A Member:** Very well.)

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The hon. Gentleman is really asking me for a legal opinion now. He is asking me for my legal opinion – and he oft disregards most opinions I give him, let alone my legal ones – on whether or not the Treaty can be rescinded and terminated at whim as a matter of policy, or indeed whether cause must include legal cause. Well, Mr Speaker, I have seen enough of the debates on the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties in the UK Parliament to know that there is more than one opinion, and so I am going to let him get his own legal opinion on that. I have the benefit of what I consider to be the best-value legal opinion in Gibraltar – from the Attorney General – on these issues, but legal opinions are not things that governments share, as hon. Gentlemen know, so they can obtain their own view in that respect.

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I would like to see, actually, a situation where we are not talking about the first treaty entered into since 1704 – which we think has huge benefits for Gibraltar, which I will deal with in the context of the debate when the time comes – not being one that we start by talking about how we are going to end it. That is why the much more circumspect, much more experienced, older, wiser approach of Sir Joe Bossano – a man who he oft seeks to have his opinions twist and turn in his favour – took the view that it was renegotiation that he was putting on the table, not revocation. And it is true, Mr Speaker. Since we were elected we have put on the table

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535 performance of the Cordoba arrangements for a simple reason: although we did not like them
and will continue to seek to renegotiate them, the mature and proper thing to do – because
politics is for serious people – is to say, ‘There is an agreement in place done by the former
administration in Gibraltar. We do not like it, we want to renegotiate it, but we accept that a
Government of Gibraltar binds its successors. We invite the other side to renegotiate; or, if not,
540 at least to perform.’ And they do not perform. In fact, Mr Speaker, hon. Members might want to
reflect that our position has been not just the mature position, it has been the logically and the
politically cleverest position to take because Gibraltar has not said it is not performing on the
Cordoba arrangements. Spain has failed to perform on the Cordoba arrangements, and so
therefore those of us who believe that the Cordoba agreements are bad for Gibraltar because
545 they ceded at the Airport sovereignty, jurisdiction and control, have been able to see them not
come into effect without having to pretend to terminate them and suffer the ignominy that
would befall those who do in respect of such international agreements.

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Roy Clinton.

550 **Hon. R M Clinton:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I beg your indulgence because the
discussion – although this is not a debate, as you correctly pointed out – seems to have veered
on to the Tax Treaty rather than remaining on Brexit.

Mr Speaker, I want to ask the Chief Minister two questions. The first is: within the Treaty,
would he agree with me that there is no reference in Article 7 to there being a need to
555 terminate for cause? There is no mention of that whatsoever.

My second question to the Chief Minister relates to the transcript of his explanatory video,
when he says, ‘We don’t trust them, so we have retained the ability to terminate the agreement
if they don’t deliver.’ I would be grateful if the Chief Minister could explain to the House how he
has retained that ability to terminate the agreement, given what he has just said; and what is it
560 that he would deem so heinous that he would actually attempt to terminate the agreement?

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am clarifying the things I have said in my Statement, not
matters that I have said in a video outside of this House – although I am always very happy to
debate my videos and I have been debating now for seven years my magnificent Facebook video
565 on the Budget and I would be quite happy to debate my video on the Tax Agreement when we
are debating the Tax Agreement.

In relation to the statement in Article 7, I have just dealt with exactly that point raised by the
Hon. Mr Feetham. I thought they were talking now.

570 **Mr Speaker:** Is there any other matter that any other Member wishes to raise before we
move on to the next Item?

Standing Order 19 suspended to proceed with Government motion

Mr Speaker: The Chief Minister.

Clerk: Government Motions. The Hon. the Chief Minister.

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

*I beg to move, under Standing Order 59, to proceed with the suspension of Standing Order 19
in order to proceed with a Government motion.*

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

GOVERNMENT MOTION

**Appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Gibraltar –
Amended motion carried –
John Gonçalves MBE GMD and Christian Santos appointed**

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

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

This House:

Appoints Mr John Gonçalves MBE GMD, to be Mayor of Gibraltar as from Thursday, 4th April 2019.

Mr Speaker, John Gonçalves is a man who needs very little introduction. Indeed, he is a man who is well known, I think, not just to most Members of this House but indeed to most members of this community.

He is a man who is known in particular to most of us as a result of his extraordinary public service. He first came to my attention when he was working in the Supreme Court of Gibraltar. He has, since then, or indeed before then, discharged many public roles and he has, I think, demonstrated to all who have known him his deep level of commitment to the work that he did in his role as a public servant.

Subsequently, John Gonçalves has become known, not just in Gibraltar but internationally also, for the work that he has done in basketball. Basketball is his particular chosen sport and he has, I think, been involved all of his life in the sport of basketball, and not just in Gibraltar. Indeed, in Gibraltar many know John Gonçalves as Mr Basketball; and outside of Gibraltar, in basketball, John Gonçalves is known as Mr Gibraltar! *(Laughter)* So, he is a person who has ensured that the name of Gibraltar has been carried internationally in a positive light in a sport which is close to his heart and close to the hearts of the many younger people he has brought into the sport and he has mentored into the sport. But of course John hasn't just stuck to basketball. Basketball has exposed John also to the Commonwealth Games and to the Island Games and other international representation of Gibraltar, and in those other committees he has contributed greatly also to Gibraltar.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, John has been known as Deputy Mayor to Kaiane Aldorino Lopez since she was appointed Mayor and he has done a sterling job of supporting Kaiane in the work that she has done as our Mayor.

Mr Speaker, I really do believe that appointing John Gonçalves as Mayor of Gibraltar will bring something different to the mayoralty, and in the time that I have been Chief Minister I have sought to ensure that all those who have held the distinguished post of Mayor – yourself included and in particular – have brought different qualities to our City Hall and to that most important civic post. So, where you brought the depth of your experience, having been there before, having been a Member of this House and having held all of the senior political positions, Kaiane Aldorino brought her ability to draw in young people, in particular young women, to what the role of the Mayor was. We saw City Hall change under you and we saw City Hall change under her, and I think we will see City Hall change under John Gonçalves as well. City Hall will be a place of welcome to sportsmen and I think John in this particular year, which is the Island Games year, will be able to attract a better understanding of the role of Mayor to all those young sportsmen and women whom he has ably represented and who look to him as a mentor as much in life as in their sport.

620 Mr Speaker, I therefore do commend that John Gonçalves be appointed by this House as Mayor of Gibraltar and his time in office will no doubt be particularly remembered for his contribution to sport and how those sporting associations will see one of theirs as our Mayor.

625 It would be remiss of me, Mr Speaker, nonetheless, to not say something at this point about the magnificent job that Kaiane Aldorino Lopez has done as our Mayor. **(A Member: Hear, hear.) (Banging on desks)** Like all those who have held the post before her, Kaiane has done Gibraltar proud. Because of her background and her international standing, Kaiane was able to attract press coverage of her appointment as Mayor and her discharge of functions as Mayor, and the people of Gibraltar should understand that the coverage that Kaiane got in international publications like *Paris Match* and other publications around the world ... We would not have
630 been able to afford to buy the pages to advertise Gibraltar in the way that these publications covered us and covered Kaiane's period as Mayor. So she must be thanked for that but she must also be thanked for the excellent way in which she discharged her functions, for her comportment as Mayor and for the way that, as I said before, she opened up the mayoralty to a younger generation. I know that you will not mind my saying that she is younger than you –

635 **Mr Speaker:** And more beautiful!

Hon. Chief Minister: – and that that was an important part of how we wanted to reach out to a younger generation as a whole House. We appointed her together. We wanted to reach out so that the mayoralty, the City Hall, those civic functions were not seen as something that was just
640 the domain of the elder in our community but that the younger community should also understand it. I think she has done an absolutely excellent job in opening up the mayoralty in that way, and indeed not just in the international coverage that she obtained for Gibraltar and in the way that she attracted young people to City Hall but also in the way that she has represented Gibraltar internationally, in particular last week when she was in Jamaica and dealt
645 with the twinning of Kingston and Gibraltar and in then the other work that she has done internationally for Gibraltar.

So, Kaiane, I think, can hold her head up very high indeed and, with the thanks of all of this House, reflect on a job well done as Mayor of Gibraltar. **(A Member: Hear, hear.) (Banging on desks)**

650 Mr Speaker, it is also incumbent on us to consider who should take over from John Gonçalves when he comes to the end of his role. It has been traditional to appoint a Deputy Mayor and therefore I am going to move an amendment to my motion that at the end of the motion presented to the House already the following words should be added – and I have given notice to the House in writing, as is required by the rules, in a letter to you of a moment ago. The
655 following are the words to be added, Mr Speaker:

and that Christian Santos be appointed as Deputy Mayor to take over the role of Mayor after John Gonçalves.

Mr Speaker, Christian Santos is a young man who is doing a magnificent job in the Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts, and before that in Santos Productions. He is bringing to our stage each year a magnificent Llanito play, where the dialogue represents the way that we
660 tend to talk to each other when these microphones are off. He has really been able to take the art, that had been lost, of *'La Lola se va pa Londres'* and turn it into a much more contemporary art form that delights many generations when the shows are on in the Mackintosh Hall.

But far from being a one-trick pony in the work that he does there with Richard Moore and the cast of characters that they deploy, this is a man who is established as an entertainer and has been in the employ of the biggest companies in the world outside of Gibraltar. He is a singer,
665 a composer and also a teacher and he has taught now a number of generations of Gibraltarian children in the performing arts. We have seen, in particular, how he has taken Gibraltar choirs

and they have brought back to Gibraltar medals from around the world, and the magnificent way that he has mentored and inspired young people. Some of those who have been working with Christian have gone on to even greater things outside of Gibraltar.

670 I think it is important that the mayoralty continues to be open to young people and that our City Hall and our civic representative, the Mayor, is not alien to young people and is somebody who young people consider approachable. With John we achieve that in the context of sports and with Christian Santos we achieve that by dint of him being a younger man and indeed somebody who is involved in teaching of young people and involving them in the performing arts.

675 Mr Speaker, I am very excited by the fact that John Gonçalves is going to be our mayor as from next week. I am equally excited that he will have with him somebody as exciting to see perform as Christian Santos and that together they will open up City Hall even further, that they will demonstrate that this is a place for all our community of whatever political view one might take, of whatever age, of whatever particular preference one may have in life, for sport or for culture, and that City Hall continues, as it has been, always open for business, open to all Gibraltarians and open as a place where we all come together. *(Banging on desks)*

685 **Mr Speaker:** Let us formally, then, move the amendment. I ask the Chief Minister to formally move the amendment and we vote on it.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I have given notice of the amendment, which is now before the House and hon. Members have in writing, as is required by the rules, and I so formally move.

690 **Mr Speaker:** Does anybody want to speak specifically on the amendment, or would the House prefer that I put the amendment to the vote and then we take the composite motion?

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, I would like to speak briefly on the amendment.

695 **Mr Speaker:** Yes, you want to speak to the amendment? Very well. The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, just a point of order. We would obviously like to speak to Mr Gonçalves' appointment and that of Mr Santos – take the whole motion afterwards. We will take it as a whole.

700 **Mr Speaker:** Very well. I put the amendment to the vote. The amendment is to the effect that Christian Santos be appointed as Deputy Mayor to take over the role as Mayor after John Gonçalves. Those in favour? **(Members: Aye.)** Those against? Carried.

705 And so what we now have before the House is a composite motion and the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition can speak to that as well.

Hon. E J Phillips: Mr Speaker, the baton, as the Chief Minister has said, has now been firmly passed from Miss World to Mr Gibraltar and on this side of the House we congratulate Mr Gonçalves on his appointment. Her Majesty's Opposition will, of course, fully endorse the motion that stands in the Chief Minister's name moving the appointment of Mr John Gonçalves to be Mayor of Gibraltar as from 4th April 2019.

710 I have known Mr Gonçalves for some time and my discussions and interactions with him in his capacity as Deputy Mayor have all been very positive and should lead us all to the conclusion that he is most fit to follow in Her Worship's footsteps. Mr Gonçalves has done much for our community. The Chief Minister has spoken about Mr Gonçalves' contribution to public life and indeed his contribution to sport, both domestically and internationally, and we of course associate ourselves with the Chief Minister's comments in relation to that.

720 I know that Mr Gonçalves believes that he has big shoes to fill – he has actually said that to me many times – but I am sure that he will wear them very well indeed and discharge his new office.

As for the outgoing Mayor, it is right to reflect that each Mayor, as the Chief Minister has said, has brought something unique to the office and it is clear that Kaiane has breathed new life and a new approach into the office and reached out to a new audience and new generation.

725 We on this side of the House wish Her Worship and her family all the very best for the future and we will, of course, support the motion.

In relation to Mr Santos, of course his contributions are well known and, as the Chief Minister said, he was fundamental – instrumental, should I say, not to use a pun – in the establishment of the Gibraltar Academy of Music and Performing Arts and has been, more
730 importantly, instrumental in bringing music to the younger generation and making music education more accessible to the younger generation, and that is why we will fully support the Government's motion as amended. *(Banging on desks)*

Mr Speaker: The Hon. Marlene Hassan Nahon.

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Hon. Ms M D Hassan Nahon: Mr Speaker, it is with the greatest honour that I can stand up here today to endorse the ratification of John Gonçalves as our future Mayor of Gibraltar.

My first recollection of this very well-known and respected gentleman is from when I was about nine years old, circa 1985, and set up a mini-basketball team for myself and my friends in the Hebrew School. John Gonçalves was running the league, of course, and encouraged us all to go out and get sponsorships, which we did and felt so empowered for having done so. After that, at every game there was John by the Landport Ditch, encouraging us all to play and to do well – even to those of us who were clearly utterly rubbish at basketball. I realised then that we were among a man who truly cared for the sport, for kids and for his community in general, and it is something that I never forgot.

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This is what being a mayor is all about, Mr Speaker: advancing your community in the civic way by including as many people as possible to do good things for our society. So, to that effect, John Gonçalves is the perfect candidate for the post of Mayor. The man has a long history in serving our community through his work with the basketball fraternity, and sport is something that always brings people together from whatever culture, creed or side of the political divide. We are lucky to be getting John Gonçalves as our future Mayor and I am proud to be validating him for the good of our community.

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I also take this opportunity to thank my dear friend Her Worship Kaiane Aldorino for the sterling and diligent work that she has done for all of us as Mayor of Gibraltar.

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On the appointment of Christian Santos, once again I am more than pleased to see his name lined up for Deputy Mayor and consequently our future Mayor. Similarly to what John Gonçalves has done for the world of basketball, Christian has done and continues to do wonders for the world of music and performing arts in general. From a small operation when he came back from university, to a fully fledged, flourishing and hugely successful Academy of Music with hundreds of students who are thriving and profiting immensely from his vision, expertise and determination, he is our perfect future Mayor, and it is precisely these qualities that are just what we need for an effective Mayor who will bring people and the community together.

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I therefore proudly support this composite motion, Mr Speaker. *(Banging on desks)*

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Mr Speaker: Does anyone else wish to speak to the motion? The Hon. Trevor Hammond.

Hon. T N Hammond: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

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I do feel obliged just to say one or two words because I have had the pleasure of knowing John Gonçalves for many years. I met him in a professional capacity. He was the Airport Terminal Director at the time that I began my career in air traffic control and in some respects he became

a mentor to me. I will never forget that day when I was fortunate enough to have been promoted to become the first Gibraltarian Manager of Air Traffic Control, and when I told John he was absolutely delighted by the fact. That speaks volumes for him, the pride that he showed in the success of others. I think that does speak volumes for John; it speaks volumes for his character. Clearly he has achieved great things for Gibraltar in the realms of basketball. So I am honoured. It also makes me reflect on how the world turns and how we meet people in our lives and then we find ourselves meeting in different capacities – and here I am standing in the Parliament of Gibraltar with the opportunity to speak about a man I have had a very long relationship with and someone I do feel privileged indeed to know. So, yes, very happy that this motion is being presented to this House at a time when I am in this House and very happy at the fact that Mr Gonçalves, John, is becoming Mayor of Gibraltar.

Equally delighted by the news, which I have only obviously received today, that Christian Santos will be the Deputy Mayor. I think that is an excellent choice, so whoever had that idea I congratulate them because it is an absolutely brilliant choice. I know he will bring a lot of energy undoubtedly to the role, so delightful news in that respect.

And, of course, to Kaiane: excellent work that she has done both deputising in the first instance to you, Mr Speaker, and then in her own right as Mayor over the last several years.

So, as I say one more time, delighted to be standing in this House being able to speak to this motion. (*Banging on desks*)

Mr Speaker: Any other contribution?

I call on the Chief Minister to reply.

Hon. Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am very grateful for the contributions from all other hon. Members. Of course one feels that way when they are supportive. I see people complaining that Mrs May is attacking those who are against her. Well, one feels supported when one is supported and attacked when one is attacked. It is perfectly natural.

I am very pleased that this motion is going to be one that is approved by unanimity, given what hon. Members have said, although I must say I never had the Hon. Mr Phillips down as a basketballer, but I am pleased to see that he has a long relationship with John Gonçalves.

I do want to be careful about the references to John Gonçalves as Mr Gibraltar. I mentioned him in that context internationally in sport, in basketball. If we go around saying that Kaiane Aldorino Lopez was Miss Gibraltar and that John Gonçalves was Mr Gibraltar, they will think, 'Well, you have some very good judges and some very bad judges when the time comes to choose who should be who.' It is absolutely right that Jonathan Gonçalves has big shoes to fill – I cannot wait to see him in Kaiane's heels!

Mr Speaker, it is particularly pleasing to hear the Hon. Mr Phillips talk of the excellent work that Christian Santos is doing in GAMPAs and the excellent work that is being done there, because of course GAMPAs was created by this Government and it fulfils an important role. We were losing music and we were losing people learning their instruments and being able to then graduate into orchestras, and the decision was made that as soon as we were elected in 2011 we should immediately move to create the Academy of Music and Performing Arts. Christian Santos then was the person successful in running that and shaping it in his own way and he has done an absolutely magnificent job in that respect.

I am also pleased to know, Mr Speaker, that Miss Hassan Nahon has something of the basketballer in her – you never know what you never know about people, hidden talents – and that she too has known John for some time and will feel very well represented by him, as will all of this House when he represents us all in our civic sense.

She also spoke fondly of Kaiane and the work that she has done and I am grateful for those kind words, which will be reflected in the *Hansard*, of the work that Kaiane has done, and indeed for her very positive remarks about the work that is being done by Christian at GAMPAs.

Mr Speaker, I am very surprised to see Mr Hammond refer to Mr Gonçalves as a mentor. Mr Gonçalves usually does a good job of the people he mentors, so I am very surprised that Mr Hammond has also claimed to have been mentored. *(Interjections and laughter)* He teaches them how to always get the shots in from a distance and that it is a no-contact sport, whilst my experience of Mr Hammond is quite different.

But I am very pleased that Mr Hammond got up to speak, because one of the things I had neglected to do was to reflect on the magnificent job that John had done at Gibraltar Airport, a job that actually Joe Bossano asked him to do and that we were all very proud to see him and the people who worked with him in Gibraltar Air Terminal and security and immigration, all of whom did a magnificent job. I think Mr Hammond has alighted upon that it is something that we should also reflect on the record as one of the excellent pieces of Mr Gonçalves' work in the past that have added greatly to what Gibraltar is today and how Gibraltar has since developed, not always appreciated by those who should have appreciated it. I am, of course, thinking of those who might have demonstrated their appreciation for that work in a different way when they held the office that I now hold.

Mr Speaker, John will be lent to us by Laura , by Elaine, by Louise and by the grandchildren, and we thank all of his family for that and we congratulate John and all of the family.

We also, I know, as a whole House, will want to congratulate Christian, and Samuel also, on his appointment now as Gibraltar's Deputy Mayor and Gibraltar's next Mayor.

Mr Speaker, I commend the motion to the House. *(Banging on desks)*

Mr Speaker: I now put the question, which is that this House appoints Mr John Gonçalves MBE GMD to be Mayor of Gibraltar as from Thursday, 4th April 2019, and that Christian Santos be appointed as Deputy Mayor to take over the role of Mayor after John Gonçalves. Those in favour? **(Members: Aye.)** Those against? Carried. *(Banging on desks)*

Clerk: (ix) Bills for First and Second Reading.

Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo): Mr Speaker, for all the reasons that I set out in my opening Statement and for all the reasons hon. Members see played out on their television screens, I move that the House should now adjourn to Monday, 25th March at 11 a.m.

Mr Speaker: The House will adjourn to Monday, 25th March at 11 in the morning.

The House adjourned at 4.25 p.m.