

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

118/2008

23 October 2008

The Speaker recessed the meeting of Parliament that was due to start at 2.30pm yesterday afternoon on the basis that demonstrators were blocking the access of Members by protesting within the precincts. There was a ruling made by a previous Speaker which by extending the precinct of Parliament had the effect of not allowing demonstrations to take place in the lobby, at the entrance and at other specified areas around the building.

The Opposition was nonetheless very surprised by this recess yesterday, given that 14 of the 17 MPs, Government and Opposition, were already in their seats at the time that the announcement was made. The only notable absence on the Government side was Mr Caruana (Mr Montiel did not attend the session at all).

Knowing Mr Caruana and the way he thinks, the Opposition would not be in the least surprised if he let it be known that he would not attend Parliament until the protestors had moved to the pavement across the road. Indeed, nobody has explained why Mr Caruana should have had this apparent difficulty passing between the demonstrators, which no other MP,

including members of his own Government, appeared to have encountered.

In fact, by some remarkable coincidence, it was not until after the demonstrators had been moved to the pavement opposite the House that Mr Caruana then put in an appearance in the presence of many police officers and accompanied by his own personal bodyguard.

The Opposition consider it quite incredible that the business of the House should have been delayed in this way because Mr Caruana, unlike his colleagues, could not bring himself to walk through a crowd of peaceful protestors.

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