

THE TREATY OF UTRECHT

The main stumbling block to resolving the Gibraltar problem is the Treaty of Utrecht. It has to be rescinded. I think that the remarks by Lady Symons about Article X are just mouth piecing the views of the Southern European Department. Not only is what she said not true but I will go further that, despite the protests of the mandarins, they pick and chose to their hearts' content.

BRITISH INTERESTS

What it is all about is to look after the United Kingdom's national interests. Today it is in Great Britain's national interest to be on the friendliest relations with Spain; therefore the interests of Gibraltar come well below that imperative.

I must add that successive British Governments, to their credit, have not allowed Spanish Governments to either take over Gibraltar or to force their political demands onto the Gibraltarians. I must admit that that support for the Gibraltarians will have been to the United Kingdom's national cost but this is a price that the British Government is prepared to pay.

MEXICAN STAND OFF

This has resulted in a Mexican stand off in which the Gibraltarians find themselves in a no man's land. Each Gibraltarian knows that he or she will not be deserted by the British Government and that Gibraltar will never be given to

Spain against their freely expressed wishes. But at the same time economically the Spanish Government is trying to reduce the Gibraltarians to penury. In my view one way forward is for another referendum to be held to decide one way or another the majority view of the Gibraltarians. If the Spanish Government agrees to accept the verdict then why not ask them to frame the questions. Such a course of action would consign the Treaty of Utrecht to the pages of history.

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

The only window of opportunity is one when the Spanish Government recognises that the Gibraltarians have no wish to become Spanish or for the Rock to retrocede to Spain. I do not wish to sound pessimistic but I do not see this window being opened in my lifetime.

THE FUTURE

The Gibraltarians can rest assured that if the Foreign Office recommends political action that the Gibraltarians do not agree with, then Westminster will not allow such a course of action to be taken. The Prime Minister knows this, the Southern European Department knows this, and the elected ministers would certainly not go along with such an idea. Mandarins advise, ministers take decisions. Almost all the

British public would agree with the premise that nothing about the Gibraltar Constitution can be altered without the consent of the majority of the Gibraltarians.

Last year wife came out with me and we went to the National Day celebrations together. She was so impressed with all the joy and beauty seen in the streets. The carnival atmosphere clearly showed where the Gibraltarians wish to belong.

My wife and myself will support 100% the wishes of the Gibraltarians."

Jamie Cann, 53, is the Labour M.P. for Ipswich. He was educated at Burton-on-Humber Grammar School and Kesleven College of Education (teaching diploma) and is married to Rosemary Lovitt. They have two sons.

Jamie taught at Handford Road Primary School 1967-81 and was deputy head 1981-92. He was a director of the Ipswich Port Authority and an Ipswich Borough Councillor and Leader of the Council before his elevation to Westminster. He enjoys two distinct profiles: a low one in the House of Commons and a high one in the constituency. By a strange quirk of fate he defeated Andrew Mackinlay to be selected as Labour candidate for the Ipswich constituency. Lord Healey is his political hero.