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Mr Feetham flip-flops on financing issues

The Opposition are incapable of welcoming anything that the Government has done without resorting to cheap political point scoring which interests nobody and helps no one. The latest statement on the refurbishment of a number of Government rental housing estates is a case in point.

It is a good and a positive development that the Government has decided to invest in its own housing stock which will improve the lives of residents in Glacis, Laguna and Moorish Castle Estates. This followed a period of intensive consultation with the residents in each of the estates as well as listening to the views of the Development and Planning Commission. The project will involve beautification, new windows, protective rendering and lift installation. It represents a huge investment in people. There will also be improvement works in Varyl Begg Estate and Alameda Estate.

The Opposition did nothing on this scale during their sixteen years in Government and preferred to spend about £ 80 million on an over-sized air terminal, which was a luxury, rather than on improving the living environment of thousands of Government tenants. This choice of priorities on the part of the previous GSD administration says it all.

The Opposition have gone on to say that this project shows that the Government misled the electorate as to the state of public finances and public debt. It is obvious that the Opposition have learnt nothing. It is possible to spend money on serious housing projects of this nature provided that public funds are not being thrown away in other areas which is what used to happen when the GSD was in office. The new air terminal building and the wasted millions on the GSD's theatre royal project are but two example of this.

Moreover, the public debt of Gibraltar in December 2011 is a matter of record. This Government have made it a priority to reduce the debt since we were first elected. The hidden issue that we discovered on election was the fact that many tens of millions of pounds in spending by Government-owned companies had not been accounted for in the calculation of debt by the GSD administration as the Chief Minister said in his Ministerial Statement at the time. This was the black hole that the GSLP/Liberal Government

discovered shortly after taking office and that the previous administration had so obviously pretended did not exist.

The reality is that the flip-flopping inconsistency of the GSD Opposition knows no bounds. The Leader of the Opposition Daniel Feetham has just been quoted as having made statements which are not sympathetic of so called Private Finance Initiatives (PFI). This is remarkable because this is the system used by his own party in Government to finance projects like the Europort hospital and the car parks to the tune of tens of millions of pounds. It was pointed out at the time of the hospital PFI that the end product would end up costing much more simply because of the method of financing that the then Government had chosen. There was no need for the Treasury Select Committee of the UK to say this in 2011, this had already been identified years before and the Government of which he was a part entered into these expensive financing deals regardless. Indeed, the new £150 million power station was also going to be financed in this way by the GSD and this was only stopped by the GSLP/Liberal Government after we were elected.

So is Mr Feetham now actually criticising Mr Caruana's policy after having gone along with it and having described him as the greatest Gibraltarian of all time?

All this shows that Mr Feetham is once again flip-flopping and arguing against himself and against the actions that the GSD took when they were in Government.