

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

90/2008

4 September 2008

The Opposition cannot understand how the Government can say it is so “delighted” following the announcement of the tender award for the construction of flats for rental to Brues y Fernandez. This is the same company that has been blamed for the delays to Waterport Terraces when the Government, as the developer, washed its hands of all responsibility.

It is a bit rich for the Government to say in their statement that Waterport Terraces, Nelson’s View, Bayview Terraces and Cumberland Terraces “progress towards completion” when there have been lengthy delays to all these projects which the Government has done little to address.

When pressed on the delays to Waterport Terraces by Shadow Housing Minister Charles Bruzon, the Government said that Phase 1 would be ready in May 2008. This was three months ago and it has not happened. Phase 2 was due to be handed over in July, two months ago and the Phase 3 in October.

It will no doubt raise eyebrows that the same construction company has been awarded the latest

tender given the delays that have occurred in the past.

Moreover, it will be recalled that when the Government announced this housing rental estate, they stated that it would be a construction of about 700 flats and that it would become Gibraltar's second biggest housing estate after Laguna.

At the time of the general election, in an exercise that was designed purely to win votes, the Government announced that they had written to persons on the housing waiting list allocating them flats in this estate. In a new departure, the allocation of flats was not done through the Housing Allocation Committee but by the central Government itself.

The Government must have known before the general election how many flats were going to be constructed in this new estate. When Mr Bruzon probed them in Parliament, they admitted that only 490 letters had been sent out, even though they had given the impression that there would be about 700 flats.

The statement issued by the Government yesterday confirms the number of flats as 492. This is tantamount to an electoral fraud on the people of Gibraltar because the Government raised expectations before the election that something was

going to happen which was not the case. Indeed, they went even further to create this expectation by actually promising to hold a draw for the non-existent flats in November, when at that time the reclamation had not even been completed.

Given this history, it is quite extraordinary that they should come out issuing self-congratulatory press releases presumably in the knowledge that nobody else will be congratulating them.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Housing Minister Charles Bruzon said:

“Indeed, when I challenged the Chief Minister in Parliament, Mr Caruana’s response was that if he was guilty of anything he was guilty of being a politician and not guilty of any other offence. I retorted that he was guilty of a serious offence against the most basic principles of social justice. It makes me very sorry to see an elected representative of our people behave in such an unacceptable and unethical manner.”

ENDS