



**CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

2013/14 SESSION

27 February 2013
Fifth Sitting of the Fifth Meeting
(pages 653–682)

Hon Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MLA
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

SPEAKER

Hon Juliana Y O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MLA

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Hon Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA | <i>Premier</i> , Minister of Home and Community Affairs |
| Hon Moses I Kirkconnell, JP, MLA | <i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of District Administration, Tourism and Transport |
| Hon D Kurt Tibbetts, OBE, JP, MLA | Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure |
| Hon Marco S Archer, MLA | Minister of Finance and Economic Development |
| Hon G Wayne Panton, MLA | Financial Services, Commerce and Environment |
| Hon Tara A Rivers, MLA | Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs |

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| Hon Franz I Manderson, Cert. Hon, JP | <i>Deputy Governor</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Civil Service |
| Hon Samuel Bulgin, QC | Attorney General, ex officio Member responsible for Legal Affairs |

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

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|----------------------------------|--|
| Hon Anthony S Eden, OBE, JP, MLA | Deputy Speaker, First Elected Member for Bodden Town |
| Mr Roy McTaggart, MLA | Second Elected Member for George Town |
| Mr Winston C Connolly, Jr, MLA | Fifth Elected Member for George Town |
| Mr Joseph X Hew, MLA | Sixth Elected Member for George Town |
| Mr Alva H Suckoo, MLA | Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town |

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Hon. W. McKeever Bush, OBE, JP, MLA | <i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , First Elected Member for West Bay |
| Mr Bernie A Bush, MLA | Third Elected Member for West Bay |
| Capt A Eugene Ebanks, JP, MLA | Fourth Elected Member for West Bay |

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mr D Ezzard Miller, JP, MLA | Elected Member for North Side |
| Mr V Arden McLean, JP, MLA | Elected Member for East End |

APOLOGIES

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Hon Osbourne V Bodden, MLA | Minister of Health, Sports, Youth and Culture |
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIFTH MEETING 2013/14 SESSION
THURSDAY
27 FEBRUARY 2014
10:30 AM
Fifth Sitting**

[Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: I will now invite the Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure to grace us with prayers.

PRAYERS

Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure: Let us pray.

Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived: We beseech Thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of the Legislative Assembly now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.

Bless our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II; Philip, Duke of Edinburgh; Charles, Prince of Wales; and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Governor of our Islands, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Official Members and Ministers of Cabinet and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that we may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

Let us say The Lord's Prayer together: *Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us peace, now and always. Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated.
Proceedings are resumed.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

APOLOGIES

The Speaker: I have received apologies from the Honourable Premier who will be joining us later on this morning.

I should also indicate that we will suspend at 11:00 and go into the luncheon session which will come up at 1:00. Government has requested that time to ensue an important meeting here in the committee room.

I have also received apologies from the Honourable Minister of Health who is away on official duties today. And Members would have known that acting as Councillor is Al Suckoo. That's for administrative purposes only, not parliamentary. The Premier and the other frontbench Ministers will fill in the gap if and when necessary.

[Inaudible interjection]

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

MINISTRY OF FINANCE, TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC FINANCE, ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 20TH JUNE 2011

[Deferred]

The Speaker: Might I invite the Honourable Deputy Premier to make representation on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It's obvious that the Minister is not here yet. I would ask if we could defer it and wait until he is present.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy Premier.

The question is that the report, which was to be laid by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development, be deferred and be dealt with later on today.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. The report is hereby deferred.

Agreed: Ministry of Finance, Tourism and Development Public Finance, Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 20th June 2011 deferred.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: There are no statements this morning by Members of Government.

OTHER BUSINESS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION NO. 4 – 2013/14 SINGLE MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES

[Continuation of debate thereon]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the honourable Member from the district of North Side.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller, Member for North Side: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise as the seconder of this Motion to continue my efforts to get single member constituencies and one person one vote established throughout the Cayman Islands. Madam Speaker, I started this fight in the discussion of the 1972 Constitution as a high school student. And I wanted single member constituencies throughout the country then. I supported it in the 1992 exercise. I supported it in the 2003 exercise, and I supported it in the 2008/09 exercise, which gave us the modernised Constitution we currently have.

Now, Madam Speaker, I lost in 1992, 1996, and 2000 elections partly because I refused to compromise or misrepresent my position on one man one vote and constitutional advancement for Caymanians and take some popular temporary position simply to win the election. I am still the only Member of this current House who has stated publicly that I believe we need and have to engage in a national debate on independence or a form of advanced interdependence in our constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom.

Caymanians, and not some UK politician—or some FCO clerk—should decide and plan the destiny of this country as to when we are going independent. And we need to have a discussion as to how we advance to that ultimate end, because the day the UK decides that we are going, that's it. We will have no say in it. We need more local autonomy and authority for our own country. But, Madam Speaker, I was truly,

truly, truly disappointed in the Coalition Government's response to this Motion.

Young people, ordinary citizens, middle-age, ordinary Caymanians contacted me since yesterday's sitting of this honourable House to express their disappointment at this regressive position taken by the Coalition but, more importantly, the position taken by the Progressives on minimum wage and single member constituencies and one person one vote, as they like to call it. As one young Caymanian put it to me this morning (and I hope he does not get offended by my using his words without his permission, for which I apologise in advance), "When will the decisions in the LA be about us, the outnumbered Caymanians, and not about the politicians?" [That is] a profound statement coming from a 19-year old.

Like me, they were shocked that the Premier would be more concerned about his constitutional survival as the Premier than doing the right thing. Legislating single member constituencies one man one vote, a position he has publicly taken for many years, but, rather, take some undefined, watered-down position of assisting of (I think he called it) equality of votes or equality of franchise (a new term), increase representation, introduce "at-large" candidates (special hybrid from Cayman Brac and Little Cayman), a possibility of combining North Side with East End to make us equal to Cayman Brac . . . that is a battle the East End Representative and I will welcome!

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Oh yes!

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Madam Speaker, the generosity in my soul could not help but feel empathy, sorrow for the Premier, as he laboured, struggled, carefully chose his words throughout his presentation. The absence of his normal oomph, gumption, assertiveness, convictions and enthusiasm for his carefully considered positions was truly painful to watch.

Madam Speaker, the Premier suggested that the C4C minority portion of his Coalition Government forced the majority of Progressives to regress from their promised 18 single member constituencies and one man, one vote, to this new position of preferred national voting under threat of withdrawing their support from the Premier.

Madam Speaker, let me give the Premier some assurance that his premiership is not at risk. Count the votes. Count the votes. Even if all the C4C candidates crossed the aisle, and on the unlikely possibility that people like me would vote with them, eight can't defeat nine.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Of course, that's easy. You'd have a vacancy in Cabinet; you can bring a speaker from the other side.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: So, Madam Speaker, eight votes on this side is still four short of the two-third majority of 12 that is needed for a no confidence vote on the Government. And under our current numbers and balance, with seven people in his Cabinet, one of them would have to vote to bring their own Government down. Which, you know, Madam Speaker, I think is wrong to start with. I said that in the constitutional talks when they came to North Side and talked about doing 18. I told them they needed 21.

Of course, they don't take any advice from me, because 21 is the number that we need if parliament is going to exercise any control over the executive of 7 Two-thirds [is] 14. So we don't need a member of the executive to vote with the parliament to remove the executive. But this Constitution is carefully and cleverly drafted by politicians.

In all of our Constitutions, going back to 1959, the one thing that every group of politicians up in here has done is look out for their own survival and the changes made to the Constitution, whether it was numerical or not, was to ensure they had a better chance of getting re-elected. Look at the history. Those that had multiple choice ones added one, or two, to make sure they had a better chance. That's what they did!

Madam Speaker, I believe that the Premier and his Progressive majority in the Coalition Government can stand their ground. I would even invite the Premier . . . because it is not unheard of in constitutional and political matters like this that they remove the whip. Let them vote their conscience, and let the chips fall. The only fear the Premier needs to have for his premiership is internal, not from outside parliament. So I encourage him to demonstrate his usual confidence, show real leadership, and stick to the promise that they made—18 single member constituencies, one man one vote.

Now, Madam Speaker, having dealt with the Premier's fear, let me deal with some of the painful rationale of his representation for 15 single member constituencies, or three at-large (or four at-large, I assume, if we go to 19), because he can use his majority—he's the Government; they have the majority—they don't need my help to do what they want to do. And they ain't going to get my help to do this! I promise you I will follow him in every borough, even nick and every cranny in this country to campaign against at-large candidates. Madam Speaker, you notice the title, "at-large." You know why? because they are going to come from the largest constituencies.

What opportunity do you think somebody has with a voting base of 600 people . . . forget what he may think his national popularity is, because they are talking two things about politics in Cayman—money and popularity—and, unfortunately, the former is becoming far too prevalent. What opportunity or chance

do you think somebody with a percentage of a 600 base vote has going up against somebody who starts off with a 7,000 base vote?

None!

That is deliberate.

That is deliberate from the same movers and shakers who are controlling and have controlled for a long time the political process in this country. And when somebody like me stands up to them, they do everything they can to economically destroy you, because you won't do their bidding.

Madam Speaker, I didn't agree with the last Government, the United Democratic Party Government, and what they did in adding two seats to George Town and one to Bodden Town. I told them so. I told the country so. But they used their majority in Government and did what they wanted to do. So the Coalition Government now, if *unna* want 15, *unna* want 3 at-large, come out announce that's what you want and let's meet on the political battlefield and see if you can get it, because you have the votes down here to do it. You don't need my vote. You don't need my support—and you ain't going to get it!

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Well, Madam Speaker, I was kind of shocked yesterday when the Premier basically announced that he had the Leader of the Opposition some kind of cornswagging going on into disagreement with this and he knew he would support him. But I believe the Leader of the Opposition defends himself. I only have to defend one person up here, and that's me!

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: That's the way I understood it.

Madam Speaker, the only fundamental reason why this country today does not enjoy the internationally accepted position of universal suffrage, single member constituencies, one man one vote, is because politicians, also-ran politicians, wanna-be politicians, and serving Members have, for the last 55 years, done what is best for politicians and not what is best for Caymanians, participative democracy and representative government.

Madam Speaker, you or any other Member of this party, of this Parliament, or any member of the public can go back to the discussions in the archives on the '59 Constitution. You can look for it on the amendments of '68, you can look at the '72 Constitution, you can look at the '92 Constitution, you can look at the 2003 and you can look at the 2009. And it was the politicians who made the decisions on behalf of the people on what to do. It was the politicians who put six votes in George Town; not the people.

But, Madam Speaker, the really sad thing in the Premier's labored presentation yesterday and the

regressive position they are taking is that all of the ills that he conjured up about single member constituencies doesn't change when they go from 18 to 15. They remain the same. He claimed that because they were going to be a little bigger they were going to be harder to manage so they couldn't get longevity, they couldn't get party domination for long periods of time, they couldn't get (what was the word he used?) traverse results if you went from 18 to 15. You wouldn't have to worry about people wrongly influencing.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: No, I will deal with demographics separately because that's a whole new topic.

Now, Madam Speaker, I won four elections in a single-member constituency. In every one of those elections my opponents outspent me. So if they believe that it is easy to buy a small single-member constituency because they might be looking at the amount of money that you can do it for, they got another thing coming, because the smaller it is the harder it is to hide it. Those people know everybody.

And when the Minister of Health comes to North Side and they get to know that he's coming to visit the clinic and he won't call me and tell me he's coming, he can't come to North Side and, I don't know, there's only one road in! And the Governor! That's fine. They are doing their job. That's good.

So, Madam Speaker, the ills of single member constituencies, which I don't subscribe to the ills that they have identified, you know. But those ills do not disappear by some magical drop from 18 to 15. You see, Madam Speaker, here is the problem we have . . . and as Winston Churchill said (or somebody, it might have been him), democracy is not a perfect system, but it's the best that he knew; something to that effect. I am not usually good at quoting other people.

The positives in single member constituencies far outweigh the ills—not for the politician, not for us, but for the people we represent. That's the problem. The fairness and equality that a single member constituency ensures is not based on the number of voters in the district, or the size of the constituency. It is based on the fact that every single person has only one opportunity to influence Government.

The accountability and the responsibility come from the fact that you know who your representative is. The people of North Side know that the Honourable Kurt Tibbetts is the Minister of Planning and he is responsible and in control of road work. They know that. But they hold me accountable to get the work done in North Side. And I better be able, during my term as their representative, to demonstrate that I have left no stone unturned to get that done, even though they know that I don't have the control to say that it be done. Can the people in Prospect, the Swamp, South Sound, North Church Street, Windsor Park say that?

They also know that the Honourable Kurt Tibbetts, Minister of Planning and Roads, is responsible and in control of what road work happens, when it happens and where it happens. But who do they hold responsible out of the other five elected Members to get the road work done in their area? They can't hold anybody responsible, especially in George Town. In Bodden Town it would be a little bit easier because they are all the same party. But in George Town they have two different groups and two different parties. And that's what the politicians are afraid of in single member constituencies, one man one vote; that accountability, that intimate relationship that you must maintain at all times with the voters, because one family turning against you can change the outcome of the election.

We are not talking here about doing favours. I am talking about doing work as a representative.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Whole sections, whole areas, and still win election.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: So, Madam Speaker, the important thing is we must stop confusing the equality of votes. The equality of votes in the constituency has nothing to do with the numerical value of votes in the constituency. It has to do with each single person in that constituency having equal opportunity, one opportunity only, to influence Government. And he has one person, and one person only, to hold accountable as his representative. And he can judge him fairly and squarely on his performance as a representative because he can't say, *I am only number six elected; you have to talk to number three or number four; or, I'm not in the Government so I can't get anything done. You have to try to talk to somebody in the Government.*

The problem with George Town having 7,000 voters, and the inequality with North Side having only 600 is not the 7,000 versus the 600. The problem is that every George Town voter has six opportunities to determine who goes in Government. Six times the opportunity of someone from North Side and East End. That's what is important. But we are getting caught up and trying to confuse the public because one constituency has 600, and that is really not enough to make a constituency, so we will combine that with East End so we get up to 1,000, and some of the constituencies in George Town are not equal. The last Boundary Commission did such a good job. But if my memory serves me correct, there are at least two constituencies in both George Town and West Bay that have the exact same number of voters when they did it. And not a single one of those 18 single-member constituencies exceeded the normal accepted 25 per

cent difference in the number of voters before you re-draw the lines.

But what we are trying to get here now with 15, you see, is Alden-mandering!

[inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: No, no. This is Alden-mandering now. So they can make it now so that it will be easier for somebody to get elected.

If you come to 15, you have to have a new Boundary Commission. But, again, Madam Speaker, that's part of the plan. Remember, we were told in 2011 and 2012 they didn't have enough time. So now we can't go . . . if we do a new Boundary Commission, that's three years away. Two years to get a Boundary Commission report. The last one was sitting down here on the desk for over a year, so they have a precedent to leave the next one that comes for another year. By the time we get around to doing it we are six months away from the election so they can't change it.

You see, Madam Speaker, my position is that this is all about conducting the next election under the same system we did in 2013, because we can't do a quick o'clock Boundary Commission and get it all done. And once they get it past December this year, Madam Speaker, we are into that two-year window.

This is a convenient time for me, Madam Speaker, I will get a chance to make some more votes up because I was up late last night. Thank you.

The Speaker: We will suspend at this time and reconvene at 1:00 pm.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, I beg your pardon. We will reconvene at 2:15 pm because there is another meeting at 1:15. Sorry.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: I just received notice that the 1:15 meeting will no longer occur. As that is the case, we will reconvene at 1:15 pm.

Proceedings suspended at 11:04 pm

Proceedings resumed at 1:40 pm

The Speaker: Please be seated. Proceedings are resumed.

I invite the Elected Member for North Side to continue his debate.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION NO. 4 – 2013/14 SINGLE MEMBER CONSTITUENCIES

[Continuation of debate thereon]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When we took the luncheon break I was talking about the numbers in this hybrid situation of 15 single member constituencies, 3 at-large, and the unlikelihood that somebody from a district with a voter base of 600 would have any chance competing against someone from a base of 7,000 votes.

I think that's very important because I believe that one of the reasons we have seen these three at-large candidates introduced is because it is going to give George Town the opportunity of having nine representatives instead of six. In all likelihood the at-large candidate has a better opportunity to come from the larger electoral districts. So it is quite possible that George Town could also get their six district representatives, or seven . . . I think they have about five if they take the two out now, but, anyway, the important thing is that I believe that if we go to at-large it is simply going to lead to George Town or West Bay or Bodden Town increasing their number of representatives. And I don't think that that adds any fairness to the process.

Of course, then, I guess the argument that the Government is putting forward is that the equality in votes comes from the fact that each person will have four votes. You will be able to vote for the person in your constituency (1 of the 15) and you would be able to vote for 3 at-large candidates. So every voter would have four votes instead of one vote. Again, I don't think that is equality because, again, we will run into the possibility of people not exercising all four votes, but giving one of the at-large candidates a greater advantage by voting for that one person only and removing the three votes from the pool of votes. So there is quite a lot of opportunity for gerrymandering that system and manipulation.

If the Government is concerned about manipulation in the single member constituencies with one man one vote, this system that they are proposing would increase the possibility of doing that because all I would have to do is just cast one of my votes for the person that I wanted out of my three, unless they are going to make it compulsory and the ballot is spoiled, it doesn't have four votes marked on it.

Now, Madam Speaker, the other thing that the Government seems very concerned about is (and I want to get the terminology right) . . . I think they talked about their concerns of the demographics in the single member constituencies and, to me, that means either nationalities or ethnic groups and they are worried that some ethnic group or nationality here might have a majority in one of the constituencies and they could elect one of their own. I think somebody needs to identify to the people in Cayman which one of these

nationalities they are concerned about and scared of. Is it the Filipino/Caymanian? The Canadian/Caymanian? The American/Caymanian? The British/Caymanian? The Jamaican/Caymanian? The Honduran/Caymanian? Or the Caymanian/Caymanian? Because the Caymanian/Caymanian is the only one on the declining list. Every other one of those nationalities is growing.

Madam Speaker, we have to understand and accept that none of these people can vote unless they have become Caymanian. And under our current Constitution none of them can run for office unless they are second generation Caymanian. And there are quite a few of us up in here that would fit into the various categories of Caymanian. I don't think that somebody who has become a Caymanian, who has exercised their vote, who has a child, should not be able to elect one of their own from a particular ethnic group which is in the majority in the area they live in. That's democracy at its best; majority rule in any community. The key word is they must become Caymanian first.

Now, Madam Speaker, this is the same Government that came to my district in 2008 and wanted to convince my community to allow people who had Caymanian status for 25 years to run for Government. Well I think they got so much reaction to that in North Side, led by me, that I never heard it mentioned again. But their proposal was that if a person had Caymanian status and had it for 25 years or more, they could run and sit in this Parliament. I don't support that. I never will. One of the things that we need to look at in this Constitution is ways to tighten that up and ensure that only second generation Caymanians, and absolutely only second generation Caymanians can sit in these hallowed Chambers.

Madam Speaker, again, I think that we may be running a foul, if that is their concern, of the section in the Constitution under Human Rights which talks about discrimination and discriminating for race, sex and political lines and all those. We could get in some difficulty there if they try to engineer this hybrid so that the eventuality of either of those ethnic groups cannot get elected. Then I think they are going against the Human Rights.

Then, Madam Speaker, the concern was the length that one might serve in one of these small single member constituencies and the ability of political parties to dominate a particular constituency. Well, that is not the case in Cayman because my friend from East End is a good example. He originally got elected on his own. And in 2005 he got elected as part of the PPM political party. In 2009 and 2013 he got elected on his own again. So, in small constituencies it is usually the individual that those constituents . . . and the only way to retain longevity in there, irrespective of what we think and might speculate, is if the people that you represent believe you are giving them good representation. Now, you and I from the outside might accuse that of being corrupt and all kinds of

stuff, and he runs a garrison and everything else, but unless the people who vote in that constituency interpret that person's representation as being good to them, they are not going to get elected. They are going to change him.

What amazes me, Madam Speaker, is how quick we are to grasp at the worst, particularly in the Caribbean, of any political system that exists. People in Cayman who don't like political party systems, the first thing they do is turn to their neighbor in Jamaica and talk about how political parties destroy a country. The great US, the great Mother country, all have political party systems. But we always seem to look for the negative. And here we are convinced that there are certain constituencies in some of the Caribbean countries that set up garrisons in order to control it, et cetera, and we have places like Guyana and Trinidad where there is great electoral competition between the ethnic groups in the majority, and we seem to think there is something wrong with that. But it is okay to have a situation where we have . . . and Madam Speaker, anybody in this current Parliament who has been here (for example, the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of Planning, and others) for 20-plus years is not here because they are affiliated with a particular party. They are here because the people that voted for them are convinced that they give them good representation. Now, I might disagree whether I believe they are giving them good representation, but the people that count—the people who vote—are convinced that those people who they have elected for 20-plus years give them good representation. That's why they vote for them.

I will agree that if it is smaller numbers it is easier to have a relationship and have the opportunity to explain to your voters how you are best representing them, et cetera. But that's good. That is what participatory democracy is all about. And that is what we need to be moving towards, providing greater opportunities for smaller constituencies with smaller numbers of representatives, with one person that they can hold accountable, one person that they can hold responsible, one vote to elect a person, and encourage . . . because that's the kind of constituency that is going to demand participatory democracy.

There is no secret that the only group up in here that has regular public meetings is the two persons from the single member constituencies. There is good reason for that. The people demand it. The people expect it. We have to do it if we want to keep their support. In George Town you could go the whole four years and never have a public meeting, come out two weeks before election and get elected. You can't do that in a small . . . and you won't be able to do that in five single member constituencies in George Town. I can promise you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Yes, check the percentage of the eligible voters before you start talking numbers. Don't worry about the little 200, talk about that, what was it, 78 per cent or 87 per cent of those that voted. That's what quality representation and participative democracy and participative representation delivers for you at the polls.

So, Madam Speaker, I see this whole shift to this hybrid system a set-out to achieve one thing, and one thing only. I don't really believe that they think they can get away with doing it. But it is going to delay any action or any final action changing the electoral system until near enough to the 2017 election to ensure that the next election in 2017 is conducted the same way it was conducted then.

Madam Speaker, since the Government is going to depart forever from the possibility of bringing the amendment to the Election Law that would set up 18 single member constituencies I just need to serve notice to the House that, in accordance with Standing Order 44, I will be bringing a private Bill to achieve that sometime before December this year if the Government does not bring the Bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town

Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr., Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is no secret that I was one of the original One Man One Vote (OMOV), Single Member Constituency Committee members. I worked hard with that group of individuals to campaign for the referendum and to ask people to vote in the affirmative when the time came. I worked closely with the Members for East End and North Side, Madam Speaker, and I recall going door to door in Bodden Town literally begging people for their vote for one man one vote and single member constituencies.

Thousands of Caymanians braved the ire and the iron fist of the Government at the time to come out and vote in that referendum. Those who came out and voted in favour of one man one vote, Madam Speaker, and single member constituencies now expect that I will stand up for them and that I will be there to carry out the promises that I made to them as their Representative. At the time I was asking to be their Representative as well.

Madam Speaker, I would refuse to turn my back on those people who not only showed me that they wanted equality of voting rights, but also showed me at the time that they were prepared to support me as the leader and as their Representative. One man one vote and single member constituencies may not be an immediate priority for this Government, Madam Speaker, in light of the other challenges that we face.

But it was a campaign promise that I made to the people of Bodden Town, and I have no intention of running away from that commitment.

Single member constituencies will address many of the social ills that we face as a nation today, Madam Speaker, and by raising the level of accountability, responsibility and effectiveness of our Representatives I think we will do a lot of good for this country in moving it forward as a democratic society. Under single member constituencies, Representatives will be made to understand that they cannot ignore small pockets of voters.

Madam Speaker, I disagree with the notion that entire constituencies can be bought. I do not believe that Caymanian society has degraded to that point. But I do agree that sufficient numbers can be influenced, Madam Speaker, so to determine the election result in a constituency where there may be less than 1,000 voters. I am very concerned with the size of the constituencies as planned and laid out in the latest Boundaries Commission Report. When we create constituencies with less than 1,000 voters it is possible for one candidate to pander to one demographic and ignore others.

Madam Speaker, it is no secret that my father was a Jamaican immigrant. And while I do not masquerade around with a heavy Jamaican accent after having lived here all of my life, I do not subscribe to the notion that I should try to appeal to only one demographic or cultural bias. Those Caymanians who, like me, can identify with a Jamaican background clearly know me as someone who can be counted on to represent them. And there is no requirement for me to turn up my Jamaican-ness, or pronounce my words any different than I always have. They know me, Madam Speaker.

However, I am disappointed—and I must take this occasion to comment on it, Madam Speaker—that during the campaign it became clear to me that certain individuals were using the Jamaican/Caymanian community to further their political goals. And it disgusted me. Madam Speaker, hopefully I will be around next election. And if I see a reoccurrence of that sort of behaviour, which is divisive and irresponsible, I will go after those individuals, because I take it personally. To me it is an insult to the Jamaican people who have come here to make Cayman their home.

Madam Speaker, when I campaigned in the district of Bodden Town I had to appeal to people from all walks of life, not just the Latin/Caymanians, or the Jamaican/Caymanians or the Caymanian/Caymanians (as the Member for North Side described it just now), or black Caymanians, or white Caymanians. I had to appeal to everybody. I had to appeal to the rich, the poor and the middle class, Madam Speaker, and the many mixed ones. I had to have across-the-board appeal in order to get elected. I didn't appeal to any one particular demographic.

I like it that way. I would much prefer to have to get out there and, as I did during this election, wear out more than one pair of shoes hitting the pavement canvassing, walking door to door—not just to the people who can identify with me, but more to those people who couldn't, that I had to convince to support me. That's the real challenge. That's the real test. And that makes you a stronger more dedicated Representative at the end of the day.

Madam Speaker, I am conscious of my Caymanian and Jamaican roots. I feel that in order for me to be a true Representative I should be able to represent not just one demographic, but everybody. I also wish to make it clear that if I were to represent just one particular constituency, that that in no way reduces the significance of my role as a Bodden Town MLA. As it stands I have to be involved in district-wide issues and that will never change.

Madam Speaker, there are some days that I can be found in Belford and Lookout. There are days when I am in Breakers. Other days I am in Gun Square, Pedro, Savannah, Newlands, Spotts/Newlands, North Sound Gardens, North Sound Estates. I am a district Representative and whether or not I am elected by a portion of that district, I have to continue to be a district Representative. If I were to pigeonhole myself into one small little single member constituency, I would be tempted to ignore the wider district issues. But this can be addressed if we ensure that the single member constituencies are not too small in terms of numbers of voters. It is a simple concept. Making them span a much wider demographic and wider geographical area will eliminate any possibility that some unscrupulous representative may want to only appeal to a small group of individuals to their advantage.

Madam Speaker, I want to represent all Bodden Towners regardless of my little area that may or may not elect me. And if I am to truly represent the people of this country, you should never see me (as a Representative) consecutively, consistently turning my attention to only one particular demographic.

Madam Speaker, I remember the experience of sitting in the counting room as the polls closed. I remember watching the sinking look on the faces of the Government at the time in that room as the votes of everyone who had cast their vote in the one man one vote single member constituency referendum were counted. Regardless of how high that bar had been set by the Government, the majority of those who voted asked for equality and they asked for single member constituencies. Again, Madam Speaker, while I cannot say it is an immediate priority, it is time for us to strike a blow for equality and to keep our promises.

Equality of voters' rights is first and foremost on my mind. One man one vote and single member constituencies is the ideal that I was campaigning for. But we can minimise having too many small constituencies.

I think it would be understandable for everyone to have three or four votes in order to introduce at-large members. It is an idea that I think can work, as long as there is equality in voting. I don't see where the population would reject the idea of having more than one vote if everyone had equal number of votes. I think that is the biggest concern right now. That is the concern with individuals in the district of East End compared to voters in George Town—six versus one.

I do believe that at-large members will allow us to have a balanced approach to district and national issues and focus. Having 18 small constituencies could result in 18 representatives who are primarily focused on local concerns. We are all politicians. By nature we will all want to be re-elected. That is why we are here; we are here to do a job. We are here to represent. We came here out of a desire to represent people; we want to be re-elected.

In my mind, Madam Speaker, it would be more sensible to have some Representatives in the House who focus on the larger issues the country-wide issues, not just the district issues. Most of us do it when we campaign, Madam Speaker. We get up and talk about what we are going to do for our districts. Having Members who focus on country-wide issues, in my mind, cannot be all bad.

Like the Member for East End, I am not so concerned with the creation of garrisons. I don't think that our Caymanians have degraded to that point. At this point in time I don't think—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.: Let me continue.

But it is important to remember that as these Islands develop and change we need to turn an eye towards that future potential.

Madam Speaker, it is possible at some point in time for a criminal element to occupy a particular constituency and through intimidation and criminal means lend their support to particular candidates and ensure that they remain in power for a very long time. It can happen. I agree. In the districts of East End and North Side there is less likelihood because those districts are spread out. But where there is a dense neighbourhood, where there is a much denser population, and where there is already a significant criminal element, there is a real concern.

Madam Speaker, I support the compromise being offered by the Government. I think that if we accept this proposal it will still address equality in voting. We will still introduce single member constituencies. We will continue to respect the spirit of one man one vote, single member constituency movement, and I think we will improve upon it. I think this proposal bars against selfish behaviour and ensures that every candidate is required to work extremely hard to win a seat.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned earlier that I wore out a pair of shoes, two polo shirts and a pair of khakis walking the streets of Bodden Town—that beautiful red one! I consider that a test. It was a rite of passage. And when I was told that I had won my seat that experience made me know that I had worked for what I had achieved. I didn't just waltz into a seat in this Parliament, this honourable House.

The proposal as outlined by the Premier also allows this Government to help our Coalition partners to keep their election mandates as well. We are not simply a Progressive Government, we have other Members who are part of this Government who are working with us—very hard, I might add. And out of respect, out of camaraderie and brotherhood, and sisterhood, I think that this Government owes it to them to listen to their concerns as well. They do have a mandate from the people who put them here. We have to respect that.

Madam Speaker, the Premier outlined a solution that will guard against future garrison-building by anyone, including Members of this Government, when the next election comes around. It is a safeguard. I am prepared to operate in as transparent and clean a manner as possible, but this furthers the transparency in our electoral process and I support what the Premier has put forward.

It also allows us to represent a much wider cross-section of Caymanians and not just one demographic, as I mentioned earlier. And it keeps the potential for criminals and unscrupulous individuals to corrupt our currently clean process at a minimum. Those are the main reasons why I can support this proposal. And although it is not exactly the single member constituencies, one man one vote system that I went out and campaigned on, I see it as an improvement on what we campaigned on.

Madam Speaker, these changes, as outlined by the Premier yesterday, actually makes it harder for any of us sitting over here on the Government side to actually win a seat in 2017. We are not fooling ourselves. It will be a challenge, much more of a challenge. However, I think we are all prepared to put what is best for the country first and worry about ourselves afterwards.

To give some perspective on the issue and to underscore how important this Motion is to the people of the country, the referendum received 65 per cent of the vote based on the turnout that day. In comparison, when you take every Member in this honourable House . . . and I am supporting some of the argument by the Member for North Side now by saying he received 71.11 per cent of the vote. The Member for East End received 57.22 per cent. The Third Elected Member for West Bay, almost 44 per cent; the First Elected Member for West Bay, 42 per cent; the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay, 39 per cent; the Second Elected Member for West Bay, 44 per cent.

The First Elected Member for George Town, 42 per cent; the Second Elected Member for George Town, 37 per cent; the Third Elected Member for George Town, 36 per cent; the Fourth Elected Member for George Town, 35 per cent; the Fifth Elected Member for George Town, 34 per cent; the Sixth Elected Member for George Town, 33 per cent.

The First Elected Member for Bodden Town, 49 per cent; the Second Elected Member for Bodden Town, 44 per cent; the Third Elected Member for Bodden Town, 43 per cent; and myself, Madam Speaker, with 38 per cent.

The First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, 75 per cent; and the Second Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, 55 per cent.

Clearly, Madam Speaker, as you move to first past the post, the clearer and stronger the election results become. And there can be little doubt who the voters in a particular constituency overwhelming chose as their Representative. In the case of the referendum, clearly the people who turned up chose equality and single member constituencies. And clearly they voiced their support for a new Government by casting their votes in 2013 and we are now bound by the promises we made to those voters.

It would be foolhardy and disrespectful to ignore those Caymanians and their demonstration that they wanted change and I do not believe that any Member of this Government would ignore the wishes of the people in that manner. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to see that we are behaving in an unselfish manner and are committed to keeping our election promises.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.: Committed to keeping our election promises.

Maybe now those who want to turn this into a political argument will give us some level of respect for not only doing what is best for the country, but for also potentially doing what may not be the best thing for us as individuals and future candidates. As one of the original OMOV Single Member Constituency members, I wish to congratulate all 18 Members of this House, Madam Speaker, and thank them for their contribution to this process in getting us to this point.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

Hon. Marco S. Archer, Minister of Finance and Economic Development: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to make my contribution to the debate on this Motion. I have been associated with the issue of one man one vote and single member constituencies since November 2011. While I will not pretend to know everything about it, I believe that I do know a thing or two with respect to the pros and cons.

What I recall from my involvement in that campaign, Madam Speaker, is that there were several essential elements to the campaign on one man one vote, and single member constituencies. Those are: collecting signatures to trigger the referendum; the PR campaign, which would include producing and distributing fliers, posters, radio and television appearances, letters to the media, fundraising. Madam Speaker, included in all of that, is also door to door campaigning which is rather time consuming. I think though time consuming, it is probably one of the most beneficial or rewarding (to borrow a word from my colleague across the floor), because it is at that time that you get to meet people, see them face to face, and convince them that you are credible, sincere, and reliable. At that stage people develop a relationship with you, and you develop a relationship with them. It is therefore that much more personal to those of us who may have done so as well as those people who were willing to invite us into their homes to discuss something that was relatively new to them at the time and for some people something totally unfamiliar.

During that campaign, I developed a great deal of respect and admiration for some of the people with whom I worked. I will refrain from mentioning anyone by name, but I will describe what I recall about these people. I recall a particular lady who didn't say very much. She sat quietly, she listened, and on the odd occasion she interjected. But what I admired about that lady was that she took on the task of fundraising and she went about it and did a wonderful job. I had the pleasure of speaking with her a few months ago. I recall telling her how much I admired what she had done.

There were others, Madam Speaker, who contributed financially and assisted with the PR campaign. I recall, in particular, one man (I didn't know it at the time but since learned) who had taken his limited cash and went out and bought PR materials because he believed in what we were trying to do. He then went around and distributed and erected those posters, signs and other things he had purchased.

There were a few others who gave advice, who lent a hand, who made financial contributions. And there were others who also promised to make financial contributions. But, Madam Speaker, as with everything, there are those whose motives are ulterior, and who do absolutely nothing unless it benefits them to do so. And, yes, Madam Speaker, the one man one vote, single member constituencies campaign had its fair share of such persons. Madam Speaker, in the interests of self-respect and dignity I

will let the guilty remain anonymous, but they know who they are.

It is for that very reason why in my debut speech as a political candidate at the Marriott Hotel, sometime in the early months of 2013, I recall saying that you should not join an organisation or get involved in something for what you can get out of it. Rather, you join an organisation, or a movement, or something of the sort, for what you can put into it. I recall in May 2012 I missed about two weeks of the meetings in the campaign. But when I returned to the battlefield (so to speak), I went door to door and it gave me a renewed appreciation for what I was doing when I saw that people identified with what we were trying to achieve.

I recall going back to one of the group meetings and saying to them that for some of them it was going to be a very hollow exercise because some were just going through the motions and had gotten involved only for what they could get out of it and not what they could put into it. Madam Speaker, I am the type of individual who never gets involved [except] for what I can put into it.

Having said that, in my own contribution to the one man one vote, single member constituencies campaign, I penned two letters to the media, one in February 2012, entitled "[The politics & democracy of 'one man, one vote'](#)" (single member constituencies). In that I mentioned some of the qualities that people should look for in a candidate. Among other things I also spoke about what is commonly called "passing the buck." In the letter of February 2012, I spoke of what constituents should look for in a candidate. I spoke of such things as track record, qualifications, experience, various things.

And then again in early or mid July (I think the referendum was 18 July) 2012 I wrote a second letter to the media. That one was "[Understanding accountability in OMOV, and SMC.](#)" In that letter I recall saying that everyone with an open mind pretty much grasped what was meant by equality of votes, or voter equality. But listening to all that was said, I had come to the conclusion that what many people missed was the issue of accountability. I recall contrasting in that article the two *de facto* single member constituencies in East End and North Side and their inability to pass the buck for the simple reason that they had only one. I contrasted their situation with that of a multi-member constituency where it is commonly perceived and believed that passing the buck is a frequent occurrence.

Madam Speaker, I am two years older, somewhat more experienced, and, therefore, somewhat wiser. And now that I stand in the shoes of an elected Member, I would humbly admit that what may be perceived as passing the buck is sometimes a simple case of representatives doing their best to achieve an outcome, resolve an issue, or satisfy the demands of a constituent or a group of constituents. I would compare it somewhat to a relay where one rep-

representative in a multi-member constituency may become aware of an issue and will do their best to do as much as they can. And then, will seek the assistance and involvement of other Members within that constituency. Well, Madam Speaker, the truth is, we all have different strengths, weaknesses, experiences, knowledge and, therefore, abilities. So while one may have done all one can and then request assistance from the others, to the outsider looking in it may appear as though it is passing the buck.

But the truth is, Madam Speaker, as an MLA within a multi-member constituency, you are (and I think this is true for everyone whether they are in a multi-member constituency or a *de facto* single member constituency) . . . the truth is we are all limited as to what we can do. And there are times when we are constrained by what we can do because of the fact that we have to operate within certain rules.

Madam Speaker, in that article I spoke about how in a multi-member constituency it is quite easy for an MLA to play the blame game and pass the buck. But at this stage, Madam Speaker, as I have said, I am more experienced now. I am equally aware that it is probably more difficult for an MLA in a single member constituency to achieve anything without the assistance of wider support. Madam Speaker, I say that just to say that even though I had written this article and I have stated what my belief was with all sincerity, I am now able to say that I am aware that it is not as simple as saying "they are playing the blame game or passing the buck."

But continuing on with respect to my contribution to the OMOV and SMC Campaign, in addition to the two letters, I also collected hundreds of signatures with the hope that we would have sufficient numbers to trigger the referendum. I also appeared on the radio whenever I was asked to do so. As I have said before, I went door to door explaining the concept of one man one vote, single member constituencies to anyone who was unfamiliar with it. I made a financial contribution towards the overall expense, as many of us had to do in the latter days of the campaign when the promised funding from many did not materialise.

So, Madam Speaker, the truth is many have said that it is something that we campaigned on. And that is absolutely true, because I recall doing so. I haven't waived from my position on one man one vote or single member constituencies. Madam Speaker, I sit in here and I try to listen as attentively as I can. But like everyone else, sometimes I am distracted. I recently heard talk about political capital, political currency (whatever the correct term may be). And I just want to say right now the discussion is surrounding whether we go straight for 18 single member constituencies or we have somewhat of a hybrid with 15 single member constituencies and 3 at-large representatives.

Whatever the situation is, Madam Speaker, as an individual, honestly, I am not the least bit afraid as

to which one we adopt. I never think of political currency or political capital because my perspective is that the truth is politically we are all bankrupt. In terms of political currency or political capital we are all bankrupt. I don't think it depends on how many times you have been here, or what percentage of the vote you got at the last election. But I will elaborate so that no one is offended by what I am saying.

When I think of political capital and political currency, I think of people who think that they are here by their own design or abilities, so to speak. I am reminded of King Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel (I see the smile on your face. I know you are familiar with the story.) To paraphrase, and to get the message across, he thumped his chest and he said, *Well, humph, look at all that I have done; look at all that I have built. This is me!* In his own estimation his political capital, his political currency, was probably equal to what is stored at Fort Knox in America. But, as I have said, Madam Speaker, because of my perspective and where I stand, I never think of political capital or currency, and neither do I fear an at-large system or a full single member constituencies system.

Madam Speaker, before he could finish thumping his chest saying, *Look at me; look at what I have done*, the great God Almighty in heaven said, *'No, not you. You didn't do anything. I put you there and I will take you out.'* And that very night, to prove that He's never wrong, He took him out. He removed him. He sent him into the wilderness as a mad man until he realised that he was subject to the authority of the great God Almighty in heaven. He was appointed king by the will of God, not through political capital or political currency.

So, Madam Speaker, I will reiterate and repeat for those who may think that political capital and political currency makes all the difference in an election, I stand before you today to say that it makes no difference. The Lord appoints and the Lord [removes]. In a debate in February 2013 I said to many candidates and to the audience, it makes no difference how much money you spend on a campaign. The Lord will decide who will get elected.

Madam Speaker, whether there are candidates who can run at-large across the entire country, or there are candidates who can run only in a particular constituency, I am comfortable with either one because the Lord has given me what I need to compete in either one. But I am not depending on that, I am depending on Him. And I am not even thinking about the next election, Madam Speaker, because it's only eight months since we completed the last one. There is much to do, much to accomplish before we start to wonder what we do as individuals, how we start posturing and campaigning for something that none of us are sure we will ever see.

So, Madam Speaker, having said all that, and while I fought fair and hard in the one man one vote campaign, as well as the general election, we had the

referendum. I wasn't happy with the way it was structured. I thought the hurdle was a bit unfair, but we had the referendum. The results came as they were. If I recall, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town said 65 per cent of the voters who turned out voted yes. What we will never know, that I personally would like to know, is how much of the success of the one man one vote and single member constituencies campaign can really be attributed to the ideal that we campaigned on, or how much of the success was in fact a vote against the Government of the day. While I remain committed to it, there are some things I would like to know for my own understanding, but, unfortunately, I may never know.

In closing, the 2012 referendum and campaign was intended to implement one man, one vote and single member constituencies for the 2013 general election. However, having failed to achieve that, it was always intended that it would then be implemented for the 2017 general election. As I have said, I have only been in office for eight months. I have many things to accomplish which require absolute dedication and concentration. I am no hypocrite. I am not going to stand here and tell you that tomorrow if we should identify single member constituencies and if we should put it in place tomorrow in preparation for the 2017 general election, Madam Speaker, I am not going to stand here and tell you that I am so perfect that it will not cross my mind as to which one of those constituencies I should concentrate on. Therefore, I run the risk of ignoring any other constituency that I have no interest in representing.

I am being fair to myself. I am being fair to the people of George Town. I am being fair to the people of the Cayman Islands when I say that while I remain committed to the implementation of single member constituencies and one man one vote for the 2017 general election, personally, eight months into the term, I cannot afford to be distracted by thinking as to which one of these constituencies am I going to give my greatest attention to so that I can position myself for the next election, and, then, for the next three years I ignore anything else that I don't want to be associated with.

I am being honest, Madam Speaker. I am human. I know some people probably wouldn't say that because everyone wants to pretend they are able to separate this and that from whatever. I am telling you it might cross my mind; but I don't think it would be fair to the rest of the constituents that I am supposed to represent for the next three years, four months.

I remain committed to it for 2017 general election, but right now I want to concentrate on the matter at hand, which is getting the country's finances back in order. That is my primary priority right now.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Final call—I recognise the Second Elected Member for George Town.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Second Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And good afternoon colleagues.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak on this Private Member's Motion. I guess in many ways I am not surprised it is back so quickly, because I truly believe that the issue is one that still burns within the Cayman Islands, one that I think the voters are truly concerned about and want to see some progress [on].

Madam Speaker, from the time I cast my first vote in the 1980 election, I always felt that because of the place that I chose to live in I enjoyed an unfair advantage over voters from other districts who did not have the same number of votes that I did. I always felt that the existing electoral system that we have is archaic. It is truly discriminatory and, in my mind, has no place in a modern society. I very much would like to see it changed.

I was never a part of the one man one vote movement, Madam Speaker. But I certainly supported the aims and aspirations of the referendum. I signed the petition and I voted in favour of the referendum. Sadly it was not successful. I do fervently believe in equality of franchise, that everyone everywhere should have the same voting rights and obligations. That, I support. And while I truly support one man one vote, and did vote for the concept too of single member constituencies, Madam Speaker, I do have reservations about the single member constituencies, for reasons that were discussed by the Premier. I share those concerns and believe that there are other systems that we should discuss and look into before we accept and move strictly to single member constituencies. So, as an elector here, I would prefer and welcome the further debate on the concept of single member constituencies.

The Premier mentioned one alternative that he is considering. I don't think that is the only alternative that we have, single member constituencies as proposed, the system as alluded to yesterday by the Premier. There is also the concept of what I would call a plurality, or truly national elections, where everybody had their elector district, but have 18 at-large seats. The first 18 across the line are the ones elected. We could go even further and keep our electoral districts the way they are right now, and for districts with multiple seats the first in George Town, certainly the first six across the line would be the winners; Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, the first two.

I found wide disparity amongst people in terms of their commitment to single member constituencies. I could never find consistency and complete commitment to it. I found divergent views, to say the

least, amongst those who supported me and who provided counsel to me during the election and even to this day. My goal is to ensure that our electoral system is reformed and that there is equality of franchise in the Cayman Islands. My goal is to see, to ensure, and to advocate that the elections in 2017 are conducted with a new system in place and not conducted under the old system, the present system, that we have.

So, in terms of the Private Member's Motion at hand, I welcome the opportunity for further debate on whether we should have single member constituencies, national at-large seats. I believe that these are discussions that we must have. And the system that we end up with at the end of the day must, of necessity, be the best for this country. I acknowledge that single member constituencies with one man, one vote is the predominate form of electoral system that exists in democracies. But, as I have stated previously, it is not the only one. Other countries, particularly some countries even within the Caribbean, have variations which operate quite successfully and have their advantages and disadvantages.

I am looking forward to the debate. I would like for that debate to take place sooner rather than later so that we can take the steps necessary to implement and make sure that our electoral reform is in place to ensure that the elections in 2017 are conducted in a far more democratic and fairer environment than presently exists.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, what a difference a day, power, position, makes. What a difference a day makes.

First of all, Madam Speaker, I have never heard more *we want it, but we don't want it* in my entire life. And one thing I can say about this Government is that they are smart. They can find some good excuses. They can find some good excuses!

Anyway, Madam Speaker, in all of my years of political involvement . . . and from the time I was seven or eight years old I was put on the car bonnet of the late T.W. Farrington and slowly driven through the district saying, "Vote for T.W. Farrington." So, my involvement goes a long way back. But 30 of those years I have spent in this House. All of those years, Madam Speaker, I have had some very, very serious issues to deal with, and I have never witnessed a turnaround as I witnessed here yesterday. I was shocked—to say the least—when the Premier rose.

Madam Speaker, the changing of the voting system is a most serious matter. A man's vote is the backbone of democracy. We would be breaking that backbone. Madam Speaker, if there are two things I respect in life it is loyalty and a man's word. Two things that really hurt me in life are when you expect people to be loyal and they stab you in the back when you are not looking, and when they cannot keep their word. The one thing I really respect about the Member for East End is that he remains true to his word. Say what you want—and we are on different sides on many issues—you can't expect more of a man. No one can say that he is not passionate about the issues, as he sees [them], affecting his country.

I have worked with the Member for North Side before and we have been on opposite sides. If he tells you he is going to do something, you just have to watch it. I respect that because you know what to expect. When a man can't keep his word he is just a *feyah-feyah* person.

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, this country knows where I stand on this issue. No matter how much they paint it up, I am not yet convinced. I hear them over there talking about why they can't do so now. They even brought in Nebuchadnezzar!

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, the problem that I have is this: I don't know what amount of people support this issue. I don't know.

I heard the Member for Bodden Town talking about an iron fist. You see, when you are put out to do something you should figure every step of the way. You must not go off half-cocked, or you should not go. That's what I am told. But all of us are guilty of doing that at times. When that was raised, Madam Speaker, I saw it coming and I said, *Well, let the people decide*. If more persons had come out to the referendum, we would [have] known. But that did not happen.

If more people had come out and voted 'yes', then we would have had to put it in place. I would have had to do that. What I do know is that the Premier used the one man one vote issue (maybe more than him) in a most disrespectful way, to put it mildly, against me. And he traversed far yesterday.

I heard the Member for Bodden Town saying that they have a solution. Well, I did not hear any solution put forward. I heard them talk about it, but if the Premier wanted to do that then he should have said: *This is what I am going to do. I am going to set up a committee, I'm going to do this and then we can all have a say*. He did not do that. So I don't know yet where the Government stands on this because I hear

them saying, *I want it, I want it, I want it; but I don't want it!* So, where are they going with it? That's what I would like to know.

They talk about priorities, yet we take two days to come down here to do this.

Man!

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

I don't hear any solutions from them. Less constituencies? At-large members? Well, I simply say if it is not broken, don't try to fix it. When you start meddling, experimenting with this kind of democracy and that kind of democracy you don't know what you will end up with! You don't!

Because BVI does it, you want to do it? They have a particular situation as to why they are doing it. They cannot find any more space to put any constituencies because they are so small. And they needed more members because of their large amount of work. That is not the case here.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

And they are regretting it too. The English made them do it. They said this is the best way for you to do it. Yeah! Any way they can confuse you! You go over there sit down and believe that they are working on your best behalf. Oh, they will agree with you long enough for you to get messed up.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

Well, I am just showing you what Churchill said: "The English never draw a line without blurring it."

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

You don't know what you will end up with.

I know this: It is not the system of voting that is keeping people unemployed. It is not the system of voting that keeps our dump getting worse and dumped on. It is not the system of voting why people are losing their homes. No! But you can't be so hypocritical, Madam Speaker.

Since they did all of this work, Madam Speaker, that they say they did, and I know they did because I was in office and I know how it distracted me. My hands were full with the budget problems left behind, but I had to deal with it, deal with it, deal with this thing shoved in my face every day of the week. Do it!

What did the Premier say? Got to break the . . . What did he say? Got to break the . . . Oh, I really want to quote that, Madam Speaker. What did he say? "Got to break fortress McKeever." And that was

mild [compared] to some of the things they said. But if they did all of this work that they said they did . . . he wore out what? One red pair of shoes and two red t-shirts. My good friend, the Minister of Finance . . . look how much work he said he did. How much he talks sincerely to people, how much he convinced people.

The truth is: what you all are not saying is that you talked to those people nothing about what you are saying here today. You talked about 18 single member constituencies. That is what you talked to them about. Come on now! You wore out shoes? You wore them out yes, talking about 18 constituencies and why you needed to do it and how much better you were going to make the place!

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

Yes, he was going to get rid of me! They didn't do that; Taylor did that.

But I am still here.

Ha, ha, ha! I am still here!

An Hon. Member: Surprise, surprise.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

A hard man fe dead.

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

What they said? You heard what Sister Tara said? "They can't get me out of the race."

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

I never heard more about how we need it but we don't need it. Tell the country the truth! You don't want it!

You don't want it.

Madam Speaker, the truth is the Premier is weak—weak, I tell you—in his district! And he cannot win on his own! Fact! Look at it. He is not willing to support any system that will take my friend's coattail in George Town that he is riding. He is not willing to do that. He needs my good friend, the First [Elected] Member for George Town. You watch what they are going to do with this system. You watch. Despite all of these years of sitting in the House he has never had the real pleasure of knowing what it is like to really win an election. Riding on somebody else's coattail.

I heard him say yesterday that he will win. He does not know that. None of us know that. But you have a good strong tugboat to pull you. It's going to pull you. I know that.

Those in Bodden Town now know it too. Without Tony Eden—the First [Elected] Member—where would they be? We know, and they found that out. So that is why they are [doing an] about-face

now. That's why the 180 degrees. I'm just waiting to see whether it is going to be 360 [degrees] because we don't know yet you know. We don't know. But right now it is a 180 degree turnaround.

McKeeva is right. I was right then and I am right now. Still right.

The Premier is weak, weak, weak, and cannot win on his own.

I have given the Government a very wide berth. I am going to continue to do that. If the Government fails, we all fail. I know that, Madam Speaker, and we cannot afford that. We should not be divided. That is the truth, Madam Speaker.

And he speaks about Jersey. Remember this: When they came with that constitutional change back when they first brought Mr. . . . what is his name again? The first one in the 90s . . .

An Hon. Member: Sleepy Smith.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Sleepy Smith.

I said, *Let us get a system that is like the Channel Islands where all of us can sit on as a government, the committee system.* That's what I said. Nobody wanted any part of that. I did say that. That is what I put forward. I wanted that and was the only one who did it. And they thought that I was too political to want that. Yes?

No, no, no, no! I still think it is the right thing to do. That's why I put in councillors, because you need people to work with you. That's why I asked the Premier, and I fought to put in a senate because they are a people, as somebody said (it might have been him), that were not going to get involved. But you know what they thought? They thought that I wanted a senate because I wanted to retire and I could be appointed to the senate. No. No.

But I do know the value of somebody looking over your shoulder to say, *No, don't go there right now. Don't do that. Look at this.* And there are experts that are not going to get into the cut and thrust of political life. They are not going to take what you and I take, you know? They are not going to take the cussing, the accusing. No. But we do know that they have expertise that we can use. That's why I wanted a senate. But he would not agree.

He said, *No, I am not going to put anybody in that is not elected. No, they are not going to have any say over me.* That's what he said.

When I put this system of councillors in place, that was an attempt to be inclusive. I like that word. He said it is not insular anymore; they are inclusive now. I know one thing; he is leaving me out far enough. And I know one thing, if they had their way, if Taylor had had his way, I would not even be. Can you imagine that he tried the very day of swearing-in to get them to appoint Ezzard as the Leader of the Opposition? But he told them, "No, you have a party system

and you have a party leader that is in the majority here." And it might have gone to the vote too if he had said anything else. But the truth is, he said, "No, it is not right."

So, this here, I see it is costing plenty. It is still costing. Here, it is still costing. They have tried to keep me out. Don't worry, I know. Plenty tears. No blood, thank God, but plenty tears, and also plenty, plenty prayers. And that is one thing I give the Minister of Finance, you don't play with Almighty God. You spit in the sky, it will fall in your face. You hear?

So, if they want something to do and they want to be positive and want to be really inclusive, tell all of us we are forming a government that everybody sits, whether it is finance, whether it is road building, whether it is . . . whatever it is, all of the subjects . . . tourism. Those who want to be in those areas will be able to sit down and make their contributions. You know what that brings? It brings less combative politics. And it is not a bad form of government. However—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: That's right!

It is not fighting. You will have the fights because you are going to have your views and I am going to have my views and the next person is going to have theirs. But it is the less combative form of governance.

No, we have gone all the way with the Westminster form.

I remain optimistic about the work of the Government. They have some newcomers that I respect and they have joined them in supporting power and politics over principles now, though. That is a sad thing. And the Caymanian people . . . don't think they are not looking, don't think they are not talking. I hear him say that he still has the majority support. I don't know that. I don't know that. One thing I have said you can't say until you go into that ballot box, then when the last box is turned upside down you can say you won. But before that, you do not know.

Now, Madam Speaker, this broken promise, they are going to be held accountable for it. They are going to be held accountable for it. You don't want Immigration the way you say you campaigned on it? You find a good excuse. You don't want minimum wage the way you put it into your manifesto? You find a good excuse. You do not want one man one vote because you found out now . . . well you knew all along. I believe that the Premier knew all along the difficulties he talked about when he joined me yesterday. He knew it all along, but it was good beating stick. It was a good thing for people to berate McKeeva because he is the one you have to tear down. You got to get him out. You got to beat him. Yeah, they did some convincing. Yes they did.

Madam Speaker, if we sit down and come up with a change, do you mean to tell me that with something as important as this we are not going for transparency and good governance and ask the people to say yes or no? You mean to say that in spite of the good democracy they espouse, all of them over there, and accuse me of not practicing, that we, 18 of us, can come here about at-large and more Members or less Members, or less constituencies? You can just do that?

No, the only thing that you can do, that you might have some moral ground to stand on is if you went to 18, because that is what people talked about. That is what you put into your manifesto. But to now talk about at-large . . . Madam Speaker, I hear some of them saying about not going to cost. No?

Madam Speaker, we were talking earlier. Look at what they spend in the United States to get one man elected—over \$300 million to get one man elected. Yes, the United States is large, but do you thing that is the reason for it? Nah! That's interest! That is what that is. No! Special interest is what that is. People are sleeping on the streets, yet they spend \$300 million to get one man elected. At-large? Go there and ask them what it is costing them. And if you are really concerned about people being able to cornswaggle others . . . You know what cornswaggle means? Control, in-wiggle [SOUNDS LIKE], use any of them that you want to.

But if you are concerned about that, those with the money, you think that anyone . . . I don't know about anybody else, but I certainly do not have the money. I know some of my colleagues do not have the money to run an island-wide campaign, an island with district, district, district. And in George Town you have to go so many different places. In West Bay . . . Bodden Town, look at how large that is. You have to go island wide. Yes, you can use television but you see what they did us, and newspapers and radio. Everybody jacked up the cost. It was only C4C that I saw had endless bundles of money to buy up television.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers, Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs: You had the last night.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Huh?

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: You got the very last night.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Did I?

Oh we had a few nights.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: We had a few nights.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: I know one thing, I tried to get one . . . on the day of the smallest paper I tried to get one page in there and I could not get it. Even when I told them that I was going to bring the money myself. Uh-uh, couldn't get it. I wanted to answer very badly, couldn't get it. We know why, though.

You think that setting up that kind of system is going to help us? Yes, it will help some people because they have the means, the wherewithal. I don't. I don't believe in it.

Madam Speaker, you are in your district, you are where the people know you best and there is nobody left out. All of those who are eligible on that list can come and cast their vote in their district. They do not have to vote six people in George Town, they can vote one vote. I heard plenty of that went on in George Town this last time. But mostly every time some people do what you call plumping; one person is given a vote. So, you don't have to change your system to get one vote. Just tell them to vote for the person that you want to vote for. But I say this, it is not broken. Let's not fix it, because it is not broken.

But I hear the argument. One thing I know is this: if it changes then I will have to live with it. But we know what we have, are we sure that we are doing the right thing? I don't know the amount of people who are for this. I know the people are more concerned about the dump right now.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Yep!

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: That's right.

Madam Speaker, all it would take for them to do, you know, is one memo to the drafting department to draft up the simple bill that they campaigned on. One simple clause and it is changed. No time wasted; nothing. Ah, but they are not sure. So they find good excuses. They are not sure.

Madam Speaker, I don't know about equality either, because if you look at it . . . I know that the Member for North Side did speak about that. That is not the kind of equality he is talking about. But I look at this: We have in East End or North Side they have between 500 to 600 voters. One constituency in West Bay would have over 1,000 voters. So, where is the equality there? There is none. In George Town, six seats. By then you will probably have at least 1,100, if

not more, voters per constituency. In Bodden Town, the four constituencies will have at least 1,000 voters.

What?

They are lucky, they will only have to go and talk with 300 people.

In Cayman Brac, I do not know what that will be as far as voters, but we will end up, if we go the way they said, with one country and two systems. No! Cayman Brac needs help, and I am always there to give my support to the Members for that. But why do you create something different there? Why? You are on a different island, but that does not mean anything when it comes to how you are voting. You are only voting in Cayman Brac and not down here.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Huh? What it means?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: If you split them up . . . you are not . . . I agree with you. That is why we should not do it. We shouldn't do it! The way it works now is the best way.

People vote for you if they want to vote for you. People vote for the next Member if they want to vote for the next Member. You get votes from both sides. I looked at the results. You carried both in the east and in the west.

An Hon. Member: Especially the west.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: But especially the west.

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Down on west end. Put you down there nobody will ever get you out.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: No, I don't want that. No. I don't believe in that. The way it is now they say it can't be broke. All it takes is one governor to set you up, paint you black, and it can change the vote system. That's all.

I don't see the clamour for it, except that it was an issue. And I understand why the Motion is being brought. I understand that, because it was promised and they all campaigned on it. So, they are trying to keep the promise that they made to their people. You can't hurt them for that. You cannot say ill-will of them for that.

Now for the Government to come here to do what they did yesterday, to say that they support

McKeeva Bush now because it suits them? Nah. Nah. No!

I said the same thing for years, the split up will give serious rise to other things, control for longer periods. The smaller the number of people, I believe, the greater the chance of certain persons, groups or parties controlling that small constituency for long, long periods. I believe that. The Premier said there is no fairness in it. And a couple of days ago he accused me of being on some road to Damascus. But I know one thing; he is on some road now. I don't know if it is Damascus he is going, but, boy, he is like Peter too. Was it Peter, Madam Speaker, or Paul? Which one?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: That went to Damascus and made the big change.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, changed the very name but we won't change his name. We will still call him the "Premier."

[Laughter and inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Right.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: You might have the same luck, you mean?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: I heard them out there planning for you. Ha, ha, ha.

Boy if you think that that Member does not take seriously when he is opposed, you are making a big mistake. *Unna* go and open *unna* mouths, *unna* will soon find yourselves overboard.

I said then, Madam Speaker—and will never forget—at the vote at Lancaster House maybe we should go to 19. Then England said no. I think they said it was better if we went to 21. I think the Member for East End had talked about 21, or the Member for North Side had talked about 21 Members. But we said the people would simply eat us about that. But the Premier then had a good chance to put the system solidly in place, no questions asked. You were going to a referendum anyway to vote on the Constitution. That was the best chance, the best opportunity to have a vote whether the people wanted yes or no.

And then they came up with this concoction of if we did not get 50 per cent then it would be rejected. I did not come up with that. Them! Your own Premier.

When we had the referendum in 2012 I said to him in Cabinet: *Look, I am concerned that 18 Members will give you a deadlock. Let us not go that way. We saw it in BVI, we saw it in different [parts of] the United States, we saw it in Trinidad.*

When one of my friends, who has since passed on, became chief minister he was an independent. Equal votes one side, BAM! He was in the middle. He became the chief minister.

In Trinidad, you all look at the regional history and see what happened down there.

In New York some time ago, shut down.

I said to the Leader of the Opposition then: *How do you feel if we do not go there? You are only trying to find a way to keep yourself in power.* [He said] *No 19 members. No, we are not going there.*

Or it was 17 [members] I said?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: *No we are not going there.*

I went back to Cabinet and said that we did not have any support to do this.

The UK said if we wanted to and the Opposition agreed they would do so. He said no! And now he comes here yesterday talking about 19 members? Not only that, but at-large, members, and less constituencies?

What grounds do you have to do that? What grounds—tell me—if you went to the public and asked them to make you the leader, make you the boss, and make you the king? You are going to represent them right. *I will put 18 members in place. McKeever don't want it because he wants to be there forever.* And you come now with all of these excuses. What a difference a day, power, position makes.

No! Madam Speaker, I don't think so.

I have not yet heard what the Government is going to do. They should come out and tell the Member for East End, *I don't support this Motion but this is what I am going to do.* You are still asking questions about it? I can't bail them out on this one.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

I have advised both my colleagues that they are free to vote their conscience on this Motion. But I challenge him to do the same on his side of the aisle. I challenge him to tell the C4C, to tell his Members, that I know are for this the way they campaigned. I know they are sincere enough. They will find excuses to keep the party line. But I know that they would prefer voting on this Motion solidly, "Yes." I challenge him!

But he said he only got them there, Madam Speaker, because he needs to be the Premier, and so that is why he put them all together.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: No.

But it is really new in the party system for us, particularly when you had such a brawl going on in the elections. The brawl that the Leader of the Opposition then had with C4C. On the television debate I said I better get in between the two of them you know, but I forgot and was reminded how much Alden could punch.

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition:

So, Madam Speaker, I said, *No I am not going to get between the two of them. Make them go and fight each other there.* Never gave a thought that they were going to be so unified within days. Good, though.

I would challenge them to look at that system that brings less acrimony, brings less in-fighting, that brings less combativeness in politics in Cayman. Bring that committee system of governance. Talk to the people about it and ask them if they would not rather have 18 people sitting down together . . . because people naturally believe that you can just come here and that is going to be it. No, it is not it.

It will be what you have right now, unless, everybody was on the same side, the same party, and you are not going to get that in Cayman. Not going to. But what you can have is me sitting down with the Minister of Tourism; the Member for East End, the Member for North Side sitting down with the Member for Communication and Works. And somebody sitting down with the Minister of Education and Employment and working together and getting it done. When you do not like something the people will judge whether you did right or not. That is what made Jersey that he is talking about, different.

But I say this, you know, whatever you choose . . . I don't think that you should do so because it is not good democracy to do so unless you went to the people.

So, Madam Speaker, if they come in with something . . . I don't know what he is coming up with because he has not said. What are you going to do? Try to change it right away? Or are you going back to the people? So, if you have to go back to the people, which I say you should, then, you know what? It is going to take the whole four years and get nothing done, and you are right back to what you have. I wonder if that is the objective or not. I wonder.

Madam Speaker, I challenge him to allow his Members to vote their conscience on this Motion. But for right now, this is between him, his colleagues and his constituents, and, Madam Speaker, cat has no place in a dog fight. Mind you, when you see the two of them fighting, the cat and dog, the dog mostly gets the worst of it.

So, I will wait to see if anybody else in the Government is going to offer something that I can say, *Yes, that is what I believe they should be doing*. But on this I have not heard it.

The Speaker: I recognise the First Elected Member for the district of Bodden Town.

Hon. Anthony S. Eden, First Elected Member for Bodden Town, Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I listened to the rollercoaster debate I want to put in my two pennies worth. I have been around this for quite some time, like the Leader of the Opposition and the First Elected Member for George Town.

As was indicated, the referendum that was held on this question was 65 per cent in the affirmative. Madam Speaker, I hear about the possible garrisons in these smaller districts. I guess I must say to Bodden Town, North Side and East End that despite their size, whether it is because of the old time Cayman tradition they have been able to keep this out.

Madam Speaker, as I kept listening to some of the debate, it reminded me of *Animal Farm*, where it says we're all created equal, but some are more equal. I will say that I campaigned on one person one vote, single member constituencies. During the day it went from my stomach to my head to my heart as to what to do on this Motion. Yes, I am part of the Government. But as many know, I make my decisions based on the representation I get from the people.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: I know that.

Hon. Anthony S. Eden: I have heard people talk about national elections. I, for one, could not support that, Madam Speaker. I believe that George Town, Bodden Town, and West Bay would probably end up with 16 of the 18 representatives. I don't know what chance the smaller districts would have, even Cayman Brac. I don't know what would happen to our Deputy Premier and you, Madam Speaker (if God spares your life), were you to run again.

I am not quite sure whether, listening to everything, a firm decision will be made and at what stage what formula will be adopted at the next election, whether 15 single member constituencies and 3 at-large. I am still trying to get my head around that. But as I shared with you earlier on, I said how my decision went from my stomach to my head to my heart. And, having campaigned on it, I will support the Motion.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Last call—I recognise the Sixth Elected Member for George Town.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Sixth Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to offer my contribution to Private Member's Motion on One man one vote, or one person one vote. A lot has been said on this topic of one person one vote, single member constituencies. Many campaigned on it. There was a referendum where I had concerns at the time that many of the people who were supporting the referendum were confused as to what they were supporting. Some were advocating that it was going to see the removal of party politics. Some advocated that it would see the removal of longstanding Members of this House. There were many, many reasons expressed by people as to why they were supporting the referendum.

But, Madam Speaker, even more than then, over the last few weeks there has been more political posturing and more of the same sort of beliefs in what this Motion would bring, should it be passed in this honourable House. You would have heard, listening over the last two days, even amongst the Members of this House, the different views and different beliefs and perceptions that moving to single member constituency, one person one vote, and what results it would have.

We have the added pressure of a two-week, maybe three-week, long campaign over the radio airwaves which . . . I thought the elections were over some time ago, but there certainly was a campaign by a particular host on the radio show over the last few weeks supporting the one man one vote, or the single member constituencies. Madam Speaker, this has added even more confusion to the matter.

Madam Speaker, I campaigned with the Progressives Government on the platform and I supported my colleagues and campaigned that we would review our electoral process and that we would review, as soon as possible, the potential of single member constituencies, one person one vote. However, Madam Speaker, I had some concerns of rushing into this and making a decision that could end up to the detriment of our country and our constituents. I say that, Madam Speaker, because I fear that (as we have heard loud in here today) so many Members have had so much experience and done so much research and have been advocating for it for so long. And, Madam Speaker, I am new to this arena.

I had concerns that I wanted to investigate with my constituents, with my supporters, and discuss in caucus with the Government. Some of those concerns included creating garrisons depending on the location of the electoral boundaries and the size of those constituencies. I heard the honourable Member for East End say yesterday that he hoped no one would speak to the possibility of garrisons. I understand what the Member for East End said, and I respectfully say to him that I believe that the Member is correct in saying that about North Side and East End.

I believe he is correct in saying that about other citizens of the country.

However, Madam Speaker, I do have to respectfully say that our demographics are changing. Our country is changing. And perhaps not in East End, North Side and Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, but, certainly, in the larger districts we can see a change in the demographics. I would also say at this point that it is not just our new Caymanians that can influence an election. We have seen in past elections where even persons who cannot vote were out campaigning. We see persons who cannot vote making up the numbers at political meetings, going around to the bars and spending money promoting. They cannot vote, but they are influencing the elections.

So, Madam Speaker, for those reasons I understand what the honourable Member said. But I do have to find out for myself and satisfy myself that I will not be responsible for creating political garrisons within our small country.

The Member for North Side spoke about the fact that we have two political parties. Again, it also concerns me about single member constituencies, and the fact that in a small single member constituency you can have a situation where you have a Member for life, as they call it; a Member that is so strong that he wins election after election after election. However, Madam Speaker, it is concerning to me that that Member may not be a member of a political party that continues to win term after term and, therefore, the constituents within that Member's boundaries could face suffrage for the fact that their Member is not a member of the party who could possibly lead the country for several terms at a time.

Madam Speaker, another matter of having a Member that also wins several terms at a time in a single member constituency is that you could see the development of voter apathy, where those who have voted against him, or who may not believe in that Member, stop showing up at the polls because they believe it is a foregone conclusion. You could also see small communities divided because persons who do not support that lifetime Member feel disenfranchised, feel a sense of helplessness, because they have not had a representative for several terms.

Madam Speaker, I am satisfied that this Government will address the issue of single member constituencies. I believe that this Government will fulfill its promise to the people of this country. However, Madam Speaker, I am also very confident that it will be in a way that ensures a fair, sustainable and democratic fashion that suits all of the people of these three [Islands].

Madam Speaker, I am also a supporter of the at-large Members. I feel that it is a way that persons who may fall in the categories I spoke of previously—disenfranchised individuals, or constituencies who may not have a Member in power for several terms—will have an opportunity to have their representations

felt by the at-large Member. The other benefit of the at-large Member is that we have Members who will look out for the entire country, rather than just a single constituency. In my mind, Madam Speaker (and perhaps I am completely wrong), and I am sure in the minds of many others, I feel that the at-large Members will offer a balance to all, or some, of these concerns that I previously mentioned in my debate here this afternoon.

I also feel very confident that single member constituencies will seek direct representation as the Members all alluded to earlier. And it will hold Representatives accountable. I have to say that my constituency work has, by far, been the most enjoyable part of my new role as a representative of the people of George Town and the Cayman Islands. So I have no fear of being responsible, directly responsible. And, yes, the Member for East End said the Cayman Islands. On my Tuesday evening counseling hours I receive constituents from Bodden Town, West Bay, George Town, even Cayman Brac. I don't turn anyone back.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Perhaps not everyone is like me.

Some Hon. Members: Ooh no!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: I am here this afternoon, Madam Speaker, with an open mind. I am here this afternoon with hopes that my brief debate has offered some thought towards the issue. I am also here this afternoon to say that despite, sometimes, the robustness of the debate here today I believe that the Members of this honourable House can work together to come to a solution that will serve all the people of this country.

So, Madam Speaker, with those few words, I would like to thank you or the opportunity and thank honourable Members for listening to me. I look forward to hearing the further debate.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I recognise the honourable Fifth Elected Member for George Town.

Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr., Fifth Elected Member for George Town: Madam Speaker, I rise to say that I will not support the Private Member's Motion moved by the Member for East End and seconded by the Member for North Side. Not because I oppose one man one vote. I signed the petition. And although I did not campaign on it, I didn't come into politics on its coat tails. I do believe in equality of voting.

One man one vote is not as simple as the two Members would make you believe, especially not in three months. During the election campaign I was quoted in the *Caymanian Compass* stating my views (if any Member wants to see, it was the 9 May 2013, *Caymanian Compass*) where I said I believed in one man one vote, but I believed in national elections. It is the same belief I have today.

Unlike what the media would try to have you believe, unlike what the Members who brought the Motion suggested, and unlike what some have inferred from the Premier's statement in January, I have not faltered in my view. And just taking it on its face, I was a first-time candidate in this last election and I would certainly have looked forward to campaigning before 900 people versus 7,000. But I didn't get into politics because it was easy. I didn't mind putting in the time and speaking to the people that I spoke to.

Again, with my view, I represent not only the district of George Town, but I represent every single person living—voting or otherwise—in the Cayman Islands. It is our decisions made in this House that affect their lives. So, not only the people who vote for us.

Madam Speaker, I do not support the Motion because I believe in giving enough rope to either pull yourself up or hang yourself. For the Members to bring it after nine months when there are so many other priorities affecting these Cayman Islands . . . I think it's premature. I also have to believe in the Premier of the day. He got up in front of us right after the election and said that he would bring one man one vote before the next elections.

Madam Speaker, I crave your indulgence to refute something stated in the contribution by the Member for North Side this morning about this Government's and, by extension, my lack of debate on the Minimum Wage Motion yesterday. Much has also been said about the Minister of Employment speaking on behalf of the Government about Minimum Wage. How ludicrous is this, and tabloid in nature, that someone could think that she would get up and usurp the Government's position, or direct the Government's position, and that we would all stand in line behind her.

I do not think that minimum wage across the board is the solution. We must be careful that we do not inadvertently hurt those that we are seeking to help. We cannot legislate for unscrupulous people who will continue to thwart any legislation brought unless we enforce it.

I will just end there and say that I am an Independent representative for George Town. I do not [belong to] and have not joined a political party. I reserve every right afforded to me and my conscience and after speaking with my constituents to stand either with or against any motion brought in this honourable House.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I can only respect you for that, sir.

Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.: Madam Speaker, one man one vote, equal voting is a must. It is not fair to have people in George Town have such a hold on politics over those in the smaller districts.

Madam Speaker, just following up on what I said before in terms of why I did not support the Motion, we have a number of priorities affecting the country right now. I would challenge the Members from East End and North Side that instead of trying to dictate the agenda of the Government, they should bring motions that aren't as sexy, but that we all voted on, or that we all campaigned on (sorry), including unemployment, including crime, before a motion for one man one vote.

Madam Speaker, I bit my tongue for several months because I chose to try and help stabilise a Government and a country that was so in need of good governance and a stable Government. Given the terrible legacy left by the UDP Government the main priority was to ensure that we pulled back from the brink of ruin and that bad Government would not gain momentum in this country again. That does not mean that I have converted to the PPM. That does not mean that I am a porch (and you can fill in the blanks), that some of the same Members in this honourable House have stated outside of these walls. That's fine, Madam Speaker. I have been called many names before. It's not something that has ever really bothered me. I'm a big man.

But if you get on my bad side you will see the smile go in a second. I don't care for shenanigans. I don't have a poker face. And anyone who knows the Connollys will know that once you cross them there is no coming back. Like I told two special people as recently as days before the election, when they took my dislike for confrontation as a weakness. If you put me up against a wall I will come out swinging. And that's when you see the real bad side of me. They know better now, having learned the hard way.

I just say that to say this, Madam Speaker: When someone questions why I am standing in this hallowed House for the people of George Town, and for Caymanians, that really irks me. I wish I had the luxury to see all 7,000 people in my district once a month. I think that anyone would agree that 500 is a little easier to do.

Madam Speaker, I voluntarily took on this role. Not because I wanted to be absent, but because I want to help people. And to me, that's not by sitting down on radio programmes for three hours at a time, it's not by grandstanding on TV in the Legislative Assembly, but it's by rolling up my sleeves and doing what I have always done—the work that needs to be done without the need for any recognition for it. And

part of this is by looking at what has been done, by correcting bad practice and bad policies, and engaging with stakeholders and discussing, and sometimes negotiating, in a civilized and professional manner the issues of the day. And then systematically going out and trying to correct them.

Some Members will say that I should not complain about the work. And I am not. Someone had to step up to the plate because of the work that needed to be done. And believe me; it's not for the salary or the power that the First Elected Member for West Bay seemed to insinuate. I make less now in one year than I did in a quarterly dividend payment, Madam Speaker. I was willing to sacrifice that and give up my partnership because I have no interest in the partnership that I once held anymore because I felt compelled, given the state of where the country was, given the state of a relationship with the UK, and because this is home. It's the only home I have even known other than when I was away for my studies. It is the only home that I ever want to have. If people are honest, if we had kept the Government that we had we would have gone to hell in a hand-basket very quickly.

So, Madam Speaker, although I am a part of the Government, I am not here to speak on their behalf. Being a part of the Government does not mean that I pander to the PPM. It doesn't mean that I have lost my identity or my independence. It simply means that I chose to side with the PPM to firm up their Government and that when I agree with their course of action I will agree to their motions. When I do not agree, I will sometimes accept a compromise position, or I will gladly speak out against them. Madam Speaker.

What it means, though, is that once I have compromised (and, there, I have said that dirty word in politics "compromise" because it doesn't sell newspapers or radio shows) . . . but when I compromise it is not my job to get up and berate the Government because I was forced into a compromise or I chose to compromise. I am a part of this Government. And it means that at certain times, even as an independent, you won't hear from me when the Government speaks.

Madam Speaker, I have stated my position on one man one vote and minimum wage at a recent public meeting, for anyone who chose to come out and hear. I note that the media would suggest otherwise, and didn't show up at that event, but then, as recently as this week, decided to invent a story about some imaginary rift and me going against my so-called "handlers." Madam Speaker, they obviously don't know me. They haven't chosen to get to know me.

When I first got in this honourable House, I stated what my association with the Coalition 4 Cayman was. I stated it all during the campaign. I refuse to answer leading questions again and again about it—to the media or otherwise. Obviously, logic would

dictate that if you say something that many times and someone doesn't get it, they are either ignorant or they have an agenda. My two-year-old would have gotten it by now. But I won't jump to conclusions to which one.

I continue to be proud of the endorsement by the Coalition 4 Cayman and all other groups who endorsed independent candidates who put country first and will lead from a position of reason and be fair in their deliberations. "Cooperation, compromise, coalition," I guess, doesn't sell papers.

Madam Speaker, you will never hear me stand up and say "me, me, me" and beat my chest about anything that I brought to this honourable House or what I have done for the people. That's for them to decide at the next election. That's for them to discuss with me when I see them. I don't believe in preening and acting when the lights are on.

Madam Speaker, in 2010, when the Electoral Boundary Commission did their report, there were 16 separate voting districts, with two being proposed for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, for 18 in total. That proposal was done with 15,000 registered voters. So, as of today's date, those numbers are out of date, because there were some 18,492 voters in the last election on 22 May 2013. The numbers would obviously change if we were to update them on today's date. And I believe those boundaries would be re-drawn. If only for that one reason we need to stop and look at that again because the numbers have changed.

Madam Speaker, I have heard a number of concerns over one man one vote and single member constituencies. I don't know if some of those would come to fruition. But it's because some of those have emanated from constituents that we need to question and answer some of those topics, not because we believe that we have all the answers, not because we believe it's simple.

My own concerns come from personal experiences. Therefore, I respectfully disagree with the Member for East End. Having been confused as a candidate from a party in the last election, where someone asked me for their envelope—an envelope of cash—I truly believe that people would, if they could, try to buy an election. And given the smaller numbers, just to get a bare majority of those a whole area could be bought, or attempted to be bought.

Madam Speaker, we are fooling ourselves if we feel that corruption does not exist just because we have a clean bill of health from the observers. I called those same observers to complain about what happened to me when I was identified by name as somebody in another party that was supposed to be giving this woman an envelope of cash. So I am speaking from personal knowledge. And that didn't get included in their report.

Madam Speaker, I spoke about how much easier it would be to campaign with the proposed boundaries. In fact, the thought occurred to me that

looking at the statistics from the last election, just like the Member for George Town who said he could try to imagine which area he would run in based on the support that he got from the last election. But, again, Madam Speaker, I represent every single member of George Town, not only the voters. I am very cognisant that my decisions in this House, my decisions as a Member of the Government, affect all of their lives, even the ones that can't vote—and especially the ones that would be victims of unscrupulous people.

Madam Speaker, let me just quote again the question in the July 2013 referendum. “**Do you support an electoral system of single-member constituencies with each elector being entitled to cast only one vote?**”

Much has been said about how that referendum was set up and what the hurdle rates were. In fact, I also have some reservations as to how that question was asked. It was not, *Do you support one man one vote? Yes or no.* There was no, *Do you support single member constituencies? Yes or no.* The two are not interchangeable.

But then Members would agree with me that that was not the best question in the world. So you can't say to the people that, *If you said “Yes” at that referendum you said “Yes” to both.* There was only one question. But why did people show up for that referendum? You could have a lot of different reasons. I think you will agree with that one.

Madam Speaker, I think and I hope—

Moment of interruption—4:30 pm

The Speaker: Honourable Member for George Town, if I could beg your indulgence . . . we have reached the hour of interruption. So I would acknowledge the Deputy Premier to move the appropriate motion under [Standing Order] 10(2).

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) that we may work past the hour of 4:30.

Madam Speaker, the plan is that we would like to finish up today and work to around 5:00, which would allow the others Members here to speak. The Honourable Minister has had to go to an engagement for the signing at the Westin and he would like to speak tomorrow morning. So this will allow us to get through as much work as we possibly can this evening and then just leave him and the mover to wind up in the morning, if that's okay.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to enable the House to continue its work until 5:00 pm this afternoon.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.

The Speaker: Please continue, Fifth Elected Member for George Town.

Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would hope that the aforementioned questions about my position, about me as an Independent and what my views are on one man one vote are [answered]. I am sorry that I disappointed those who reported some dreamt-up rift like it was Bible leaf. I am, on this occasion (and will probably do several times in the future), agreeing with the Coalition Government's position that every person in Cayman should have the same number of votes. That is the reason—and not because I don't support one man one vote—that I cannot support the Private Member's Motion brought by the Member for East End.

With that short contribution, Madam Speaker, I end my contribution to this debate. Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Financial Services.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton. Minister of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to indicate my position in relation to the Private Member's Motion, which is that I will be voting against it.

Madam Speaker, the fundamental principle for me is voter equality. I was involved with the one man one vote campaign. I supported it. I was fully involved, fully engaged with it, because I believe in voter equality. I believe in that proper franchise that others spoke about.

Why did I do it? As I said, I believe in it. I think the current system that we have is fundamentally unfair from the perspective of voter equality. I have been on interviews and radio shows. I always gave the same example, which was that I thought it was fundamentally wrong for me to have four votes in Bodden Town, for my brother who lives in the district of North Side to have one vote, for other relatives of mine who live in George Town to have six votes and, therefore, have an unbalanced contribution as to how the Government of the country is formed.

Madam Speaker, without a doubt, the UDP Government of the time made it completely clear that they were not interested in any kind of electoral reform in relation to this issue. They apparently didn't accept the principle of voter equality as being fundamental to fairness in our democratic system. But at the time, what choice did the people have? We have a Government that says it's completely opposed to any electoral reform on this issue. You have a constitutional provision which allows people-initiated referendums. To pursue that, to utilise that tool, you have to have a question framed. It cannot be a question of, *Can we please have a discussion about this? Can we have a discussion about how best to change the system to make it fairer?*

I think the people who were involved with one man one vote at the time, took the simplest approach in saying this is an issue that is not *the* recommendation, but *one* of the recommendations of the Boundary Commission. And it was something that we could take forward, explain to the people and attempt to get some kind of change in circumstances where the Government was fundamentally opposed to it.

Now, while people may have had concerns . . . in fact those who were involved, many of them, were not constitutional experts, not political experts, not seasoned politicians (a few were, many were not). So while they may have had concerns, they may have had questions, they put those aside to pursue an opportunity to effect change in those circumstances, or to attempt to effect change in those circumstances.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: So, Madam Speaker, while I was actively involved, as were many others, and while I fundamentally believe that it is one way to achieve the fairness that I think is absent from our current system and is necessary to reflect the appropriate type of democracy that we want in this country, I supported one man one vote. The Government at the time, as others have said, effectively took over the referendum by bringing the Government-initiated referendum. The fact that they campaigned against their own referendum—and did so in some cases in very personal ways—was clearly indicative of their hard position against any reform.

Now, the bar, as everyone knows, was set very high, and the referendum failed to meet that high bar. It failed to have a majority of the registered voters. But of those who voted, a significant majority voted in favour of the question. But many will recognise that perhaps there was a question of whether they were truly voting in favour of single member constituencies or whether they were indicating disfavor with the Government, or perhaps the leadership of the Government at the time. I am prepared to accept that it could be argued either way. And I fully believe that the people of this country want to have the fairness that I spoke about earlier. They want to have that fun-

damental principle in place where there is voter equality.

But there are different ways of achieving that. There is not one system. I think the fact that the Boundaries Commission recommended different ways is indicative of that. And we all know . . . many of us have certainly gained an understanding of the issues over time. So we know that there are different ways of achieving this. Madam Speaker, for me, the fundamental principle hasn't changed. But I recognise that there are different ways of doing it. I am, and I remain, supportive and committed to single member constituencies, but not necessarily complete single member constituencies. I think it is possible that the proposal that has been discussed earlier effectively works just as well.

But, Madam Speaker, one of my real issues is the timing. I have a busy ministry. I have a busy agenda; a lot on my plate in terms of a legislative agenda. And I know others have as well. One of the issues we have is time to deal with things in the House, time to deal with access to legislative drafting resources. We need to be focusing on the matters that are priorities right now. The election is not until several years from now.

I do not accept the argument that a Boundaries Commission is going to . . . first of all, we would have to have another one anyway. Whatever the case, I think. And I do not accept the position that it would take two years to achieve this. I think it can certainly be accomplished in less time than that.

But the point is, Madam Speaker, that I feel strongly that we have other, more important priorities right now to deal with in this country.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, the Member for East End seems to be objecting to, or the Government, giving him the opportunity to have his Motion heard. I would certainly love to be dealing with the important things, the priority things that we have deal with right now. But I believe in democracy as well. And I believe that the Members should have the opportunity, if they bring a Private Member's Motion, to have it heard.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Now, I would like to be dealing with this issue 12 months from now, rather than right now, because I think that is more in keeping with an appropriate timeframe to get this in place.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: My Government, the PPM, the Progressives, in its Manifesto very clearly said, Madam Speaker, that we were in favour of amending

the Elections Law to establish single member constituencies in good time for the 2017 elections. In good time.

We have more than enough time to get this done. The resources, from my perspective, that we need are better directed right now to dealing with pension reform, dealing with legislation, which is going to create products, which is going to create revenue for Government, which is going to grow our economy, which is going to create jobs and opportunities for Caymanians. That is what I believe in. And that is what I feel we need to be dealing with right now, Madam Speaker. I don't see the need to utilise those significant and important resources when we can appropriately direct them and usefully direct them towards other priorities.

Madam Speaker, I think (I could be wrong) that the people of the country probably feel the same way. I have seen, and I will admit, that there were some preliminary polls. But from what I saw there were clear indications that the people of the country feel that this issue is not an immediate priority, that there are other matters that need to be dealt with and that the resources of the country need to be directed towards. I think it is very clear that the resources to run Government to do the things we need to do are limited. They are not unlimited. And those resources need to be deployed in the best possible way to create the best possible effect for the country.

I don't think that those should be subject to the directions of any Member or any particular . . . any two Members of the Legislative Assembly who think that it is an issue for them to effectively try to score points rather than deal with issues that are important and priorities for the country.

I think several associations and, as far as I remember, even the Chamber of Commerce, indicated that they agreed with this position as well.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Now, as I said to you, Madam Speaker, from my perspective I think that we can achieve a lot of the important things that we need to achieve within the next 12 months. And I will be happy to be down here talking about this around that time. It may happen sooner. If it does, fine. But that's how I see it.

We have to make a difference in this country. We have to do the things that are going to help our people, help the quality of life, improve the economy, drive growth and create opportunities. So that's my focus on it. I am just as committed as anyone else to electoral reform. I am committed to the principle of voter equality. That has not changed. That will not change. But I recognise that there are some other ways of doing it.

You know, some of the arguments put forward by the UDP Government at the time did have some

merit. You could understand where they were coming from. Because every system has pros and cons. Everything is, to some extent, a compromise one way or the other. The challenge is to get the compromise in the balance as far over on your side as possible.

Madam Speaker, Rome wasn't built in a day. This Government has been in place for eight months. I do not think that we are failing. I think we are delivering on the promises we made to this country. I think we are making significant progress. I am proud of where this Government has gotten to. I am proud of what has been achieved. I am proud of the stability that has been brought to this country, that good governance has been restored in this country, that the sense of pride, the sense of confidence has been restored, I am proud of all of that, Madam Speaker. I think we simply have to do the right things at the right time and achieve what we need to achieve. Suggesting that we are delivering some things and failing to deliver other things is a silly argument.

Madam Speaker, in closing, let me say that I think I am certain this country is going to get electoral reform. I am certain that it is going to reflect the principle of fairness. I am certain that it is going to respect and adhere to the principle of voter equality. But it isn't going to be dictated by any particular Members on the other side.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: The priorities of the country are going to dictate what we do right now. Timing is important on this. But it is not the time now to be worried about it because the election is not until 2017. Be it whatever you want.

Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity. I will close off my comments.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to make a very short contribution on Private Member's Motion No. 4-2013/14. There has been quite a bit said on this Motion. There is a little bit that I think I need to say about Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. And I also need to declare my position on whether or not I am going to support this Motion. So that there is no suspense, I will do that early. I am not going to support the Motion.

Madam Speaker, I will spend some time in my short contribution explaining what my position is and why I will not be supporting the Motion. It starts off in the Whereas section:

“[WHEREAS] the implementation of Single Member Constituencies has been the subject of discussion by the country for more than a decade;

“AND WHEREAS both Electoral Boundary Commissions recommended the implementation of Single Member Constituencies for the Cayman Islands . . .”

The Motion's whereas sections take a lot of time talking about single member constituencies. And then at the very end it says, **“BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Government shall consider bringing a Bill within 3 months to amend the Election Law (2009) Revision to introduce an electoral system of single member constituencies so as to allow the next General Election to be conducted on the basis of the equal suffrage principle of ‘one person one vote’ under the First Past the Post System, which timeframe will allow sufficient time to educate the electors on the changes to the voting system.”**

Madam Speaker, the issue of single member constituencies from the time of the referendum was an issue for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. So that is probably one of the reasons, certainly from my constitutional responsibility to represent my constituents in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman as one of their Representatives.

Madam Speaker, in line with international best practice, at the last elections the Government of the day invited the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Election Observers Commission to observe our elections. In the preliminary [report](#) released by the commission's leader, the Honourable Mario Galea, MP, it was confirmed that the Cayman Islands received a 9 out of 10 rating because the process had met the international standards for fair, genuine and transparent elections. And, Madam Speaker, that they truly reflected the will of the Caymanian people.

So the last elections truly represented the will of the Caymanian people.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Your good friend Mario Galea, MP.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: You invited him.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Madam Speaker, I didn't interrupt the Leader of the Opposition when he was speaking.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: The observers also concluded that our multi-member system, where voters in different districts have different numbers of votes is

contradictory to the equal suffrage principle of one person one vote.

Madam Speaker, long before the overseas mission provided their feedback, the question of one man one vote had already received serious consideration by the PPM party (which was then in Opposition). Madam Speaker, yesterday, in his contribution the Premier confirmed that Government has since given significant consideration to the issue of single member constituencies. And he also confirmed that there was a retreat held where a large amount of time was spent discussing a way forward.

There have been questions here today on the Government's position. The Government's position is, as the Premier said . . . a paper will be prepared based on more consultation from the Members of the Government. Once the consultation is finished the paper will be distributed for the people of this country to discuss. Madam Speaker, I believe those are questions that were posed from the other side. And I think that is straightforward, forthright and a way forward that each one of us here will have an obligation to take to our constituents and discuss.

Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the zeal with which my very good friend is pursuing this ideal to the point where a Private Member's Motion is now considered necessary . . . I respect that, Madam Speaker. But in my opinion, I believe this Private Member's Motion is not timely. Madam Speaker, the ideal of one person one vote is important. It is a progressive action, and it can help us take a further advance to the democratic system of our country. My point is that at this juncture elections are more than three years away. At this time we have far more pressing and urgent priorities to focus our attention on, like growing the economy and creating Caymanian employment.

Madam Speaker, when I am in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, I can tell you that in the last seven months not one person has asked me about one man one vote. But I can also tell you, Madam Speaker, that many, many, many people have asked me about the economy, they have asked me about jobs, they have asked me about help from social service, they have asked me opinions on different things. But I believe it is confirmed and heavy on all of our minds that the number one issue in this country today is the economy. And the time being spent should be spent dealing with the economy of the Cayman Islands, all three Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the issues of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman are unique. I believe that, although it was not mentioned in this Motion, my good friend knows, because he has been there quite a few times. When he was Minister he invited me to accompany him when he made his ministerial visits (for which I will always be appreciative). The difference in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman starts, really, with the Constitution itself. In [section] 89(d)(ii) it says, **“Cay-**

man Brac and Little Cayman shall (between these two islands) at all times return at least two members to the Legislative Assembly.”

I think that was put into the Constitution, Madam Speaker, because the framers of the Constitution understood the uniqueness of two separate islands 65 miles away. The idea that Grand Cayman has one airport and Cayman Brac and Little Cayman have two airports, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman have two sea ports, Grand Cayman has one. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman have a whole network of roads that are independent and the equipment that is used in Grand Cayman cannot be used in Cayman Brac or Little Cayman. The people services that have to be provided are independent. It is not that you can get in your car and drive to the licensing bureau that is in George Town. It's a completely different . . . autonomous police service that is there. Buyer service. Madam Speaker, the schools. Independent, two separate islands. Sports, the playgrounds, the marinas. And, Madam Speaker, I believe everybody in this House knows that you fly there or you go by boat. You don't drive there.

So I think that that is the platform; that there is a unique situation between having separate islands away from Grand Cayman (which is the major island of the three). That's why I believe that the uniqueness of the voting system is also a stand-alone. At present the Sister Islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman form one electoral district and are represented by two elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. The voters are consequently entitled to vote for any two of the candidates included on the ballot. The introduction of one man one vote would potentially change this scenario and several interesting options present themselves.

Option number 1 in the pursuance of 17 single member constituencies proposed divide Cayman Brac and Little Cayman into 2 constituencies, namely, Cayman Brac West, Little Cayman, and Cayman Brac East. Under this scenario residents in the east would be permitted to vote only in the eastern district and for candidates within their specific area. The same would apply in the west. They would only be allowed to vote in the west for [candidate] running in the west.

Option 2 presents a different alternative. Rather than dividing the Islands into two constituencies its delineation as a single constituency could be retained. But voters would be provided with only one vote. The top two candidates with the most number of votes would be declared the official district representatives—in other words, the first two past the post.

Option 3 provides a twist on the previous option in that the Islands would remain as a single constituency, but voters would be allowed two votes each as is currently the case. The difference is that both votes would need to be cast. This would effectively eliminate the deficiencies of the current system

whereby election results can be skewed by voters only using half of their voting allocation.

Madam Speaker, option 4 is to retain the status quo without making any changes, meaning Cayman Brac and Little Cayman remain as a single constituency where each voter is entitled to two votes with the option to use one or both at their discretion.

Madam Speaker, in the referendum held in July 2012 voters were asked, “Do you support an electoral system of single member constituencies with each elector being entitled to cast only one vote?” This, Madam Speaker, is the buildup to why I believe more discussion is needed with my constituents and more dialogue for a clear understanding. Approximately 47 per cent of the electorate turned out. Now, Madam Speaker, you and I both know that in Cayman Brac 80 per cent to 85 per cent turn out for an election. Forty-seven per cent is what turned out for the one man one vote [referendum]. Two hundred and fifty-six voted yes, and 203 voted no. Madam Speaker, the vote said that they were in favour of one man one vote. What the vote did not say was that they were in favour of single member constituencies.

Unfortunately, how the mover has brought this Motion it is all about single member constituencies. Assuming the Islands were divided into two constituencies, this presents a scenario whereby a person (I will go over this again) living in the east side may be familiar with a representative that they have voted for over a long period of time in the west. But they would not be allowed to vote for the Member in the West unless they were running in the east. So, the explanation and the understanding really come down to the unique situation that Cayman Brac and Little Cayman cannot stand to be divided. They have to have the ability to share a responsibility and understand, with the people's blessing, how the Members work together to not separate the Islands, but to make them better as one.

While this could arguably be an issue also faced by voters in George Town or Bodden Town, for example, when districts are demarcated, in the Sister Islands where the population is so small and interconnected the impact of this scenario is much more significant.

So, Madam Speaker, it is my preference, as I have said before and as the Premier has outlined, that through public meetings and face-to-face meetings with our constituents we garner more information to arrive at an informed decision that is currently reflective of the wishes of all of our constituents, but for me personally, my constituents in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Madam Speaker, to be truly representative of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman more dialogue is needed to be sure of what is wanted. They said that they are supportive of one man one vote. I have explained to you what the numbers were, and how the referendum went. But they have not said whether they

wished to progress to single member constituencies. Before moving forward we have to be sure that the introduction of one man, one person, one vote will not unintentionally extinguish the harmony and cohesion that currently exists, dividing the Island rather than uniting it.

Madam Speaker, it is for these reasons that I will not be supporting the Motion. Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member—
Honourable [Deputy] Premier?

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Madam Speaker, I would like to move the [adjournment] of this honourable House until 10:00 tomorrow morning.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House be adjourned until 10:00 am tomorrow morning.

I recognise the Elected Member for North Side.

MATTER OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

[SO 11(6) and (7)]

OBSTETRIC CLINICS AT THE GEORGE TOWN HOSPITAL

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker in accordance with Standing Order 11(6) and (7), I wish raise a matter of National Importance on the adjournment. And, having received your permission, I do so at this time.

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Madam Speaker in accordance with Standing Order 11(6) and (7) I wish to raise the matter of obstetrics clinics at the George Town Hospital, operated and managed by the Health Services Authority under the responsibility of the Minister of Health.

Under the current system, if a person walks up to the reception counter of the Women's Clinic at the hospital, or telephones to make an appointment to see an obstetrician, they are told that it is not possible, but to give them a number and a midwife will call to make an appointment. If they call (that is, the midwife) some days later, they are told that the obstetricians do not do clinics in the mornings, only in the afternoons. So if the potential patient works evenings they cannot get an appointment. If they can't come in the evening they have to go to see a private doctor.

Madam Speaker, not even in an emergency situation, like a miscarriage, can they walk into the

clinic or call by telephone to get an appointment the same day. They are told to go to the emergency.

Now, Madam Speaker, I wish to assure the Minister that this is not some second-hand complaint made to me by a constituent. But this is my personal experience in trying to make appointments for women at the hospital for this specialised treatment.

Madam Speaker, standard medical best practice and good business sense mandate that the receptionist or clerk (and there appears to be one sitting at the desk at the George Town Hospital) keep a daily appointment book and schedule appointments for doctors so the inquiring patient can be given an appointment to be seen at a specific available time during normal working hours that is convenient for the potential patient by the receptionist. Madam Speaker, this is almost as unacceptable as a patient who went to the dental clinic in May last year to make an appointment and was told to return in August to make the appointment. To which the patient inquired if their calendar at the dental clinic only went until August, as the one in his cell phone went to December this year and beyond so maybe they could use it to make the appointment beyond August.

Madam Speaker, the information I have is that the Health Services Authority has four obstetricians on full time staff. So this situation is entirely unacceptable. And I am asking the Minister to correct this situation and insist that the receptionist/clerk make the appointments and that a morning clinic is conducted to facilitate those who work evenings.

The Minister may also want to insist that patients be afforded the opportunity to choose a specific obstetrician as it would be a good indicator of the quality of service each gives.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I recognise the honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Madam Speaker, as the Member knows, and as you know, the Minister responsible for Health is off Island. I will commit to the Member that this information will be given to him, and ask him to provide you with a telephone call and any action that he is going to proceed with in writing.

The Speaker: Member for North Side is that—

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Madam Speaker, I was hoping to get a more definitive answer.

As you know, as on the last occasion, I provided the Ministry with copies of what I was going to say to allow them time from this morning to answer (as is required by the Standing Orders) here this afternoon. But, if that's the best the Government can do in the absence of the Minister, then I guess I have to accept that and hope that something positive is done, Madam Speaker, because this is really unacceptable.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House be adjourned until 10:00 am tomorrow morning.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes and one audible No. [*Hon. W. McKeeva Bush*]

The Speaker: I believe the Ayes have it.

At 5:20 pm the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday 28 February 2014.

