



**HM GOVERNMENT OF GIBRALTAR
PRESS OFFICE
No.6 Convent Place
Gibraltar
Tel:20070071; Fax: 20043057**

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MR NETTO IS THE 'LORD MONCKTON' OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is clear that Jaime Netto has set himself up as the 'Lord Monckton' of this Government's Health and Safety policy. At Tuesday's meeting at the John Mackintosh Hall, he was seen busy scribbling down notes during the addresses given by the Chief Minister and Minister Balban. Oddly enough, as soon as the visiting experts began their talks, his note-taking ceased. It is clear that Mr Netto was there purely to nit-pick the Government's Ministers rather than to offer any genuine contributions to the debate.

In his most recent outburst, Mr Netto criticises the Minister for Health and Safety because, although there are now two additional Factories Inspectors (making four in total), the Approved Government Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure show an establishment of just two! So, perhaps the Ministry is wrong to recruit additional Health and Safety Inspectors! During its time in government, the GSD failed to recruit any specialist staff after the previous Principal Factories Inspector (Mr Avellano) retired, a failure which indicates the GSD's less-than-proactive view of Health and Safety matters.

In another nit-pick, Mr Netto ridicules Mr Balban for having said that, 'the department is now giving advice for the first time ever.' However, Mr Balban's speaking notes reveal that what he actually said was, 'The Government, in its short term of office, has doubled its staff support within the inspectorate, which has led to the possibility of greater emphasis on the proactive side of Health & Safety, which has not been seen for many years. Now, not only, does the inspectorate investigate and actively process incompliant employers who fail to show a duty of care to their employees, but it is also able to afford advise and support to employers in order to ensure that the necessary education is available to ensure that the risks to the workforce, that is the employees, are mitigated as far as possible.' Minister Balban was clearly offering a more proactive support mechanism for Gibraltar's workforce but, again, Mr Netto chose to twist the Minister's words in order to score a few cheap points.

If he chooses to attend future Health and Safety meetings, perhaps Mr Netto will try to offer some constructive ideas instead of merely criticising those who have something positive to say.