

Rock Weekly Advertiser

GIBRALTAR'S LARGEST CIRCULATION NEWSPAPER

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GIBRALTAR The Town that thinks it is a CITY that thinks it is a COUNTRY!



With a total voting population of some 17,000 persons Gibraltar is by any standards no more than a modestly-sized town. "Just a minute", I hear you cry, "we have a cathedral or two, that gives us the right to call ourselves a city". O.K. I'll buy that Gibraltar is a city. "Hold it! hold it!" I hear you protest, "we have a Government and a frontier and a dockyard and we even have an airport. Not a piddling little airstrip either, but a fully fledged airport capable of handling modern jet airliners carrying lots of people, and all that surely gives us the right to consider ourselves a country! And not only that, a group of us are getting together to meet Mr. David Ratford to protest over possible British moves to share OUR airport with Spain".

Well we suppose that the airport and the isthmus on which it stands could loosely be described as belonging to the people of Gibraltar but it surely is a most nebulous interpretation of ownership. It seems to us that the airport really belongs to the British taxpayer and it may fall to Mr. Ratford's lot to explain, as the representative of those taxpayers, that they are no longer prepared to carry the financial burden on their own and that Spanish participation on manning and maintaining would lessen that financial burden.

It may be that Mr. Ratford puts forward a proposal that the Government of Gibraltar accept the airport as a gift from Britain providing that Government can see it's way clear to providing Air Traffic Control staff, Fire-fighting staff, vehicles and equipment, Meteorologists, Security Personnel and the

full gamut of maintenance people and equipment. Mr. Ratford may make that suggestion, but then again he is possibly aware of that other super Christmas present the British taxpayer gave to the people of Gibraltar — the dockyard, and he may remember the £3 million new engine for the generating station and the ex gratia payments to improve Gibraltar's standing as a tourist resort, as he treads carefully along our dog-polluted streets.

Perhaps his hosts will take him on a sight-seeing tour to Europa Point where he can see Gibraltar's refuse disposal system at work. And it may be that Mr. Ratford will decide that few if any SMALL TOWNS, of 17,000 population could possibly afford the luxury of their own airport . . . and opt for a deal with Spain.



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