

NEED FOR 'CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE'

Gib must move before Hong Kong

- *Simon Hughes MP*

Mike Brusfal reports from London

Gibraltar should seek a Constitutional Conference and secure a status with the EU and move before the Rock becomes top of the agenda after Hong Kong is settled. These are the views of Simon Hughes, MP, the Liberal Democrat who also believes that both the Brussels Agreement and the "two flags - three voices" concept are dead.

Hughes although taking a close watch over Gibraltar's affairs for more than a decade, made his first visit to the Rock to take part in last year's National Day celebrations. His interest in Gibraltar started during his studies at Brussels and Strasbourg. His family has had connections with Gibraltar via the Royal Navy. At an early age he considered the Gibraltarians to be like the Basques, a doughty race who were not afraid to stand up against the might of the Spanish government's imperial ambitions. Many others would have crumbled away many years ago. He had intended to fly to Gibraltar before but political imperatives always came up to prevent his departurè. He thoroughly enjoyed the short break on the Rock and was able to meet a cross section

of ministers and members of the opposition parties. Since his return several matters that were raised by local politicians have been followed up.

Simon is briefed by Albert Poggio on regular basis and, apart from communications from the SDGG via a third party and one letter from the Gibraltar National Party, has received nothing from either the GSD, the AACR or the Chamber of Commerce. He expressed surprise that the leaders of the opposition parties have not made use of the standing invitation to address the Gibraltar Parliamentary lobby. The more the meetings the greater the chance of recruiting much needed new members.

One positive result of his visit



was a commitment from the Gibraltar government to take a stand and hold a reception at the Liberal Democrat annual conference. Gibraltarian ministers accept that stands and receptions should not be confined

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