

will mean the relocation of development and cohesion funds.

BRITISH WEAKNESS

In Cornwall the authorities impounded a Spanish fishing vessel and it was moored in a creek for a year because the owners refused to pay the fine. I am saddened to report that the British authorities authorised the release of the boat without the fine being paid. This was another example of the British Government acting tough for five minutes and then conceding at the first opportunity. This small incident no doubt gives the Spanish Government encouragement to just hold on and keep pressing its case as eventually the British Government will cave again. Frankly I see the Matutes plan B as showing the Spanish Government taking a strong position in the expectation that the British Government will eventually appease rather than take resolute action.

POLITICAL REALITY

The British Government is not prepared to take advantage of the many ministerial meetings within the European Union to demonstrate its total support for the inalienable rights of the Gibraltarians to self-

determination and to demand that the Spanish Government lifts the many restrictions imposed on the Crown Colony of Gibraltar. This is simply because the United Kingdom needs the support of the Spanish Government in many European issues such as the lifting of the beef ban. The Foreign Office appears to believe that it is better to keep the Spanish Government on board rather than risk a major confrontation over Gibraltar.

I think that the Spanish Government, if you will excuse the phrase, is making a monkey out of the British Government. The United Kingdom is in danger of looking extremely foolish over Gibraltar in front of our European partners.

THE FUTURE

I would like to see the British Government becoming more vigorous in the way it deals with the Spanish Government. HMG must demonstrate that it wishes to resolve this issue and it not content just to leave the Gibraltar problem on the diplomatic table.

This failure to take any action is leaving the Gibraltarians in a state on limbo. In my opinion, since the Labour Government came to power, there has been absolutely no progress in resolving the Gibraltar Problem.'