



PRESS RELEASE

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Once Again: Feetham is playing into the hands of Spain

The Leader of the Opposition Daniel Feetham continues to play into the hands of Spain. This is reminiscent of what he did at the time when he said that he was prepared to remove the artificial reef under pressure from Madrid; and his reaction to the Chief Minister's report to the Fourth Committee of the UN that the Guardia Civil had fired rubber bullets at a Gibraltarian jet skier in BGTW. This attitude can again be seen in his latest outburst in relation to the Government's advertising and general policy on the Spanish media.

While Mr Feetham is indeed free to say whatever he likes, there are times when politicians should be careful to measure their words and exercise restraint in the wider national interests of Gibraltar.

The plain fact is that there has been no change in the Government's policy towards Radio Bahia Libre. The position remains exactly the same as that which existed when the GSD was in office and when Mr Feetham himself was a Minister in that Government. The difference is that at the time the radio station was critical of the GSLP/Liberals and now it is critical of the GSD and Mr Feetham clearly cannot take it and does not like it. This is a matter between him and the radio station.

The Spanish journalists who are invited to Gibraltar Day in London are exactly the same ones who were invited by the GSD when they were in Government. One addition has been the new newspaper "La Verdad". Other than that, the only new invitee is, in fact, actually the Leader of the Opposition, in this case none other than Mr Feetham himself. It will be recalled that the GSD Government never invited Joe Bossano or Fabian Picardo to Gibraltar Day in London when they held the office of Leader of the Opposition. Mr Feetham now gets invited on an all-expenses paid basis and clearly he has no complaint to make about that. In fact, he doesn't even question the expenditure or the government finances when it comes to his travel expenses and meals being funded by the taxpayer! Indeed, there were three members of the Opposition at the Gibraltar Day lunch and also at the evening event!

The Leader of the Opposition continues to practice a policy of "do as I say and not as we did".

In relation to the breakdown of the sum in question, Mr Feetham needs to be reminded that the GSD Government consistently refused to provide a breakdown of such sums year on year after the breakdowns were requested in Parliament. They argued then that making this information



public was not in the national interest or that it was too voluminous to provide. It is relevant to note that the breakdowns that were requested of the Government to which Mr Feetham belonged involved similar sums of money or indeed even larger ones, in one case close to a million pounds. They did not disclose the information but expect the Government to do so now.

In this instance, the difference is that the Chief Minister has offered to brief Mr Feetham privately about the Media Monitoring item of expenditure and he has chosen not to take up the offer. When they were in Government, the GSD did not offer such briefings.

The Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said:

“Once again Daniel Feetham has ended up with egg on his face. He complains about the Government not providing a breakdown and he did not provide such breakdowns himself; he complains about Government policy in relation to Radio Bahia Libre when there has been no change in policy since his time in office; he complains about the journalists invited to Gibraltar Day when they are the same journalists who were invited in his time and on top of that he is now invited to Gibraltar Day himself when in the past Leaders of the Opposition, including myself and Joe Bossano who deserved to be invited, were not invited. People might be forgiven for thinking that Mr Feetham simply says the first thing that comes to his head without any thought of what happened in the past or any knowledge of the facts. It is not surprising in such circumstances that the entirety of the elected Members of the Opposition, bar one, have abandoned him!”