

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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It is clear that whenever anyone exposes his shortcomings, Mr Caruana's instinctive reaction is to hit the roof like a jack-in-the-box. The Chief Minister should calm down given the hysterical and uncontrolled nature of his overreactions over the past few weeks.

Mr Caruana gives the Opposition too much credit if he thinks that we are responsible for all the perceptions, all the rumours, all the discontent and all the demonstrations that take place in Gibraltar.

However, it must be said that some perceptions have turned out to be true in the past. It will be recalled that there was a perception that Mr Caruana wanted to demote the status of the Chief Justice in order to be the second most important person in Gibraltar after the Governor. This perception was given effect recently when a new protocol list was published which showed Mr Caruana as the number two in the order of precedence after the Governor, instead of the number three after the Chief Justice as he had been until then.

In this latest incident, the Government was replying to the Opposition statement which had expressed concern at the “perception” that on a number of specified occasions the Police seemed to be acting at the whim of the Chief Minister. These occasions were spelt out in detail.

They were that in December 2006 a solitary protestor with a placard was not allowed to demonstrate on the day that the Spanish Minister of State visited Gibraltar. The statement made by the Police that they did not have the resources to man the SDGG National Day rally last month. The count by the Police of the number who attended the rally at Casemates. The fourth incident were the conditions reportedly laid down to the organisers of the Waterport Terraces demonstration that they could not shout, boo, use whistles or megaphones during their protest. The Government, who presumably was not represented at the meeting between the protestors and the Police is hardly in a position to lecture anyone about what went on.

Mr Caruana’s statement conveniently ignores all the incidents and he replies with a broad-brush approach because it is politically convenient to him to do so. However, there are more. People will also recall the peculiar statement issued by the Police in the middle of the general election campaign, reacting to a rumour, that a particular Minister was not being

investigated. This is the first time in living memory that they have reacted to a rumour in this way.

It is undeniable that the beneficiary of all these actions, intended or otherwise, has been none other than the Government and the policies of Mr Caruana himself. It is also significant to note that Mr Caruana has lashed out like a spoilt child who has been caught out doing something naughty which will no doubt add further credibility to the perception that already exists.

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