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Chief Minister's Statement to Parliament

By-election for 4th July 2013

Mr Speaker

With your permission, I rise to deliver a statement of information to the House.

Mr Speaker, a few moments ago I met with His Excellency the Governor at the Convent and advised him to issue a writ for an election to fill the seat vacated by the death of the Hon Charles Bruzon.

I advised His Excellency to issue the writ for that by-election to be held on the 4th of July.

Importantly, the business of Government and of this Parliament will continue whilst the by-election process is underway.

That will no doubt make huge demands on the staff of the Parliament because, although this is not a General Election, we are now meeting monthly as a Parliament - a timetable that will not be abated by the calling of this by-election.

I understand that timetable will require candidates to have signed nomination papers before noon on Thursday the 13th June.

Mr Speaker, I believe that this is a historic occasion.

With all the surviving Chief Ministers present in this House today, I believe that this is the first time that a Chief Minister has come to this House from the Convent having convened an election for a vacant seat in the history of the by-elections held in our democracy.

In doing so, I am demonstrating that, where possible and relevant, the Government will seek to make statements of national importance in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, an election, whether for one seat or for all the seats in this Parliament, whether a by-election or a General Election, is an important democratic opportunity to test ideas, to consider political performance and to hear the voice and will of our people.

I trust that, in particular given the tragic circumstances which give rise to this election, all those who contest the seat will do so in the spirit of presenting their policies and ideas to the electorate genuinely and honestly; presenting their respective visions for the future of our Nation with tenacity but with respect and presenting always the best of each of themselves.

Our nation has an established and respected democratic tradition which once again comes to the fore today because, however tragic the cause of this election, the cause of democracy requires that we press on to hear the will and voice of the people of our Nation.

Mr Speaker, I confirm that the Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party, which I lead, will in coalition with the Liberal Party, present a candidate to fill the seat presently vacant. The selection process within the GSLP will start tonight at our Annual General Meeting and our candidate will be presented to the electorate at the end of that process.

Thank you for your indulgence in allowing me to make this statement of information to the House.

Ends