



Date: 19th January 2016

**Address to Parliament by the Chief Minister, The Hon Fabian Picardo
QC MP, on the occasion of the swearing in of
Governor Edward Davis CB, CBE**

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the People of Gibraltar,
On behalf of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar,
And as Leader of this House,

I have the privilege of being the first to formally welcome you and your wife Lorraine to your new home in Gibraltar.

It is, indeed, a pleasure to also be the first person to have the honour to address you formally by your new style.

You are now the representative of Her Majesty in Gibraltar.

And it is right of course that as the representative and embodiment of Her Majesty the Queen, it should be in this, Her Gibraltar Parliament, the beating heart of Gibraltar's democracy, and the root of its civil institutions, that we should formally welcome and congratulate you.

Both your new style and your new home will no doubt be slightly unusual to start with.

But I am sure that you will find it easy to live your new life amongst us.

And I have no doubt that apart from making a home here on the Rock you will also soon make many new friends in this Community.

Because the sheer cliffs and the austere exterior of the Rock of Gibraltar betrays a soft and hospitable core fashioned by the warmth of the character of its great people.

A people who have had their identity sculpted by sacrifice.



Not least in the last century – during the Second World War - when the women and children of the Evacuation Generation, described by one of your predecessors as “useless mouths”, were evacuated from their homes and cast into an international diaspora.

We have been commemorating the seventy fifth anniversary of that Evacuation in this past year.

A poignant way of understanding the importance of that seminal event in our modern history is to understand that some saw it as the potential end of the civilian population of Gibraltar as a community.

Instead it was to be the making of us as a Nation.

A Nation that enjoys a vibrant – some say too vibrant, if there is such a thing – democracy.

And indeed you might wish to spare a thought for Mr Speaker, who sits next to you today, given that he is the one that has to corral all that vibrancy into some element of order during our debates!

In fact, you will, be aware Your Excellency that we recently held a General Election which saw a robust debate of the choices for the future facing our People.

That election has resulted in the seventeen members being here today in this Chamber.

Tomorrow we will formally start our work as a Parliament.

The five new members will get the chance to question the Government and speak in debates for the first time in coming days.

And one of the most senior elected members in the Commonwealth, the Honourable Joe Bossano, will continue his tireless work for the Nation that he loves and has been an architect of building.

Work, incidentally, which he started forty four years ago in this place.

As a legislature, from our newest, least experienced members, to our veteran and most seasoned Father of the House, one of the most important aspects of the work we will do in this generation will be in this first month when we meet to deliberate on the “European Union (Referendum) Bill”.

Because, Your Excellency, the decision on whether or not the United Kingdom should remain a part of the European Union is one which will, in great measure, be determinative of our long term fortunes as a Nation.

Because it will be as apparent to you as it is to all of us that Europe matters to Gibraltar.

Not only are we a part of Continental Europe; we also enjoy freedom of movement throughout the EU.



And we are also able to access the single European market from Gibraltar in a way that has been a catalyst to economic growth since we joined.

Public opinion in Gibraltar is therefore broadly in favour of continued membership of the European Union.

And that position I believe is also reflected in this Chamber.

And I believe that we will see a unified Gibraltar position in this important coming referendum.

Interestingly, in the past days we have heard that in the United Kingdom the Treasury there and other departments are not doing any planning for the eventuality that the United Kingdom might vote to leave the European Union.

Here we are leaving nothing to chance and we are already in the process of undertaking an economic study for the purposes of analysing the different possible permutations of membership of the EU, EFTA or the EEA, including the potential effects on our export economy of membership of the Common Customs Union.

Indeed, the EU has become such an important part of our National legal order that specific provision is made in Section 47 of our Constitution that, “[w]ithout prejudice to the United Kingdom’s responsibility for Gibraltar’s compliance with European Union law, matters which under [the] Constitution are the responsibility of Ministers shall not cease to be so even though they arise in the context of the European Union.”

In effect, that paragraph carves out EU matters from the otherwise purported “catch all” reference to “External Affairs” which are one of Your Excellency’s “Special Responsibilities”.

On this side of the House we have been elected with a specific mandate to establish a Select Committee of this Parliament to consider what, if any, changes should be proposed to the text of this Constitution.

And, given the specific reference to the European Union within the Constitution itself, it is therefore particularly important that this work be done in the planning for a potential British exit from the EU.

The Constitution as presently framed forms the basis of a relationship between the United Kingdom and Gibraltar which, whether or not it is based on colonialism, has not seen us removed from the UN list of colonies and which – ten years on – is now not as modern as it might have been ten years ago.

The previous Select Committee, in the run up to the negotiations which led to the 2006 text, proposed certain reforms which remain outstanding.

And so, if there are changes which we can agree with the United Kingdom to make to the Constitution which would advance Gibraltar’s removal from the UN list of non-self-governing



territories, then that is something which every right thinking Gibraltarian will wish to see pursued in the context of continued British Sovereignty in perpetuity.

This is work which must be community wide and done in the most open and transparent manner.

I expect to be constituting that Select Committee very soon indeed.

There will also be another Select Committee that will further consider the workings of this House and how best to further modernise its work.

We have already done much in this respect.

We have refurbished this Chamber and introduced cameras to provide broadcast and online video streaming of its proceedings.

These things might be taken for granted elsewhere, but are our recent innovations here.

I alert you to these technological steps in the road of e-government because the advertisement that happily led to your appointment made much of the need for the representation of a modern image.

We are certainly modern in this Chamber and as a Community, of course, we boast one of the most *avant-garde* industries in the online gaming industry.

Because as well as being economically sound and politically stable, Gibraltar is a modern and socially advanced society which is mature in its outlook and in its attitude to the rest of the world.

Indeed, we have been working hard to establish strong commercial and political links with all our neighbours.

We have successfully strengthened our relationship with the Kingdom of Morocco, across the Straits of Gibraltar.

We have not been so successful with the Kingdom of Spain.

But not for want of trying.

In the past four years the political representatives of Spain have been determined to return to bilateral negotiations with the United Kingdom in respect of the Sovereignty of Gibraltar, over the heads of the Gibraltarians.

That has of course failed and will always continue to fail.

Because the only people who will ever be able to freely determine the future of Gibraltar will be the People of Gibraltar.



And that unimpeachable right of self-determination is not one which admits of any 'reasonable accommodation' of the illegitimate claims of others.

Because the sovereignty of our home, your home now too, is exclusively a matter for the People of Gibraltar.

Indeed, it was one of your predecessors, the distinguished and much loved General Sir William Jackson, who coined the very appropriate phrase that "Gibraltar is neither Spain's to claim nor Britain's to give. It is the Rock of the Gibraltarians".

That is the position in a nutshell.

We, nonetheless, continue to be strongly committed to a Trilateral Forum for Dialogue in which Spain, the United Kingdom and Gibraltar would be able to consider together any matters of mutually beneficial interest without touching the issue of Sovereignty.

And there is much we could do together with our neighbours to further promote economic growth for mutual benefit.

This time last year the Chamber of Commerce in Gibraltar disclosed the results of an Economic Impact Study which reflected just how great the impact of Gibraltar's industries are in the area around us.

One in four jobs in the region around us – one quarter - is attributed to Gibraltar; up from one in six in 2009.

In fact, we are the second largest employer in Andalucia after the regional Government or the Junta de Andalucia as it is known.

And Gibraltar's economy now accounts for one quarter of the GDP of our neighbouring region in Spain, up from one eighth in 2009.

All told, Gibraltar increased the GDP of the region by over half a billion pounds, which amounts to near three quarters of a billion euros.

And all of that, Your Excellency, at a time when the Government of Spain has closed all doors to widespread economic cooperation and has seemed more intent on the pointless navigation of our territorial seas – those through which in time honoured tradition you arrived this morning - than in any meaningful law enforcement partnership.

But we believe that the interests of Gibraltar and the region lie in leaving behind the confrontation that some seemed to seek these past four years whilst pursuing instead closer economic cooperation which could enable the real potential for growth on both sides of the frontier to truly flourish and produce even greater wealth.

And all of that without the need for another, potentially highly polluting refinery to be established in the Bay of Gibraltar!



But we are not limiting our vision for the development of our economy to the immediate landscape.

Today's globalised environment creates opportunities for Gibraltar around the world.

That is why we are now established in London, Brussels, Hong Kong and in the United States and hope soon to be established in other nations too as we spread our commercial reach.

And the private sector in Gibraltar is driving projects which will be of great interest to international investors in those and other locations.

The World Trade Centre is nearing "topping out" stage.

We continue to positively progress our negotiations on the development of the Eastside "Bluewater" Resort.

And we are in advanced negotiations in respect of the potential for the redevelopment of the central site named after Admiral Rooke, one of many sites being handed over by the Ministry of Defence as surplus to defence requirements.

Whilst the adjacent "MidTown Development" – on an old navy playing field - is now being redeveloped funded by a local consortium.

Previously, our economy was almost fully dependent on the Ministry of Defence's spending.

Today, that is a fraction of what it was.

But that makes it no less significant.

Not least because the United Kingdom is responsible for and guarantees the defence of our sovereignty; and we have seen some fairly regular calls of larger naval assets in the past months asserting British sovereignty over British Gibraltar Territorial Waters in that respect.

But also because a large number of Gibraltarians continue to provide loyal service to the MoD as locally employed civilians.

Their continued employment and the quality of that employment is a matter to which we are committed to and on which I expect to soon be engaged in substantive and no doubt positive discussions with the Armed Forces Minister.

A good moment to reflect, Your Excellency, on the fact that one of the happiest and proudest parts of your role here will no doubt be the opportunity to work with the Royal Gibraltar Regiment.

The People of Gibraltar are rightly proud of the Regiment.



And you will no doubt enjoy your association with a band of men and women who are a credit to the British Army.

Their motto “Nulli Expugnabili Hosti”, conquered by no enemy, is a fitting motto with which all in Gibraltar associate.

But we are no less proud of our association also with the Corps of Royal Marines of which you have been Commandant General like our two former Royal Marine Governors of recent memory.

That is a long and enduring relationship, immortalised in your battle honour, which I know the Marines are equally proud of.

For Gibraltar is today a place to be proud of being associated with.

We are a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi religious community with an enviable measure of political and economic stability.

A nation that has just established a National Bank and a University.

Enjoying the third highest GDP per capita in the world and boasting employment levels at record highs and unemployment levels at record lows.

And enviably low public debt by any measure.

Our work in Government will be to assure that continued prosperity going forward.

Especially in these challenging times for all democratic nations.

The threats to our security, especially on the shores of the Mediterranean, are multi-faceted and can bring deep economic consequences.

And your undoubted experience in these fields is very welcome indeed.

Experience of Gibraltar is something which is certainly not lacking in the lady who has ably held the fort in the interregnum between the departure of Jim Dutton and your arrival here today.

Alison MacMillan has for over twenty years been a friend of Gibraltar and of many Gibraltarians from across the political and social divides.

Her first posting here was now two decades ago.

And I know that she, Julian, Alicia and Cameron cherish their time in Gibraltar.

Your Excellency could have no better guide for your early days in post negotiating the difficulties inherent in representation of the Monarch in a modern, Westminster style democracy.



For now, it is worth remembering that sections 49 of the current Constitution, provides that the Governor – that is to say, you - will keep the Chief Minister fully informed of the general conduct of those matters for which you are responsible.

And section 52 provides that the Governor and the Chief Minister – that is to say, you and me, for now at least - shall confer on a regular basis and the Chief Minister shall brief and keep the Governor informed about the policies of the Government and the public affairs of Gibraltar.

We are clearly about to get to know each other much better!

I for one very much look forward it and that the time we will spend together working in the common, public interest of Gibraltar.

With good will and hard work, I have no doubt we will achieve the standard of each generation of our predecessors and that we will greatly advance the general interests of Gibraltar and its people in so doing.

And as you undertake that work, Gibraltar will take you and your wife to its heart.

So all that remains for me to say is: “Welcome Home to Gibraltar”.

ENDS