



**CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

2015/16 SESSION

19 October 2015
*Fourth Sitting of the Third
Meeting*
(Pages 501-542)

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

Disclaimer: The electronic version of the *Official Hansard Report* is for informational purposes only. The printed version remains the official record.

PRESENT WERE:

SPEAKER

Hon Juliana Y O'Connor- Connolly, JP, MLA
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA	<i>Premier</i> , Minister of Home Affairs, Health and Culture
Hon D Kurt Tibbetts, OBE, JP, MLA	Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure
Hon G Wayne Panton, JP, MLA	Financial Services, Commerce and Environment
Hon Osbourne V Bodden, JP, MLA	Minister of Community Affairs, Youth and Sports
Hon Marco S Archer, JP, MLA	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon Tara A Rivers, JP, MLA	Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

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

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Mr Anthony S Eden, OBE, MLA	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , 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

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

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

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

APOLOGIES

Hon Moses I Kirkconnell, JP, MLA	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of District Administration, Tourism and Transport
----------------------------------	--

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
THIRD MEETING 2015/16 SESSION
MONDAY
19 OCTOBER 2015
10:50 AM
Fourth Sitting**

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

The Speaker: Good morning. I will recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to grace us with prayers today.

PRAYERS

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: 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 Premier, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet, Ex-officio Members, 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.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMAITONS

The Speaker: There are none for this morning.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

APOLOGIES

The Speaker: I have received apologies for the late arrival of the Third Elected Member for the district of West Bay.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Speaker: No petitions.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

GOVERNMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS MINISTRY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES, COMMERCE AND ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2014

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Financial Services and wish to welcome him back to Parliament.

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

Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June 2014 for the Ministry of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to his report?

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, no thanks. I think the report speaks for itself.
Thank you.

CAYMAN ISLANDS STOCK EXCHANGE LTD. ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Minister of Financial Services.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Report for the Cayman Islands Stock Exchange Ltd. for the year ending 30th June 2014.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the report?

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: No, thank you, Madam Speaker.

**REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR
GENERAL ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAVEL
AND HOSPITALITY EXPENDITURES – MAY 2014**

**REPORT OF THE STANDING PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
COMMITTEE ON THE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF
THE AUDITOR GENERAL ON THE MANAGEMENT
OF TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY EXPENDITURES –
MAY 2014**

The Speaker: As Members would be aware there was a recent change in the membership of the PAC. The Order Paper has the Elected Member for North Side, which is the current Chairman. I will recognise him with the understanding that perhaps the Second Elected Member may be the one delivering the report, if I received the message correctly.

The Honourable Member for the district of North Side.

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

Yes, Madam Speaker, by agreement with the former Chairman, I think it is only proper for him to lay the reports that he has prepared before this House.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I recognise the Councillor, the Second Elected Member for the district of George Town, and former Chairman of the PAC [Public Accounts Committee].

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Second Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I apologise for the delay.

Madam Speaker, I would beg your indulgence to lay upon the Table of this honourable House, Report of the Office of the Auditor General on the Management of Travel and Hospitality Expenditures together with the Report of the Standing Public Accounts Committee on the Report of the Office of the Auditor General on the Management of Travel and Hospitality Expenditures – May 2014.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Does the honourable Councillor wish to speak further to these two reports?

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Madam Speaker, I think the reports themselves contain all the details and relevant information so I do not intend to speak to them specifically. I think that they speak for themselves.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**QUESTIONS TO HONOURABLE
MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE
CABINET**

The Speaker: There are no questions for this morning.

PROCEDURAL MATTER

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Madam Speaker, on a matter of procedure.

The Speaker: Member for North Side.

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

On the 14th when Parliament opened I expressed my concern that there were no questions on the Order Paper from me and I am now put in a position that I will only get one. To date only one question has been placed on the Order Paper out of 10 that I submitted on October 6th.

For family reasons I am going to be absent on Wednesday so I will not be here to ask any questions for I will not get back in Parliament until lunchtime on Thursday, so I will not be able to ask any questions. I would like permission to have the questions rescheduled for the next meeting because when they go to be answered in writing it never happens, Madam Speaker.

So, I would like the nine questions that are in my name unanswered to be placed at a future meeting.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for North Side that is irrespective whether this meeting concludes before you come back? You want them in writing nonetheless? I just . . . I just want to make—

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: No, Madam Speaker, I think that—

The Speaker: —sure that I am clear of what your request is.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: —the progress we are making, I doubt very much that we are going to go beyond Thursday. I will not be here on Wednesday, I will not get back until question time on Thursday, so what I

am seeking to do is to withdraw the other nine questions and resubmit them for the next meeting because when they are left to be answered in writing it never seem to happen. I have questions going back to June 2009 . . . and I want to make something clear here, Madam Speaker, so the public will know. The reason why these questions are not answered is not because of us politicians. It is not the Ministers in Government who are supposed to prepare the answers to these questions, and I think it is . . . well, I had better stop.

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, good morning. The course proposed by the Member for North Side is entirely acceptable to me. I too share his concern at what is the chronic failure to answer questions in a timely manner, not just in this administration, but ever since I have been here—15 years of it.

The Speaker: We will then need to ensure that when we do reach the adjournment, Member for North Side, that the Government bench and usually it is the Honourable Premier, would ask for the questions to be carried over to the next time so that you can.

The Premier, Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin: Madam Speaker, is there any objection to the motion being moved now?

The Speaker: No, I am at the whim of the House. If you wish to move the motion now I can put the question.

The Premier, Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will try to formulate the motion on my feet.

Madam Speaker, I move that the questions standing in the name of the Member for North Side on the current business paper be deferred until the next meeting of the House.

The Speaker: The question is that the questions standing on the current Order Paper in the name of the Member for North Side be deferred until the next meeting of the House.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. Accordingly the questions standing in the name of the Member for North Side on the current business paper will be deferred until the next Meeting of the House.

Agreed: Outstanding Questions standing in the name of the Elected Member for North Side deferred until the next Meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: There are no statements for today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: None.

RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGES

The Speaker: None.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

[Deferred]

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bills of the Government Business and the Bills which are listed on the Order Paper be deferred until we have completed the debate on the Government Motions.

I do this principally, Madam Speaker, to allow the debate on the Order to Effect Recommendations of the Electoral Boundary Commission to continue at this stage.

The Speaker: The question is that the Government Business in the form of Bills be hereby deferred to allow Government Motions to continue, specifically the Motion dealing with recommendations from the EBC.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. The Government Bills will be taken after the completion of the Government Motions.

Agreed: Government Business on Bills as listed on the Order Paper deferred to allow debate on Government Motions to continue.

MOTIONS

GOVERNMENT MOTION NO. 8/2015-2016 ORDER TO EFFECT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

[Continuation of Debate on Motion as amended]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member for the district of North Side.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise to support Government Motion No. 8 to create Single Member Constituencies—one person, one vote.

For me in particular, Madam Speaker, the country knows and has known for a long time that I have supported this. In fact, I think I started supporting this when we were drafting the 1972 Constitution just a few years ago.

And Madam Speaker, if I could sing I would ask the Minister of Planning to join me in *Oh happy day, oh happy day* but everyone . . . I am not capable of singing it, so even if he leads it I could not follow.

So Madam Speaker, I am delighted to see that the Government has brought this Motion and I accept that Single Member Constituencies—one man, one vote—will be in place for the 2017 election.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: I do not think even he cannot bring it now. But he has committed—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: —to doing that.

So Madam Speaker, those of us who have supported Single Member Constituencies for a long time have had a roller coaster ride. We have had two major constitutional drafts which did not include it, or even if it started off including it, somewhere along the way it fell out. We have had a new Constitution, the 2009 Constitution, which made some provisions in it, but did not mandate it to come in place.

Madam Speaker, we have heard from all those who have opposed one man, one vote and Single Member Constituencies. And while, Madam Speaker, I know that one man, one vote and Single Member Constituencies is not an absolute faultless or perfect system, it has to be better than what we have now. And part of our responsibility as legislators is to try and continually improve the governance of our

country. And I believe Single Member Constituencies—one person, one vote—will move toward more of a participative democracy because people will have easy access to their representative, which they have always had here, Madam Speaker.

But in a Single Member Constituency, as I well know, whatever happens you get the blame. There is no such thing as credit in politics, as we know, good or bad you get the blame. But the people know who their representative is and you cannot defer to some other representative. And I know by people who come to see me that that happens on occasions. Even though they may have six, four or two, there are times when they cannot get to see the persons that they wish to see.

And Madam Speaker, as the Member for East End often says, if you are representing a Single Member Constituency you have to spend the time to develop a relationship with every single voter in that constituency, even if you know they did not vote for you, you have to represent them as if they did which is your responsibility once you win the election anyway. But it is even . . . you cannot take the chance in a Single Member Constituency to ignore certain voting areas in the hope that you might win. And I am not worried about the small numbers that people say is not a good thing. I think it is a good thing.

Madam Speaker, those who campaigned for the joining of East End and North Side, I think, ran out of steam after the North Side meeting. And they like to say that, you know, people like me should not have any say because I was elected with less than 300 voters. But if they think that votes are easy to get in a Single Member Constituency I would tell them, Madam Speaker, that they need to take off their patent leather shoes and put on some nice running shoes because in the 2017 election there are going to be a lot of people walking and visiting people's houses and developing relationships with these people in these smaller areas.

Madam Speaker, I am not worried about this red herring that is drawn out on a regular basis—garrisons—because garrisons and corruption can only be done if the politician wants it done. Even if the people want it done, they cannot corrupt the politician unless the politician allows themselves to be corrupted. Even if you have criminal elements in your community they cannot make you assist them in setting up a garrison on your behalf unless you allow it. And we as politicians have to make the choice. If we do not want those things to happen, then do the right thing and they will not happen. Because the only country that I know that garrison is associated with, is Jamaica. And anybody who knows the history of Jamaican politics will admit that most, if not all, garrisons there, were driven by various political powers on various occasions.

In the US they do not have garrisons, they have PAC—Political Action Committees—and money

does the talking. But, again, Madam Speaker, it is the politician who has to stand their ground for the right thing and stand on the principles that they were raised on and that they learned in Sunday school. And if the politicians do not give ground it cannot happen. But far too often politicians are willing to go along, to get along, or to get a promotion in their representation.

So Madam Speaker, I want to thank and I want to congratulate the Government for bringing this Motion here before Parliament. And the Premier knows that if I do not see the necessary amendments to the Election Law in short order I will be questioning him and the public about it. But I have no fear at this point in time that they now have put themselves in a position where they cannot bring it.

And Madam Speaker, as long as the Opposition continues to oppose its introduction, I can sleep assured that the Government is not going to let the Opposition win by stopping it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: So I am confident that the Government will bring the necessary amendments to the Election [Law] and that the 2017 election will, in fact, be conducted on the Single Member Constituencies, one person, one vote.

You know, Madam Speaker, people tend to change the interpretation (and Kurt this is Ezzard's interpretation) or the definition of equality. In any democracy that I am aware of, Madam Speaker, is the equality for the politician, in that every politician sitting in this Parliament must represent the same exact number of constituents, or voters. The equality is for the voter in that the voter must have equal opportunity, equal chance, authority, and power to influence the formation of a government. And if some people got seven votes or six votes and some people only got one, seven chances to influence government has to be greater than one.

Madam Speaker, just to consistent, the Premier and his Government know that I do not enthusiastically support increasing the Members of Parliament, but that is a price I will pay. And I will today publicly declare that I will support the 19 seats in order to get Single Member Constituencies—one person, one vote.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Final call—I recognise the Fifth Elected Member for the district of George Town.

Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr., Fifth Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to support the Motion moved by the Third Elected Member for George Town on behalf of the Government, the Honourable Premier.

Madam Speaker, although I did not campaign on one person, one vote, I have publicly come out in the past two and half years to say that I would support it if that was the will of the people.

Madam Speaker, I have heard some of the debate thus far, and although people say that there is no real fear of garrison politics, there is no real fear of buying votes, Madam Speaker, having campaigned successfully in the last election, I think that either those comments are a bit naive or were trying to blow smoke up the proverbial . . .

Madam Speaker, I had concerns regarding the size of Single Member districts. We only have to look at places as close as Jamaica to understand garrison politics. You can go to Northern Ireland and see a lot about garrison politics as well, by the way.

Madam Speaker, like this and every other thing everybody has their opinions and everybody in here has their say. We know we have criminal elements right here in our own backyard and every single one of our constituents says we have criminal elements. For anybody that wants to put their head in the sand and say otherwise just read the newspapers over the last several months and ask some of those families whether or not there are elements that could overtake a constituency if not having checks and balances put in place.

Madam Speaker, if we choose to turn a blind eye on things that could happen because we like to believe that Cayman is this utopia, then I do not think that any of us should be in these seats.

Madam Speaker, there is a possibility, in my mind, of garrison politics. And like I said I think it is naive if other people do not. During the campaign, Madam Speaker, I said that I thought a more preferable situation would be a national vote and that everyone should have two votes—one for a Premier and the other for the remaining 17 Elected Members. So, just like everybody else in this House, I have an opinion of what the national election scene should be. But having spoken to colleagues who were here, who have been here much longer than I, I conceded in caucus and publicly that this was what the people wanted and this was what the people should have.

We had a referendum, Madam Speaker, and we had a mandate from the 18 July 2012 when five out of six districts voted in favour of one person, one vote. We are after all, Madam Speaker, still a democracy and no matter how some of us might want to silence the opinions of the people, it is by them that we are here. Never should we forget that.

Madam Speaker, as an Independent Member of this coalition Government I have been accused of voting almost unconsciously or subconsciously, I guess, with the PPM. In this I can tell anyone that I very consciously support this Motion. But Madam

Speaker, I do think that there needs to be checks and balances on the system.

There are lots of speculations about who supports one person, one vote; who does not support one person, one vote; lots of suggestions that it favours a party system or it favours the independents. What I do know, Madam Speaker, is what exists. And I saw first-hand during the last election, money being handed out when I was mistaken for another candidate who was running in a certain district. It was not even my district. It had a very lasting experience on me, Madam Speaker, because as a new politician it showed me what was expected and, in fact, I had people coming up to me almost bartering their services saying that they could guarantee me certain areas in George Town if I paid them to do it and I gave them money to do it.

So, Madam Speaker, let us not fool ourselves into thinking that elections cannot be bought. Let us not fool ourselves into saying that it does not happen right here, right now. They might not get the results that they are paying for because I can guarantee you that I got here without doing that, but it does not mean that people will not try it, because for some reason people think that this position is some powerful position that if you get in you get to write tickets to fame, fortune and everything else. Those people . . . those are the naive ones because if anyone gets into this for the right reasons it is not for any kind of money, as much as people would like to say it on the press and everything else. A lot is given up to be in public service, Madam Speaker, which each and every person in this honourable House that has had the honour and privilege to represent their people, know full well. But like anything, Madam Speaker, it can be abused. And people, if they think there is an angle, will try to use it.

Madam Speaker, having seen and read the Boundaries Report . . . and I would like to thank the persons that authored it because the creation of these boundaries and the explanation as to why some of them were designed the way that they did with a mix of socio-economic voters lessens the chance in my mind, Madam Speaker, of buying a boundary. At least it is going to be more expensive if somebody tries.

Madam Speaker, I have heard a lot of talk in the press and in other places about 19 Members. People talk about, again, the money that is involved in adding one more person—another fat politician with another hundred thousand dollar pay check. They should think about the situation in the last election when we could have had a hung Parliament and I know that all too well because I could have hung it and my group, that some people claim is a party, could have hung it. In the aftermath of that last election we had three Independent candidates that chose to go on the side of the Government . . . chose to go another way. We could have had a very weak Government, Madam Speaker. And I dare say that

you might not be in that position that you now hold had some of those machinations transpired—those probabilities and possibilities.

Madam Speaker, 9 to 8 or 10 to 8 would have dramatically changed this political landscape. God forbid we had gone 9 and 9.

Madam Speaker, 19 ensures that even if on a narrow balance we will not have a hung Parliament. And I am happy, Madam Speaker, that I made the decision that I made at the time because the country did not need another political blow at that moment in time. I am also happy that I can add my support to one person, one vote, even though the press beat us up when we stood as a Government against the Member for East End's Motion earlier in this term. I told the press then and the people of the Cayman Islands that I would support the Motion when it was fully and properly brought and thought out with a Boundaries Commission Report because, again, in things like this, Madam Speaker, playing politics is not the way to go.

So I am happy to support my colleagues.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.: We all have our say in the House, Member for East End. Right now I am on the microphone.

Madam Speaker, I support one person one vote as it ensures that every person in this country is equal. I signed the petition when it came around, but like I said, I did not campaign on it because I believe it advances us politically as a country and it is one step closer to true democracy.

We also have, Madam Speaker, in this country the honour . . . the results of the referendum. That is the ultimate voice of the people. When this is finally voted on, assuming that it is successful, Madam Speaker, this will be a historic day for this country.

Madam Speaker, here is a bit more to add to the Member for East End's next contribution—the checks and balances that I believe are necessary are to outlaw political handouts and to set in place term limits. And I have said this publicly before as well because we need checks and balances on electorate. And two ways to do that are to outlaw the things that could possibly lead to garrison politics and buying votes and that is to outlaw that process.

We already have a very generous social security system in this country, Madam Speaker, and that, when combined with the handouts from politicians is a large amount that we spend on the people of the Cayman Islands. We need to make those systems more robust, we need to make them more transparent, and we need to put in place the proper safety net for those people that need the services, not those people that want the services, not those people that would not work, but take things because they are there. Madam Speaker, we need to

educate our people about giving back to society and not taking in some instances.

Madam Speaker, the ultimate check would be three term limits where people take a break and come back. Because if politicians are the only ones that can create garrison politics and if, God forbid, they were allowed to, at least there would be breaks in the system and a chance to reset the button.

Madam Speaker, I know that my view is not very popular. I have heard what was said about me trying to limit democracy and other things and the will of the people. But Madam Speaker, power corrupts. And I am not saying that anybody in this House would, but I am saying history and other countries have shown us that it could happen. We are all assuming that people will remain the same as we are, and we all assume that people are all God fearing and honour their positions, but there could be a day, Madam Speaker, when that is not the case and we have to ensure that we have some checks and balances in place, just in case.

Madam Speaker, in my mind, those are things that we need to prepare for. And I will stand here every single time and state my thoughts just like any other Member in this honourable House can.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I do think that we have made one step closer to full democracy today, but like anything, we need to go in eyes wide open. So I fully support this Motion and I hope that the entire House, when it comes time to vote, will support it as well. But in my last duress while I am on the mic I will say we still need checks and balances.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from the district of East End.

Mr. V. Arden McLean, Elected Member for East End: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I promised the previous speaker that I would be next.

Madam Speaker, I was hoping my contribution would be rather short, but that is not to be, I guess.

Madam Speaker, it would be foolhardy of me to get up here and not support the provisions of Single Member Constituencies. I have fought long, long, much longer than many in these hallowed Chambers for that day to come. I cannot say today is that day, Madam Speaker, even if a vote is taken today I cannot say today is that day because we still have to go through the general election under the umbrella of Single Member Constituencies. And anything can happen, usually in politics; a day is a long time and we have about 18 months to go.

Madam Speaker, therefore, I do not think it is necessary for me to overly congratulate the

Government on agreeing to bring this to its legislative conclusion, simply because they have a promised obligation they had to keep. I know, as much as they will say that they all support it, there are some of those who are kicking and screaming bringing it here because they do not see it enhancing their political fortunes. To the contrary, some see it as the demise of their political fortunes or their political careers. And I know, I can promise them, that is a fact. Over the next two elections, if this successfully reaches the political arena, they will all learn what it is to be Members of a Single Member Constituency. It will not be the first one; it will be the second one that they will understand the responsibility that comes along with this democracy that we are trying to build.

Madam Speaker, despite my reluctance to be overly congratulatory, I should inform the Government that they are doing the right thing. This is a necessary step in this fledgling democracy.

Madam Speaker, I can assure them that history will be kind to them in their absence from these hallowed Chambers. I do not know when that is going to be, sometimes some of us need to go sooner rather than later, but that is the nature of this thing called politics.

Madam Speaker, having said all that, there are a couple of things that I would like to touch on a number of things that I think need my opinion on, too, and there is a caveat in my support and I will explain that caveat. Let me begin with that caveat.

Madam Speaker, there has been much discussion coming from the Government about hung Parliaments and the probability of a hung Parliament in our country . . . the possibility of a hung Parliament in our country. Well, Madam Speaker, I am here to tell them we had a hung Parliament in May 2013. For those of us who did not recognise they had gotten elected in a hung Parliament, it is precisely what it was. And we do have a Government now, do we not since then? It might not be what we want, but the Government has no mandate, it was a hung Parliament. And no matter how many people we put in here, Madam Speaker, we will always have that possibility—always—because of the different factions that can emanate from an election.

In England, for instance, they have 635 I think it is and the election prior to the most recent one was a hung Parliament. How did the country move on politically? They negotiated with each other, talked to each other, and they came together—the Liberals and the Conservatives—and they created a government. It is within reasonableness of those who get elected, Madam Speaker, it is what it is.

Your good-self, Madam Speaker, before the ink was dried on the election, you had joined the PPM. That is what it is about.

Now, when you get unreasonableness on the part of those Members elect, then we go back to the polls. How often does it happen? The Leader of the

Opposition can tell us. He is a scholar of this kind of politics. Very seldom you see it happen. In the independent countries like Trinidad when they had 36, it happened two or three times, but the Governor General appointed a caretaker Government until they could get back to the polls. Are we saying the calibre of politician that this country is going to attract is going to be of that nature?

Madam Speaker, do not worry, I will touch on the little utterances of the Fifth Elected Member from George Town too. I will disabuse him one time and done, today.

Madam Speaker, here is my dilemma with another person in these Chambers. Madam Speaker, when we did the constitutional talks and your good-self was there and the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier, the Minister of Lands, the Deputy Premier, myself, we were all there. We started from a position of saying we needed additional people in Cabinet to carry the workload. There is no magical formula. And we said we believed we needed two more people. At the time Cabinet was five and we needed two more people to spread the work amongst.

Now, that is how the composition of the Legislature, any Legislature is determined, particularly small ones, like ours. So, we started at seven and true democracy tells us we need a two-thirds majority to remove the Executive. Two-thirds majority meant we should have had 14 people on the floor to be able to remove the Government, which would have put us at 21. And a simple majority would have been 11 for the Legislature to be quorate, because you cannot have 50 per cent plus one in one individual, so you have to go to the next one up to create the simple majority.

Madam Speaker, be that as it may, we opted to go to 18 because we did not believe the country was going to be accepting of moving from 15 to 21. Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition was one who argued against that, and I conceded. One of the things I also conceded, Madam Speaker, was that we would leave our democracy with a two-thirds majority to remove the Executive.

Madam Speaker, it was a mistake. That was a mistake. We made that mistake, Madam Speaker. So we must all hold our hands up and plead guilty to that mistake. Because having agreed to 18 instead of the 21 (because we thought 3 on 15 would be more palatable) . . . so having agreed with the 18, 12 is the two-thirds majority. If you have 17 Members of Cabinet, you cannot get 12 out of the 11 that is left—if you have 7 Members of Cabinet—7 Members, Madam Speaker. I said 17? I do apologise, Madam Speaker. If you have 7 Members of the Executive out of 18 you cannot get 12 Members to remove the Executive.

It was our mistake, Madam Speaker. So, what we have to do currently is dip into Cabinet to get someone to vote against themselves. And no democracy should be structured in that way. We should not have to compel a Minister to turn against

their collective responsibility to remove the Premier. We should never have to do that.

Madam Speaker, here is my concern, having gone through those numbers there. Here is my concern with the 19. We now add another person in these Chambers, so I trust we understand that 50 per cent plus 1 to make a simple majority to be able to appoint a Premier will now require 11. It will not be 10 anymore because right now to appoint a Premier you need a simple majority, which is 10 out of 18, and only the majority of those. So, six people can, in effect, appoint a Premier—the majority of the majority, which is six, if they write the Governor and say, *This is our Premier*.

So, Madam Speaker, now, we add another person to Parliament and he or she has to be counted. You cannot get 50 per cent plus 1 out of one person, so you have to get another person to create a majority to appoint the Premier. You need another person for the Legislature to be quorate. And then you need a two-thirds person for a two-thirds majority. You cannot dismiss that individual; you need a two-thirds person to get a two-thirds majority. So you need one more. You are going to need 13. I know most people do not understand those numbers, we have not thought of them.

Madam Speaker, when we get a simple majority of 11, which is the position we need to start working from, and leave a two-thirds majority, that leaves, out of 19, 8 in the Opposition, but you are going to need 13. Eight and four is 12, and then we are still going to have to dip into Cabinet to vote against them.

We had a unique situation in 2013 when more than two-thirds of the Government turned against the Leader of the Opposition (the now Leader of the Opposition). That is a unique situation.

So, Madam Speaker, the only way to correct that anomaly in our two-thirds majority is one of two ways. We increase our Legislature to 21, leaving 7 Members in the Executive, or we go to a simple majority. This is the first time we have had, I think, what the lawyers like to call a lacuna in the law since 2009, in our Constitution. Prior to that, we had 12 as a two-thirds majority. Those who need a political history lesson, listen

When we had 12 Members, Madam Speaker, we only had 4 Members of Cabinet, so we had 8 on the floor which is a two-thirds majority. When we went to 15 it was going to require 10 for a two-thirds majority. That is when Mr. Anthony got elected in 1992 and got elected to Cabinet in 1994, once the Constitution came into place, yes?

So Madam Speaker, we needed 10 people on the floor to remove the Executive then, because we had gone to 5. And say what you want about Mr. Truman Bodden, in his infinite wisdom, do you know what he did? They changed it to 9. That is the way it stayed until 2009 when we messed it up. Throughout

our history we have never needed to go into the Executive to get a vote to remove the Executive, until 2009.

Now we are even pushing that further because with 19 we need 12 and two-thirds person. Am I right Mr. Accountant? When we get the two-thirds person that means we are going to need 13. Good. So we are 8 over here, with the simple majority of 11, we need 5 from over there. But there are only 4 on the backbench; 7 and 4 equals 11. So, we still have to go into there.

So the other way to correct is to get a change in our Constitution to remove the Government—a vote of no confidence—to be a simple majority. That is the one that is most palatable.

So here we are, Madam Speaker, I know a lot of Governments would not like that, especially those who enjoy a big majority, such as those three who rushed to go, and your good-self as well, Madam Speaker. So the Government today has 13, but Madam Speaker, you know what happens when your good-self sits as the Presiding Officer, you need two from Cabinet then.

It worsens because if the Presiding Officer is from on the inside at all times, and you go to 19, you are still dipping into the Executive, because what you are going to have on the Floor of the Legislative Assembly is 18. Seven out of those are in Cabinet—the Executive—so you need 12, but you really only have 11. You need 13 . . . you really only have 11, so you are going to need 2 people out of Cabinet at that stage to win a vote of no confidence. You need 2 people because you are going to need 13.

Madam Speaker, I do not know if we understand how we are throwing this democracy and the lack of balance even further into jeopardy without changing the Constitution to allow a simple majority to remove an Executive.

Madam Speaker, I know what is going to be said is, *No, no, no*. Every Government is going to say that. I see the Attorney General saying *no, no, no, no*.

Okay, Madam Speaker, let us talk about these musical chairs. So I said a simple majority, which would be 11 with 19, but the Government has the simple majority and they have one as Presiding Officer, so they have 10 left. They cannot form a quorum. The House will never be quorate. The Premier will be able to be appointed, but he will never have the House quorate because you need 11. So we will never get the Speaker from on the inside in a simple majority.

There are 8 people on the other side, so the Government has their 11, and you have a Speaker from on the outside—7 and 4 is 11. To win the majority the Opposition has to convince all four backbench supporters. That is what they have to do—all four have to walk. Three of them will walk but they cannot get a majority to remove the Government. But

the Government will be operated as a lame duck Government. No matter who walks from that side, the Government will operate as a lame duck Government in the absence of being able to have a quorum here.

So, what will it require? It is more difficult than the Attorney General thinks to have a vote of no confidence with a simple majority because, Madam Speaker, the Government is going to satisfy its backbenchers. It will keep the Government extremely honest to make sure they satisfy their backbench support.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: What do you mean it is not consistent with good administration?

Madam Speaker, I hear the Attorney General say it is not consistent with good administration. So you are telling me it is consistent with good administration to ask two people of Cabinet to vote against themselves to remove the Cabinet? Now, that cannot be. That is worse than a simple majority.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Absolutely.

What is good administration is that all backbench supporters getting disgusted with their Executive and leaving them and coming to form another government; that is good administration. And when the backbench has that hold over the Government it will keep them honest. They must satisfy their backbench supporters and involve them in the governance of the country. But if they know there is a threat that they can lose their seat as a Government when those backbench supporters leave, I will bet you they will be more cognisant, they will be more particular, with their people.

Now, when you enjoy a large majority, Madam Speaker, like this Government does, you do not need that because you can lose one or two. That is why some of them are now afraid to leave. As much as they do not particularly like what is going on over there, they are afraid to leave.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, because they cannot bring the Government down. It does not do anything to the Government. Oh, you wait until trouble makers in a few minutes. You wait. Because, Madam Speaker, there is no way anyone is going to tell me that they are all satisfied out there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: No, no, they are not. They get up here and they proclaim their love and their

togetherness and their hugging-upedness and their and their kissie-kissiness.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: You really think I was jealous of that when I left that? You need to learn to leave it. So be careful what you say now.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, my concern is with the 19. And I would encourage the Government for us to sit down, let us look and see if we can change it to a simple majority. It is one of two things, that or increase it to 21, and do not increase the numbers of seats in Cabinet. I hope it is not in the books, it is not in the plans of this Government because we are getting one in to put one more in Cabinet because that is worse. That is worse.

Madam Speaker, those are the numbers on that and those are my concerns with that 19th seat. I should say at this juncture that I really had to concede that with the Commissioner that did this and how the 19 came about. In their efforts to try and make it a little more equal (they say) is what was required.

Well Madam Speaker, I think the Member for North Side did an excellent job on the equality of enfranchisement in any country and what it really means. It is about the people. It is not about politicians. We are the slaves and the workers and the hired help; that is what we are. It is about equality for the electors and accountability from the elected. That is one of the fundamental tenets of a democracy, or two of them—accountability, responsibility, equality.

Madam Speaker, when I queried the Chairman about the provision of proposals to increase the seats, because I know the Premier has been talking about this for a very long time, about getting away from the possibility of hung parliaments with 19, well, I think I have already explained that. It does not matter how many you get because of the different factions that go at politics . . . you can have a hung Parliament anytime. So let us not use that as the reason. Do not tell the people that is a reason.

The most plausible reason I have heard is the Commissioner, the lady Mrs. Handley, I think it was, Dr. Handley, when she brought my attention to the Constitution I had to concede it is based on persons who qualify to be registered as electors. All previous electoral boundary reviews were done based on the electors' registry. The Constitution says completely different. It says it completely different in **“so far as reasonably practicable, across all electoral districts there will be an equal ratio between the number of elected members of the Legislative Assembly representing each electoral district and the number of persons qualified to be registered**

as electors under section 90 in that district.” That is, Madam Speaker, [section] 89(2)(d)(i).

So that is how we got caught over on that one, Madam Speaker, and what they did was to go back to the Census of 2010 and extrapolate all the population that was 15 at the time will be *eligible* to be registered as electors. So that is how that 19 came in.

But I should hasten to warn those in George Town who think adding one seat enhances their chances of winning, like it did hitherto. I should hasten to tell them that it does not because you are going to get elected on your own merits in your own constituency. Now you have not got one big constituency where you can miss out part of it and still get elected. You are going to have to run in that specific constituency.

Madam Speaker, the Member for North Side and I are very familiar with that and, to a lesser extent, your good-self in Cayman Brac, but more so than the others throughout the rest of the country. So, Madam Speaker, we have the benefit of not having to learn this thing with this historical change.

We are going to hear a lot of gnashing of teeth and wailing too. Hear what I tell you, Madam Speaker? I do not wish ill to anyone, but if you are my opponent I expect you not to come back because I want to beat you. And that is the nature of this acrimonious business that we are in. And I know there are enough lawyers there who have been in court; they know how it works—I will fight for me and you will fight for you.

Madam Speaker, I am going to say it out loud. Let me touch on a few things that I heard the Leader of the Opposition and the Fifth Elected Member for George Town talk about. And there are a number of people in these Chambers who do it too other than those two. We talk about garrison politics.

Madam Speaker, we need to stop scaremongering, we need to stop frightening our people and turning them away from being willing allies of change that is going to make their representative more accountable. We love to talk about Jamaica and its garrison politics. Why do we not talk about the rest of the Caribbean that does not have it? But the opponents of this change of the implementation of single member constituencies want to frighten our people.

Madam Speaker, I hear the Member about [how] he supported it and he also said, talking about blowing smoke, and my motion was playing politics. I either pass this Legislature every day or I come here on the other days I do not. And many of those days (1) I did not see a steeple sitting on the top of this building; (2) I did not sign on as a preacher. I signed on here as a politician, and this just happens to be the house of politics. It is all right for them to play politics, but it is not all right for me to play politics. Oh, that is how it goes? No, that is not how it goes. Because the more you can play it, the more I can play it too.

This is the house of politics, and, Madam Speaker, it is my responsibility, if he does not know it, that Fifth Elected Member for George Town, if he does not know it yet, because he has the cushy seat over on the Government side, if he does not know it, it is my job to keep the Government honest. One day, maybe, just maybe (I am giving them a maybe chance of coming back here), he will come out here and understand the other side of the political arena.

Madam Speaker, when he says that I was playing politics with my motion, I was keeping them honest. Madam Speaker, I needed to make sure this Government fulfilled their obligation to the people. But you know what, Madam Speaker, were it not for me, I dare say, I could speculate now that it would not have been brought, because I kept it on the forefront—January 2014 and then by September—and to counter me the Government brought a motion. They had no thoughts of bringing the motion. They had none. Somebody needs to get up and say unna side about it—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: You are learning? Okay, watch how it is done.

Madam Speaker, that is not garrison politics. Garrison politics is equated to longevity in politics. According to some of these I hear, they equate it to longevity in politics. Let us look at the districts of East End and North Side.

In our political parliamentary democracy we have had six Members of Parliament from East End and North Side. Three of us are left, the other three God bless their souls. Longevity was a part of that—my predecessor—24, 28 years; his predecessor—30-odd years; North Side, the first one, 30-odd years; the next one, 20, 16; and now my good friend the Elected Member for North Side going on 16.

Madam Speaker, I want to go further. I want to go even further than that. I want to go to West Bay. The current Leader of the Opposition, 32 years almost, and Mr. Willie Farrington was 54 years. Unna listening to what I said? Five and one four, okay? Fifty-four years. Now, Madam Speaker, I was about to say 53, 54, but I am going to say 54.

Now, I want all of us to consider and tell me, where are the garrisons in just those three districts?

We want to look at the Minister responsible for Works, 24?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Twenty-four years after this one. The First Elected Member for Bodden Town—24 years—a whole generation!

Where are the garrisons that the two of those created? There are no garrisons, but they have stayed there. Why? Because the people want them!

Madam Speaker, garrisons are created by politicians. Are you all telling the people of this country that because garrison means stronghold—by force—that you are going to create and be a part of garrison politics in this country? I hope they never re-elect either one of you. I am going to see to it that I campaign against you all if that is your intent. Because, Madam Speaker, we need to stop talking about this thing called garrison politics. Every . . . every—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I hear the Fifth Elected Member for George Town talking about Jamaica. Try and remember, or look at the history of Jamaica, and what caused it, especially in the capital of Kingston. Unna need to think about it. Inevitably the two parties' names come up in every instance that we see garrison politics.

So is that the intent? That goes for the Leader of the Opposition, too, because I am going to start a campaign against you all that you are going to drag this country by true garrison politics, by strong holding people to vote. I am not saying you are going to do that; that is what it says. Just like are we talking about importing guns and the Member for George Town talks about the criminal element? The criminal element can only survive by virtue of politicians facilitating that.

Is that unna's intent? Unna better be careful, you know, because I am going to campaign against unna.

Madam Speaker, the Fifth Elected Member for George Town stood here a few minutes ago and said that he was approached by certain individuals and he told them *bug off!* That is precisely what it takes. And if this country—"we" this country—are going to elect people to represent them that stronghold them into voting and batter them about and . . . Madam Speaker, we like using these terms and do not understand what it means. So, you are going to tell me that there are people here and potential people coming in here who will cater to the wishes of the criminal to get elected and re-elected?

Madam Speaker, honestly, maybe those rookies (they like calling themselves) need to be in here a little longer and get the threats on their lives that many of us have had—the Leader of the Opposition, my good-self, the Premier, my good friend for Bodden Town, the Member for George Town, the Minister for Works. That is what unna need. When you get home at night you do not know who is waiting for you and you do not know the safety of your family inside.

You know, Madam Speaker, we need to stop this thing about trying to frighten the people that it is about garrison politics, because it is us who would facilitate it. And Madam Speaker, if it is not those of us

who are here, it would be someone who is coming in and running for politics and using the criminal element to force people to vote. Madam Speaker, are we going to start talking about it in here and then the word gets out there and that is a possibility? Every person who does not support electoral reform comes up with these red herrings, and this is the worst one we could come up with. Say that we do not support it for other reasons.

Madam Speaker, the people of East End and North Side has been a part of this all their lives and they have not created any political garrisons in East End. Every election I have to fight for my seat. So all the safe seats that have 30 years and 30-odd years in their safe seat, it is not me. And I am a Single Member Constituency. How can the multi-Member Constituencies have safe seats? Why? Because the people work.

Maybe some of you need to get up and wear out some shoes. That is what causes longevity—intimacy with your people, work hard. That is why you got elected to come in here. The one good thing that the Fifth Elected Member from George Town said was *this is no glorified place, you are in service to people*—he understands that when many do not. And those who are coming behind us will realise it when they reach here, Madam Speaker.

For me, today I am worse off than I was 20 years ago. I made out my register of interest two weeks before, or six weeks I think it was before the election, from 1992. But the one that is relevant is 2000. Go check it. I made one out on the 29th of last month, July, I think. Go check it. No, last month, September. Go check it. All I did was to copy it over. The same things, why? It is about passion, it is about heart, it is about commitment to your people. And if you do not come here with any principle, yes, you will try to create garrisons to stay.

I agree with the Fifth Elected Member in that regard. You will try to create something to be able to stay here. And who am I to say that people are not doing it? We are all human beings. But we need to stop this; that people come here and everybody is being painted with the same brush. Paint thyself! Speak about what you are going to do. Speak about what Single Member Constituency means for you. Do not come painting me with any broad brush.

You know, politicians, Madam Speaker, the world over have had to battle this belief that we are crooked. If it is for you, paint yourself red and those who you assume are in that category. Do not paint me. Do not paint me. Find someone else to say they are creating garrisons. Because I will have spent 16 years in here representing the people of East End, I've got garrison in East End? Because when you take it to its natural conclusion that would be what it says.

The Leader of the Opposition has been there for 32 years. Did he create a garrison to stay there? No.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, yes, of course, but they have got to blame everybody.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: But we do not need to repeat this baloney.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Oh, it happens, but if we continue to repeat it, then it gets in people's heads. If we want to make sure it does not get there, stop saying so.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: All right, buddy. I ain't rowing with you all; I am just saying we need to be careful of our utterances. That is the one thing I have learned in 15 years, we need to be careful.

Mind you, sometimes, because of the aggravation from them, Madam Speaker, I go off the rails. But I know people listen. And the more they listen and the more stuff we say, the worse it is for our democracy. We will never enlighten our people into understanding what we go through here, what it is in the outside world.

Look at Barbados. One of my best friends was the Prime Minister. He was there for 20-odd years before he became Prime Minister. Why did he stay in St. James? Why did he stay in power? Because he was in his constituency every weekend; he was beloved. He never had any garrisons. He was Godfather of every child born since he got elected. Why? Because he was there for his people. Call it what you may, but he was not bringing in guns . . . putting one set of people against the other. He locked it down for a safe seat. It was so safe that as soon as he died two months later they had an election and his wife won the election. And she has been in there ever since, all right?

That is garrison? That is not garrison. That is service to your people or the majority of them anyhow, because she ain't going to get every vote.

Unna stop it! The Leader of the Opposition for West Bay, call him what you want—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: —call him whatever you may, but remember he knows his people and he goes to them. Why do you think he keeps getting re-elected? Do you think it is not hard to get rid of him? We could . . . let us work together to try to get rid of him, let us do it, but it is going to be difficult because he is beloved by his people.

Let us try to get rid of the First Elected Member from Bodden Town. Do you think it is easy?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: You think it is easy? Let us join together to remove Kurt Tibbetts, the Minister of Works. Do you think it is easy? You see him walking around with barrels of guns handing them out? We need to stop this. Unna need to stop it.

How are the criminal elements going to get the facilities to be strongmen? And then Government . . . like in Jamaica, they build housing and through the . . . they've gone and given it to the people. Patronage is how it is done. I can hardly buy bread. Unna need to stop this. We need to remove that from our psyche. And then this Fifth Elected Member from George Town about *happy he made the decision he did because of the machinations that were going on around the place after the election.*

Madam Speaker, mouth says anything when it learns to talk. And he can talk now, but deep within his soul he is burning because he knows it was mistake. He has got to wrestle with his conscience though, you know, Madam Speaker, not me. He must wrestle with his conscience because it could only be the Member for North Side and I that he was directing it to. He must live with his conscience because so must I. But he knows what went on during that period. He regrets now all that was told to him outside of my ears. He regrets that now, he recognised that it was not so. He recognises that, Madam Speaker. He was the one who started this, you know, he opened this door and you know, Madam Speaker, I will push it. You know that, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Just make sure, Member, that when you push it, that it will be pushed in a direction different from what you just said where he regrets doing or knowing what he did, which was outside your ears. I am still having a hard time trying to wrap my mind around that, so please continue.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, he knows what I am talking about. He knows, trust me, you can write it down however you want, but he knows what I am talking about. He knows very well because it was deliberately directed at him. He knows. And in the privacy of your Chambers he will tell you and he will cry to you and tell you he regrets that.

Anyway, Madam Speaker—

The Speaker: Member, you invited this on yourself because I thought one of the reasons you were purporting was that one man, one vote was going to get rid of coattail, but I did not realise it was going to allow you to prophecy as well.

Please continue.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, are you talking about your coattail or?

The Speaker: We have one hour remaining. Is this an appropriate time for the luncheon break?

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Proceedings suspended at 12:43 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:37 pm

The Speaker: Please be seated. Proceedings are resumed. I recognise the Honourable Member for the District of East End, with one hour remaining for his debate time.

MOTION

GOVERNMENT MOTION NO. 8/2015-2016 ORDER TO EFFECT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

[Continuation of debate thereon]

Mr. V. Arden McLean, Elected Member for East End: Madam Speaker, I won't need all of that, thankfully—no, *hopefully*, let me say.

Madam Speaker, I think I have covered most of what I wanted to talk about with regards to single-member constituency and why I support single-member constituencies and the one man, one vote process and the first past the post. Now, Madam Speaker, there are many other systems, but none is perfect. We cannot find one system that is perfect. We can look at proportional representation. We don't have the kind of diversity in this country to require proportional representation. Places like Guyana, where we have the ethnic divide and the like, that is where proportional representation comes into play. I hear some of us talking about a general election for the whole country.

Madam Speaker, there are so many other things that you need to put in place to effect equality and fairness in the election that it's not worth it. We might as well stick with what we have and then try to create the equality in the number of votes that are allowed by each elector. Because if you go, like one Member talked about, one for the Premier and then one for the other 17 Members, can you imagine, Madam Speaker, the UDP getting the majority and Alden being elected as the Premier? Do you see where that's going, or vice-versa—the PPM getting the majority Members, and the Premier being the now Leader of the Opposition? Oh, what a day that would be!

So, these systems, you would have to put so many things in place. Then, you would have to give another tier on the administrative side. So you would

be like a miracle, where the president would veto votes and the likes—veto provisions to stop the legislature from doing what it wants to do. So, thus far, I believe the first past the post, and now we move into single-member constituency facilitates our needs. And like I say, I fought long and hard for this, Madam Speaker. My first try at this to become a representative, and long before, the records will reflect that at my first time trying to be elected in this Parliament 20-odd years ago, I said in the television closing [debate], which I think is called the Chamber of Commerce debate amongst candidates, that *if East Enders, must vote for one, then the rest of the country must vote for one person. Or East Enders must have multiple votes, as well.*

Prior to that, Madam Speaker, and subsequently, I have always fought for it. The Premier said that he did more for single-member constituency than I did. Well, that may be true. But I have been in it longer than he has, because he didn't put his \$1,000 up until eight years after I went at it for the very first time. You know? And that's the nature of this business. We do it when we think we're ready. So that's fine. But certainly, I have been out beating the pavement much longer than he has. I accept that he was maybe beating it for someone else, but I was beating it for me. And yes, I believe that he was out beating it for the Minister for Works from the 1980s. But then, so was I.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: The Premier beating the pavement for your good-self.

So, we have immersed ourselves in this political arena, and it has been for quite some time. And I dare say that it has been for the better. And I am proud of the contributions I have made, just like you, Madam Speaker, because you have been out there wearing out the shoe soles as well, and all for good reason. And I am thankful for the contributions we all have made with that. When the microphones are on, there are no friends in here. I came in here, they've got their friends over there and I'm over here. So, you know, there is always going to be the acrimony and the difference of opinion.

Madam Speaker, I want to turn to three other areas that I think need to be addressed. I hear the Fifth Elected Member for George Town talking about *offences that are committed during election*. He had had experiences with it and the likes. But, Madam Speaker, I draw all of our attention to section 95 of the Election Law. All that he spoke about are offences now. We just need to bring them to the attention of the authorities in order that we do not crawl down that road of where people believe they can use force, strong-arm people to get what they want. We need to do it and do it fast.

But, Madam Speaker, it is ironic that we are here today talking about electoral reform, and maybe it's timely that we are doing it now. Because the latest edition of the *Parliamentarian*, for those of us who read it, those who don't, I would draw your attention to it.

The latest edition is entitled *Vote: Elections and Voting Reform*. And there are some very interesting articles in there, Madam Speaker, from around the Commonwealth. The editor's note—“Elections and voting reform across the Commonwealth.” That's his message. That's what his message is entitled. The Acting Secretary General: *Parliaments and Elections*, his message.

The Commonwealth Woman Parliamentarian's Chairperson, who is the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda, the Right Honourable Rebecca Kadaga, *Election Reform and Women*. [Former] Commonwealth Secretary General, His Excellency Sharma, *Commonwealth Electoral Networks*. The Honourable Raphael Joseph Mhone, from Malawi, *Electoral and Voting Reforms in Malawi*. And my good friend, the Leader, the Premier, *The Isle of Man, 150 Years of Electoral Reform*: These are all matters that I would draw to the attention of my colleagues to start to read if they haven't read them already. *Canadian Electoral Finance in the 21st Century*. And I am sure my good friend, the Fifth Elected Member for George Town, would like this one: *Advances in Political Party Financing in Jamaica*, even. It is here by Philip Falwell.

There are very good articles in here. *The Price in Politics: The New South Wales Experience; Elections and Voting Reform on Albany, Extending the Voting Franchise*. That is to the youth. *Youth Engagement in Elections in Scotland; The Electoral System in the Seychelles; Democratic Renewal in the Prince Edward Island*. Madam Speaker, there are many. *Out With the Old and In With the New: The Case for Internet Voting in Australia*. For instance, Australia requires 100 per cent turnout. So they are trying to do it now if you are working overseas. You will be able to vote by the Internet so that their citizens are not breaking the law.

So, Madam Speaker, I believe that this Election Law, is only the first step in our electoral reform. The Election Law, Madam Speaker, as you well know, needs changing. And I know the Fifth Elected Member for George Town never liked this one that I'm about to say, which is, Madam Speaker, we really need to reform election financing. We really need to do it! You cannot run an election in this country on \$30,000. So what we do, we go and pay for things before the election cycle! That in itself is wrong! We need to change it. And we need to stop being afraid because the public is going to jump on us.

The only one jumping on us . . . And that leads me nicely into the press that I have written down

here. Madam Speaker, the relationship between Parliament and the press has been longstanding. They each have a responsibility to inform the public and to tell them the right thing. But we have a press corps in this country that seems to have become the press when they land here at Owen Roberts Airport, and they see a stenographer's pad, or they borrowed one, because it is all about us as Parliamentarians and what we didn't do. That's what the press seems to have their day on. They have a responsibility to properly inform the press. And, Madam Speaker, some of the things I've seen, some of the newspapers in this country, the printed media in this country, talking about this electoral reform that we are going through, is ludicrous! And it is wrong. And it further agitates our people against us when we are doing it in the people's interests.

They come here with their bowties and their short pants and they take over. And they do us anything! And we are not supposed to say, *Oh, you know, you're abusing the privilege! And you're immune from prosecution inside here!* I wonder which one of them thinks that I am afraid to tell them outside what I say in here. This is what we do. And the press . . . How many Caymanians are in this press corps? We talk about lawyers. How many Caymanians are in the press corps? Very few. And what is happening is that the press corps does not have a point of reference in our country. For instance, Madam Speaker, a classic example, before we took the lunch break, I was talking about how the Minister for Works and my good friend, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town and the Leader of the Opposition has been in office for so long. And he tells me during lunch that somebody said they didn't know that we weren't friends anymore. I wasn't talking badly about him; it's just that people misunderstand it.

Further, what is happening is that it is compounded by then the press going out there and saying all manner of evil against us. We are not educating our people on these matters. And, Madam Speaker, there's nothing wrong with them being uneducated politically, because they're not in here every day. They don't sit down listening to us. They don't have the time. That is why we, together with the press, need to educate our people. But the press is not taking up its responsibility. All they want to do is have a nice headline that sells. This is the very country that they're in, in that business, you know.

They create this feeding frenzy. This morning they are calling the Government *beggars* in the editorial. That's what they do! But we must stand by and take it. I want them to know parliamentary privileges were given to me by the people of East End to defend them. And if my language is not unparliamentary, which the Speaker has a responsibility to stop me, then, I'm going to say it. Just because they get one or two licks, I'm the only one who is supposed to take licks on behalf of the people of the

East End? No, they must take it, too, when they're wrong.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: That's the press I'm talking about. I ain't talking about you now. You'll get yours. Don't rush it; everybody is going to get their little piece.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: So, Madam Speaker, in all the things that I've learned since being here, I never learned once that the press cannot be considered wrong or they do everything right. But I'm not supposed to say anything and they ridicule me to the very people whom I represent?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Infallible? It is more than fallible about them, especially those we have here. I know, Minister, you say they are not infallible. Madam Speaker, there is a need for a press. I would not encroach on the freedom of the press. But along with every freedom comes certain responsibilities. Even me, Madam Speaker, I'm a Member of Parliament. I have the freedom to drive to my house, but I can't go above 50 miles an hour. I don't have the freedom to go kill whom I want to kill.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I don't. Oh, don't get that wrong.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Now, Madam Speaker, the Minister asked me if I do. No. I don't want the freedom to kill. But sometimes, I wish I had the freedom to choke somebody.

Madam Speaker, I think the press must step up. And I'm calling on them to stop this absolute ridicule. It appears to me like there are only five people in this honourable Chamber who will not vote in favour of this reform. It's an overwhelming majority—well, three, but those two over there, the two officials cannot vote. I don't know why anybody believes that they can vote. They aren't voting in here anymore. This is a constitutional political thing. And even if they could vote, Madam Speaker, like we had in years gone by, I would have asked them not to vote, because it is not their responsibility. The responsibility lies clearly on the shoulders of those whom the people go and elect to represent them. That's where it lies.

And if the Opposition, the official Opposition, doesn't want to vote in favour of it, that's their business. That's their business. I know what. I've got to drown out two of the votes with my two here. And I hope the other side, the Government, drowns out the other one. And that will happen. But the press is going to go out now and . . . I see the first thing they did, they say that the Leader of the Opposition is going to get judicial review. You all don't think there is enough of them going about here now and can't finish um? And unna like spouting this out—they're going to get judicial review, but they can't afford it. What, are you talking it for then? Stop talking it! We're going to get judicial review for? You lost! There are 18 Members, only 3 of you and 17 on the floor. Three can go into seventeen, but seventeen can't go into three. They will lose! How many times have I lost here?

The Fifth Elected Member talked about how I brought the motion and it was politics. I brought it twice; yes, it was politics. What do you think it is? But I lost. In both instances, I lost. And look here today, unna voting for it. I have won. I won! I am the only one winning in here! The Member for North Side and I, because many of you have changed your minds over the years and you're still thinking about whether or not you should go back to where you were. We haven't changed our minds. We are the winners in here today. Maybe you win, too. But our win is greater than yours, because we don't have to fight any longer. We don't have to fight any longer, thanks to you all that you brought it.

Madam Speaker, I want the public to know that I explained my caveat with the 19. And I still believe we need to look at that. I still believe, Madam Speaker, we need to get to the Elections Law. There's so much stuff in this that is irrelevant. For instance, Madam Speaker, every three months you register people. Why can't we register electors whenever you can get to a magistrate to verify the electors thing? We have to wait for three months. That's why it causes so many problems at election! People go and provide all the information, and they're out of time, whereas, if we had that change so that it's at any time the Supervisor of Election can go to a judge, you could do it the day before the election, you know. Because we have verified that that person is eligible. It is only that person we need to confirm, you know. When the person reaches the poll, he can have an addendum slip there.

These are the things, Madam Speaker, which we need to bring into the . . . Yes we did one time, Madam Speaker. I think we did it that if you're going to be 18 prior to, you could have registered in advance—advance registration, I believe, before you turn 18. But we need to go further. There are many people who don't remember or who decide, *Oh, I'm not going to get registered*, and two days before the election, because they see a good candidate whom they think they want to vote for in their constituency, they want to

get registered, Madam Speaker. Anywhere else in the world there are court cases the night before election and while the election is going on. Why? It is not like you're asking a judge to review a million electors to be registered. In those instances, it's probably 10–12, maybe. And all they've got to do is look at the requirement, birth certificate or what-have-you, Cayman status or whatever it is.

Here we are, that person is disenfranchised until the next election, just because they decided to late on that particular candidate. Who knows? They might have been overseas, Madam Speaker. But we never make provisions for people to exercise that ability to register. We never make provisions easier for them to exercise their franchise. And that's why we need to look at the Elections Law. We need to stop being afraid. I know the Leader of the Opposition supports me in that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: And, Madam Speaker, the other thing is the Supervisor of Elections. We can go and buy the CD's from them of the list of electors. But you can't manipulate it. It just doesn't make sense! I mean, the one electors' list that we could be concerned about, if there was a question, is the one the judge holds in the safe. If he or she did it yesterday and the election is today, that is in safekeeping there. And if you want to challenge someone who is on it, that's where it has to go. This old colonial thing where we have got to have control over everything, we need to stop it. These are modern times. If we don't change it, Madam Speaker, trust me—the next generation coming up, they're going to change it their way.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: This old Elections Law.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yeah, it needs a lot of work, lots of work. And I am willing, ready and able to go on a committee to look at it and see what we can do. We need to.

I just get so frustrated sometimes with the redundancies and the antiquated pieces of paper that govern our country. And maybe that's a little harsh to say. Maybe I should say, *Let us move ahead and change it to the changing times*.

Madam Speaker, I can assure Members that, as much as I have a caveat about the 19th seat . . . I have concerns about it; not so much about the cost of it; I'm not overly concerned about that, because that's negligible. What I'm concerned about is the balance of power and how another seat further erodes that. I'm very concerned about it, and we need to address that,

Madam Speaker. But I, nevertheless, will support this Motion for the one man, one vote single-member constituencies. I would really look like an idiot not to. But, Madam Speaker, this is not the end of it. Every government will find, or can find, excuses. So, I am going on record today to say to the Government, *Don't come six months from now and tell us there is insufficient time to implement this before the election because we didn't do something*. Because remember, I gave you ample time to do it, from January 2014. I gave you that opportunity.

I want to see the next general election contested under the umbrella of single-member constituency, one man, one vote, first past the post; same as East End and North Side. And, Madam Speaker, I know the Leader of the Opposition is going to be so glad when he has contested one election with 1,300 members as opposed to 5,000. I know he is going to be. He's going to call me up the next morning and say, *Arden, you know you're right*. I know he's going to do that, Madam Speaker.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: So, too, will the others. I know, Madam Speaker, Cayman Brac has been questionable and the people up there. And I encourage them to give it a chance to let it work.

The last thing for me to do, Madam Speaker, is to thank my good friend, Steve McField, and Adrienne [Webb] and the young lady out of the States. I think they did a wonderful job. But, Madam Speaker, every electoral commission we have ever had in recent history, Ms. Adrienne has been on there, I believe. And then Steve went on there. And when Steve was appointed, I said on the radio, *Steve is nobody's fool. So nobody must think that they're going to direct him*. And such is the case. I think they have done a pretty good job, a very good job with it. It's only left for us to decide whether or not we're going to implement it and when. I want to thank them for a stellar job and let them know that this is a very important job that they did. And I hope that they will be remembered as those who assisted with bringing one man, one vote, single-member constituency, first past the post system into this country.

This is a serious matter, because, Madam Speaker, this system has been talked about from Lord Asquith, who spoke of it in the 1970s; 1969, I believe, or 1970 when he was sent here to review our system. And he spoke of the lack of equality in the voting franchise in this country, where George Towners could have so many votes, and East Enders and North Siders . . . and these are the communities he spoke about, the same one that I am currently representative of, my good friend from North Side. He spoke of it from then, that it was not right.

Here we are—what is that? 45 years? Forty-five years later we're doing it. We're slow in reaching

where we've got to go. But 45 years later, nevertheless, we got it. And, Madam Speaker, I just want to say to all, in particular the press, who tried to influence East End and North Side becoming one. I just want to tell all of those that that is not going to happen. Not today, Bobo. And you can be here as long as you want, but influence, you will not the joining of two separate and distinct communities. I had no worries about it, Madam Speaker. You noticed I didn't even say that much to the press, because if the Government had even thought about that, we wouldn't have been here today. Unna talks about demonstrations in the street—that's where we would have been.

And I'm wondering what happened with the Leader of the Opposition and his initiative. I heard him on the radio, him and one of his other members, asking people to sign a petition. I think that is healthy in this democracy. But I haven't seen anything.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I don't have to see it?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I'm not going to see it yet?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Okay. Okay.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Too late, Bobo.

So, Madam Speaker, it's not going to happen in East End and North Side. Whilst we are twin cities—we are not identical, but we're twins—we have a distinct culture in each one of those communities. There's not one person who has the ability, the political acumen, the political currency to run both districts. Half of the people in North Side, I don't know, and half the people in the East End, nobody from North Side would know. We don't have the relationship. Madam Speaker, that is just as bad as them telling me to come to Cayman Brac to run against you. And that is not going to happen. I hardly come up there because I am afraid that you will deal with me in your constituencies. That will not happen. I live in Bodden Town, but I don't know that number of people in Bodden Town to get elected. If I go with Tony and he throws that coattail on me, I'll bet you I'll get it, though. But that's cut off now, too. I hope everybody knows that. That's getting shorter and shorter, because we celebrated his 70th birthday in here the other day. He's going to retire soon. We need young people to come. Me, too!

Many of us think that we're here for life. We're like the cornerstone that Royal Bodden laid. That's not

going to happen. At some stage you're going to retire, or you're going to be removed. And Mr. Warren told me that. He told me, in every politician's life, there comes a time that his ideas are good, might even be considered great. But they're old. You'd better know when to leave. If you don't leave, they'll teach you how to leave. This real estate does not belong to us. We must treat it with respect.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Last call: Does any other Member wish to speak?

If not, I'll recognise the Honourable Premier. Are you getting up, Member for George Town?

I recognise the Sixth Elected Member for the District of George Town.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise to support the Government Motion titled Order to Effect Recommendations of the Electoral Boundary Commission. I know this and personally spoke in depth on this subject back in, I think it was February 2014. And back then, I did have some concerns or some questions I still had to answer. But as we said back then, we were committed as a government to continuing the process of analysing single-member constituencies, one man one vote and to request the Governor to establish the boundaries or to establish a boundaries commission.

Madam Speaker, I had thoughts and continued to wonder about how the structure should be, whether we should have at-large members or whether what we have in front of us, which was recommended, a straightforward single-member constituency, one man one vote and other issues. But when I reflected, Madam Speaker, and I attended the Town Hall meeting on July 7th—which was chaired by Dr. Handley and included the Committee members; local attorney, Ms. Adrienne Webb, who was appointed by the Premier and the Government; and also Attorney, Mr. Steve McField, who was nominated by the Opposition—I felt confident after looking at the maps and listening to the committee, that they had considered all of the factors under their mandate. The boundaries that they recommended, I felt, were done considering the population or cultural and historical boundaries and the race makeup of the constituencies.

Madam Speaker, when we campaigned for this election, myself and a couple of my colleagues, especially in George Town, I heard quite often, *Oh, I guess I'll see you again in four years*. And it was at that stage that I promised myself that I would not want to face that same sentiment in four years' time, should the Lord see it fit for me to run in the next election. And so, a few of my colleagues and I have made it a

point to get out as often as we can to walk the District of George Town. And, Madam Speaker, that's no easy task. Madam Speaker, it took six of us, along with help, a couple of months full-time to do it when we were campaigning. So the task for one or two people, or one individual in particular, to do it on their own, along with all of the other requirements of being a Member of Parliament and, in my particular case, being Councillor to a Ministry, in the District of George Town with around 8,000 voters is no easy task. There are a lot of miles to cover, Madam Speaker.

I try, because I think that that's what every constituent deserves. That is what we were elected to do, was to represent them. So, besides holding constituency clinics, I do my best to walk communities, to drive through communities with my windows down and to interact with all members of my constituencies throughout George Town and all communities, good or bad.

Madam Speaker, we cannot speak about progression and be afraid of change. This would simply lead to self-stagnation, Madam Speaker. And this Government has tackled this portentous issue in very much the same way that we have tackled many issues that have faced many, many previous governments. We may not please everyone, and, I dare say, we are not perfect. But, Madam Speaker, we tackle the tough issues. And standing here today discussing this single-member constituency, one man, one vote and the acceptance of the recommendations by the Electoral Boundaries Commission is, once again, evidence that this Government is not afraid to tackle the tough issues.

Franklin Roosevelt said, **"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."** This, for me, Madam Speaker, is what single-member constituencies and the one man one vote provides for those citizens within our communities who don't have the wherewithal or don't live in the areas to get to see their representatives every day. It is very easy for us in such a large District like George Town to just focus on particularly easy areas, because we have such a wide . . . You know, we can satisfy ourselves that, *Oh, I'm out every weekend* or, *I'm out every day*. But are we going everywhere? And are we all going to the same places? So inevitably, Madam Speaker, some persons are going to be left out. And usually, those are those who have little or those who are in the tougher neighbourhoods with the tougher challenges.

Madam Speaker, single-member constituencies provide voters with strong constituency representation. Each voter has a single, easily identifiable representative which encourages our constituents to provide service and involvement by working with their easily identifiable representative. Single-member constituencies demand accountability. It is much more difficult for me to maintain the

numbers of 1,300 people, the majority numbers of 1,300 people than it is to do so for 8,000 people. You will be accountable to each and every one of those 1,300 people. You can't just skip some or say, *This is not my area* or, *They don't like me*. You're accountable to each one of them. It also provides and ensures, again, for me, Madam Speaker, equality and the fact that we can't just forget about problem areas.

I like to use the operations of a restaurant as an example. You have your dining room. And if you do not divide your dining room up into sections and appoint each section to one server, you will have chaos. And inevitably, for your guests, some will be forgotten about. Some will assume that the other server took the order, or that the other server already delivered the order. Or, Madam Speaker, what you can have happen is that the servers will only identify the big spenders or the big tippers, and only focus their attention on those individuals, leaving others sitting in the corner lacking service and in need of service. So this is why I feel that it's important and why I feel that it provides a greater equality to have single-member constituencies and that one easily identifiable representative for that area.

It also helps the Government in having that one person whom you can work . . . Even as small as we are, every district has different areas and different needs. So, George Town has different areas and different needs. The needs on one side of George Town are different from those on the other side. George Town has from Camana Bay to Central George Town, all the way up to Prospect, everywhere having different needs.

So, when we think about things like planned area developments, now that you will have one representative responsible for an area, he understands intimately the needs of that area and can sit with the Government to discuss that. That is one of the things, as I sit here and listen to the Members for North Side and East End when they speak about their constituencies; they're intimately involved in the day-to-day. They understand the needs of all of their constituents. And I think it will bode well and be a tremendous help to the Government to have one responsible representative, one easily identifiable representative, in each constituency to work with. We can concentrate our efforts on the social needs of those constituencies. We can force participation of persons within the constituency by being there day in and day out. Get them involved. Get them to participate in the representation of that constituency. And encourage them (forcefully encourage)—

[Laughter]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: —to participate on a daily basis, Madam Speaker. Because again, they will feel that we have somebody, that we have someone, this one easily identifiable person. *This is the guy, this is the*

girl whom we can call, whom we can work with, whom we will see on a regular basis.

Madam Speaker, I think that this is a fantastic start. Again, we have to change. We have to advance. And as is required, or as recommended by the committee, I think this is a fantastic start. But we have to ensure that we review the boundaries every four or five years, see how they are working, see if the mix culturally, population-wise are all still intact. And I believe, Madam Speaker, that as much as was said about pros and cons of the representatives in here, at the end of the day, I believe that this is a winner for the people.

In closing, Madam Speaker, the strengths again of single-member constituencies will establish close ties between representatives and constituents. It creates accountability for representation, for representatives to their voters. And finally, constituency service between a single member and a single constituency, as I alluded to earlier, will foster strong and stable government, Madam Speaker.

I would like to congratulate the Premier and the Government again for tackling the tough issues. We had many, many robust debates around the caucus table, evening after evening. And I'm happy to see us all here bringing another tough issue to a resolution, Madam Speaker, not to be kicked around again for another 15 or 20 years, but to have the strength and the fortitude to bring solutions to this Honourable House.

Madam Speaker, with those few words, thank you, and God bless these Cayman Islands.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Second Elected Member for the District of Bodden Town, and Honourable Minister responsible for Sports.

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden, Minister of Community Affairs, Youth and Sports: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to offer support to the Government Motion No. 8, an Order to Effect Recommendations of the Electoral Boundary Commission.

Madam Speaker, this is indeed a landmark Motion. It is one that will change the political landscape for current and aspiring politicians and representatives in these Islands. The progressive Government sees this as a new era of accountability and transparency, and another campaign promise fulfilled. As my colleague from George Town just said, this was not an easy decision. If the Government wanted to be purely selfish, they would likely have left this on the table. But, Madam Speaker, this Government is about what it feels is right for these Cayman Islands and not right for itself.

This one-person-one-vote and single-member constituency idea has been around these Islands for many, many moons and has been debated for many generations. I want to pay kudos to the One Man One Vote Committee and to the Members for North Side and East End who have been staunch supporters, and indeed all those who put their weight and shoulder behind this to make it into the reality that it has become, or certainly on its way to becoming, because there's no turning back now, as the Member from East End said earlier.

I too participated in public protests and committees on this. And certainly, I feel vindicated in prodding, at the time, the UDP administration to hold a referendum on this very important topic. We all know how that was set up. And certainly, that was a case of the Government holding a referendum but encouraging its people to vote against it. Well, despite that, at the end of the day, there was only one district where the vote didn't carry, and that was in the District of West Bay. And we all know that the Leader of the Government, the Premier at that time, is the Leader of the West Bay Chapter, and certainly his weight carries significant impact in that district. And he was staunchly, and still is, for his debate earlier here last week, against this. And therefore, there's no surprise that, at the end of the day, the vote failed in West Bay. But I must say, Madam Speaker, it didn't fail by any large margin.

So, the writing was on the wall. The people of the Cayman Islands are asking for greater accountability and more fairness in the process of electing their representatives. For a long time, we've had the Cayman Brac situation, which you're well aware of, and the Members for East End and North Side, who sit as single Members. And it is fair to say that there's a risk with any election, but certainly you are much better at being able to know your district and pretty much know the result before it is tabulated because of how well you know your people and how the vote is going to go. And they know you, and they know what you stand for. And they are holding you accountable for what you do and say.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition got up here, I think it was on Friday, and he does as he does best. He basically used scare tactics, in my opinion. He talked about everything under the sun and blamed everything under the sun that happens negatively on this—*round and round the mulberry bush* he went. Sometimes I wondered as I listened to his debate what I was listening to, because he certainly had a lot of latitude with where he was going. But he, at the end of the day, did a good job in convincing people, or his people, that that is not the way to go.

And that is his job, Madam Speaker. If he feels strongly against it, then that's his job. But I think that as the Member from East End has said, we have to be careful that we don't unnecessarily put ideas into

people's heads, because, Madam Speaker, when it comes to the G word that has been used, I think that it is safe to say that it all depends. There are no guarantees in this life, Madam Speaker. And at the end of the day, as we were discussing off-microphone earlier, the only way to ensure good representation, to ensure the situation which he refers to, in particular, about the possibility of it happening , , . And that is where these strong holes are created, and you become entrenched and you have these pockets of support that nothing can disturb. And it becomes a 'you-are-there-forever' type of thing.

The only way you can avoid that, to an extent, is to elect the right people. Now, you may still get that effect, but you may get it just from good representation. And that has been alluded to here, in the House. We have the examples of the Member, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, Mr. Eden, the senior Member of this Parliament, who is beloved in his district because of the care and attention that he has given the members of Bodden Town. It's not because he's set up strongholds and given, you know, pockets of resistance and violence and all that—far from it! Instead, he has represented by being there for his people, being there in good times and in bad times, and treated them with respect. And they, in turn, respect him, and he's loved for it.

The man on my left here, Minister Tibbetts, Minister for Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure, we all know the legend he is in Cayman politics—past leader of Government business, and someone who, no matter what they do in George Town, from the time he has gotten his feet in, he comes out on top. And we just got to squeeze that one more term out of him now, and I'll let him go. But I cannot let him go yet. I told him the other day he's just getting good. He said, *Boy, you crazy or what?* I said, *No, K. T., you're just getting good. Trust me. I would never lead you wrong.* He's led me long enough, not wrong enough—

[Laughter]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: —for a good while, and I appreciate every bit.

We have the Leader of the Opposition. He may be accused of much, and he may not be liked by many. But the fact remains that he has provided representation to his people on a personal basis, and he is loved for that. And that is why he is entrenched as he is in West Bay. So, I think that really is scare tactics when you talk about, you know, creating these strongholds with the individual system that one person one vote will bring about and a single-member constituency will bring about. Because it all depends on the representation and the character and level of representation that you as the people . . . You have that choice on elections day to put the right person in there to represent your interests.

And nothing is fool-proof. There's no perfect system, as the Member for East End said. There's no perfect system in terms of government. But I think that this is taking some of the unfairness out of our current system and doing its best to make it a much fairer system. Because why should someone in East End and North Side or Cayman Brac feel lesser in terms of their ability to influence the national scene of politics in Cayman, compared to someone in West Bay, George Town or Bodden Town, who have multiple votes at the moment? And naturally, you know, you always hear, *Well, boy, the election is going to turn on Bodden Town or, It's going to turn on West Bay on the results in those districts, and this is because that pocket or that group that you have there that's running together, and once we get them in, then that's it.*

So, when you think and hear of that, naturally, the folk who have one vote must naturally feel that they don't have that kind of influence. I mean, yeah, they can send the Member for East End down to George Town and bring him here to Parliament. But he's one person, and really that's their voice in the wilderness, as it were. So, I'm just using hypothetical examples, Madam Speaker. But I think the point I'm making is that we want everyone to feel that their voice is as equal as the others. And it's very important that that happens.

Madam Speaker, a little historical perspective on two of the countries that we deal with. One man one vote was introduced in the US in 1964, some 51 years ago; and introduced in the UK through a series of reform Acts between the 1800s and 1950s. And that's some 65 years ago. And we see those countries as prosperous, and we see those countries as true democracies. And therefore, I don't see where all the negativity is really coming from. This system is about voter equality. It's about, as I said, each person being able to speak through their vote and effect change.

Madam Speaker, one person, one vote will subject representatives to greater scrutiny. Naturally, you can't hide. If I'm in BT West or wherever it is, when they're looking for me, I can't say, *Well, go look for So-and-so*, because I am the representative. I am the representative of BT West. There's no First, Second, and Third and Fourth Elected Member of BT West. It's Osbourne Bodden, and if Osbourne Bodden is sick or away, well, hopefully I will have people in place that will help out while I'm not there. But certainly, the buck stops with me. And if I don't represent well, I will pay for it when the time comes.

So, Madam Speaker, it also, as the Member, my colleague from George Town (what number are you?), the Sixth Elected Member . . . You see, all that you don't have to remember anymore, Madam Speaker; that struggle to remember who's third, fourth, fifth and sixth, you know. That goes out the window, too. It's another advantage. But the Sixth Elected Member was just saying that the ability to work more closely with 1,300 people compared to

4,000, 5,000, 6,000, up to 8,000 people, as in George Town, it is overwhelming, Madam Speaker, to represent. Right now, there are four of us in Bodden Town. Bodden Town is the fastest-growing district, we keep hearing. And the number of voters, electors, there now in the district is somewhere in the region of, I would venture, 4,500, 4,500–4,600. That's a lot of people, Madam Speaker.

We do our best. We have an office. We have full-time office attendants who do a wonderful job. We get out there, and our phones are never off. We're always in touch. We have people who work closely with us in the district. We go to funerals, we go to weddings, we go to parties, and we go to events. Whatever is happening, we are there if at all possible. We do a tremendous amount of work with the elderly. We have a committee in Bodden Town of wonderful senior ladies who do tremendous work with our elderly folk. We have former MLA, Ms. Heather Bodden, managing our office in Bodden Town, who has been a Godsend since her coming on board back in, I think it was May.

We work closely, as much as we can, with everybody. We get around. We see people, you know, just casually. As the Sixth Member for George Town was saying, we drive around, windows down, in communities, stopping and seeing people in the yard, whatever. But, Madam Speaker, you are human. You have a demanding job. There's time for you to spend in the office. There are events to go to, official events that you cannot avoid. There are only so many hours in the day. When the weekend comes, you do your best to share some time with your family and still spend time in your community.

With 4,000–5,000 people, Madam Speaker—not to mention, I'm not speaking to George Town, because although they have six Members, the ratio is about the same—the demands on you as an individual, sometimes the pressure simply gets to you and it feels overwhelming. And you wish you could do more, and you wish you could just sometimes not have to say no and not have to attend or do something that you would like to do.

Madam Speaker, that in itself is a compelling reason to break this down into smaller segments and get better representation, afford that Member the ability to . . . Because if you're dealing with 1,300 people, Madam Speaker, Lord forbid that all 1,300 of them want help at one time. You are going to get that ratio of people and things that you need to do and the people who need help. But it has to be more manageable, Madam Speaker. It must be. And so, they in turn will get better representation. You will be held to account. You will be held to your word. But, Madam Speaker, overall, it has to produce a better system. It has to produce less bureaucracy to an extent. And certainly, you're going to get quicker election results. You should not have those, along with all the improvements we're doing on the E-

Government side and all that, as well, but with counting the ballot boxes now for this system should be a lot quicker. So, that's another little perk, I guess, of what you expect to see.

Certainly, Madam Speaker, you will be well known, because if you're so foolhardy to try and hide in a single-member constituency, then you're going to pay the price. So it's in your interest to be well known and offer that level of representation that you should.

There was discussion in relation to the coattail effect. Personally, I don't see that diminishing as much as some people would like to think. I think you will still have a popular individual who will have that wide-ranging effect and that casting net, as it were, as these are the folk running along with me, and I need you to support them. But what that individual will also have to do is pay particular attention to his or her own seat and not take the chance of supporting others and losing that. So, it will curtail it, I think, curtail the coattail to some extent. But I don't think it will totally diminish it. So I wouldn't put too much weight on that.

Madam Speaker, the progressives are not under any illusions that this is, as it were, the cure for all ills. Far be it from that. But what it does do, it speaks to a better system, in our mind, of democracy. I can't think of many places—in fact, I don't know of any other examples—where the system that we have obtains. Now, some people will say, *Oh, that's a good thing, and we shouldn't follow this and we shouldn't follow that.* But I think it's a case of us, we have developed slowly. You know, Members have been added over the years. And we now find ourselves in this position where we have to re-evaluate where we are and decide on the best way forward.

And this is a change. But it is not as radical a change as we could have made. I mean, people talk about national elections and all types of creation of Senate and different variations on what we have. So, I think it's going to take some getting used to. Certainly, this next election in 2017, there will be teething problems like any new system. But I believe that the kinks will work themselves out, and we will find that in due course, we will be glad that we stood here and offered the solution and had these debates.

Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, the progressives looked at this carefully. And in some ways, we felt we might have had . . . We would put ourselves more at risk to implement such a system, because we are the incumbent, and there is an additional seat coming online. And if we were purely about the progressives, we could easily have said, *No. We're going to put this off until God allows us another term and deal with it then.* But we have bitten the bullet, as it were, as we're doing with many tough things that have been left alone for a long time in this country. Right now, we have the whole issue of the dangerous substance motion that was brought by the Minister for PLAHI [Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure]; again, an issue with fuel

companies that have been left a long time on the table that are being dealt with.

We have the issue to come on liquor license moratorium. We have the port that's going to be built, Madam Speaker. And all of these things that we have promised the individuals of this country that we would deal with, hard decisions, tough decisions, things that we sit and argue internally about, but we come out with one voice on it, and we look at what is best not for us as individuals, but for us as a country. And that is very, very important, Madam Speaker. It is what is best for Cayman and its people.

Madam Speaker, I believe that this is the electoral system that the country needs at this time. And at the end of the day, life is a learning process. And none of us has a crystal ball; none of us knows it all. But we are attempting to construct a better political system for these Islands and for tomorrow. Madam Speaker, I am trusting, that history will be kind to us. As I said, there's no perfect system. But we have looked at this from all angles, and I am happy to offer my support to the Motion.

Before I conclude, Madam Speaker, I want to also offer my congratulations to the Commission of Mr. McField, Ms. Webb, and Dr. Handley. I think they came together as a group who really gelled by the end and did a wonderful job. The report is a very detailed report. They went to great pains to carve up the Islands into manageable pieces in terms of the number of electors. As my colleague from Bodden Town, the Fourth Elected Member, said, *It's not a case of erecting fences or walls.* And there are no impediments to your crossing from one side to the next. This is simply a carve-up of the Island on paper on where you live, your place of abode, is where you vote. And they looked at it carefully. They were able to look at the demographics and ensure that we had a good balance so that we don't have all people of one economic means in one area. Because that would be, naturally, a recipe for disaster. They looked at it, and they brought balance to it.

I think they've done a magnificent job, and we thank them as a government for their efforts. Madam Speaker, there's not a lot more. You can talk around this a lot, but the truth is that a lot has been said. And there's not a lot more value that I can add. I think that I've made my points and certainly, I'm very proud to be a part of a government that is progressing this through this legislature, and very happy that the progressive Government has stood by its word and we are moving forward. The country will be better off in the end. I am positive about that. And the people will have the type of representation that they deserve and want. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Education.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers, Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this Government Motion as it relates to the acceptance of the Electoral Boundaries Commission report and recommendations. Before I begin, I first want to thank the Electoral Boundaries Commission on carrying out this laborious task in such a timely manner. And I also want to thank the Electoral Boundaries Commission for hosting the initial meetings in all the districts that they had in April, including the District of West Bay, during their first round of public meetings. And I understand they included a meeting specifically with Little Cayman, as well as a separate district meeting. So they were very thorough in their initial approach to hear from the members of the community with respect to this issue.

Madam Speaker, there has never been a time in our history such as this. The Bible speaks of it in Ecclesiastes 3, when it speaks about there being a season for everything and a time for every purpose under the heaven, a time to keep and a time to cast away. Madam Speaker, times such as these are rarely straightforward decisions. They are rarely clear-cut decisions to be made.

Madam Speaker, according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (the IIDEA, as I will be referring to it henceforth), the choice for an electoral system is one of the most important institutional decisions for any democracy. Electoral systems define and structure the rules of a political game. They help determine who is elected and how to campaign. It helps to determine the role of the political parties, and most importantly, who governs.

Madam Speaker, according to the Foreword, written by Carina Perelli, the Director of the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, in the electoral system design, the new international IIDEA Handbook, and I quote (and I'm happy to provide you with a copy of the quote afterwards): **"The design of electoral systems is a vital component of these processes. It cannot be considered in isolation from the wider context of constitutional and institutional design, and it can be critical for areas as diverse as conflict management, gender representation and the development of political party systems. Done well, electoral system design can add to the momentum of political change, encourage popular participation, and enable the emergence of legitimate representatives who are capable of handling a wide range of needs and expectations, immediately and in the future. Done badly, it can derail progress towards democracy or even political stability.**

"To be successful, electoral system design processes must build understanding and trust—not just among politicians and election

administrators, but among civil society organizations, among commentators, and above all, among the citizens of a country undergoing democratic reform. Electoral systems must be designed not only to work under current situations but also to accommodate future changes in attitudes and behaviour as electoral incentives change. They can contribute to the development of a stable democracy or they can be a major stumbling block to it."

Madam Speaker, as I said in my first public debate on the matter in this Honourable House in February 2014, although I'm not one of the Members of this House who launched my political career through the involvement with the OM/OV campaign, having not been a Member of the OM/OV Referendum Committee, I support equality in voting for all. Madam Speaker, I still support equality in voting for all.

Madam Speaker, as an Independent Member of the Government who is not fulfilling a campaign mandate or promise with regard to this issue to either support the introduction of single-member constituencies, as is the PPM's Members' mandate in their manifesto, as we heard by some of my colleagues, nor am I fulfilling a campaign mandate to reject one person one vote and single-member constituencies, as is the UDP position and the party line, which is evident from the Opposition Leader's position and the fact that two of the Opposition Members will seemingly change their position on the matter since voting on the issue in February of last year. I am supporting the adoption of this Motion purely on its merits. And that, to me, Madam Speaker, is primarily based on the principle of equality of voting franchise.

So, Madam Speaker, one person one vote—yes, absolutely. I wholeheartedly support the principle of one person one vote. But, Madam Speaker, what about single-member constituencies? Is that the best electoral system to adopt to achieve one person, one vote? The truth is, Madam Speaker, I don't know. Madam Speaker, I attended the West Bay meeting hosted by the Electoral Boundary Commission in April of this year, and I took note of several of the very valid and pertinent questions asked by some of my constituents at that meeting, even though, as explained by the Electoral Boundaries Commission at that time, the purpose of that meeting was not to discuss the question as to whether or not to adopt an electoral system based on single-member constituencies.

Madam Speaker, listening to some of the questions raised and some of the comments made, led me to realise that, like many of my constituents in West Bay,—and I dare say throughout the three Islands—although many people are desirous of change in the electoral system to create a more equitable, a fairer voting system for all, many people have concerns about the implications for single-

member constituencies. And many people are not aware of the alternatives to adopting single-member constituencies in order to achieve a more equitable system than what we currently have.

So, Madam Speaker, for the benefit of my constituents and the benefit of others who may have those same questions, I will spend some time discussing a few of the different electoral systems which are utilised by various countries worldwide, because, Madam Speaker, as I said in my debate last September of this year, it is incumbent upon us as government and as individual elected representatives in our respective constituencies to ensure that we help to educate the people about what such a change will mean for them personally and practically. Because, Madam Speaker, that fear of change is often because people do not understand what the change will bring.

There have been several proposed variations discussed in public and in private to achieve the principle of one person one vote over the past several years. Madam Speaker, we have heard discussions as they relate to a national vote—each person casting 18 votes. We have heard conversations as it relates to a combination of single-member constituencies and a national vote, such as what pertains in the BVI [British Virgin Islands] with the single-member constituents' candidates and at-large candidates. Madam Speaker, we've even heard a few people speak about multi-member constituencies with equal votes across the country; for example, nine constituencies with every person having two votes. We've heard a number of permutations and combinations of potential ways to achieve the principle of one person one vote.

Madam Speaker, there are also a number of alternative voting systems which have been adopted in varying degrees by other countries, which appear to achieve the principle of one person, one vote, or equality of voting franchise in multi-member voting districts. And here are a few examples. Under what is known as a single non-transferrable vote system, voters cast a single vote in a multi-member district. The candidates with the highest vote totals are declared elected. And, Madam Speaker, as can be understood from the IIDEA Handbook, countries such as Pitcairn Islands and Manawatu conduct their elections under such a system.

There is also what is known as a single transferable vote system, which is a preferential system in which the voters, or the voter, has one vote in the multi-member district, and the candidates who surpass a specified quota of first-preference votes—say, for example, they must reach a threshold of 40 per cent or 50 per cent of the votes—are immediately elected. But in successive counts, votes are redistributed from least successful candidates, who are then eliminated, and the votes surplus of the quote once a candidate has reached that minimum quota, those are also redistributed from the successful candidates, until, Madam Speaker, sufficient

candidates are declared elected. Again, this appears to be the system adopted in Ireland and Malta.

Madam Speaker, we have another system, which is known as the limited vote system, which is a multi-member district in which electors have more than one vote, but fewer votes than there are candidates to be elected. These candidates with the highest vote totals win the seats. Again, an example of this would be Gibraltar.

Madam Speaker, there are also systems which seek to specifically address the issue of proportionality and representation in Parliament. The rationale underpinning all of these proportional representational systems, Madam Speaker, is to consciously reduce the disparity between the party's share of the national vote and its share of the parliamentary seats. If a majority party wins 40 per cent of the votes, for example, it would win approximately 40 per cent of the seats. And a minority party with 10 per cent of the votes would also gain 10 per cent of the legislative seats.

Madam Speaker, proportionality is often seen as being best achieved by the use of what they call party lists, where political parties present lists of candidates to the voters on a national or regional basis, but preferential voting can work equally well, as I spoke with respect to the single-transferable vote, where voters rank-order candidates in multi-member districts. And this is apparently another well-established proportional system.

Madam Speaker, under the list proportional representation system, each party or grouping represents a list of candidates for a multi-member electoral district. But under this system, Madam Speaker, voters vote for a party. They don't vote for individual candidates. And parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote. Madam Speaker, in some closed-list systems, the winning candidates are taken from the list in order of their position on that list. And where you have what's called open or free lists, then voters can influence the order of the candidates by marking their individual preferences when they go to vote.

An example of this in our region, Madam Speaker, would be that of Aruba. And in doing my research in this regard, it appears that the most popular type of system with respect to the number of countries adopting this system, according to the IIDEA, is the list proportional representation system, which represents about 35 per cent of the 199 countries covered in their report having adopted this type of electoral system.

Madam Speaker, there are also a number of countries that have moved to a mixed electoral system. An example of these mixed electoral systems would be the parallel system, which is a mixed system in which the choices expressed by voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems. So they have two different systems running in parallel.

One is the list proportional representation system I just spoke about. And one is the plurality, or majority, system, such as a first past the post system, which uses single-member constituencies as the voting districts. And so, under the parallel system, there is no account taken of the seats allocated under the first part of the system in calculating the results under the second part of the system. And, Madam Speaker, there are a number of countries which seem to have adopted this particular system. And again, one example of this would be the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean.

Madam Speaker, another mixed electoral system is what is known as the mixed member proportional system. And that is a mixed system in which the choices expressed by the voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems—one less proportional representation system, and usually one plurality, or majority, system, again such as a first past the post, where the list proportional system compensates for the disproportionality of the results from the plurality, or majority, system. And an example of a country that uses this type of system appears to be Germany, Madam Speaker.

So, Madam Speaker, parallel systems use both the proportional representation element and the plurality, or majority, or other element, running independently of each other. And again, the mixed-member system also uses two elements, one of which is a proportional representation system with the difference that the proportional representation element compensates for any disproportionality arising under the other system. These systems normally lead to what is considered to be a much more proportional outcome than the parallel system. And these systems have been widely adopted by new democracies in Africa and the former Soviet Union. But again, these systems are also adopted in countries where there are strong, entrenched party systems. So the issue of proportionality is much more of a concern than it would be for countries such as the Cayman Islands, where the party system is not necessarily entrenched as such.

So, Madam Speaker, there are many electoral systems which can be adopted to address the concerns which we have as it relates to our current bloc vote system, which we currently have here in the Cayman Islands. But, Madam Speaker, the Government has proposed to move towards implementing a new electoral system based on single-member constituencies, as a result of two things, Madam Speaker: firstly, as a result of the outcome of the majority of voters who participated in the 2012 referendum on the matter; and secondly, as a result of the campaign promise as we heard made by the Members of the Government who represent the PPM.

However, Madam Speaker, simply adopting a single-member constituency electoral system does not automatically answer the question as to what electoral

system will or should be adopted under single-member constituencies [SMC]. As you will see, there are different voting systems utilising the SMC electoral model. Madam Speaker, we heard the Member for East End speaking about the 'first past the post' electoral system. And under this electoral system, this is one where the winning candidate is the one who gains more votes than any other candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes. The system uses single-member districts, and the voters vote for candidates rather than political parties, although candidates may run as members of political parties, of course. And, Madam Speaker, countries that have adopted this 'first past the post' single-member constituency electoral systems, include the United Kingdom, the US, Canada and the majority of the English-speaking Caribbean. It is important to note that we have a similar, even though it's in a multi-member system, our bloc voting system also has a first past the post-type scenario where you don't have to have an absolute majority of votes in order to get elected under that system. However, the first past the post is done under the auspices of single-member constituencies.

Madam Speaker, there's also another option with respect to single-member constituencies, and that is the alternative vote system. And the alternative vote system is a preferential system used in single-member districts. And that is, voters use numbers to mark their preferences on the ballot paper. A candidate who receives an absolute majority, which is 50 per cent plus one, of valid first preference votes is declared elected. If no candidate achieves an absolute majority of first preferences, the least successful candidates are eliminated and their votes reallocated according to their second preferences until one candidate has an absolute majority. So, Madam Speaker, under this alternative vote system, voters vote for candidates rather than political parties, again. However, candidates may or may not run as members of political parties. And an example of a country where this alternative vote system seems to be in effect is Australia.

Madam Speaker, what are the issues inherent in these various types of electoral systems, be it multi-member or single-member constituencies? As I've just outlined—and that is just a few of them. This is not an exhaustive list of the types of electoral systems that are in effect around the world. But as you can see, some of these electoral systems seem to rely very heavily on having entrenched political parties, or groupings, as I said, to operate effectively. Others appear to involve some level of arbitrariness as to who the ultimate winners are, because in the end, it is based on redistribution or a reallocation of votes away from the weaker polling candidates to the stronger ones in determining the final count.

So, Madam Speaker, how do we determine what is the best system for us? Again, it's a bit of an

art, not a science. But, Madam Speaker, one of the questions I sought to answer was: Why does the single-member constituency, first past the post voting system appear to be a fairly popular voting system adopted by countries worldwide, and especially the English-speaking Caribbean? And again, according to the National Institution for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the first past the post is regarded the simplest form of the plurality majority electoral system. And the IIDEA's Handbook currently lists 47 countries as being listed using this first past the post by the voting system. And these countries represent 44 per cent of the total population living in the 199 countries covered by this report as using this type of electoral system.

So, Madam Speaker, it is fair to say that, of the countries surveyed in this study, the first past the post electoral system is, by far, the most popular type of system with respect to the population of the inhabitants of these countries. But, Madam Speaker, we have heard on both sides of this Chamber, concerns expressed about moving to a single-member constituency regime. And I won't reiterate or rehash those concerns. But I will say, Madam Speaker, that although Single Member Constituencies may not be perfect, although, Madam Speaker, it may not be the best electoral system for the Cayman Islands to adopt, if we are able to determine what this "best system" should be, it is, Madam Speaker, certainly a more equitable system than we have now.

Madam Speaker, we have a current multi-member block vote system that keeps increasing the voting pie for residents of the largest district—in this case George Town—thereby increasing the power of George Town voters as compared to the remaining districts in the country as MLAs have continually been added to the district as the population increased.

Madam Speaker, this was also true when they added one seat to West Bay back in 1992, increasing the number from three to four, but similarly, Madam Speaker, the latest editions to the MLAs were apportioned to the largest districts currently with George Town getting two additional seats and Bodden Town getting one additional seat in 2013 which, Madam Speaker, resulted in the relative voting power of West Bayers to be diluted as compared to the two larger districts.

So, Madam Speaker, without any change to our current voting system under our current multi-member district block vote system, additional seats will continue to be allocated to the additional districts and additional votes will continue to be allocated to the electors who happen to be resident in those districts, thereby increasing the voting power of each of those residents, widening the voting inequity across the country. In this case, Madam Speaker, widening the inequity in voting power of my constituents in the district of West Bay as it relates to the larger growing districts.

Madam Speaker, turning specifically to the issues and the concerns expressed by some of my constituents in the district of West Bay: West Bay, Madam Speaker, is truly a district divided on this issue. Madam Speaker, according to the Elections Office published statistics as it relates to the results of the July 2012 referendum, these were virtually split in favour and against the adoption of Single Member Constituency Electoral System with a mere 26 vote difference.

Madam Speaker, according to the Elections Office 1,027 people consciously voted yes to move to Single Member Constituencies and 1,053 persons consciously voted no. Madam Speaker, contrary to arguments made in this House, we cannot count the vote of those who did not participate in the referendum because, Madam Speaker, it would be the same thing as saying those who did not show up to the general elections they would or would not have voted for me or they would or would not have voted for someone else.

So, Madam Speaker, looking at people's conscious decision as it relates to their decision whether or not we should keep the current electoral system or to change electoral systems to Single Member Constituencies, the district was virtually divided as I said with 27 [sic] differential which represents a mere 1 per cent difference in views.

Madam Speaker, if we fast forward to April 2015, earlier this year, participation at the West Bay public meeting hosted by the Electoral Boundaries Commission also represented a room divided. At this point, Madam Speaker, I must express my deep disappointment in the Electoral Boundaries Commission for not returning to the district of West Bay in July of this year to hold a public meeting with the residents of West Bay to explain the proposed maps and Single Member Constituencies drawn up.

Madam Speaker, as a matter of fact, I specifically wrote to the Electoral Boundaries Commission requesting that they host a public meeting in West Bay on behalf of my constituents to explain the proposed Single Member Constituency boundaries and to take on board feedback provided at the meeting prior to finalising the report. And, Madam Speaker, I would also like to read my request into the record in this regard.

The Speaker: Member, just on a point of elucidation, the Chair would just like to ensure that the letter has no content which is against the Government per se, it is just against the EBC. I am not saying that you cannot speak against the Government, but if you do then you would have to prove to me that you have evidence or consent of a conscience vote.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Sure, no, Madam Speaker. This was specifically requesting the EBC—and I am happy

to not read it into the . . . I am happy to just leave it at that, that I specifically made that request.

The Speaker: You can read it. I just want you to be sure that once you read it you would not be crossing that line. That is for you to decide.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Well, no, I mean whether I read it or not is what I am saying is exactly what I have said to you. The fact is, I wrote specifically to the commissioners as the representative from the district of West Bay because the commissioners have, of course, they are constitutionally appointed and so they are not necessarily beholden to the Government or anybody else under their mandate to carry out their role as commissioners under the Constitution. They obviously can act and they act as an autonomous body in that regard. I felt it incumbent upon myself as the member for the district of West Bay to specifically make that request on behalf of my constituents for further clarification. I just wanted to make that point, Madam Speaker, again, not as anything other than to say as a member of this Legislative Assembly representing the interests of the people of West Bay, I felt it was important that they return to the district of West Bay in that regard. I wanted my constituents to know that I have been expressing that view as well. However, they did indicate that they received representations from the various district meetings that they did hold in July from persons who were in attendance from West Bay and they received written representation as well from persons from West Bay.

Madam Speaker, going back to West Bay being a district divided, some will argue that as a result of the referendum West Bay has no clear mandate for change. But on the other hand, there is also no clear mandate to stay the same either. Madam Speaker, you cannot make the argument that a 26 vote differential in a referendum called by the then Government who openly and vociferously campaigned against One Person One Vote in a Single Member Constituency, as a clear mandate from the district to keep the current voting system.

Madam Speaker, a total of 2,094 ballots were cast by West Bay voters including postal ballots and mobile ballots during the referendum and only 26 more persons voted no than yes—again, as I said, representing a mere 1 per cent difference. Madam Speaker, with no clear mandate from my constituents to change or no clear mandate to keep the current voting system, as a leader I must do as I was elected to do, Madam Speaker, and that is to lead.

As I said on 10 September 2014 when debating the Government motion on the matter, in putting my support behind this motion and this step, I am demonstrating leadership and oftentimes leadership is what is required in order to take us in the direction or take us forward even though it may not be seen as the politically popular thing at the time. So,

essentially, by standing here I know that I obviously represent and as a representative I strive to represent the interests of my people and my constituency to the best of my ability. But, Madam Speaker, in this instance, there is no clear mandate from the people of West Bay. Nonetheless, they elected me as one of their leaders to take the position and to take decisions as a leader. As such, I stand here and say that I support a system where everybody is able to have equal participation in the electoral process.

Madam Speaker, we have heard arguments made where people have claimed that they will not go to vote if they cannot vote for whom they want. Exercising the right to vote is a democratic right. In this country, it is not an obligation. However, it is important for people to realise that if you do not exercise your democratic right, you are, in essence, ceding that power to others to make the critical decisions for you, yet you have to live with the consequences of that action nonetheless.

Moment of Interruption—4.30 pm

The Speaker: Honourable Minister, we have reached the point of interruption.

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Planning to move his motion.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)

Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) in order to continue the business of the House after 4:30.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to allow the business of the House to continue beyond the hour of interruption until—

Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts: Madam Speaker, as indicated to me by the Premier, when we have completed this Motion, that that will be the end of the business for the day.

The Speaker: I put the question that we suspend Standing Order 10(2) to allow the business of the House to continue beyond the hour of interruption until the conclusion of the Motion which is now before us, being Motion No. 8 2015/2016.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: I think the Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Education, please continue your debate.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I was saying, the concern that has been expressed about people not going out to vote if they cannot vote for who they want, well that reality exists today even, Madam Speaker, under our current voting system. I am sure many of you have experienced the same thing that I have experienced where people have expressed their wish to be able to vote for you, as they have expressed their wish to be able to vote for me but can't do so because they do not live in my district of West Bay. So this is a reality which exists under any voting system, Madam Speaker, and so moving to a Single Member Constituency situation will not necessarily create something that hasn't already been in existence with respect to wanting to vote for people who may not necessarily be running in the district in which you live.

Nonetheless, Madam Speaker, the Elections Office must seek to monitor voting turnout trends going forward. They must embark on voting education drives, well in advance of the elections regarding the changes and where each person will now vote, especially as the demarcations may have changed significantly in some districts.

Madam Speaker, whether the type of electoral system has an impact on voter turnout in the Cayman Islands remains to be seen. And, as the Cayman Islands have enjoyed a relatively high voter turnout during general elections, this is something the country must continue to try to safeguard and to promote in the future. Therefore, the Elections Office must work to try to mitigate any potential drop in voter turnout as a result of changing systems.

Madam Speaker, the Government must also critically evaluate the situation going forward as well, because changing the electoral system should never be about simply ticking a box to fulfil a campaign promise. If it is determined that further change is required in order to strengthen our exercise of democracy then so be it. Further change must come.

Madam Speaker, we have also heard the arguments of "if it is not broken, don't fix it". But, Madam Speaker, I would argue that the current system is broken because of the fact that as time goes on the gap between the equality in voting widens, favouring residents of George Town and Bodden Town—the fastest growing districts—under our current multi-member voting system. If population trends continue with people moving out towards the east, West Bay's relative voting power will continue to shrink in favour of the larger growing districts. So, Madam Speaker, there may even come a time that the number of representatives for the district of West Bay which represents the number of votes each West

Bay voter has, that that may decrease if it is determined that the redistribution of elected representatives is necessary in order to better match the population distribution; especially if the country decides to put a cap on the number of elected representatives in the Legislative Assembly. We do not know what the future holds in that regard, Madam Speaker.

So, yes, Madam Speaker, these are all hypothetical scenarios of what could possibly happen if we remain with the current multi-member block voting system. But these scenarios, these possibilities, are no different than the hypothetical scenarios discussed by other Members during the debate, such as, the formation of garrison communities and the like.

Madam Speaker, there is no crystal ball to tell us precisely what will occur if we were to change or what will occur if we were to remain the same. Ah, Madam Speaker, if life were that simple. But the one thing I know is for certain, Madam Speaker, and I think it is put by the words of Max DePree best, the author, when he said, "**We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.**"

Madam Speaker, even though this is not a feature of this particular debate today, given that we are voting to amend our electoral system it is incumbent upon me to raise what I believe is an issue which, as a country, we need to begin to address more directly and that is finding ways to increase female participation in Parliament and as key decision makers in this country.

Madam Speaker, women make up the largest percentage of registered voters in every district by at least 4 to 8 per cent depending on the district. Overall, men make up 47 per cent of registered voters and women make up 53 per cent. Yet, women make up only 11 per cent of the current MLAs with the percentage of female representation hovering around that mark for several decades.

Madam Speaker, some may say that the simple answer is well, women vote for women, then women will get elected. But, Madam Speaker, as I am sure you know, the situation is not quite so simple. There are critical barriers faced by women from even entering the political arena much less if and once they get elected. Some of those barriers, Madam Speaker, were discussed very candidly and very openly and are contained in the report on the first ever National Conference on Women in the Cayman Islands which I hosted as Minister of Gender Affairs in March of last year to commemorate International Women's Day and honouring Women's Month.

Madam Speaker, since we are voting today to change a fundamental vehicle of our democracy, it is time for us as a country to begin to address some of the other issues pertinent to our democracy, such as, increased participation in women in the political process be it through adopting formal party or political

party structures or amending party constitutions to promote such, or by adopting other targeted means to increase female participation and representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Madam Speaker, one of the disadvantages cited as it relates to the first past the post Single Member Constituency Electoral System is that it excludes women from the legislature. It is found that the most broadly acceptable candidate syndrome also affects the ability of women to be elected to legislative office because they are often less likely to be selected as candidates by male dominated party structures. According to the IIDEA, evidence across the world suggests that women are less likely to be elected to the legislature under the plurality majority systems. Again, systems where votes have been cast and tallied, those candidates are parties with the most votes are declared the winners, then under proportional representation system which consciously translate a party share of votes into the corresponding proportion of seats in the legislature.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union's study of women in Parliament found that as of June 2004, on average, 15.6 per cent of the representatives in lower houses of legislatures were women. Comparing established democracies in 2004, those using the first past the post averaged 14.4 per cent women in the legislature but the figure was almost double—27.6 per cent—in those countries that use some form of proportional representation.

Madam Speaker, this pattern has been mirrored in new democracies, especially in Africa. And in our 185 year old democracy under this current system, the best we can do is a little over 10 per cent women representation in Parliament. Is that good enough as a country? Madam Speaker, as far as I am aware—but again, I stand to be corrected—we have not had such a national discussion in the Cayman Islands on these issues. However, just as the time has come to discuss changing our electoral system so too, Madam Speaker, I believe the time has come to engage in a national discussion to specifically address the underrepresentation of women in Parliament.

Madam Speaker, I conclude by saying that I fully embrace the principle of equality in voting for all; those eligible to vote in these beautiful Islands we call home, the Cayman Islands. The guiding principle of why I will cast my vote in favour of the Motion today is in addition to being a Government motion, of which I sit as a member of Cabinet, and as such, have certain Constitutional obligations as a result, I believe wholeheartedly in the principle of equality in voting franchise. There is no justifiable reason why any given person in George Town should have six votes. There is no justifiable reason why any given person in George Town should have 33 per cent chance of influencing the makeup of the legislature when somebody from West Bay only has four votes or only has 22 per cent chance of determining who the

Government is, and somebody from East End or North Side only has 6 per cent chance because under the current system that is what exists. The current system is what I have just outlined with respect to the different percentages of being able to influence the outcome of who gets elected. There is no justifiable reason why you must keep a system that promotes this kind of inequity between the districts purely based on where you live.

So, Madam Speaker, is Single Member Constituencies the best electoral system for the Cayman Islands? I cannot say that I am completely convinced of that but I believe that more could and should be done to determine the most appropriate electoral system for the country to adopt, even within a Single Member Constituency context.

However, Madam Speaker, rejecting the One Man One Vote principle and Single Member Constituencies in favour of keeping the status quo as the Opposition is pushing for, is not a preferable option either. The unwillingness to embrace change simply because of sticking with the devil you know, Madam Speaker, this is no way to govern or lead a country. Nor am I supporting this move for personal advantage as some have alleged in this House as being the motivation of those supporting this change. Madam Speaker, I have already demonstrated that I can and have won my seat as an Independent member in a multi-member block vote system. The coattail effect does not apply or does not concern me in this regard.

Madam Speaker, there must be a rational and considered reason why keeping our current multi-member block voting system is preferable from the country's perspective and it simply cannot be based on fear mongering or towing a party line either way. I am not convinced by the arguments made to stick with the status quo of an inherently inequitable system.

Madam Speaker, this is one of these times where I believe the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson could never be truer spoken when he said, **“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”** Madam Speaker, there are many unknowns about the changes that we are about to embark on with respect to our personal context here in the Cayman Islands, but electoral systems will inevitably need to adapt over time if they are to respond adequately to new political, new demographic, and new legislative trends and needs. This is one such time.

But, Madam Speaker, as a country we must guard against what happens and what is currently the push with respect to those opposing this change. We must guard against, once a system is put in place, once an electoral system is put in place, those who have benefitted from that system are likely to resist the changes to that system and that decisions are made with that premise in mind.

Madam Speaker, the only thing permanent in this life is change and we need to be able to adapt our electoral system like any other system to be able to reflect necessary changes as we continue to grow and mature as a democracy. We may not know where the Single Member Constituency path will lead, Madam Speaker, but based on our history we certainly know what the current system will bring; more and more concentrated power to determine the leadership in the country in the hands of the electors in the largest districts. West Bay population is diminishing in comparison to the fastest growing districts of that being George Town and Bodden Town; so, too, will our relative voting power decrease if we do not do anything to change the current multi-member block voting system. West Bayers will continue to lose overall ability to influence the makeup of the Legislative Assembly, Madam Speaker, if we continue with the voting system we have and the population continues to increase elsewhere.

Madam Speaker, I have heard some people make the argument that moving to Single Member Constituencies will decrease their rights. But in actual fact, Madam Speaker, staying with the current system has already led to a decrease in rights of West Bay voters in relation to George Town voters and will eventually lead to further decreased rights as the population continues to expand in other districts as I have already explained.

Madam Speaker, moving to Single Member Constituencies levels the playing field so that everybody having the privilege to vote has equal rights to do so irrespective of where you live or irrespective of where the population growth happens in the future.

Madam Speaker, it is with this levelling of the playing field, it is with this creating a more equitable, a fairer voting system and an attempt to prevent future erosion of my West Bay constituents' relative rights that I support this motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Final call, does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Third Elected Member for the district of Bodden Town, the Minister responsible for Financial Services.

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

Madam Speaker, I certainly intend to dial down the duration and detail compared to that contribution recently made by my colleague Minister of Education. But I think what I would like to say and I will try to be very brief, Madam Speaker, is that I am very happy that we are at this stage in putting this motion forward to this honourable House to complete

another essential step in what we promised to do as a Government in terms of the implementation of Single Member Constituencies and One Man One Vote.

Madam Speaker, there has been much speculation that the Government didn't intend to do this . . . that we were looking for some way to avoid it. But, Madam Speaker, if anyone cared to look at everything that has been said from before the election, certainly through the period of time that we have been in office to date, it has been very clear that this Government intended to make good on its promise to reflect what it considered to be the wishes of the people of this country in general. I certainly accept as my colleague Minister, the Minister for Education, has indicated very clearly that there was not a definitive indication in terms of a majority in West Bay. But she is obviously right in that it didn't indicate the opposite either.

Madam Speaker, we have said we were going to do this and this is one more step, as I said. I think every time we take another step towards this we will have eliminated one more negative comment and undermined one more argument that people have made against this Government proceeding to do this. The arguments that have been made in relation to garrison politics, I think, are arguments that are based on observation from a neighbouring country. But, Madam Speaker, as the Member for East End and others said, garrison politics is something that we could have seen examples of here previously. We haven't seen it. Garrison politics by its nature requires politicians to be engaged in garrison politics. I think the reality is that we have seen the voters here and the politicians who have understood dangers involved in that sort of thing, and we have avoided that and I have the greatest confidence that we will continue to avoid that.

The system that we are proposing to adopt is based on equity. There is no question that it is a fairer system. There is no question that it is fairer than the system we have today. Yes, the system we have today has served us well. But, we feel, and based on the response from the referendum as a whole, the majority of Cayman feels that Single Member Constituencies and One Man One Vote would promote better accountability and fairer representation and equality of voting.

Is it something that isn't going to create some concern? Of course not; it does. Madam Speaker, as human beings we all suffer from inertia. We do not adopt and take lightly to change and that is whether you are the electorate or whether you are the politician. But we still have to look at this thing in a broad context and decide which way is the best direction to move, put our fears aside and move in that direction. That is what we are doing here, Madam Speaker. We are doing the right thing by this country, we feel there will be uncertainties going forward but we can go forward with confidence that as a country

and as politicians and as an electorate as a whole that acts with responsibility, we can get through this. We can adjust to the changes and end up in a better system, a fairer system, a more just system.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Electoral Boundaries Commission and each of the members of that Commission. In particular, Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate our own Caymanian members, Ms. Adriannie E. Webb and Mr. Steve McField. I think they have done a good job. I think they have fulfilled the essential elements of their constitutional responsibility and having read the Boundary Commission report in great detail and looked at the various maps and accepting the challenges that they faced in coming up with the report that they have and the recommendations that they have, I think they have done a good job, Madam Speaker. As I said, I wish to congratulate them for that.

Madam Speaker, with those few words, I will simply say I am fully in support of this motion and I look forward to full implementation later on.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Finance.

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

Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to congratulate and give thanks to the Electoral Boundaries Commission for a job well done. I will try to be brief so I won't go over the same ground as most others have already done. So just thank you and congratulations to all of the members of the Commission.

Madam Speaker, the issue of One Man One Vote or One Person One Vote (whatever term one would like to give to it) and Single Member Constituencies, Madam Speaker, I am going to say for me it started in 2012. I know others have said they have been dealing with it or being proponents of it for well over a decade. I wasn't so fortunate and would like to think that I am not that old, so . . .

For me it started in 2012. There was a group of people who thought it was something worth proposing, something worth standing for and it required a lot of work. If I remember the three essential elements of the campaign at the time was, one, to collect signatures; two to promote the idea itself, such as writing articles or making public statements, utterances, otherwise and, of course, going throughout the neighbourhoods to speak to the residents and explain to them what it was all about and what we were trying to achieve.

Madam Speaker, I am somewhat familiar with what took place and I will be honest and say I am not absolutely certain that I am aware of what the future holds and anyone who can say so with absolute certainty then it is one of two things: they are telling you a lie or they are delusional. I will be honest enough to say that while I believe it is an ideal, it is fair—supposedly fairer than the current system that we have where we have multiple votes in a multi-member constituency. Of course, it is the greatest form of equality in that everyone has one vote and equal opportunity for their vote to count towards forming the Government of the Cayman Islands.

So, having said those things, Madam Speaker, in the next election, 2017, after today, once we have cast our vote, we would have taken that step to ensuring that the next election is contested on a One Person One Vote, One Man One Vote, Single Member Constituency basis, and I want everyone in this Chamber to look at the person next to them and realise that together we are making history and, yes, Madam Speaker, looking around perhaps that was something that I didn't quite notice that the Chamber was so empty right now. But for those who were here when we started this morning, Madam Speaker, we will make history. We would have voted to progress to that type of electoral system and presumably some of us—I will not be so presumptive to say all of us—but some of us will contest the polls in a new electoral system.

In all honesty, Madam Speaker, some of us may be re-elected and some of us may not be re-elected. That is the shared truth. No one knows what the future holds. We only hope and live in hope. But we must continue and we continue with all honesty and dignity that is required of us as representatives conducting ourselves and the affairs of Government on behalf of our constituents over the next 20 months or so, in a manner that is consistent with good governance and proper and honest behaviour.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that there are those who, for whatever reason, in the next election will seek to take matters into their own hands, and by that, I mean that not everyone competes fairly. You have heard much talk about vote buying. You have heard much talk about garrison politics. Madam Speaker, I will add to that a term that is often forgotten and that is state capture. We all understand what vote buying means. We all understand what garrison politics means. What many people do not understand or hear too often is state capture. It is when the rich buy the Government. Madam Speaker, I do not know which is worse. All I can say is that both are bad . . . or all three, if you want to include garrison politics with the two.

Madam Speaker, at the end of the day, when I cast my vote—and this time around I will have only one vote—I will always exercise my democratic right to vote on election day as I have every election ever

since I was of the age to do so. When I cast my vote in May 2017, should I be alive and well enough to attend the polling office or polling station, Madam Speaker, there is something in me that tells me what to look for in other people and I look for the calibre of the individual . . . the character of that individual. Not everyone will be a genius but I look for strength of character and in that, I mean honesty and integrity because when you ask someone to represent you, you want them—well, not when you ask . . . when you agree because it is us who do the asking if you think about it—when you agree for someone to be your representative you want to know that you can trust them to do what is right and what is proper. Included in all of that, Madam Speaker, is honesty. So, I look for the calibre of the individual who best represents my own morals and ethics because, Madam Speaker, I will agree that in this job there are many who will say to you thank you for what you are doing and there are many who will give you no thanks and will crucify you for whatever you do.

So, Madam Speaker, at the end of the day whether it is by vote buying or state capture or whatever the case be, the electorate by its collective decision will get the kind of representative and by extension the kind of Government that they deserve because an honest person—someone who plays by the rules, someone who has confidence in themselves and trust and faith in the Lord and His leading and direction—will not stoop to such things.

Madam Speaker, this job . . . it is not extremely difficult. It is very time consuming, very time consuming because after you have spent a long day in the office or sometimes in this Chamber, you then have to go and do the work of your constituents in other ways. That means visiting them or something that they have asked you to do that you have to attend to that isn't directly involved in the desk work that you have to do in your office. Sometimes . . . and I know this is true for certainly us as Ministers, we have to multitask and sometimes combine the work in the Legislative Assembly with the work back in the office. So this isn't a very difficult job, but it is very time consuming.

Madam Speaker, it is often perceived that the people who are fortunate enough to be elected are by some chance going to fall into a money pit and there is this perception that everyone in here is in here to fatten their own pockets and we are the lucky ones. Madam Speaker, I am aware of two pieces of legislation and a third one to come: the Anti-Corruption Law, the Standards in Public Life Law and coming in the near future is the Whistle Blowers legislation.

So, Madam Speaker, for anyone who thinks that you can come in here or that they are going to come in here and fatten their pockets . . . woe be unto them. So this is a job that you do out of a sense of responsibility—responsibility to your country, your

constituents and yourself, because for those of us who are fortunate enough to have the ability to do the job, we ought to do so for as long as the people will allow us to represent them.

So come what may in 2017, Madam Speaker, we will be in a new political voting system. Everyone who is a registered voter will have one vote and everyone who contests the polls will then be in one Single Member Constituency and in that constituency you can only have one winner. There won't be a first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth as it is in George Town and lesser numbers in other districts. There will be just one winner, Madam Speaker. But at the end of the day, it is the people who will decide who they elect and given the popularity of the movement in 2012, Madam Speaker, we are left to assume that the people at the next election will be happy with the way in which they go to the polls.

So I am happy that this is a campaign promise that we were able to keep but I can only say that I will get another opportunity to say this when the House is prorogued in another 20 months or so. But for everyone here today, Madam Speaker, everyone here who perhaps may not know definitively at the moment but may decide to do so at the next general election, I wish them the very best, Madam Speaker. I hope for them that they are successful because I believe that the people in here on both sides of the aisle want to do the best job that they can for their constituents and for the country.

I wish everyone, Madam Speaker, the very best and perhaps now that we will have brought this matter to a close, the country will know that it is something that will happen and the back and forth discussions and the predictions that I have heard in a week or two past that it will happen and it will not happen and the reasons why it will not happen, Madam Speaker, all those things will come to an end today.

I just want to say once more to everyone in here I wish you the very best in the next election and I pray for the country that everyone will understand the way in which the system will work and that we will move forward and by the grace of God our country will be better off.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I do support the Motion.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Third Elected Member for the district of West Bay.

Mr. Bernie A. Bush, Third Elected Member for West Bay: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has stated the views of our party and the people that we represent and had it put on record. I did not have any intentions to speak, Madam Speaker, until a few minutes ago I scribbled a few

notes. But, Madam Speaker, I, too, was for the One Man One Vote and then when our committee for the beautiful district of West Bay said to me to look carefully at the referendum and to remember I was the party now and whom I represented. Then I had a few elderly gentlemen, well educated, sat with me and also pointed out to me pros and cons.

Madam Speaker, West Bay people showed that they did not want this, regardless of how small the Minister of Education might try to make it seem. But what I do know . . . and not that she tried . . . what it was on record. But what I do know, Madam Speaker, is the amount of people that told me that they stayed home on purpose because it was a no vote.

Madam Speaker, the Education Minister in her usual beautiful, eloquent lawyer style was quick to say how we over here changed our mind—talking about myself and the Fourth Elected Member. Once again, I guess there's that legal side chipping in and saying the things that are important to their cause and not the whole story. As a friend of mine said one time, you are entitled to your own opinion but you are not entitled to your own facts. The facts was that when those two gentlemen up in that northeast corner as I like to refer to them—southeast corner—brought the Motion here that day and then it was discussed, we heard all kinds of things coming from that side of the floor, Madam Speaker, that said “member at large.” We heard all kinds of things going on. We felt it was better to vote with this same thing that they are bringing now because this is almost like what the Member for East End said, they won because this is what they brought here. We thought it was better to vote with this than the other evil. We didn't want change but we said the lesser of the two evils. We almost succeeded. At least we kept that other system out thank the Lord.

Madam Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Yes.

Madam Speaker, it is also when it comes to changing minds as the Member for North Side and the Member for East End and the Leader of the Opposition has shown here many times in this House since we have been elected, by using *Hansards* and showing where some of those on that side of the table, on that side of the floor, took apart motions that were brought here by the Leader of the Opposition and they now bring them back dressed in a different coloured dress. So it seems like everyone is entitled to change their minds and I am entitled to change mine. What did bother me though is I never heard anyone on this side bringing nationalities into this and some members had that and they are talking scare mongering when I don't think that was necessary, Madam Speaker.

I pray, Madam Speaker, that when this change is made it will show down the road that it is for the good of this country. I pray for that, Madam Speaker, because I want what is good for this country.

Madam Speaker, I want to close and like I said, I had no intentions of speaking, but those few things really got to me. And in talking to a few people in the legal profession and, of course, you know the saying, Madam Speaker, you put 12 lawyers in a room, you will get 12 different opinions. I have had three different legal minds tell me that the referendum failed. Now, the Government is saying that the way that was brought by the Government is what caused it to fail.

Madam Speaker, I would have like to have seen another referendum brought to the table for a simple clear yes or no. My biggest fear, Madam Speaker, is that you get another Government in and they will just come and change it back. I think a bad precedent is being set.

Another thing, Madam Speaker, is when I heard the Minister of Education talk about equality in the votes. Now, her mathematics—I know she is a Rhodes Scholar and I know she is all those things, Madam Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Now, Madam Speaker, I could not understand where the mathematics came in and I am hoping she will lean to her accountant friends, Madam Speaker, to get the figures right where West Bay has four, George Town has six—so the chances in helping make the Government was kind of close. Now with George Town going to seven and West Bay staying at four, she is saying that somehow that will. . . I don't know, Madam Speaker, that really got a lot of people confused including myself.

So, Madam Speaker, in closing I will simply say that I will pray. In closing, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for telling me from the very beginning to vote my conscience on this. I want to say thanks to him for allowing me to do that. But I will pray that this move by the Government will not come back to haunt us. I pray that this country will continue to prosper. We know what we have done under the system that we have.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I will not be long because this is an amended motion and I had already spoken and I don't think I should try to tax the House by trying to get a

second bite at it, but under the Orders, it does allow that.

I have a question and I want to try to find out, Madam Speaker, where we are at with the Governor's order, the motion that we debated and I just want to find out from the Premier to explain that because I do recall that in 2010 we had a problem and we were told that we could not amend the Governor's order. But, of course, what we did—I was about to table it that day as the records show and I couldn't table it because there was this discussion that we had that said we couldn't. We had to go back to Cabinet, though. I had to go back to Cabinet and the Governor had to make that change on the Order in Cabinet. Now, if the Governor has agreed, I would hope that she had done that in writing but let's see what she has done.

Madam Speaker, much has been said. Listen, we the minority . . . I have put my points across and I pray to God what is being done is going to help this country because this motion, as you have heard, will pass amidst much hoopla and talk and all sorts of things being said about different matters which, like I said, I am not about to get into it. I don't want to tax the House that much anymore. I have had my say to an extent, but some of the things that were said, such as what was said by the elected Minister of Education, Madam Speaker, is, that an election where you vote for someone as a representative in a general election is completely different from that of a referendum. So she should understand that.

When she says we went all over West Bay that is not true either.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Well, whatever you said you gave an explanation to that extent, Madam Speaker, that we had this huge meeting. I think we may have had two if we did. I remember one that we had but what we did tell people was, *Listen, if you don't come out to vote, that means a no vote.* Now that was sounded as a strong bell across the community. But I didn't need that because the constituency over the years has clearly said that they didn't want this. Once the Member for North Side brought a motion, I seconded it. You nearly ate me about it. The next time the Government—another Government—would not support that motion again and the West Bay people told me the same thing. So I have a clear understanding from the people in my district that they do not want this change. Therefore, I believe the people across the country would rather make a definite yes or no. I have said that, I think, in the debate on the substantive Motion, Madam Speaker, so I am not going to get further into that. But she ought to know the two are different and is not so that that is just a mere majority. If she believes that, Madam Speaker, the proof would be in the tasting of

the pudding and that can only be known when an election is fought.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Planning.

Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, politics is all about interests. I cannot remember the last time that I heard any major issue—not in this House—but for the electorate of this country. I cannot remember any major issue where all thoughts expressed were unanimously in support. In this issue, which is all about the level of democracy we all enjoy, and as some people who have spoken to the Motion have mentioned, moving forward perhaps in what compared to other territories is a fledgling democracy. That is our democracy. We find, Madam Speaker, that not many of the particular issues surrounding the way the system is presently, and what is being proposed, really affects individuals to that extent. It doesn't change the price of gasoline and it doesn't change the price of groceries at the supermarket. But what it does change is, for instance, in the district of George Town, every person on the voter's list at present has the ability to vote for six different individuals come election time. In West Bay, each person has the ability to vote for four; Bodden Town, four; Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, two; East End, one; and North Side, one.

Madam Speaker, first of all before we speak to the arguments that might be put forth in disagreement with the Motion that exists, we must be able to accept what is what I would call an empirical fact, if I am making it strong enough, that we do not enjoy equality amongst the entire electorate when it comes to their ability to vote today. We don't.

Madam Speaker, when I sought to be elected in my earlier days, there were 12 representatives in this House. In 1988, when I was convinced that I should seek to be elected there were only three seats in George Town and I placed fourth. By 1992, that had moved from 12 to 15 seats and there were four seats then in George Town. One was added in George Town, one was added in West Bay and one was added in Bodden Town. So we moved from 12 to 15 and that was the year that I got elected.

So in that step, every voter in West Bay, George Town and Bodden Town got the opportunity to vote for one more person than they could the time before. The people in East End, the people in North Side and the people in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman remained. For those three districts, that has stayed how it has been almost forever . . . not quite forever, but for a very, very long time and that is very

easy to understand because the population growth in those three districts has not seen any huge increase at all, at all, at all. But now, when we moved from 15 to 18, Bodden Town now enjoys four seats so they got one extra one.

When it was examined, the Bodden Town population had increased because it was and still probably is the fastest growing district in the country relatively speaking—not share numbers, but in percentages. And West Bay, in fact, I dare say if we get a voter's list today, the Bodden Town district has more voters on their voter's list now than West Bay has. So Bodden Town has overtaken West Bay. Bodden Town had four and then the other two seats went to George Town because of the huge numbers in that district. So that put the people of George Town with six votes, Bodden Town with four and West Bay with four, Cayman Brac, Little Cayman and East End and North Side staying the same.

Madam Speaker, everybody knows what I am saying but I took just a couple of minutes to say that to say that every time that there has been an addition to the number of representatives in this Legislative Assembly, it has skewed the whole process more and more and, I daresay, if it stays the same as time goes on, even after all of us who are here now have gone from here, it can only get worse. It can't get any better. And you will hear as you hear now, a complaint when you speak to one more seat being added, that it goes to George Town and nowhere else. It is all about numbers in this scenario. It is all about numbers.

Now, Madam Speaker, if we are going to try to create the equality that we want to have, there is no other combination of change or changes that can be made, except what is being proposed. There is just no other way. There is simply no other way to do it.

Madam Speaker, I hear many arguments. But none of those arguments regardless of any difficulty pointed out in moving from what obtains presently to One Person One Vote, none of those arguments can change the fact that if we want for each voting citizen of the Cayman Islands to have the same equal right, this change that is being proposed is the only answer. There is no halfway house. There is no in-between because all you do is more of the same. If we accept that as logic it then leaves only to speak to, in my view, not slighting anything at all, but mostly emotions that people feel.

It has been brought up here today—and, Madam Speaker, lest no one misunderstand, I am always humbled when I think each time to be returned by the people of the district of George Town as one of their elected representatives and I enjoy as many personal relationships with people in my district, by now, some of them third generation. Even now as I have grown older and I am one of the almost old fogies in this Assembly, I experience the difficulties, too. Today, in this building when this debate is going on I am pulled to one side and asked to be explained

if I am going to go somewhere else to run when this is all over because if I am going to do that, that person's not voting again. So, I know.

Madam Speaker, just being very practical, if it was an easy situation and it really didn't matter for people like me, my life is 10 times easier leaving it status quo. But, Madam Speaker, I know (I don't believe), what is right and this is right. I am not making light of any situation like that because I am sure other members who are in multi-member districts will have heard the same, some more than others. But they will have heard the same thing.

But, Madam Speaker, do you know what? If the good Lord spares my life when this is done, when the changes are done, you are going to have hiccups anytime you have changes. I don't care how hard you try to get it to be seamless, you will have some difficulties. But once you get over that and they move into the new system, the people of the country, too, will become accustomed to that system. Just like everything else. Again, I want to impress, I am not making light of that situation because to many the change is a shock. Some of them have voted a dozen times and have had opportunity to vote for more than one person and increasingly as time has gone on as the numbers in this House have increased. So it is not something that is easy coming to them and I understand that. The district I represent has six—the most. But remember as I said, Madam Speaker, as time goes on, 10 years from now, 20 years from now, who knows what the population is going to be like. The population may well have doubled by then and you start to get into all kinds of difficulties with your numbers in your representation.

From that perspective, Madam Speaker, I don't believe that anyone can fault the logic that to bring equality to the table we must do this. So now we examine the difficulties that might ensue. For me, Madam Speaker, the two main driving points why I have supported this from the time I was elected and I didn't have as what they want to term the political currency that people might think I have now then, but from the time I was elected I supported Single Member Constituencies or One Man One Vote and I mean that, because to me that is where equality steps in. But the other thing that I have always contended and I will continue to believe and I am sure that it will prove itself when it actually happens is it calls for a hell of a lot more accountability with your representatives. You can't dodge when you are the single elected representative for that constituency and you know what the voter's list is in your constituency. You cannot dodge representing those people at every level that you could think about.

Madam Speaker, I cringe when I think to hear that this old time *ya-ya* blarney argument about how everybody is going to want their own church, everybody is going to want their own this and everybody is going to want their own that. Pile of crap!

Makes no sense! I don't mind you bringing some argument, but bring some good arguments. Don't bring any little fool-fool business. That is not how the world works, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I hear the Member for North Side saying that at least he will not, as a representative, ask for an airport to be put in North Side for them and that is taking it to the extreme and perhaps making light of it. But you see, Madam Speaker, those kinds of, I want to call them spurious arguments do not hold water once you stop and think about it.

I am going to tell you something else, Madam Speaker, that I do not like and I don't care who up in here don't like me for not liking that. I do not like when people try to prey on any level of ignorance of the populous by telling them stories to frighten them when all they are doing is sowing seed in the mind of some other people for the possibility of that to happen. They can say whatever they wish to say. That is Kurt Tibbetts and how Kurt Tibbetts feels.

Madam Speaker, if we go around today, what I will quite willingly admit is you will hear in different pockets in some areas, a lot more people saying yes to this and in some other areas you will hear a lot more people saying no to it. I understand that. I am not trying to deny that. But, Madam Speaker, there are some decisions, as I started off my little contribution this afternoon, there are some decisions which we have to make as responsible legislators which will never see unanimous agreement and this is one of them. The question is: What is right and what is not right? If you want to help along the argument for those who are by instinct simply averse to change, not wishing to see it change, you can do so. But are you doing so because it is right or because it suits the occasion?

There lies the question and I want to say, Madam Speaker, and I am going to repeat this, I want to say in the district of George Town, my life and my colleagues' lives politically would be a lot easier leaving status quo where it is. But it is not right to do so. What I also know, Madam Speaker, which I have absolutely no doubt, once the people of the district of George Town get to appreciate all of the reasons why the changes that are proposed are being made, they will understand and accept because they want what is right, too. It is just not that easy for them to see it in the immediate because of what they have been used to forever. I know that. It is going to take wearing off some shoe heels for a little while but that's all right. They want to see us anyhow. So that is okay. There's not a single thing wrong with that. Nothing!

Madam Speaker, I don't like this word "g-a-r-r-i-s-o-n" so I'm not going to use it. But let us talk about it just for a minute. Madam Speaker, if that is to happen—and I am not going to use the same arguments the Member for North Side used. He used his own arguments but there are other arguments

regarding the topic. If that is going to happen in this country it doesn't matter what kind of system we have. You will find those pockets if they are allowed to thrive and exist. It doesn't matter. The quick answer from the other side of the argument to that is, yes, but if the constituency is smaller it will be easier. Ha!

Madam Speaker, my answer to that is unlike a lot of other people I have tremendous confidence in the people of this country and the silent majority who are the honest, decent, hardworking citizens of this country are not going to sit down and be part of that. They aren't going to do it because you know what, Madam Speaker? As many challenges as we have here in the Cayman Islands today—and there are many—God knows everyone of us in here wishes that there was not one person out there who didn't have a job. That is one of our biggest immediate challenges and it is not something that you wake up one morning and it is fixed, and we are doing everything we can in working towards that. But once that is not fixed right away the people are going to complain and I cannot blame them. We understand that.

Madam Speaker, when you look at the rest of the world and you either read or go visit, all the time I hear when people come back from even in the region and elsewhere *Oh, it's so good to be back home, so and so and so and so. So I am glad I don't have to deal with that here.* Who in their right mind believes that the citizens of this country are just going to allow all that to go away because where else are they going? Where else are they going to go? I cannot tell you or anyone else what is not possible but what I can tell you is that whatever is possible in a Single Member Constituency scenario is just as possible in what we have today.

Madam Speaker, it is getting late so I am not going to go on and on but there are lots of other reasons; some of which have been talked about before, but I just wanted to bring across those few points and to say that I fully support this initiative to take responsibility for being a part of it from the very beginning, accept that responsibility and I just pray that everybody will be like how I am because I do not agree with everything all the time. But once consensus has been gained regarding an issue, Madam Speaker, consensus has been gained. So you are moving forward under presumption that that is the way you are going and then you start to look for the other challenge that you have to take care of for the people of this country.

Madam Speaker, there isn't a better place in the world than these three Islands we call the Cayman Islands. I am not saying that spouting off my mouth. I am telling you what, that is another thing I know. I don't just believe that. I know that because I live that. But because it is the best place in the world doesn't mean that we don't have our challenges and we do and we will. The good Lord only made us invent the word utopia. He didn't tell us it was going to exist

while we are here on this Earth. In fact, with your good knowledge of the Bible you would know that He kind of in His own way told us that it wouldn't. So there we are.

Madam Speaker, no more pontificating. This is the right thing to do. I support it. Obviously, from the contributions made the Government supports it. I am not going to try to fight down the Opposition's varying views on it. I take issue with some of the issues that they brought because I happen not to agree with them. But after this is done, it is time for us to move on, put the machinery in motion. No one will have any huge disadvantage or advantage over the other one. In fact, the Members for East End and North Side are perhaps the only two with any advantage in a scenario of Single Member Constituency because they have lived that for years. So, it is nothing new to them. But for all of the other elected Members who will vie for a seat and for all of those wannabes who will vie for a seat, everybody will be in the same shoe starting from day one. Who wants to pitch their tent wherever they want to pitch it, so be it, and the better man or woman will win.

Madam Speaker, God is a good God but he tells us don't try to sow bad things in the minds of people when they are not there from the beginning.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Final call, does any other Member wish to speak?

If not I will call upon the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I have the distinct privilege to wind up the debate on this historic Motion which will fundamentally change our electoral system. I do so with a great sense of responsibility and indeed pride to be able to participate in such an event and to be Premier on such an occasion.

Madam Speaker, before I get into the substance of my windup, I wish to address some procedural matters to clarify what the Leader of the Opposition has raised with respect to the order. The first point, Madam Speaker, just to put this to bed, the Leader of the Opposition said he wished proof that the Governor had approved the draft order. I would simply read this email which he has just sent to the Cabinet Secretary who has printed and given to me: "Dear Samuel, Thank you for sight of this. I approve the draft order as amended. Regards." [UNVERIFIED QUOTE]

Madam Speaker, this is simply the email proof that the Leader of the Opposition was asking for but the Governor indeed had approved the amended order. As the House will remember, I withdrew the earlier order and replaced it with the amended order. The amendment was simply to make sure that we had corrected two of the electoral districts in West Bay.

The Speaker: So ordered.

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Madam Speaker, just to make sure that everyone understands, again, of the process, I will refer again to the Constitution in that regard.

Madam Speaker, section 89(3) of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009, "**As soon as may be after the Commission has submitted a report under subsection (1),**" (of section 89) "**the Premier shall lay before the Legislative Assembly for its approval the draft of an order by the Governor for giving effect, whether with or without modifications, to the recommendations contained in the report, and that draft may make provision for any matters which appear to the Premier to be incidental to or consequential upon the other provisions of the draft.**"

Subsection (4), "**Where any draft order laid under this section would give effect to any such recommendations with modifications, the Premier shall lay before the Legislative Assembly together with the draft a statement of the reasons for the modifications.**"

There have been no modifications proposed by me on behalf of the Government, Madam Speaker.

Subsection "**(5) If the motion for the approval of any draft order laid under this section is rejected by the Legislative Assembly or is withdrawn by leave of the Assembly, an amended draft shall be laid without undue delay by the Premier before the [Legislative] Assembly.**"

So, Madam Speaker, what happened is I withdrew the earlier draft and laid a new draft in accordance with section 89(5) of the Constitution.

Subsection "**(6) If any draft order laid under this section is approved by resolution of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier shall submit it to the Governor who shall make an order (which shall be published in a Government Notice) in terms of the draft; and that order shall come into force for the determination of the boundaries of the electoral districts to which it relates upon the next dissolution of the Assembly after it is made.**"

Subsection "**(7) The question of the validity of any order by the Governor purporting to be made under this section and reciting that a draft of the order has been approved by the Legislative Assembly shall not be inquired into in any court.**"

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: So, Madam Speaker—

The Speaker: Honourable Premier, if I could just have one moment, I could ask if those who are in charge of the camera if they would please take it off the Chair

and put it on the Honourable Premier as he is the one making the presentation at this particular stage.

Honourable Premier, sorry for the interruption.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Serjeant, can we get an indication from those responsible what is the issue?

[Pause]

The Speaker: I am not talking about the light, Honourable Ministers. I am talking about the camera that I can see from this Chair and where it is. So, either that is not working or it is not being recorded and I don't want to take the risk in this historic moment for the Premier to be speaking and at the end of the day there is no recording. I keep my eye on it. Although I am writing, I do have a pretty good peripheral view.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Members, can we take a short break?

Proceedings suspended at 6:07 pm

Proceedings resumed at 6:40 pm

The Speaker: Please be seated. Proceedings are resumed.

I recognise the Honourable Premier.

MOTIONS

GOVERNMENT MOTION NO. 8/2015-2016 ORDER TO EFFECT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ELECTORAL BOUNDARY COMMISSION

[Continuation of debate thereon]

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When we had the suspension based on concerns of whether or not these proceedings were being recorded and broadcast, I was just finishing up my explanation of section 89 of the Constitution, which deals with the whole question of the laying of the draft order of the Governor by the Premier and the process for it, and I was concluding with my reference to section 89(7) which completes the process by making it clear that this process cannot be inquired into by the court.

Section 89(7) states, "**The question of the validity of any order by the Governor purporting to be made under this section and reciting that a draft of the order has been approved by the Legislative Assembly shall not be inquired into in any court.**" And I repeat that, Madam Speaker,

because there is reported in today's *Cayman Compass*, the intention of the Leader of the Opposition to investigate the possibility of judicial review of this resolution of the House. So we shall see, Madam Speaker, where he gets to with that.

I am saddened, though, that for someone who proclaims that he believes in the democratic process that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would seek to challenge what he knows is the will of this House with respect to this matter by threatening to begin legal proceedings. There is little question, I believe, based on the contributions of Members that the vast majority of the Members of this House are in favour of the Motion to convert our current electoral system from a multi-member constituency based system to one of single member electoral districts with each voter having one vote.

Madam Speaker, a lot has been said. A lot of contributions have been made. And I value all of them. And I am not going to seek to take to task every single point that was made with which I may not agree. But I want to say this, Madam Speaker. We have had the current system of single member, of multi-member districts for many years, going back to the earliest days when we had vestrymen and justices. But if one looks at what has transpired in Cayman, you will see, as you would expect, the evolution of the system as the country grew, the population grew, appreciation of the doctrine of separation of powers and accountability grew and as circumstances dictated that we needed to change and move forward.

From the earliest days back in the 1860s when the Cayman Islands was a dependency of Jamaica, Caymanians decided that they needed to have some form of representation themselves. Their big issue with the dependence of Jamaica status was that we did not have representation in the Jamaican Parliament and we were not able to contribute to those, and Caymanians were increasingly concerned about being taxed, decisions being taken without any contribution on their part.

So, Madam Speaker, those were the early days of representation. In Cayman, initially, it was not even constitutional because there was no constitutional basis for it, but Caymanians always understood the critical importance of having persons who were able to speak on behalf of the people of this country.

Madam Speaker, the vestrymen and justices, I think generally served two terms. And all districts had more than one. I think as—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Perhaps Little Cayman didn't have one. But that system stayed in place for some 129 years until we got our first

written Constitution. I think we got our first written Constitution in 1959.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: One hundred and twenty-nine years.

That system was replaced with the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council. Madam Speaker, at that point there were no less than 35 members of the Assembly of Vestrymen and Justices. And for those who think that the numbers we have in the Legislative Assembly now are high, should also bear in mind that in 1972, when we got our new Constitution, when the number of elected members were reduced to 12, the Assembly still consisted of 18 Members because we had three nominated Members and three Official Members. So now in 2015 we still only have 20 Members, including the two Official Members, the Deputy Governor and the Attorney General. And when the additional seat is added, we will still only have 21 Members with a population now approaching 60,000. And for those who complain about the number of representatives, I have seen many derogatory comments on *CNS*, and you hear them on the radio and elsewhere. And there was a very unflattering editorial in the *Compass* last week again, just showing general lack of regard for Members of the House and the work of the House.

Madam Speaker, let me say this: As Premier, I believe that this House and this country are fortunate to have the calibre of men and women who have been elected with their abilities, their commitment and their concern and compassion for the people of this country. It is so easy to sit on the outside and hurl slurs, insults and derogatory remarks and say that those who come down here come down here and waste time and are long-winded and make empty promises and poor speeches and the sort of stuff I see written over and over again. But if anyone believes that the business of running this small, but extremely complex country, and managing its affairs, given the expectations of those who live here, those who are of here, those who come here, those who invest here, need to think again. Many times I wish that I could turn this role that I have over to some of these critics even for a week and see how they fare.

Madam Speaker, my point in all of this is that there is a constant evolution of the system of government and along with it the electoral system trying to keep pace. The 1972 Constitution was around, quite frankly, too long, because we bickered about it for too many years. It needed to have been advanced well before 2009. I devoted the best part of nine years of my political career to battling for a new Constitution because I believed so passionately in the need for constitutional change. And I am happy, and one of my great satisfactions, regardless of what happens to me down the road, and even becoming

Premier did not trump my satisfaction at the fact that we got through a modern Constitution on a referendum in 2009.

Madam Speaker, the seats had been increased from 12 to 15 in 1992 to reflect the increased responsibilities and the burden of work of this House and of, then Executive Council, now called Cabinet, and again, when the Constitution was advanced in 2009 the seats increased to the current number of 18, with revision again to allow an increase in the number of members of Cabinet to seven. It had been increased to five under the changes in 1992.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, sitting where I sit as Premier, seven Ministers is still a little understaffed, given the burden of work. Because as Premier I still have to have constitutional responsibility for three significant subjects, because there are not enough Ministers to spread those around to. If anyone believes that the Ministry of Health is a minor matter, they really don't understand. And I am very, very grateful for the able assistance I receive from the Second Elected Member for George Town, who is acting as Councillor in that Ministry. But I have no doubt in my mind that the role of Premier has evolved to a point where you really need a premier who does not have a specific ministerial responsibility, given all of the other responsibilities that he or she has in managing the affairs of the country, managing the team of Ministers and Councillors, doing all the ceremonial duties, giving the speeches, travelling, it is not an easy burden. And for those who think it is something, they should try it for a week or so, and see how they get used to 14 hour days and your phone never off, and seven days a week.

So, Madam Speaker, I believe that the number we are coming to in terms of elected representatives of 19 is about right. I would like to see one more Minister. This is not going to do that. But I am just giving my perspective, having been Premier for almost two and a half years now. So, for those who think that the House is overstaffed, and that Cabinet has more than it needs, they need to think carefully again about that.

Madam Speaker, the point made by the Minister of Education, and I single out her contribution among all, is, I think one of the most powerful arguments in favour of a move to single member electoral districts, and one that is overlooked and rarely mentioned. If we continue down the road that we are now, where you have seen George Town go from three representatives to four to six, now proposing seven based on population within the districts . . . well, actually, not population, based on registered voters within the district. It ignores one of the other realities, which is that you do not represent just those who are registered voters, you represent everybody.

So, Madam Speaker, if we don't do something in terms of limiting, as the Minister of Education

eloquently pointed out, restricting the need to constantly add a new representative to reflect the growing overall numbers in the district, we are going to get to, in very short order, 10 representatives for George Town, 5 or 6 for West Bay, 8 for Bodden Town and the disparity that exists now with respect to the smaller districts of East End, North Side and Cayman Brac, is just going to get greater and greater. By going to single member electoral districts, it means that as the numbers increase, you can have a re-districting of the various districts to reflect the increases in the population without having to add another Member, because 1300 constituents is easy to manage. One person can easily carry 2,500 or 3,000 without a huge problem. So, we can't keep growing the number of representatives just to try to keep some sense of equality in the system.

So, I think that is one of the most powerful arguments in favour of moving to single member electoral districts.

Madam Speaker, I, like others, have had my concerns about the smaller sizes and what can possibly happen in terms of manipulating the vote. After four elections in which I was a candidate successfully, and two previous elections in which I worked with the Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure (PLAHI), the First Elected Member for George Town, I think I have a fair handle on how this thing works. And, Madam Speaker, I have heard over and over again about people buying elections. In my experience, at least in the district of George Town, you don't buy any election. You may influence a few votes here or there, perhaps, but you don't buy elections.

Let me tell you what wins elections in Cayman. What wins elections is when people believe that you are a good representative or that you will be a good representative. In the early days they relied heavily on what other people tell them about you. And they rely also on who you are running with, especially, and particularly, if they trust that person, because that person has been a good representative. But I promise you this, the second time around, you better have performed, because no amount of pleading on your behalf is going to convince people who had you for four years and you turned your back to them and did not assist them. I don't care how many bills you pass down here and how many motions you bring down here, unless they believe it has impacted them, I am sorry, you are not coming back.

I have watched that happen, since I have been here, to six people.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Yes.

That is what matters to people—how you have impacted their lives, their children's lives,

whether you have compassion and care about the things that matter to them.

Madam Speaker, I had as good a teacher as has ever been around. And he is sitting to the right of me. And I pay attention. I pay attention.

So, Madam Speaker, let me say this: Most of my life, from the time I was 14 years old, I was in a service organisation in Cayman. I joined INTERACT [PHONETIC] when I was 14. I was president of INTERACT twice, president of ROTARACT twice, and I have been a Lion for 27 years. I have been elected 15 years. Most of my life has been about service to my community and my people. And if anybody believes that because I will help someone who is need financially, that that means that I am buying my seat, then, they really don't understand the meaning of compassion.

Madam Speaker, none of us can afford to help all of those who come to us on a daily basis. And do people try to genial you? Of course, they do. And they succeed sometimes too. But in cases where there is genuine need, and I have the means, personally, to help, I have always tried to do so. And I hope we are not going to reach the point where it becomes illegal for a representative who wants to help someone in his community from doing so. But that is to be distinguished, Madam Speaker, from wholesale attempting to influence the vote by buying people huge things. That is not what I am talking about. But, Madam Speaker, when you have been around for a while, you are able to make the distinctions between what is genuine need and what is not.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of term limits, I personally battled for years, particularly with the Leader of the Opposition over whether or not the Office of Premier should be subject to terms limits in the new Constitution. It was one of the sticking points which allowed that process to be dragged out forever and ever. And in the end, the new Constitution says that the Premier can only serve two consecutive terms before he or she has to take a break and then it will become open to them again, if that is what they wish. I don't know why anybody would want that, but then everybody is not me.

I have heard for years and years and years this argument, Madam Speaker, of regular elected Members being subject to term limits. When I think of the size of the population in Cayman and the stature, calibre of representative that is necessary to deal with the complex issues in this country, I wonder why we would be keen to turf out of a contention experienced representatives to replace them with green brand new representatives. There is always a turnover and turnover is good. But surely, the job of an elected representative cannot be the only job in the world where less experience is better than more experience.

If I were hiring somebody for any job I would want the most experienced person for the job. And that is how this is. Anyone who believes that you can

come in here because you have been successful in another field and automatically that makes you a good representative is someone who is not in touch with reality. This is a vocation like any other in which skills are needed to be learned, and there are no schools you can go to, to learn these skills. You learn them in here. You learn them on the street, and if you are lucky enough to get in Cabinet and in Government you learn them there. There is no substitute.

I remember when I came in here full of vim and vigour, having practiced law 12 years, partner in a law firm, thought I knew it all. Knew what? I got taught pretty quickly, a couple of good slap-downs I understood how little I really knew about the business of politics.

So, Madam Speaker, I lead a Government in which I have a significant number of new Members, all extremely able, well educated, articulate. But they will all tell you that the learning curve has been very steep and the truth is they still have much more to learn. I am still learning after 15 years. This is a difficult, difficult business. And to go down a road which dismisses experience, good representatives that the people want in a place like Cayman where the population is so small and the pool from which you pull is even smaller, is not, in my view, wise. And that is certainly not something that I would support.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has said that moving to one person one vote, and single member electoral districts will damn us into an eternal fire. Madam Speaker, I know the man is passionate about retaining the current system but this sounds like desperation. I do not believe any such thing. I believe that we will have challenges, because the system is new. But I don't believe that, as he claims, gangs will organise in small constituencies and start garrison politics, but he says the wealthy can influence the elections under one person one vote. Madam Speaker, the wealthy seek to influence elections under any system anywhere in the world. And if we think it is any different in Cayman, you tell me one Government that has been elected without the support of the business community. I don't know about any of them. And I have won and I have lost, and I have won again. So I know what I am talking about.

Madam Speaker, a number of Members who have spoken have said that this Government does not have a mandate for one person one vote, single member electoral districts. Well, Madam Speaker, we, the People's Progressive Movement, have advocated this from 2002 consistently. It is contained in our manifesto. We won 9 of 18 seats. And anyone who joined this Administration joined it in the full knowledge that we had campaigned on a platform for single member electoral districts, and one person one vote. So, they may argue.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Third Elected Member for West Bay may argue about the

semantics about all of that, but I believe firmly, and especially after my discussions with you, that we have . . . you who are a member of this party, that we have more than a mandate for one person one vote, and single member electoral districts. So, Madam Speaker, I don't buy the arguments put forward by the two Members on the Opposition benches who have argued against this. I am not sure . . . sorry, three Members. I am not sure precisely what the position of the Third Elected Member for West Bay is, he didn't quite say, he simply said he had been told he could vote his conscience. So I guess we will see in the fullness of time. But I don't buy the arguments saying that this is retrograde, that this is going to take us back, that this is going to create similar situations as occurred in some other countries. All progressive and developed countries that I know, either, are or are moving to the principle of one person one vote. And if Cayman is to continue to progress, we have to also move with the times.

Madam Speaker, at the risk of breaching the rule against anticipating a motion, there is another motion to come shortly which I hope will be acceded to by this House which will continue to evolve our parliamentary system and bring us closer to what are considered the modern rules with respect to the separation of powers, further enhance the status of this parliament that we are all honoured and privileged to be Members of.

So, Madam Speaker, this evening we stand on the threshold of a new electoral dispensation. And all Members of this House, I believe, are deeply conscious of the significance of the vote that we make this evening. It will be one of those events, one of those changes that are written about for years and years. That struck me with such force over the course of the last couple of days as I was reading our constitutional history and the significance of the events that occurred and how they have changed the face of, not just our Constitution, our constitutional framework, and our electoral framework, but the pace of the country altogether.

Madam Speaker, this is one of the most significant constitutional and electoral changes that this country has made, and I am proud to be Premier at this time. I am proud to lead a Government that believes in this significant step, and I ask again all Members of the House to give the Motion their full support.

The Speaker: The question is: BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly hereby approves the draft Order of Her Excellency the Governor for giving effect to the recommendations contained in the Report;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an Order then be subsequently made in terms of the draft, so that the changes in representation of Members of the Legislative Assembly, and

determination of the boundaries of the nineteen (19) Single Member Electoral Districts as provided therein, will come into effect upon the next dissolution of the House.

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

AYES and one audible NO.

The Speaker: I think the Ayes have it.

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Madam Speaker, can we have a division?

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Divide please.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk.

The Clerk:

DIVISION NO. 9

Ayes: 13

Hon. Alden McLaughlin
 Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts
 Hon. Osbourne V Bodden
 Hon. G. Wayne Panton
 Hon Marco S. Archer
 Hon. Tara A. Rivers
 Hon. Anthony S. Eden
 Mr. Winston C. Connolly
 Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
 Mr. Joseph X. Hew
 Mr. Alva H. Suckoo
 Mr. D. Ezzard Miller
 Mr. V. Arden McLean

Noes: 3

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush
 Mr. Bernie A. Bush
 Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks

Absent: 1

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell

The Speaker: The result of the division is as follows: 13 Ayes, 3 Noes, 1 Absentee. The Motion is carried.

Agreed by majority on division: Government Motion No. 8/2015-2016 - Order to Effect Recommendations of the Electoral Boundary Commission, as amended, passed.

[Applause]

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move the adjournment of this honourable House until Wednesday morning at 10:00.

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

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

At 7:16 pm the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 21 October 2015.