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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Mena a Brilliant Asset for Gib Plc : Feetham Wrong to Object**

It is surprising that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Daniel Feetham, seems to have chosen to object to the appointment by the Chief Minister of Mr Feetham's friend and law partner, Albert Mena, as Financial Secretary.

Despite the fact that Mr Mena is a friend and law partner of Mr Feetham, and that they have been working in the same firm for the past three years, the Chief Minister appointed Mr Mena after wide consultation.

The appointment was made after the Chief Minister had approached the one person who had been recommended to him internally as being able to do the job of Financial Secretary, who indicated that they did not want to take the post.

It is also particularly surprising that Mr Feetham should now suggest that Mr Picardo was not prepared to provide information on the subject. Mr Picardo told Parliament he would give the information required but asked for specific notice of the relevant questions. A transcript of the debate which ensued in Parliament around the relevant questions is attached for editors.

The Chief Minister has considered this issue with the unions who have understood the position explained by the Government.

The Chief Minister also addressed this criticism from Mr Feetham in his speech yesterday to the Gibraltar Banker's Association.

The Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo QC MP, said: "Given that the person who was recommended as being able to do the job did not wish to do so, I know Albert Mena is the right choice for Gibraltar and I appointed him despite him being a friend of Daniel Feetham's and his law partner. My soundings about the appointment all met with universal approval and he is doing an excellent job: the colleagues in the Treasury are as happy working with him as they were with Dilip Dayaram. I therefore have very little regard for the statement by Rafael Benzaquen, who is best known for having gone from earning about £60,000 as a civil servant one year to earning almost £250,000 in legal fees from the GSD Government the next. I guess it's not surprising he is still defending his old pay masters in the GSD for the quarter of a million they paid him in just one year."