

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION 128/2006
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The Opposition understands that a state of collective redundancy has been declared this week by at least one of the internet gaming companies.

It will be recalled that it was being said a few weeks ago that employment levels in this sector would not be seriously affected by the changes in US law.

According to the information provided at the last meeting of the House by the government, in May this year the sector employed 1634 people of which 303 were Gibraltarians.

The Opposition considers that the reduction of the number of jobs in the industry should not be at the expense of local jobs.

The company that is known to have declared a state of collective redundancy employed 381 persons in May of which 77 were Gibraltarians. This compares with the figures in September 2004 when total employment was 276 and the Gibraltarian element accounted for 63. It shows that of the 105 additional jobs in the last two years, only 14 were taken up by Gibraltarians.

The argument for the increase in new entrants into the Gibraltar labour market in these and other areas and in particular the importation of workers who have subsequently taken up residence in the

Campo Area was reflected in the increase in frontier workers last year of 468 of which only 6 were Spanish nationals, according to Government sources.

These increases have regularly been defended by the Government on the basis that the growth of the sector required importation of labour because the local labour force had been exhausted. If there are now going to be less jobs then the opposite of that argument must hold true.

The Opposition therefore believes that the reduction in the number of jobs in the industry must not be at the expense of jobs held by locals who have not in fact benefited, as can be seen from the above figures, when the industry was expanding.

The current redundancy situation in this one company alone is expected to be around one third of their existing workforce, and it is therefore likely that the shakedown in the industry as a whole will mean a contraction. However, that is no reason why it should affect Gibraltar jobs given that currently Gibraltarians take up less than 20% of the total employment in the sector.

The Opposition will be monitoring the situation and its offices are available to offer help and advice to those affected.

ENDS