
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2018 – 2022

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

At a meeting of the House of Assembly at the Worthing Corporate Centre on Tuesday, the 28th Day of September, 2021, at 10 a.m. pursuant to the Adjournment.

PRESENT

His Honour A.E. HOLDER, B.Sc. (Hons.), MSW, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Speaker)

His Honour N.G.H. ROWE, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.

Hon. R.St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of International Business and Industry)

Hon. Miss MIA A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, Minister of National Security and the Civil Service)

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P. (Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs)

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD, J.P., B.A.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship) (Online)

Lt. Col. the Hon. J.D. BOSTIC, MVO, B.A. (Hons.), (Minister of Health and Wellness)

Mr. E.G. HINKSON, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C, LL.M. (Online)

Hon. D.G. SUTHERLAND, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.), (Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Development)

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training)

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY, J.P., B.A., B.Sc., PgD. (Leader of the Opposition)

Dr. the Hon. W.F. DUGUID, J.P., B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S, F.D.R.C.S., M. Min. (Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance)

Hon. W.A. ABRAHAMS, LL.B. (Hons.), (Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs)

Hon. Ms. C.S.V. HUSBANDS, B.A. (Hons.), (Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Mr. R.A. THORNE, Q.C., LL.B., L.E.C., Dip. Theology.

Hon. I.A. WEIR, M.B.A. (Minister of Agriculture and Food Security)

Hon. A.R. FORDE, RPh. (Minister of the Environment and National Beautification)

Hon. C.McD. GRIFFITH (Minister in the Ministry of Water Resources)

Hon. P.R. PHILLIPS (Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security)

Hon. J.A. KING, BSS. (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for Culture and the National Development Commission)

Hon. G.P.I. GOODING-EDGHILL (Minister of Transport, Works and Water Resources)

Hon. C.E. JORDAN, B.Sc. (Hons.), (Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations)

Dr. S.E. BROWNE, M.B.B.S. (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. K.D.M. HUMPHREY, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.P.A., (Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy)

Hon. R.R. STRAUGHN, B.Sc., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Finance)

Hon. Ms. M.K-A. CADDLE, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment)

Ms. T.N. S-A. MOORE, M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by the Reverend Mark Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is in Session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, are to be deferred. Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the aforementioned Minutes be deferred.

Hon. K.D.M. HUMPHREY: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Minutes of the Meeting of September 21, 2021, be deferred was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's Sitting.

Hon. K.D.M. HUMPHREY: I beg to second that.

The question that the aforementioned Standing orders be suspended for the remainder of the day's Sitting was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the order of the day. Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, of which Notice was given on September 20, 2021, be substituted with the newly revised Bill dated September 27, 2021. The revised Bill has already been circulated to Members.

Hon. P.R. PHILLIPS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the previous Constitution (Amendment) Bill be substituted with the current Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 6

To move the Second Reading of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise with the honour of being able to move the Second Reading of the Constitution

(Amendment) Bill which, quite simply, seeks to do just four things:

1. To revoke the Barbados Independence Order of 1966 as an Order in Council of Her Majesty while saving and keeping complete the Barbados Constitution which existed only as a Schedule to that Order hitherto.
2. To make provision for a Barbadian to be a Head of State of Barbados.
3. To change the Oath of Allegiance from that to Her Majesty to now the State of Barbados.
4. To ensure continuity in all of the other aspects and functioning of the State of Barbados through all of the offices, appointments, permissions and everything flowing from the prerogative that was hitherto exercised in the conduct and the affairs of this country, while at the same time vesting all that previously was vested in the Crown now in the State of Barbados.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, this is a very simple Bill in its terms but a fundamental Bill in its action and intent. This is a Bill that allows us to say to the world that we, Barbadians, as we move to celebrate the 55th Anniversary of nationhood would want to complete the process and to build on that which was done by those who went before us. It is in no way intended to take away from the work of the Father of Independence or indeed the Father of Democracy before, because without the right to vote and the capacity to control our destiny, we would not have been able to become independent. What it does is allow us to close the circle with respect to Independence and move to another state of our development, thereby allowing Barbadians to say to the world that we have the confidence in ourselves to be completely responsible for who we are and what we do and what we say and all that surrounds itself with the Nation of Barbados. This is an acknowledgement of the prescience and indeed leadership of those who went before in previous Parliaments, starting of course with the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow who was responsible for the acclamation with which we went forward with respect to Independence on November 30.

We believe that just as this country with confidence was able to take that step that what remains now for us to do in terms of both the symbolism but also the reality of the action is something that is entirely within our province and something to which they ought to be a simple natural step.

Mr. Speaker, somewhere across this land there are little boys and girls who live out their dreams and think about what they want to be when they grow up. We would want as a Parliament that among those boys and girls there

should be a legitimate ambition to be the Head of State of this nation. It is no different in the United States of America, it is not different in Brazil, it is no different in many other countries across the World, it is no different in Ghana, and it is no different in Kenya. We would similarly want for a Barbadian boy or girl to believe that they can in their own right, in their own skin, in their own country be equal to the task of being Head of State of their nation. We say this without any ...???..... because we accept that since modern settlement in 1625 the Head of State has been the merit of the United Kingdom and that has had its own torturous journey, but we accept that in recent times our relationship has been one that has been based on mutual respect and that has seen us work collaboratively and with respect as I said with the monarch. In this particular instance, we are particularly thankful and extend our courtesies and gratitude to Her Majesty the Queen. However, there comes a point in the life of a nation when time simply has come and we believe that that time has come in our nation effectively while not being matched by the legal and constitutional arrangements of our nation. It is against that background therefore that this Government has taken the decision that the time has come for us now to complete that process.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill that is before us recognises that the Barbados Independence Order of 1966, which flowed from the legislation thereto, had as its schedule the Constitution of Barbados. The truth is that many people when going to look for it one might have been confused, because of the fact that our Constitution like that and many other Caribbean Commonwealth countries was simply the schedule to an ordering counsel made by Her Majesty and not a standalone piece of legislation as we have become accustomed to doing in every other instance. This Bill today repeals that Barbados Independence Order while preserving the schedule which is the Constitution as the Constitution. We took the deliberate act of ensuring that we had broad consultation from a legal perspective, they were different views and in the end the Honourable Attorney General and I would have requested an opinion from the former Chief Justice, Sir David Simmons and the former President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, Sir, Dennis Byron who by a ???..... of circumstances happens to be in Barbados today as we debate this Bill.

Their view like those of Mr. Justice Sherman Moore who was responsible for the drafting of this legislation is that this entirely works in a manner that allows us to repeal and preserve while at the same time allowing the Government to remain committed to our intent to start the work of a new Constitution from January next year. What do we mean by that? I said before in other places that the Government will ensure that there will be the most comprehensive consultation, not just by having a Bill that maybe a 150 pages of giving to someone for two or three months without guidance, but a consultation that goes

chapter by chapter, because that is exactly how our Constitution is written as you know Mr. Speaker. The first set of chapters deal with the fundamental rights and freedoms. We believe that a new Constitution should deal with fundamental rights, freedoms and responsibilities, because at the end of the day what we are trying to do is to build a nation where active citizenship is the hallmark of that nation and if that is to be the hallmark of the nation then it ought to be reflected in the terms and content of the Constitution.

However, that process is ???..... and that process will see the kind of consultation that we saw with the Thorne Commission, which as you know went around this country almost in every parish speaking to Barbadians with respect to the content thereto of what our local Government systems should be developed and evolved to reflect. To that extent, it is that similar type of process that we expect to take place next year.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that that is where the effective and real consultation will lie. With respect to this Bill as I said, this Bill does nothing else but seek to make a Bajan the Head of State of Barbados and it as simple as that because that is the lacuna that will take us from one point to the other. By also revoking the ordering counsel we make the clear statement that we want to be in control of our affairs as a Republic and as a Parliamentary Republic. We do not intend for this country's name to change. I made that absolutely clear and the other Members of the Government have made it clear that the name of Barbados remains Barbados and we do not need to change our name in order to be able to advance in the process of Independence.

Similarly, we are not changing the date of Independence, because we do not see this as anything other than a complete continuum to what was started first in 1950 with the right to vote and the passage of Universal Adult Franchise Bill, then with the act of Independence in 1966 and now with the act of making a Barbadian the Head of State and removing our Constitution from the status of being a schedule to our British order and council.

Mr. Speaker, these are therefore simple things that we believe that are necessary at this point. What we want to be able to do is to ensure that just as December 1, 1966 saw this nation rise united as we greeted the World as the newest Independent State on December 1, 1966 that we equally want to have a situation where this country closes that process in a dignified manner, places its own national as its Head of State, separates in a dignified manner from Her Majesty the Queen with gratitude for her role and post-Independence Barbados for sure, but recognising that without that we will always continue to have doubts in the minds of our people as to whether we are truly independent and whether we are truly in charge of our own destiny,

because if we have to send to the Palace in order to confer honours or we have to send to the Palace in order to appoint an Ambassador to a non-Commonwealth country, then we do not can cannot say that all power resides and locates within the nation State of Barbados. It is as simple as that, it is not a lot of long talk, it is not a lot of long action, but it is simply making sure that in the same way on other aspects of our governance we can fully make the decisions without the geographical jurisdiction of Barbados we want to be able to do so and all of our actions and not just the majority. Mr. Speaker, as I said, it therefore is a matter first of fundamental pride and if you go back to where this Government stands, we in the establishment and publication of our Covenant of Hope made it very clear the document that speaks to who we are, what we stand for and what we would fight for.

In 2016 when this BLP, then in Opposition settled the Covenant of Hope, we recognised that boosting of our country's self-confidence and national identity is the foundation from which all other things spring, including that sense of confidence that will affect how we look at ourselves in the mirror, whether we love who we see, how we treat one another in our families, communities and country or whether we are prepared to work to higher levels in terms of productivity. All of these things come back fundamentally to the type of persons who we are and our sense of self-confidence and self-esteem, our ability to rise above and to recognise that this is who we are.

You hear me say that all the time because the essence being Barbadian matters. The essence of being Barbadian separates us from others. The essence of being Barbadian allows us to want to pursue those things that we believe to be intrinsic to the nation-state of Barbados. The recognition that we want to stand up for something, particularly when it comes to fighting against injustice and fighting for social justice. We want to make sure that this country forever recognizes that a person should not be condemned simply because of the circumstances of their birth and that there should be no office outside of their reach, not even the Head of State of this country in terms of their aspirations and achievements.

Mr. Speaker, we believe this to be fundamental to this nation and if we are to give our children the opportunity to be global citizens anchored by Barbadian roots or "Bajan" roots that they must have that confidence that they can be all that they want to be, so long as they are prepared to be the best that they can be. Mr. Speaker, it is fundamental. I served as Minister of Education in this country for seven years and regrettably I have seen too many examples where people are doubting themselves and their capacity, and they carry it with them throughout their entire lives. Very often when you look at somebody in their fifties or sixties and you start to deconstruct what is really the issue when they are going through a difficult time, it

goes back to that sense of self-doubt and sense of whether did someone really love or accept them; all of those things.

Mr. Speaker, I say so conscious that that determines the level of output, gentility, compassion and all of the things that are necessary to make us a successful society, a great society and civilisation. We believe always that we should speak truth to power, so when people ask me, "How do you go to the United Nations and say what you say? Are you not frightened?" Mr. Speaker, "friends of all; satellites of none." It was not just a statement from Mr. Barrow, it was a reflection of the essence of who Barbadians are. Let us deal with the whole question of education.

This Government's first Act or at least one of the first was to be able literally to give our young people the assurance that we would not limit their horizons by refusing to pay for their tertiary education and post-secondary education in this country. We felt that it was critical to do so because we know from generations that the most important gift that a parent could ensure that their child receives in this country is the right to an education because more often than not that the education would secure that child's path throughout their life and capacity to be the best that they can be. Mr. Speaker, these things are intrinsic to who we are as a Barbadian.

Therefore, we feel that this process of completing the circle is but the natural step that this generation, particularly those of us born at the time of Independence who carry no doubts about why we should be independent and who have no doubts about the correctness of the decision made in 1966, we feel have an obligation to close the circle. Mr. Speaker, I have said many times about closing the circle of enfranchisement. Why? In 1937 when we had the rebellion, not the riots but the rebellion, that basically said that Barbadians wanted to claim their own destiny that was step that sought to build on the work before of Charles Duncan O' Neal and others who tried. When Marcus Garvey came here in the 1920s that started to build on the whole act of political organization and mobilisation so that ordinary people could have control of their destiny in a way that was not being appreciated or agreed to by the then British Colonial Government and office.

Mr. Speaker, that rebellion made it possible for us to push pass in a cataclysmic way almost, such that it led forces to form the first political party; the one that I have the distinct honour to lead. This political party started in March 1938, less than one year after that rebellion and making it absolutely clear that it was a direct expression of the uprising that took place hitherto on July 26, 1937. By March 31, 1938 less than a stone's throw away at Martineau House on Bay Street and that that event took place less than a stone's throw away from Golden Square is of significance for me in the recognition of the journey that

we are taking. There are some who felt that it was inappropriate for me to speak on July 26 this year and to lay out what Government's role and roadmap would be with respect to the election of a Barbadian Head of State.

I disagree and humbly so. I disagree humbly so because the journey of modern Barbados in my view can be anchored back to that rebellion in 1937. It was not led by people of any formal, organized movement but it was led by people who understood the voice and the call of the Right Excellent Clement Payne, understood the agitation that was taking place before by the Right Excellent Charles Duncan O'Neal and others on the ground. There is Clennel Wickham in his writings. There is a whole cast of persons who understood the work and the courage of people like Israel Lovell and a whole host of others. I am sure that the Member for St. Michael East will reflect and place appropriately into the records of this House. This is why we made July 26 a day of national significance.

This is why we also moved to expunge the criminal convictions of those convicted with that event because we understood that that was the defining moment that led then to what I call now the journey of enfranchisement. On March 31, 1938, you have the establishment of the BLP, then known as the Barbados Progressive League. It went back to the BLP again. We had then in 1941 and I believe that the Honourable Member for St. George North will have the opportunity to speak to this because they too will be celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Barbados Workers Union's (BWU) formation in less than a week. This is next Monday; October 4.

Mr. Speaker, that process then led not just to political enfranchisement with the BLP but then the workers' enfranchisement was then becoming possible with the establishment of the BWU. We start to talk then about the enfranchisement of persons with respect to the right to vote and the passage of the Universal Adult Suffrage Bill in 1950 allowing for the first time in 1951 people to vote in this country without reference to any kind of property. I did not refer specifically to the right of women to vote in 1945 but that enfranchisement was also critical.

The problem was that was still anchored to property and by 1950 when Sir Grantley led the Bill it gave, for the first time, all Barbadians over the age of 21 the right to vote in this nation. That age was subsequently reduced to 18, but the enfranchisement did not end there. We then went to the process of enfranchising people with respect to their workers' rights and social rights and that is what the 1950s came to be recognised as because you had then the passage of the labour legislation, holidays with pay. You had a whole suite of labour legislation that sought to protect workers who for regrettably, centuries were just seen as beast of burden in this nation and were brought here purely for their labour and not for any consideration,

regrettably. We then saw, equally, in the 1950s the process of wanting to provide education and wanting to provide education and healthcare in this country and I thank God that we have had successive governments that have treated to this as a continuum so the construction of West St. Joseph Secondary School now known as Grantley Adams Memorial School, the construction of Princess Margaret Secondary School, the construction of Parkinson Memorial Secondary School, the construction of what was then known as Richmond School, now known as St. Leonard's Boys' Secondary School. Those four newer secondary schools were all constructed in the 1950s in order to be able to expand the capacity because while this country had in 1900 over 200 primary school on a 166 square miles, it only had six secondary school at that point thereby making it very difficult for persons to move beyond a Seventh Standard education in this country. Mr. Speaker, once Mr. Errol Barrow now Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow won in 1961 he was then able with the literal writing of a pen to ensure that every child going to primary and secondary school in this country would do so free of charge understanding that represented the essence of what Barbadians wanted for their children and we have never looked back. We paused in 2013 on post-secondary, but mercifully the will of the country was sufficient to say we will make other sacrifices and we will make other changes but what matters to us is that any child born in this nation must believe that they can be the best that they can be. That is how we have a Sir Garfield Sobers and when people started to make fun at him they always forget that he excelled where no other man has gone with respect to what he was able to achieve in cricket globally and that is why if you call his name now in any part of the Commonwealth people literally receive his name awe because they understood his absolute brilliance, but he was born short there in the Bayland. If you go to the other side of Bridgetown now and you look at Robyn Rihanna Fenty, she knew from small that she wanted to take on the world. If you ever doubted it look at the interview that she did with, I think, it was Katie Couric when she was about 17 years old. I still remember where she sat - actually she had on the same colour I have on now - she sat in an off-white outfit in a chair with her legs literally poised and her who manner focussed and she said: "When I build my empire ..." she did not say: "When I am successful in my career", she did not say, "When I get through ..." at 17 years old, and she was dealing with the unfortunate incident of domestic violence so even after that, she sat there and she told the entire world: "When I build my empire ..." and if I were to be asked to encapsulate why we are really doing this because I believe that every child born in this nation has the right to those kinds of aspirations, but you cannot get it if you are being told that somebody else is going to rule over you by circumstances of birth. That is the closest thing to a feudal system. You cannot get it when somebody else has that right to be over you simply by reason of birth and by conquest. Mr. Speaker, no. The time

truly has come and it has taken courage and we are not blind to the fact that there are some who would not want us to make this journey and who do not believe that we are equal to the task but we believe fundamentally that the majority of Barbadians by far already feel the way that this legislation is now trying to bridge the gap too. Bajans already feel effectively that they are in charge of their own destiny so why do you have then the difference in our legislative and constitutional construct and that is why I say that as a child of independence. I was born one years and one month before this country became independent. I have no doubts, no fears and I believe that almost every other member of my Government feels the exact same way. They have no doubts or fears. This has been a conversation that has been taking place since December 1998. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the fact that I was a part of the Cabinet of Barbados that agreed to the establishment of this Commission explains why I have so much grey hair now, because it has been a long journey. It has been a long journey.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, one of my greatest regrets is that while there are a few who are still with us, the majority of persons who served on this Commission and, in fact, the Cox Commission before have gone to the great beyond. There can be no rush, therefore, about this Act. This Act has taken long in coming and if we go back we agreed that there are aspects that are certainly worthy of consultation and that is the majority of the work that relates to the Constitution. We get that, and we are committed to that fully indeed, Mr. Speaker, when I was Attorney General. I think the current Attorney General would tell you that the work and much of the work done in the first draft I would have started along with other persons who, regrettably, are no longer with us. Sir Roy Marshall who was the drafter of the 1966 Constitution and who was the Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.) and also the University of Hull, who was the first Chairman of the Commission of Racial equality, I believe, in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and a former, as I said, he was advisor to me as Attorney General. Professor Keith Patchett who was the first Dean of the Cave Hill Law School at the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.). Professor Patchett, fortunately, was prepared to work with us in those days. The late Simeon McIntosh who is no longer with us, a great Grenadian constitutional expert well known to post independence Caribbean lawyers, particular those who attended the same Cave Hill Law Faculty of the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.), Mrs. Shirley Belle who was the Chief Parliamentary Counsel at the time, Mr. Hal Gollop, who in his own right as a member of the Private Bar at the time, and indeed, Mr. Griffith who was the Law Reform Commissioner at the time working in the Chambers of the Attorney General. Mr. Speaker, that work was done, it was rested and left there and it has been there for the better part of 15 or 16 years and the current Attorney General and Mr. Justice Moore have taken it and

they are now seeking to make the amendments that are necessary such that a draft will be ready for consultation come January 2022. There is nothing being done behind the backs of anyone and to that extent, therefore, I commit the Government to that full consultation, but at this stage, this Bill is simply about making a Bajan the Head of State.

Mr. Speaker, because we are also taking back the Constitution and removing it as the Schedule to an Ordering Council, for the avoidance of doubt as well, we also ensured that we provide for continuity in every other aspect whether it is in the offices or whether it is also in the transfer of land previously held by the Crown now to be held by the State. In the same way that we replaced Her Majesty's name in the Oath of Allegiance with the State, we replaced references to the Crown with the State of Barbados in terms of the possession of land.

We also ensured that there is no doubt that enactments which would have passed validly before as part of the Laws of Barbados under the old construct are all legitimately preserved under the new construct, so all this does is to say that what existed yesterday will exist tomorrow with the exception of the fact that there is no longer a Governor-General, there will be a President and that President would be elected in the way set out in this legislation.

The other thing that we did was to remove the criteria for age but we insisted that the President of Barbados shall be a Barbadian by birth or by descent and that is captured at Clause 29 where it says a person is qualified to be nominated for election as President if he is a citizen of Barbados by birth or descent. Ironically, as we discussed in the parliamentary party last night the Interpretation Act is such that masculine includes feminine although it should be both feminine and masculine, and I hope that at some point the Attorney General would start drafting also in the feminine and not simply in the masculine particularly since we are determined to be able to reflect that kind of parity for those boys and girls going forward.

What is clear is that a person is not qualified to be elected to the office of President if they are a sitting Member of the House of Assembly or the Senate, but if they have left more than twelve months they could then be eligible for that nomination for election. Mr. Speaker, there is a reason for that. We felt that there should be a cooling off period, it is not impossible. In a small society we have limited options very often but at the same time we do not rule out a person simply because at some point in their career they would have expressed openly partisan preferences. The truth is that all of us have preferences, it is just whether we have them openly or whether we keep them to ourselves. This says clearly there should be a 12-month period before anybody can be eligible to move from

this Parliament to that office. Similarly, that a person will not be able to serve if they are disqualified under the things that prevent a person from serving in the House of Assembly by Section 44 of the current Constitution. We all know what they are in terms of the things that preclude a person from being able to serve in public life in this Parliament in terms of if they are bankrupt or if they are not of a sound mind and if there are certain types of convictions, not all, so those are set out clearly. We are not making any changes to any of that. Similarly, this Bill sets out the manner in which the Election shall take place, and the Honourable Attorney General shall carry the Honourable House through that procedure so that the country is clear as to the process for that.

Mr. Speaker, I have approached the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and he and I met and agreed that we would want to bring the absolute ultimate dignity to this process by ensuring that we do a joint nomination. I did indicate to the country our intention when appropriate and once the legislation passes to be able to nominate Her Excellency the current Governor-General, and with your permission I call her name only for the purposes of our records, Dame Sandra Mason. We believe that she is a fitting nomination for the post of being the first President of Barbados to be elected by this Parliament of Barbados through the separate Houses meeting on the same day and collectively but meeting as separate Houses of Parliament. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition like myself agrees that the dignity of the occasion requires this joint effort.

There are some things that are simply above partisan considerations in this nation and long may that be so. I refer to December 01, 1966 as being one of those days when all of us, regardless of where we stood, recognised that we must now greet and meet the world as one. I believe that this process is of a similar nature, that we accept the honour and dignity of being given the opportunity to be able to play a role in the nomination and subsequent election of the first President of Barbados and we believe that there is no more fitting person to be nominated than Her Excellency. She by her circumstances has shown what it is to rise and to reach the very highest levels of this nation by dint of education, hard work, discipline, respect for God, respect for traditional values and empathy and compassion that saw her work as a United Nations' International Advocate for the Rights of Children recognising always that the essence of who we are as Barbadians is to simply make a better life for our people particularly where persons are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Mr. Speaker, I want publicly to thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for agreeing that we collectively should set a tone for this that hopefully would inspire others that come after us that there are simply some things that are above partisan consideration.

I reflect equally on the other momentous occasions of State with which I have been involved, and perhaps the greatest other one was when we left Her Majesty's Privy Council as the Final Court of Appeal of Barbados and put in place the Caribbean Court of Justice which I had the honour to Chair the Propriety Committee towards its establishment for almost five years and towards settling the financial arrangements such that it could become an institution that would stand on its own without the dependence on Caribbean Governments on an annual basis to function. On that occasion, Mr. Speaker, the then Honourable Leader of the Opposition was the late Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable David Thompson, and I am happy to report that on that occasion too after I spoke to him as the then Attorney General and then the Prime Minister then spoke to him that we were able to agree that Barbados' entry into the Caribbean Court of Justice would be a seamless one supported by the people of Barbados as reflected by the institutions in Parliament namely the Government and the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, this is what separates this country from many others. There are many others today that still cannot settle on that fundamental issue of what should be the final court in their land. Mr. Speaker, when I say to you that sometimes I get emotional for leading a country like this it is because of that tradition that there are some things that are simply above partisan consideration. I know it from sitting on both sides of the aisle over the course of the last 30 years effectively. I did not celebrate it formally but the truth is that January of this year would have been 30 years for me in both the Lower House and the Upper House in the Parliament of Barbados as a Member of Parliament, the first three-and-a-half years being the Senate and of course since 1994 with the permission and the consent of the people of St. Michael North East in this Honourable Lower House. Mr. Speaker, I say this because I know that in this relay race, in the same way that we are now running this leg of the relay race, that Sir Grantley Adams and the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow started in terms of Barbados' modern development, that there will be others who will come after us to run it and when they come, I hope that our example today, (the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and my example) as we go through this process will inspire them to remember that there are some things that are simply above partisan consideration.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also say so [while being] conscious that there are those who would want us to take partisan decisions as to whom we nominate. I am not in that. I believe that the best person for the job should be that person whom we elect as president of the country and I am satisfied that Her Excellency has comported herself in a way that she enjoys and commands the affection of Barbadian people and that the majority of Barbadians, I know, would want the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and myself to do exactly as we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Oath is self-explanatory; indeed, anyone who has had to take that long Oath before would know that it became almost impossible for you to do it without pausing because there are no punctuation marks and it was just about 25 lines straight. We recognised that that really is not appropriate to the times in which we live and of course, as I said, the new Oath simply will reflect the simple words and the essence of what we want to say as Barbadians officeholders. These Oaths are found in the First Schedule to the Bill. The First Schedule simply says:

“FIRST SCHEDULE

OATHS

Oaths of Allegiance

I..... do swear (solemnly affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Barbados, according to law. (So help me God. (to be omitted in affirmation)

Oath for the due execution of the Office of President

I do swear (solemnly affirm) that I will well and truly serve Barbados in the office of President. (So help me God. (to be omitted in affirmation)

Oath for the due execution of the office of Prime Minister or other Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

I do swear (solemnly affirm) that I will be faithful and loyal to Barbados and I will uphold the Constitution and the law.

And I further swear (solemnly affirm) that I will conscientiously, impartially and to the best of my ability discharge my duties as Prime Minister/Minister/Parliamentary Secretary. (So help me God. (to be omitted in affirmation)

Judicial Oath

I do swear (solemnly affirm) that I will well and truly serve Barbados in the office of Chief Justice/Justice of Appeal/Judge of the High Court and I will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of Barbados without fear or favour, affection or ill will. (So help me God. (to be omitted in affirmation)

Oath for the due execution of the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions

I..... do swear (solemnly affirm) that I will well and truly serve Barbados in the office of Director of Public Prosecutions. (So help me God. (to be omitted in affirmation)

Judicial Oath for Judges of the Caribbean Court of Justice

I..... do swear (solemnly affirm) that I will faithfully exercise the office of the President/Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice without fear or favour, affection or ill will and in accordance with the Code of Judicial Conduct. (So help me God. (to be omitted in affirmation).”

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a simple Bill and I shall not detain this Honourable House any further. I promised the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that I would not speak for long. I think the Honourable Member doubted me but I shall not detain this Honourable House any further because the truth is, as I said, these things now have to go to other places and when this Bill leaves here, it clearly must go to the Honourable the Senate, then under the legislation I believe that once the Governor General assents to it, that then there is a requirement that there be Letters nominating the person and that you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, will do the equivalent of what in law we call a “Take Notice”, which is simply to give notice of the nominations that you have received. In this case we have already said that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and I intend to do a joint nomination but the law provides as well for any 10 Honourable Members of the House of Assembly to do a nomination separate from what we may do. That Special Gazette that comes out will also set the date for the election of a President of Barbados. We expect this process to take place all within this month of October and Mr. Speaker, Sir, we therefore look forward to being able to carry it through its various stages in a very deliberate way.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the appropriate time we will also identify for the country how we intend to deal with this matter of the swearing in of the President. We are conscious that we are in a pandemic but we are also conscious that life continues within the pandemic and as I have said to the country in the last six weeks, this is a marathon now, this is no longer a sprint and indeed, as we meet with those across the world, whether in the World Health Organisation, the Pan American Health Organisation, or indeed in my role as Chair of Development Committee of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, what is clear is that there is no immediate end in sight of a pandemic that is likely to become endemic and just part and parcel of our landscape, for want of a better phrase.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, against that backdrop, how we do it will obviously have to change but what we do must continue because we do not know when and if ever life will be like how we had it before; that is why we urge Barbadians to be able to protect themselves; that is why we say to Barbadians that the biggest and best protection is through the vaccination. We are not going to mandate it, as I have said, but what we are saying is that the evidence is

clear that what we have now is a pandemic of the unvaccinated and to that extent therefore we need to make sure that as many people who can take it will take it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, ironically, when you look at the numbers, the truth is that we are already at a stage where 58 per cent of those eligible to take the vaccine have taken it. And why do I say so? Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no vaccine that can be used by anybody, from being a baby to the point of becoming 12 years. There is no vaccine, yet you have about 40-something-thousand Barbadians in that category, so that when you subtract that from our total you begin to see that the numbers, the 132 000 people who have taken the vaccine, when taken as a percentage of the eligible population, is in fact far more and it is almost six out of every ten Barbadians who have already taken it who are over the age of 12. That is a significant achievement for this country and while we are not yet where we want to be, we are significantly along the road and we have a gap that we must close and I am satisfied that over the course of the next few weeks we will close that gap and I do look forward to us with working with Barbadians to do that. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have made the point over and over that this is, in fact, also our reality that the reconstruction and recovery from COVID-19 pandemic, as I said the other night, is now everyone's business; it is not just the business of the Minister of Health and Wellness; it is not just the business of the Ministry of Health and Wellness; it is not just the business of the Government of Barbados; it is everyone's business. Just like we have the slogan: "Tourism is our Business", well, the recovery and reconstruction from COVID-19 pandemic is all of our business. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have no doubt that a time will come when we will have to recognise [that] if you want to save lives in this country you cannot be risking them, and that if you want to be able to work comfortably going forward that we need to make sure that as many people [would] protect themselves as much as possible as we do this.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I say so, [being] conscious that there may be some who may feel: Why now? And I ask the question: Why not? Why? Mr. Speaker, Sir, because since December 1998 and before that, the 1970s with the Cox Commission, this has been a journey that has been long; it is not finished by the passage of this legislation at all today. We continue, as you know, with the consultations next year. What we will do this year and what consultations have already started is with the Charter of Barbados. We have asked for a Charter simply because we feel that there should be a document separate from the Constitution that sets out who we are and sets out what we are prepared to pledge to each other, and how we are prepared to work with each other, because at the end of the day it is not just about the legal, it is also about how we express ourselves and what we want to say to each other and say about our journey and about where we want to go. Mr. Speaker, Sir,

that is all the Charter is. I believe that the Republic Transition Advisory Committee that has established has started that process of consultation on the Charter. We believe that the Charter should be completed and available for Her Excellency to be able to read on the Independence Day as the embodiment of our country and of what we want for our country, as she reads it. If we can have that after the consultation that takes place in this month, we will point out to the world and to ourselves and to Barbadians yet unborn where we stand, what we see going forward and what we would like to work towards as a nation and as a people.

For some people these may sound airy-fairy but they are critical, because what we speak we achieve. I always remember Kamau Brathwaite and his work and the emphasis which he placed on a name. There is so much in a name, especially for those of us who were brought across the waters and had our names stripped from us and were forced then to take a name and an image of someone we did not know and did not reflect who we were. Therefore, there are certain things that matter because they tell you how you face each day, and whether you face it with the confidence that you can achieve but with the humility that you are no greater or no less than any other person. These things matter and must matter not just for this generation and those who went before, but it is our duty to take the baton and run our leg and perfect our leg as best we can while being conscious that we must equally hand it to another generation to continue the race.

Mr. Speaker, I use this analogy all the time. Why? Because very often people want to feel that you can achieve everything in your lifetime. You cannot but we must run our leg faithfully, with passion, with commitment, with discipline and with an understanding that we must move the needle of progress forward. If we do not move the needle of progress forward, we will find ourselves regressing in a way that is not the intention of those who came together to found modern Barbados. We will have difficult conversations as a nation. That is the nature of a nation just as it is the nature of a family. We do not get always to choose the circumstances within which we function, nor does a family, but whatever circumstances or whatever environment within which we function, if our values are solid and if our commitment to those values and principles remain solid, then we will always find a way.

Sir, even this morning we reflected on how we address challenges, and there is only one way to address challenges: sincerely and frontally. If we put them to one side it will be no different from that person who ignores a festering wound as a diabetic, and we all know what happens if they do so. We have reached the point in our maturity as a democracy and as a nation state where this is the next natural step. We are not taking anyone for granted in doing it, but we are embodying and giving thanks for the

work of many who have gone to the Great Beyond and a few who are still here like Sir Henry Forde and Melanie Newton and Professor Norma Forde. It is unfortunate that Sir Maurice (King) passed last week, and I paid tribute to him separately. I am told that he is being buried on Friday. He too represents that kind of Barbadian who understood that there are certain things just above partisan consideration, and that is why I spoke in the terms in which I spoke and reflected my complete admiration for his work, his dignity and the fact that throughout his entire life he remained a gentleman. Similarly, Sir Henry Forde. It is ironic that both of them served the parish of Christ Church but on different sides. That tells the story of Barbados, and that we can come together when it matters.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled by the opportunity to lead this country at this point in time to be able to say to the world that we are moving to the next stage of our development and that we have the full confidence that those who are of us and from us have the capacity to carry themselves and deport themselves with dignity and with a commitment to fundamental values that are intended not only to uplift us as Barbadians but to uplift humanity. That is the commitment of this Government and of the people of Barbados at this juncture of our journey. We are not seeking to rewrite history. Indeed, we are seeking to add to history. We are not seeking to move away from those whose courage brought us safely thus far, and history may well report that their courage is the one that shall always be exemplified. To carry a country from a colony to one where people can vote for their own destiny as Sir Grantley did, and to carry a colony to a point of Independence where we would have to be responsible for our own revenue, it means that we were always responsible, given the form of Government we had with the United Kingdom from settlement, but responsible for other aspects of our development without the development compact that would compensate us for the centuries of extraction of wealth that was taken from this nation. They exemplified the courage to make that journey. Ours is simply now to follow in the shadow of that courage and to ensure we pass the baton to the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore, with great pride and dignity, ask that this Constitution (Amendment) Bill that seeks to bring to an end the reality of a British monarch being the Head of State of Barbados since 1625 -- a period of time that marks 396 years -- brings this chapter to an end by the actions of an independent Barbadian people, confident and standing tall on the basis of the achievements of those who went before to allow us to be here. We do not take for granted their journey and we shall not in any way dilute their memory or place at risk the integrity of their actions in bringing us safely thus far. It is now time for us to move to the next stage. Mr. Speaker, let this Constitution (Amendment) Bill be read a second time on today's date conscious and confident that the people of Barbados have

reached this journey after many, many years but deliberately now want to say to the rest of the world, "We are going to the next stage of our development". Let it be read a second time. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Prime Minister did indicate to me that she would not be long and would take only about 45 minutes. I expressed disbelief then and have been proven right. I think she did in fact address the Bill before us in 45 minutes but then went beyond in addressing a few other matters, as is her wont and right. I had indicated to the Honourable Leader of Government Business that if she had someone who was prepared to speak before lunch, the person could go now because I cannot give you the assurance or undertaking that I will be through in 45 minutes, Mr. Speaker. I may very well go well into the lunch time. I am advised that that is quite. So here we go. The English term republic comes out of some Latin some origin that refer to in the two words or two parts of the word the affairs and concerns of the things of the people. It is characterised by a philosophy and ideology where the power is vested in the hands and voices and in the will of the people and is a philosophical position which is opposed to any notions of monarchy or tyranny. By this measure, we seek to delink from the British monarchy. I want to examine that philosophy just for a moment. The whole idea of power being vested in the hands, voices and the will of the people. We have to ask ourselves to question as to the extent to which in Barbados this is the reality, the extent to which as we go forward under a new constitutional regime, we want to make it further so the experienced reality. They are several who would suggest that in Barbados today under the current political system, institutional life, and institutional dynamics as they are actualised and played out, a power is only vested in the people in notional terms. I support that view, and I am strongly of the view that Governments of this day in Barbados must see it as significant part of their mandate to so address issues of Governments that we make that reality and that experience more than simply something notional, the idea of power being vested in the hands and voices and will of the people.

There is great extent to which many across Barbados do not believe that power lies with the people. I do not see any visible or physical movement but I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is nodding in the affirmative when I say that. Hence I repeat it, perhaps it

may engage the attention interest and ultimately and hopefully the support of others in here. In notional terms this is quite true, to some extent, in actuality we go through certain forms of public expression in relation to our constitutional life as a country, our political life as a country that gives the opportunity to people to express themselves, principally so the right to vote when it comes. By and large, I do not know that there is a sense among majority in Barbados that power lies in the hands, voices and will of the people, but certainly not the majority of the people in Barbados. We have to ask ourselves as we contemplate becoming a republic the extent to which we want to lead in the effort to make it more so the reality that that notion applies here in Barbados.

We delink or can delink fairly smoothly I imagine from the monarchy as is the intention in due course. However, Mr. Speaker, the issue of tyranny cannot be easily bypassed or glossed over. It is but a small step to tyranny from absolute power. That reality has reflected itself all over this World in many repeated instances, some even here in the Caribbean. It is but a small step from absolute power to tyranny. The notion of the republic dismisses the idea not only a monarchy but of tyranny.

Now, I would have to say if I am to be honest that there is the tyranny of the system. We talk about tyranny and we relate it to personalities and to leaders. Some people have accused Presidents and Prime Ministers of becoming tyrants. I am bordering that, I am not focusing on that and I hope I am clearly understood. However, there is the tyranny of the system under which people are forced to live and the question has to be faced. Honestly, answered is that the situation, the reality in Barbados is there systemic tyranny. When the system locks the majority in a confined space of persistent disadvantage is the system working tyranny when it locks persistently so, the majority in a confined space of disadvantage and disenfranchisement. Does the system work the evil of tyranny when it robs certain classes of the power of hope? You are sociologist by training as well, you are so many things Mr. Speaker, it seems as though all applies to you. You would honestly face and answer this question I am sure by careful examination. Is the system working the evil of tyranny that it robs certain classes of the power of hope?

There is a saying that comes from Thomas Jefferson, "that government is the strongest of which every man feel himself apart." When people feel excluded, marginalised, dispossessed, disempowered, left out, when people feel as though they are second or third class citizens in their own country they do not feel a part of the government experience, they do not feel a part of that which we profess, that we live as reality when in fact benefits a crew only to select groups and when the wider context of the majority is other than that the best which is experienced by others in the country.

Kwame Nkrumah have said, "We face neither East nor West; We face forward." That is a statement that is designed to evoke hope and confidence in the blessings of tomorrow. That is a statement that is supposed to reflect a sense of independence and confidence in one's own identity and to face the World, to look forward with hope for a better day that tomorrow promises. As we come to the point in our life in this country, where we contemplate becoming a republic, we should this very thought shared by increment, should be the foremost driving thought. I think unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that if we are honest we have to admit that despite our best efforts to date the circumstances of the now moment economically and socially do not evoke the desired level of hope nor confidence.

Barbados has been brought by dint of various circumstances to a place where hope has been diminished in the hearts, minds and spirits of too many. As we take the step to become a republic, we have to renew or resolve and recommitment to ensuring the rebirth of hope in the bosoms of our people. If we cannot do that, then all we do is change the constitutional arrangements under which we live without changing for the better the reality that our people experience in the majority case. This is my understanding of what we ought to be doing. It is my understanding of what we are attempting to do. If we conceive of anything less than that and if that which we conceptualize does not bring us to the point where whatever constitutional arrangements we put in place must be the framework within which hope can be reborn in the bosoms of our people, then we miss the mark, lose the moment and opportunity goes by.

I want to make it abundantly clear that some of us are given to easy misunderstanding. I make it abundantly clear that I support the move of Barbados becoming a parliamentary republic and doing away with our monarchical system that has governed our arrangements constitutionally, and becoming a non-monarchical republic and non-presidential republic. I remember and know that the Honourable Prime Minister would have forgotten. I remember not so long ago from this very position being aware of Government's projection to the people of this country that that step would be taken in an effort to complete our journey of Independence. I remember querying when and where we would be about that business specifically.

It was not too long ago when the Prime Minister said perhaps prudently then that that was not the now moment. The economic circumstances in Barbados were such that the cost to making this change in our constitutional arrangements and all that would attend upon it that it was not the moment for us facing down the economic straits and the battle with debt, earnings, lack of growth, et cetera. I was taken a bit by surprise when, therefore, in the Throne

Speech we were just a few months after that exchange told that we would be going republic certainly by the time the next Independence anniversary came around this year, 2021. I was never able to ascertain what brought about the change of mind or thinking or whether in fact it was my early misunderstanding that led me to an erroneous conclusion as to what position.

I am here and the answer has not yet been given to me and it will come later. I will be very much appreciative of that. I am saying that to reinforce the view and not to attack the Government in any way. Sometimes, I am misunderstood. I am saying that to reinforce the view that I support and very strongly so, the move to Barbados becoming a republic. I support the move to our Constitution speaking to the appointment of a Head of State as a non-Executive Head of State as recommended in the Forde Commission of 1998. I believe that Cabinet Government has served this country well since 1954. Cabinet Government has served this country well with the Executive Head of Government, so to speak, being rooted in the Office of the Prime Minister and Head of Cabinet.

I do not know that we need to go to the position where we have an Executive Head of State and then, we find ourselves faced with all of the confused realities that others have had to face with blurred lines of responsibility in dual seeming roles and conflict of personalities. I do not know that we need to go there. I believe that we can reserve the executive branch of Government that has served us well since the 1950s. I am making it clear that I support as the Forde Commission recommended the non-Executive Head as President of the Republic of Barbados. I support, and I said this very early in the piece, the Honourable Prime Minister has referred to it today and she did alert me before she did that she would do this.

I had no problems with that. Very early in the piece when the Honourable Prime Minister indicated when the time was appropriate to use her words, she would be wanting to lead her Government in nominating Her Excellency currently serving as Governor-General to be the first President of the Republic. Immediately, I publicly said that I am supportive of that again because that is very much part of the recommendations of the Forde Constitutional Reform Committee of 1998. It stipulated and recommended that the incumbent Governor General at the time when the transition was made should be the first President of the republic.

I support that. We can go into all of the credits that we can identify that may be associated with the professional career, personal bearing and the contribution of the current office of Governor-General, Her Excellency. There will be a time I presume to do that in fuller detail but I support that coming out of the Forde Commission as well and will join in that nomination of Her Excellency at the

appropriate time when the moment comes. I support the process by which the nomination will take place. Subsequently, an election will be held and a vote taken. I support the notion of a two-thirds majority of both Houses where a vote has to be taken voting independently of this Honourable Chamber and of the other place.

I do not believe that some would advocate that simple majority in a situation such as this would suffice, especially in this first instance of Barbados becoming a republic and naming a first President. A simple majority can, in my view, in our system of Government lend itself too easily to politics being the dominant dynamic which will influence the result and outcome of such events. If you take for instance the configuration of the last Parliament here and the Honourable House at 16 to 14. Were we to have gone republic then and the Government of the day were to have nominated person A, then by simple majority, the force of numbers and not large numbers that vote could easily have carried, especially when one takes into consideration the dynamic of Prime Ministerial dominance over Cabinet Cabinet and over Parliament to some extent so I support two-thirds vote when the vote, if it becomes necessary, of both Houses of the Honourable Parliament voting separately, both for election and in a case, should it ever come to that, of the removal from Office. I also support as I anticipate will be made known to the Honourable House in the case of a vote being express that that would be by secret ballot. I think these things are important in the absence of a referendum for which many people have called. We operate on a representative democracy and there are those who have called for a referendum. I can live without a referendum on the issue once there is a proper programme of education and information. There are many who have grown up in this country ever since the heady days of this debate who have not, perhaps, been the beneficiaries of much of the argument on either side and perhaps they need to be better informed as to what this is all about. It may help to disabuse their minds of some of the myths and misgivings that may have fallen upon their ears. In the absence of a referendum and people's vote in the face of a fact that we have a properly functioning representative democracy and that the people of Barbados truly are representatives in this Honourable House who when the time comes to vote one imagines vote in their interest, respectively, that this is where we can achieve what we want to achieve without in anyway fearing that we may be going against the will of the people. We need that strong education programme.

I have to say and I have said this to the Honourable Prime Minister and I have said it publicly, I support the move to a republic. I support the nomination when it comes in the appropriate format and time, but I believe very strongly that we are doing this at the wrong time and that the process leaves much to be desired. I believe that there are many out there who are of the view that we are not

getting this right when it comes to the process. The old Bajan expression of “putting the cart before the horse” in my view with respect to this, the cart is not even in the same yard as the horse. I think that should give us pause for thought. I am sure I am not alone in that view. I have heard many voices, some quiet and some loud, which have spoken in that vein and we have got the cart before the horse. We need to do the business of, in my humble submission, constitutional reform before we make the formal move of establishing a republic because that is what we are doing if we change the arrangements for the Office of Head of State. We are, by dint of that action, establishing a republic. We are establishing a republic without the Constitution for that republic and that horse is in a different yard all together from the cart. We need beyond reform thinking in terms of the actually Republic Constitution. We need some significant other constitutional reforms, Parliamentary reforms. I have said before and I believe it very strongly, we need a fixed date for elections in Barbados. We are practicing democracy. The ultimate expression of that democratic privilege in practice is the right to vote and no single person, no matter how popular he or in this case, she might be. No single person should be put in a position where he or she can determine the context and circumstances in which I get the opportunity to exercise that right. That should be framed in constitutional stipulation. No Prime Minister should be able to say, I am calling an election now, two years before the due constitutional date. No Prime Minister should be able to say I am holding on for these few extra months simply because there is some allowance for that and you go beyond the five-year period. No one person, man or woman, woman or man, should be able to so affect my right to vote. It is the Constitution of Barbados that should determine when I get to vote by fixed date as happens in some places. When Prime Ministers, depending on the circumstances guided by their whims or fancies or political pressures or fears decide let us do it now, we are doing that in the interests of party. We are doing that in the interests of our own political fortunes. We are doing that without reference to the fact, look, this is a democracy. People have an ultimate right of vote and nothing that I do should interfere with that right to vote and that is where I stand on that. We have got a Senate which has the power to put a check on this Lower House and the actions we take here but a lot of what people see with reference to the role and work of the Senate suggests to them that it is just a rubber stamp. I think experiences of recent times with this Parliament have suggested it is not just a rubber stamp. The Senate, in fact, could be very active and formally and robustly perform a role in part that it is in part expected to play, but we need to broaden the responsibility. That set of functions attributed to them and give more meaning to that which they do. I believe there should be an element of the Senate of Barbados that should be elected, but I do not want to get too much into this today. There will be time for that. All I am simply saying, Mr. Speaker, when we go to a

republic constitution there is significant reforms in which we must engage and I do not like the idea that we are becoming a republic and then we are going to discuss constitutional reform and I hope it can be appreciated the position I am taking, that I support going to a republic, I support jointly the nomination when the appropriate time comes, I support the process when the time comes as far as I am advised of that process, but I do not like the moment in which we are choosing to do this for several reasons.

I have to ask hard question and recently I was confronted a bit because I simply asked some questions. I am not the first to have been asking questions in this country. I just asked about eight or nine recently and there was some push back from the Other Side, but I know when the Honourable Prime Minister was Leader of the Opposition she asked about 18, repeated and I supported her right to ask those 18 questions so I do not think there should be much of a push back if you ask nine questions which are pertinent and ...

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: No comparison. Well if you believe that there is no comparison in the questions, well fine, but it is my right to ask those questions and that right should not be challenged. Challenge the merits of the questions if you want but not the right to ask the questions and if I were mischievous I would really get into some of the specifics of those questions and let Honourable Members decide for themselves, but that is not me by nature and that is not for the now moment. Mr. Speaker, the question has to be answered, what is the agenda driving the Government, driving the Honourable Prime Minister, that we must make this move now at this time? Why cannot this be perhaps next year, November, July 26 or some date next year? Why now? What is the agenda upon which the Government is embarked that makes it absolutely necessary that we do this now, a couple of months from now or a few weeks from now? If I think politically, I come quickly to the conclusion that it might have something to do with election timing possibly. I might be wrong but if I think politically, that is where I come down in the absence of any other information. If I think politically, I conclude it may have something to do with an election platform issue. I might be wrong. If I think politically that is where I come down. I do not like the November 30 date, our Independence Day. I think even if not intended as the Honourable Prime Minister was clear to point out this overtime would diminish the legacy around the contribution of the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, Father of Independence. It may not for those present in this Parliament today because that history is fresh with us. We are products of that independence movement but 40 years from now or 25 years from now when a generation or generations that succeed us come by, despite the best intentions of this Parliament and this

Government I have a feeling that what would have resulted would have been an erosion, a diminution of the legacy, appreciation and value for his contribution. I am seeking not to be political in the decisions I take or support with reference to this move to becoming a republic, then I cannot see how I cannot say that and put that as a consideration, that even if it is not intended because it may very well not be intended, there are those who are saying that is the ultimate intention but that is not the point I am making. Even if it is not intended, what over time will result is that that Republic Day of November 30 will be associated with a Parliament of this day and all the thoughts that went around the move at this time and you would see the erosion of the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow's contribution.

I believe frankly quite apart from November 30 whatever year it is, the better date is July 26, which we call a Day of Significance, and the Honourable Prime Minister alluded to it, it is to me among the black majority class in Barbados the birth of consciousness, it is the birth of an identity which was evolving and which has set us on a path to this now moment and that the move to Republic when we get there in fact culminates for me what began in the 1930s and on July 26, 1937.

This move to Republic is another bout in the struggle that evolved then and it was a people's struggle. We can take this step as a Constitutional initiative. We can conceive of this as just a parliamentary action, a statute, a law, or a Bill passed here but we are talking if you reflect on the 1930s and specifically the struggles of the 1930s you are talking about an evolutionary process in which the impulse of the people was to create a framework for governance within which the interest of the people became paramount. If we are not there in our thinking then again we have missed the mark. This is not simply Constitutional, this is about a people's impulse getting ultimate expression and taking the ultimate step to govern their own affairs and to chart their own destiny. If we do it the way we are doing it, the cart is not in the same yard as the horse. What we are doing is setting up a Republic by means of instalment so come November 30 would be instalment 1 and sometime thereafter would instalments 2 and 3. We are setting a Republic State in my humble submission by instalments.

When the Honourable Prime Minister says that we are independent and we do not have to go to ask leave of anybody's Parliament I do not believe that that is the expression of a lawyer which is her profession, I believe that that is the expression of a political leader, but the truth of the matter there are some realities with which we must reckon if we are to do this properly.

We removed Lord Admiral Nelson from the top of Broad Street. I think he is housed somewhere in the area of

the Garrison, I am not sure. Out of sight and hopefully out of mind. I believe that when we take actions like this, and the Honourable Prime Minister said it, there are some things that should be beyond the realm of politics. Some things in politics should not be politicised. We moved Lord Admiral Nelson. He is gone, whereabouts known to some. We have to replace him I imagine at some stage with something else and I hope that we do not use that action and opportunity as another instance to politicise what we do. I frankly do believe that what we erect there in his place should not be some personal representational image of somebody or anybody. This is only my view. I do not know if there would be six people who would agree with me, but it is my view which I hold. I shared it with the relevant ministry when they advertised for submissions and I have not heard a single word from them. Honourable Member for St. Philip West I cannot recall whether you were still in charge of that portfolio or if it was the Honourable Member for St. George South but I submitted my view with respect to this. I believe that what should be erected, Honourable Member for St. Michael East, in the spot where Lord Admiral Nelson prominently stood should be not a personal representational structure but an aspirational symbol that excites every young person in Barbados to dream and to believe that he or she can achieve personally and contribute to nation building. I think that is something to which the Prime Minister referred. I want to see this emanating from the lives and the efforts and ambitions of our young people, and I believe the symbol should be abstract and aspirational and should be so architecturally done that it speaks loudly to the young people of Barbados that this is what Barbados upholds as the ultimate and the ideal which you as a person, a young person in this country, can aspire to, dream of, believe, claim, achieve and become. I believe it should that or, alternatively, it should be a celebratory symbol of the achievements of women in this country.

I have long said that we laud a lot of political leaders and a lot of businessmen for leading in the development of Barbados, but in my humble view it has been the women in Barbados, especially many who worked in households to raise families and to raise our leaders and to give the products of their wombs to this country, and these products led this country to the level of development which we now experience. Those women in every sector of life -- whether it is in agriculture or health -- should be celebrated. They are coming to the fore now. We have glowing examples in this Honourable House, led by the Prime Minister and my honourable former friend from St. Michael South East.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: I look forward to the making up.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: There are other honourable ladies in this House and outside of this House, and the one we contemplate to become the first President. Women, therefore, have done this country proud, and men have long occupied prominently, more prominently so the seats of power. That is changing now. The contribution of women is to be celebrated and heralded, and an abstract symbol that salutes and celebrates that contribution at the top of Broad Street would work fine. If it is a personal representational symbol, a structure, then one party will accuse the other of promoting its own and then that takes us into the world of the politicised. We need to move beyond that and carry the country forward. That is something which we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, I am no lawyer but I have had some concerns. When I first heard the Prime Minister speaking to the nation and suggesting how we were going to go about this, as a layperson -- not a legally trained person nor a luminary of excellence such as yourself, of high achievement and acclaim and wealth thereof derived....

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Obviously, you are not speaking about me.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: When I heard as a layperson, it caused me to pause because of this: Can the Barbados Parliament revoke an Order in Council of the United Kingdom Parliament? I see you are smiling, Mr. Speaker, and maybe your mind has been given to the same consideration.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: I am not confusing anyone. If we want to get brutish about this, we can do so. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister said that the Government has been advised by prominent persons whom we have saluted and honoured. If you do not mind my calling their names: Sir David Simmons, Sir Dennis Byron, Justice Sherman Moore and, I have no doubt, others. I have no doubt that the Government of Barbados would come to proposing this to the House on the basis of good legal advice. All I am saying here -- if I be allowed, Mr. Speaker, in your House -- is that there are equally prominent persons, legally experienced, trained and acclaimed, who are of a view that this is inappropriate. I am a layperson, Mr. Speaker, so I simply have to raise the questions. When I heard it mentioned, it occurred to me whether that was possible. I have spoken to a number of legal people who hold very strongly the view that it is inappropriate for the Barbados Parliament to seek to undertake an action that results in what we perceive to be

the revocation of an Order in Council of the United Kingdom Parliament.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Do not try to crucify me. Answer the issues raised by others out there who are equally legally trained and otherwise disposed from where you are. That is what democracy is about. That is what debate is about.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said, if we want to get brutish about this issue, we can get brutish about this, you know. This Government does not like to be challenged by anybody on anything. All knowledge is not reposed over there. There are people in this country like the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West who want to be properly informed on matters such as this, and who do not feel that we must settle for an opinion which you hail and bring.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, the question therefore is: Can the Barbados Parliament revoke an Order in Council of the United Kingdom Parliament? That question is being raised by many and it has to be properly answered, and we have a learned Attorney General in this Place and he will get the opportunity to speak from his feet. He has spoken in the past from his feet and has been proven to be wrong. Mr. Speaker, you will well recall even an instance in this House when I, from this Place, suggested that a course of action upon which this House was embarked was wrong, and he asked for leave of a few minutes to put me right, to educate me. I am no lawyer. He came back, and this House had to admit that I was right and he, Honourable Attorney General, was wrong. If you want to get brutish about this, we can get brutish. I did not come here to behave like that but if that is the type of debate we want to engage in, let us go.

Asides.

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: I am absolutely focused. Another question, Mr. Speaker: If it is that the Barbados Parliament can lawfully repeal or revoke an Order in Council in the British Parliament, and the Barbados Parliament repeals that Order in Council in the UK Parliament, and the Constitution of Barbados was a Schedule to that Order, then the question has to be addressed to settle any doubts in the minds of people. On what basis, then, does the Constitution stand? Mr. Speaker, you are a lawyer. The Constitution is an attachment, a

Schedule, an appendix to an Order in Council. If you repeal or revoke the Order, on what basis does the Constitution stand alone? I am here to be educated by those who know better. I am simply raising concerns that others have as we seek to make this very important step. Now, I did some of my own research and I tried to find information which will help me to come to sound opinion. I am not going to be misled and influenced by any advice coming from any dubious sources.

Mr. Speaker, I came across this article. It is the Jersey and Guernsey Law Review October 2012. It can be made a document of the House. It talks with reference to appealing and lapsing stuff like that. They quote, Paragraph 11, "When the enabling power in primary legislation is repealed any legislation made under that power lapses." Now I tried to understand what we are seeking to here in this context, because if you think you have the power to repeal the order in council, British Parliament that gave us Independence and attach our Constitution as a Schedule to that order and you repeal that order how does the Constitution stand on its own. To me that is an act of dismemberment. Treating to the same issue as far as I can see as a layperson, this says to me that when the enabling power in primary legislation is repealed any legislation made under that power lapses. This is because delegated legislation only has force of law because primary legislation says that this is the case and once that legislation is repealed there is nothing to give the designated legislation any force of law. Now, please educate me, because to me as layman they are telling me we are doing something wrong. I understand from that that is mechanism of the order in council that brings the appended Act into force, so if you do away with the order in council it seems to me you have done away with the Act that is appended as a schedule to that.

The validity of the dependent piece of legislation attached to the order in council which is the pairing piece of the legislation. Mr. Speaker, of course they will be those who would say that the Constitution is of such a peculiar or particular nature. The Constitution is the supreme law. There are notions of that. Supremacy is the overall law of the Constitution. Therefore, an argument can be made from that. What I am saying here is that we are making serious step in this country and there is a body of legal opinion who believes that we are getting it wrong and we cannot just sit and have Government say without question that we are getting it right. Prove that we are getting it right and disabuse our minds of any fallacy or error that might exist therein.

Does the peculiar nature of the Constitution make it an exempted piece of legislation within reference to that notion that the Schedule or appended piece of legislation depends upon the parent piece of legislation for its validity

and existence. Hence, you do away with the parent and you have done away with the dependent piece of legislation.

If we are wrong and I pray we are not, I will be in an honest position to this thing here Mr. Speaker. I plan to support this thing, trusting that the Government has it right. I have a right, responsibility and a duty to raise in here contrary to what other people might think other views that challenge that which is being put before us. That is what Bill is all about. Now, there are 28 others on that side who can all speak with one voice or whatever, notwithstanding what, but after raise a voice of question in challenge. If the rest of them are pleased to sit down in the face of alternative views and not give some consideration to those views then we are in a sorry state. It does not mean that you are antigovernment, it does not mean that you are anti-republic, it does not mean that you are anti the legislation, it does not mean that you are anti the proposed nominee or anything like that. All it means is that there are other views being purported on this issue and therefore we need to have a clear understanding of what we are doing. We expose if we get it wrong, we expose ourselves to legal challenges pursuant to or consequent upon any action that we take as a people under a Constitution, if it is proven that we got it wrong.

Mr. Speaker, Guyana had to move to a republic after Independence. As far as I could see it was provided in their Independence Constitution for them to make that move. It was provided in their Independence Order of 1966 for them to make that move. I cannot talk pretty but I can read well. I read this document and it is a statutory instrument, 1966 No. 575 The Guyana Independence Order 1966, made on 16th May, 1966 and laid before Parliament coming into operation on 16th May 1966 and the Remainder on 26th May 1966 at the Court of Buckingham Palace. It speaks to the fact that in shrine in the Independence Order for Guyana was a provision in the Independence Constitution that will enable them smoothly to move to a republic. They are those who believe that this is the way it should be done. Mr. Speaker, I only do not read this this to keep these people in here all day. I am going to read this Mr. Speaker. Clause 3 states, "Subject to the provisions of the next following section and to the other provisions of this Order, the Constitution of Guyana set out in Schedule 2 to this Order (hereinafter referred to as "the Constitution") shall come into effect on the appointed day." Clause 5 (1) reads as follows, "Subject to the provisions of this Order, all laws (including laws made or having effect as if made under the existing Orders) in force in, or otherwise having effect as part of the law of, British Guiana immediately before the appointed day (in this section referred to as "existing laws") shall continue to have effect as part of the law of Guyana on and after that day but all such laws shall, as from that day, be construed with such modifications, adaptations, qualifications and exceptions as may be necessary to bring them into conformity with the Guyana

Independence Act 1966 and this Order.” Mr. Speaker I am not going to read all of that, but all it is saying is that

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I got lost along the way, but I can tell you that all it is saying here is that You see, I am not the learned Attorney General responsible for advising this Government. Ultimately, I am not him. I do not hold that position, so I can get lost along the way but there are other learned people out there in the discipline of law who are just as lost as I am and they need to be helped. This is why I have raised these issues.

If learned people in Barbados are lost, Mr. Speaker, you know what is happening with the lay people out there who are in majority numbers, who votes or whose support we want in this move towards republic? They need to be educated too, Mr. Speaker. Lost along the way? Guyana provided for a move to republic by having it put into the Independence Constitution. This is seen by many to be the proper way to do it, Mr. Speaker. Trinidad Order in Council was revoked by the UK Parliament, as I understand it, in its Independence Constitution but we are doing it the other way. We are establishing a republic and then, we will develop the Constitution because we have revoked and repealed the Order in Council, the parent piece of legislation to that schedule, the Constitution, leaving it on its own in the opinion of many erroneously so.

Others did it in the right and proper way. The question has to be faced down. Are we establishing a republic State without a Constitution? There have been instances when matters of high concern and controversy such as these have had to be made settled by recourse to the opinion of the courts. Perhaps, if the divide in Barbados on this matter is wide enough and there are sufficient number of people of eminence in the field of law who believe that we are doing this the wrong way legally and constitutionally, may be there should be a declaration made by the court on it and settle it once

and for all. In fact, this is the people’s journey and you are just the appointed leaders of the day. It would do us well to remember that. Of the moment, we are the appointed leaders of the time.

It is the people’s journey. This journey began before us and will be ongoing long after we are gone. You want to take the people along with you. Not only legally and otherwise, this is a bad moment for us to be doing this. I have said this. I want to support this because this Parliament has brought it here I would like to think that in good faith and on good advice. I would support this but I have these concerns which other people have. If you open your ears a little you will hear. Beyond the constitutional and legal arguments, and some of the other arguments I

have raised is that this is a bad moment with COVID-19. It is not the right moment, in my view, to be doing this. Some would say and I have heard this said that we do not know what next year will bring.

We may still be face down with COVID-19. Yes, we might. I would prefer to believe that by the middle of next year this thing would have gone. I live with that hope and pray that I am right. However, I do not know if it is sufficient to stand here today and say that we do not know what the situation health-wise in the country would be like next year. Therefore, we cannot wait until next year. Presently, Mr. Speaker, my humble submission is that people are not turned on to this thing. People are not turned on. The Government may be and the Parliament obviously is today. I do not know if people are turned on to this thing. There is a lot of raging debate as to what it means, why do it now and let us do it now, we should have done it yesterday and all of that.

Do you know the economic hardship that obtains out there? People’s minds are focused on that. People’s spirits are depressed, Mr. Speaker, with their own

economic hardship concerns. Family stress are record levels, Mr. Speaker. You know these things when you live close to the people as you do whether politically in St. Michael Central or as a practising lawyer. In the pastoral field, you know the stresses that people are going through. We know where people are at in Barbados today; family stress high levels. Business uncertainty such that businessmen are making demands of the Government and of the people which are not in sync with law because it is business uncertainty.

There is an aphoric sense of distance because I have to keep six feet away from you, Mr. Speaker, cannot celebrate together anymore and share a moment of bereavement together because the numbers are limited. He who you have known from your boyhood days is buried and you are not able to attend. This is a bad moment to be doing this. The mental stress levels, we are seeing and hearing people talk about it, people who are involved with people in this way. There is a highly reinforced sense of dependency among people. You face it, Mr. Speaker. I am sure. My experience in St. Michael West must be the same as yours. Many telephone calls every day and all hours of the day because people feel a heightened sense of dependency. They do not know where the next meal is coming from.

This is a reality. This is where people’s minds and spirits are at. Now, we see an increased infection rates and incidence of death in Barbados. This is where people are. This is where people are today. Nkrumah, I remind you said, “We do not look East. We do not look West. We look forward.” People find it not so easy to look forward today.

They are looking over the shoulders to see who is coming too close to them for fear of contracting the COVID-19. They are looking at other people getting ahead because they can benefit out of their circumstance, whereas they left behind in further straits of misery beyond the norm for them. This is where people are in their minds. This is not the right moment to do this. I cannot be prophetic and say that next year will be better but what I do know is that this moment now is not the right moment for this.

We have lamented, Mr. Speaker, the wrongs that Parliaments have done in this space. I think the Honourable Prime Minister when she spoke even referred to one or two. Even in recent debates in this House, we have lamented the actions of past Parliaments that allowed for the right of franchise on the basis of property and wealth. The right to vote was related to your wealth and property status. Most recently, the Minister of Energy and Small Business lamented the fact that Parliaments in the past criminalized the legitimate activity of vending. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East in a recent debate of Glendairy Prison lamented the actions of past Parliaments in confining men to undignified and inhumane conditions, and situations of forced labour in prisons in Barbados in all the actions of this Parliament. Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to get this one wrong as the Parliament of the day.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue, Honourable Member.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Yes. Thank you!

This should be a high point for us, becoming a republic. It should not be shrouded in controversy and it should not be politicised as the Honourable Prime Minister said. I am not seeking to do that. I am raising questions which are being raised out there and questions which I have myself and I am open to further enlightenment. We have embarked for some time on a philosophical journey, a number of high points reached and achieved and becoming a republic should be another one, the birth of labour organisations and political parties in this country in the 1930s and 1940s being celebrated today in Barbados still and while I spoke of the political consciousness of the 1930s; the attainment of adult suffrage and female suffrage without reference to property status or wealth status, the whole decolonisation process that has brought us to this point that gave us this Parliament and to the point now where which we look beyond the now monarchical constitutional type of arrangements to becoming a republic; the birth of a black majority political class in this country, ultimately the independence of November 30 in 1966 and all of this celebrated and achieved along the journey in a context of educational advancement, health services development, infrastructural modernisation, governance

maturity, regional leadership and global respectability. All of these things have been part and parcel of that journey and a part of that course and we have come to this high point which ought to go down in the annals of history as another high point, therefore, -- and I have said this to the Prime Minister -- I do not think this is the now moment in this now moment we should be doing this because this should mark for us a time of high celebration and a time of serious reflection. Do you know how many things we have to celebrate and of which I am proud as a Barbadian; stability of governance. Even in the region among our neighbours we have seen the absence of that in some instances, the marked and sad absence of that. We have celebrated stability of governance over these years and I want to take that to the next level. The developmental status that we have achieved in the world even despite our recent shortcomings, our reputation globally and regionally even among developed nation spaces, our people's advancement in the arts and cultures, in sport and academia, in the professions, health, Mr. Speaker, every time I see Dr. Corey Forde and the comment is made that he is alone in his field in Barbados, a product of this country who is now able in our moment of darkest peril to lead the charge and to be in advance of our fight to save this nation in basic ways, a product of our system. I see this. These are things to be celebrated. The step to republic should be a high point for celebration. Now is not the time to do it in the current circumstances, but as we do it, and I have said this before, and if a Government with this mandate does not understand that one its principle responsibilities is to mainstream the peripheral elements of our economy then is missing the mark. There are a lot of people, sectors, classes and emerging groups in this country economically that should be mainstream. To me, Government today in Barbados should be about mainstreaming those who have been living on the periphery and I am talking about the periphery of the economy in this country. I have said it repeatedly and you will hear me say it until I have no breath left. We have to modernise and revolutionise ownership patterns in Barbados. That is a principle duty of any Government today, to revolutionise ownership patterns in Barbados. The majority of us are still dispossessed. We are still numbered among the poor and the powerless. We have, in my humble submission, Mr. Speaker, to recast the Barbadian image and identity so that our people with confidence can stand up and take their place in this world. The Government knows this but we have to translate the efforts to achieve this into actual initiatives that are meaningful that people can sense that we are being moved, that they are being improved and their lot is being improved. We have to revolutionise the Barbadian image and identity in today's world and there are those, the odd persons, who are doing that, but that should come almost as a matter of course for us. We have to see ourselves as to who we are. I do not very much like "This is who we are". My focus is more so on "My goodness, what we can become -- who we ought to be." We need to

reshape our institutions for better functionality. Mr. Speaker, you work in the Court so you know, they do not always work well or efficiently in the interest of people and all across this little landscape, institutions that constitute the system that should serve the interests and betterment of the people are found to be dysfunctional, not totally but sufficiently dysfunctional as to cause despair and a sense of cynicism and alienation to arise. We need to rebuild the social values platform that they might withstand the currents of modern assaults upon the Barbadian psyche, upon Barbadian value system, upon the Barbadian mindset and there are many. We are now exposed to the world. There is nothing shielding us from the assaults of the evil currents of this modern world and our values are put under threat and we have to rebuild those social values platforms. Mr. Speaker, we have to re-energise the waning spirit of "Pride and Industry" that served to construct this nation we are in danger of losing. Yeah, we stand in danger of losing this nation today even though we contemplate becoming a republic and we have to re-energise that waning spirit of "Pride and Industry" among our people.

Mr. Speaker, when we take this next step, it will still leave us facing certain economic, social, international and domestic realities, Mr. Speaker. You work at the Courts and you would be the first to admit, Mr. Speaker, that there is still a sense of too high a degree of discrimination in the dispense of justice in Barbados, and that justice in Barbados is perceived by many, not to be necessarily colour blind, or class averse or class neutral and that is justice, one of the principle planks of our democratic culture. There is a sense of system dysfunction to which I have referred, and there is growing sense of hopelessness, especially among young people, but not only them, but among educated people, highly qualified people too, that opportunity will not be found for them here in Barbados and hence, there is a growing attractiveness of foreign fields, which is affecting the young, educated and the highly qualified. The foreign world is becoming more attractive to them because things are brown in Barbados and there is not much to suggest that the colour will change. With all that we face, regionally and globally, Mr. Speaker, we have not yet, as a country, found a either within ourselves or regionally or in the context wider so of small developing states to engage the developed world effectively and successfully in matters of trade, capital investment, loan financing, environmental vulnerabilities, developmental inhibitors or even access to food and I applaud the Honourable Prime Minister for the stance she is taking on the world stage in bringing these important matters to the attention of the developed world and trying to muster the confidence among developing countries and small vulnerable states such as ours that we may find our niche in this world and that we would be treated with equity and a sense of justice by those who are better off.

Republic status for us would constitute a new chapter, Mr. Speaker. There are things we can get wrong and still move on but in my view we should as hard as possible to make sure we do not get this one wrong. You can sometimes do the right thing in the wrong way. I hear many voices on that side suggesting that there is never the wrong time to do the right thing. I have heard that repeatedly from over there but I caution you that you can sometimes do the right thing in the wrong way and I would dare to suggest that somebody on that side, if your ears are to the ground, if you sense what I sense, if you feel what I feel, should have the courage to say quietly we need to pause or to stand boldly and say look we need to stop and make our step forward more certain. Somebody surely over there is strong enough. We are all educated in the same schools, we all have been exposed to the same culture, same values and we relate to the same people so somebody over there must be hearing what I am hearing, somebody over there must be sensing what I am sensing, fearing what I am fearing and should be able to stand up and say boldly look we need to pause or to sit quietly and humbly suggest we need to recheck this before we move forward. Mr. Speaker, that is all I have to say.

Mr. Speaker, I support the move to a parliamentary republic, a non-executive Head. I support when the appropriate time comes the nominee as the incumbent Governor-General for the position of first President of Barbados. I support the process as I know it today as to how we will go about... I support all of these things but I think this is the wrong moment for many reasons for doing it. I think we got some legal issues that have to be clarified before we make them. I humbly say that, Mr. Speaker, for your consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise, Mr. Speaker, to support this constitutional amendment. It is a very historic moment I must say because this has been long overdue. I am not an Independence baby by any stretch of the imagination but having been what I consider a child growing up politics I have a certain understanding of the vision,, the way in which we must behave and the targets certainly that we must meet. I do believe that we have a responsibility to complete what has been started and that responsibility has fallen certainly on our generation to be able to complete what has been started by the Father of our Democracy as well as the Father of Independence.

Mr. Speaker, what troubled me from the comments of the last Speaker - and I know that he has indicated that he has fallen out with me and perhaps would hope that we are going to make up in the future - is the impression seeking to be conveyed that the time to do this and to pass

this particular Bill is not now, that for some reason we must wait until the right moment in order to be able to send a message not just to our people but to the rest of the world that we are on a different trajectory, that we want more out of our society than what has been handed down to us from across the shores. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition conveys the impression that now is not a good time, that we are in the middle of a pandemic and therefore the public is not ready for what lies ahead in terms of this transformation despite the fact that we have said that what we are doing here today is simply to make sure that every single Barbadian child, every single Barbadian boy and girl, can aspire to become the Head of State in this country and does not have to learn in a history lesson or a civics lesson that the Head of their Barbados is someone who is part of a colonial past somewhere across the seas. I find it difficult especially knowing how much we are managing at this point in time in our history that in the middle of a pandemic would not be the right time for us to prepare the pathway for our people so that when we are in a position where things are better that we have at least laid the foundation to be able to set in motion our identity, that we set in motion where it is that we want to go.

Sir, I get that we have had a history of the past decade where there was almost an inertia where nothing was happening, where nothing was the right time. Even the former Honourable Prime Minister indicated to this country that he wanted to take Barbados into a Republic but on different occasions over the course of the previous time of his tenure never was able to move the mark, was never able to move the goalpost to be able to take us there, it was simply rhetoric even though in his bosom and in the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party they understood that we had to capture the imagination of our people by making sure that we put ourselves in a position where we appreciated that we had to move and to do the things that were necessary to create that identity.

Mr. Speaker, I am disturbed by the fact that the Honourable Member is also the signatory to not only our Manifesto but he also was the individual who understood at the time that our "Covenant of Hope" in which we spoke to, I believe it was the very first principle that we spoke to, that the Barbados Labour Party stands for strengthening the spiritual and the cultural psyche of Barbadians in a way that enhances honesty and integrity, raises self-awareness, build confidence and pride and fosters a sense of industry and responsibility, community and nationalism. The Honourable Member who just spoke understood that when he was a member of our party, Sir. I do not know where this new wisdom has come from but to behave as though because we are going through a pandemic that the people are not ready to be taken where they were in 2018 when they voted unanimously for the Barbados Labour Party is misleading because we have a responsibility as we did in 2018 and as we do now to make sure that we take the

people where it is that they vested the confidence in us to take them. The Honourable Member would do well to remember to what he signed on to at that point in time because it was not so long ago that he was a member of the Barbados Labour Party with that type of vision.

As the Honourable Prime Minister said, we have had the Forde Commission, we have had all of the commissions, and everybody has pronounced that this is the position that we needed to take as a country to close the gap as to where we were in relation to Independence that we needed to send this signal. Sir, this reminds me of the discussions that we have sometimes on the Common Entrance Examination. Everybody has written reports, everybody has a position and everybody knows what is not working but when it comes to touching anything that bears the stamp of the colonial past all of a sudden we are not sure that we want to let it go even though in our heart of hearts we know that we would be all the better for it because the identity that has been lost from our people is one that we need to give back to our young generation that they can aspire to be anything that they want to be even if it is the Head of State of this country or a Prime Minister or a doctor or a lawyer or a tradesman, or a painter. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it does not matter, but what we must not do in the midst of grappling with a pandemic [to] pretend a though everything has come to a standstill, as though we can no longer push the envelope or to push our people to be the best that they can be, or that we cannot put the systems in place to prepare for after the pandemic, (for the post-pandemic period). Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is not the Barbados Labour Party's way, it has never been the Barbados Labour Party's way, and while the Honourable Leader of the Opposition admires the Honourable Prime Minister for speaking truth to power, the Honourable Member then comes and creates the impression that in some way we are now rushing to do something, [he want to create the impression] that this thing can wait, that the Honourable Member has all these problems with it, though he supports it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you to the Honourable Member, we will continue to speak truth to power; it is what has allowed us to be able to stand head and shoulders above all the other Caribbean countries, to be able to say enough is enough, to be able to level the playing field and to be able to get Barbados to a point where its voice is heard on the international stage. Mr. Speaker, Sir, for the last 10 years when we were taking every single downgrade Barbados did not have a say anywhere, whether with investors, in the international arena, or even amongst our other Caribbean territories. We have had to work grappling and managing this crisis, [we have had to deal] with the economic crisis, yet trying to make sure that we committed to all of the things we said we were going to do in relation to uplifting our people.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member talks about empowering people in relation to housing. Mr. Speaker, Sir, let us be fair; we know what we inherited but we have come week after week with proposals in relation to housing, in relation to those who are investors who have money to be able to spend, to be able to build out housing for our people. We have come with solutions in relation to those who are middle-income: doctors, lawyers -- all those persons at the middle class. We have also taken the bold step -- we cannot do every single house -- to be able to deal with those low-income earners to be able to get them as well to get housing. Mr. Speaker, Sir, [we did] not just talk about it but put things in place to be able to get accommodation here for our people in the shortest time frame because we understand the social and economic implications of not being able to do so.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, hence, it is not fair to have to listen to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition behaving as though, while the Honourable Member supports it, [that] all is wrong with our timing, as though the Honourable Member has a time put down. We do not have a time put down, and whether it is improvement in our healthcare, education, community centers, Honourable Members on this side are working not just for today but to plan and to strategize for tomorrow as well, because we do not believe that we will always be in a pandemic, we do not believe that the tide is always going to be against us, we do not believe that the population will not always be vaccinated, we have set targets, Sir, even when it seemed as though we are losing the battle. We have set targets because we want our children back into school and when they get back to school we want to be able to teach them that they can become the Head of State of this country Barbados. We want to be able to put them in a position that even as in the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training we are working towards a Revised Curriculum, that now we have another layer to add to be able to educate our young people, not just about the Cuban Revolution or the Haitian Revolution, but we are going to talk about our own Barbados Revolution where we completed the course of history, and we are going to talk about moving towards the state of being a republic and being able to have the participation fully of our people in being able to change our Constitution so that it is relevant for the next decade. That is what we are working towards, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, whether or not you know where Nelson [the statue of Lord Nelson] was located, that statue was taken down under this administration. When others talked about it, we took it down. The Honourable Member was there with us when that came down and it was an emotional period for all of us who were able to have witnessed it. When we said that the people of Barbados will get the opportunity to choose and to be able to participate in what they wanted to see in the center of Bridgetown, the representations are being made, it is not an

overnight process, the submissions are being made and all views matter in terms of what replaces the structure that was there.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we moved towards National Honours and started to do away with the Queen's Honours, that was also a process which we were doing in the middle of a pandemic because we understood what our journey was and we have never stepped aside from that understanding of what the journey is. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I grew up in a time when everybody talked about waiting for the Queen's Honours List, everybody wanted to be "Sir" and "Lady", everybody wanted the title to come from England, as though it was manna from heaven, and you grew up as a child believing that you could not be anything unless you had this title behind your name and your name appeared in a newspaper. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the truth of the matter is that we understand as the next generation that those titles mean nothing, what has to mean something is the contribution of each and every one of us that we make to our country, our society and our community. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is what we needed to be treating our children, not that we have to retain a Head of State that does not look like us, that does not sound like us, that does not eat like us. We have come to a point in our history where we understand that we respect others, we understand our journey, but we also have a responsibility at this point in time to empower our people, to engage with our people in a more meaningful way.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Administration can never be accused of not consulting, we have consulted more than any other administration in the history of this country: people's assemblies, rubbing shoulders, foreign commissions. We have consulted and consulted, and there are times when I say to the Honourable Prime Minister we are consulting too much, because that is how it feels, but we know in our bosom that views matter, and that those things we may believe are the way things are supposed to be done, that sometimes when you step back and listen to other contending views you may be able to pause and recognise that some of those views matter and can be filtered into the discussion.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have also brought vending legislation which now is before a Joint Select Committee, empowering our people even further; people with whom the Honourable Member would have rubbed shoulders with us from time to time, prior to the last election and who understands do doubt the importance of this type of legislation. Therefore, to give the impression that we are not doing anything for the poor people of this country is misleading and the Honourable Member needs to behave himself. He needs to behave himself, because the truth of the matter is that we have been working hard and while we bring this piece of legislation here today and there has been all of this controversy and all of these different views

contending, we have listened. We have done so in a way that we intend that the Constitution will have the benefit of being able to have the input of the people of Barbados, including the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member does not have to worry that this Administration is off on a frolic of its own, we have completed the course and I am pretty sure -- he talks with the former Honourable Prime Minister -- he would be happy to know that this day has eventually come. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you cannot just oppose simply [for the sake of being] in opposition, you have to be constructive as well in the things in which you attack the Government for. Mr. Speaker, Sir, in fairness, this Bill is brought here today to empower, to uplift, to enlighten and to let people know that we control our destiny.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I talked about the Honours, we have been doing; we have talked about the fact that we have removed Lord Nelson Statue but we went further, we talked about the National Transformation Initiative as well because in the process of us getting to this point and going further in terms of amendments to the Constitution, we understand that it is not just about changing the name or the title, it is also about changing mindsets, that if you are going to prepare people to be a new generation of citizens you have to create the framework in which you start the process from now to get them to understand the type of citizen that they must be and the type of Barbados in which we all want to live. Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not by chance that there is a Charter that has been circulated to the people of this country for their input, including the Honourable Member. Sir, it is not by chance that they are able to participate in who they are and identifying who they are, and being able to say to this Administration what changes they may want to see reflected in the Charter. Sir, we have started a journey of making sure that our people are able to do citizenship modules. That is not by chance. It is a recognition that in many cases people do not even know who they are or what they want to be or what their place is or what their station is in this world. We did not start that by chance. We started it because we understood the challenges which we are seeing confronting our country, especially in relation to our young people not understanding what they are to do when they become adults and what is expected of them, Sir.

We also understood that there were people in various forms of employment, whether in the hotel sector or other sectors, who had been affected by the pandemic as well, who needed in a sense some grounding, a refresher course to better understand their station in life, to connect the dots as to who they are and what they can offer to this country. It is not just about what has been happening over the last couple of decades where we just prepared people for a job, but rather that we prepare people to be entrepreneurs, we prepare people to understand that if I do something and I

do something wrong, it impacts on my brother, it impacts on my neighbour and it impacts on my sister. We cannot just teach people to just get certificates anymore, Sir. We have to make sure that in getting the certification, people understand that there are also some responsibilities as well that come with their ability to acquire certain certification, Sir. That is where we are.

Sir, I really did not intend to come in at this juncture but I believe that it is necessary because I do not want the last words, as we go to our diet for lunch, to be the words of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I will not be able to have a good luncheon, period, Sir. I will not. I will not allow those misleading words to be uttered from the Honourable Member's lips.

Asides.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Sir, I am going to close on this: We have spent considerable time focusing on getting to this point of bringing this particular Bill, but in all of the things which we have been doing we have also been trying to centre Barbados' relationship with the rest of the world and with the rest of the region. We understand that the words of Errol Barrow mean something; that we must be friends of all and satellites of none, Sir; that we must live in a Barbados where we are proud of who we are; that we can stand on any world stage and speak truth to power, Sir. That is what our mission is. I say to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, through you, Sir, that you do not have to worry about the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow's legacy because the Barbados Labour Party has always told the story, whether the story is a good story or a bad story. We have told the story. Perhaps we have not told enough of the story, but we do not have to worry about how we immortalise his legacy. His legacy will not be forgotten by a Barbados Labour Party. It may be forgotten by a Democratic Labour Party Administration, which has....

Anyway, let me stop there, Sir. History will speak for itself, because it is not us you must worry about, Sir. The legacy of Errol Barrow has already been eroded by his own party in relation to education in this country, and it has been restored by a Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Asides.

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Sir, this Place is where the Record is set straight. Sir, I want to support this Bill. I thank the Honourable Prime Minister for her leadership and for the Cabinet of Barbados in being able to get us to this point. It is for me an historic occasion to be a Member of a Parliament that is able to take us from where we are to where we must go and to be able to lead by example in setting a foundation for our people so that every child in this country has something to aspire to, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: With those few words, Sir, I am obliged and I would ask that this Honourable House be suspended until 3 p.m.

Hon. K.D.M. HUMPHREY: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 3 p.m. for lunch was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MR. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker have been in this Chamber since 2003 and before that I had the great privilege of serving in the Senate from 1999 until 2003. I have to say that during the course of those years, when you think of them in this way it really spans three decades. I am asking myself whether at any time they have been any pieces of legislation that somehow have been as great and important as this and I will admit that I really cannot think of anyone. I am a pre-Independence baby, but, throughout my secondary education and my days in the Crucible that was the University of the West Indies and I hope still is the University of the West Indies, a lot of what took up our fledgling intellectual thinking was where we stand in the World and whether we as a young Caribbean State was truly up to the task of claiming the sovereignty that our 1966 Constitution bestows on us. Mr. Speaker it is so peculiar to me, in fact, it is an oxymoron, on the one hand for us to declare ourselves as being sovereign States but yet still thrive through legal artifices as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition to deny the very sovereignty that we claim. Mr. Speaker I did not write the Constitution. At the time when it was written I could not read, but over the years I have come to read that document for many reasons and that Constitution declares that we are a sovereign State. In fact, it is probably so obvious that I do not even need to refer you to it, but I might as well.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have my copy with me.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: We could read together Sir. the Constitution says, "Now, therefore, the people of Barbados (a) proclaim that they are a sovereign nation founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, the dignity of the human person, their unshakeable faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms and the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions;"

Let me first deal with the excursion into legal theory that the Leader of the Opposition sought to go into. I promise you I will be respectful, but you know there is that saying that a little learning can sometimes be a dangerous thing.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is in law grounded on our proclamation and declaration of sovereignty, and what the Leader of the Opposition and those people who support that simplistic view that we cannot do this and we cannot do that they forget the purpose and intent of the very Chamber that we are in, because in Section 48 of our Constitution says, "(1) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament may make laws for the peace, order and good government of Barbados." Therefore, I begin to deal with the argument that we cannot revoke the Independence order and we cannot do this, and we cannot do that, by first saying we are sovereign, and we can, but if you legal authority for it look at Section 48 of the Constitution which says that this Parliament is to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Barbados.

Now Sir, they are some people who somehow, I do not know how they manage, seem to have come to grips with the notion that we somehow have the power to declare that we are a republic but, in their minds, they do not see the roadmap as to how we got there. Hence, the Leader of the Opposition have no difficulty with us becoming a republic, but his problem is the roadmap. I have sat in meetings in another place where the Leader of the Opposition is appointed as a member, and he said, you all are doing it the wrong way and we asked him what the right way is. We gave him an opportunity to provide a legal opinion to establish for us what his thinking of the right way is and we have not seen or heard a word yet.

Now Sir, for what it is worth, and for those people who believe that we cannot amend the Independence Order, just to recapitulate, the argument by the Leader of the Opposition or the argument that he chose to repeat is that the Barbados Constitution is a Schedule to the 1966 Independence Order and the basic principle is that if you repeal the Order then all of the constituent parts of the Order falls with it. It makes sense if there is a roof on a house and you demolish the roof you also demolish the house. However, it would be helpful if the proponents of that argument simply looked at Clause 4 of the amendment Constitution. Remember, Parliament is the law-making body of the land, we can make any law as long as it is consistent with the Constitution. Let me say, if you look at Trinidad, they did more or less the same thing, except instead of amending the Constitution Trinidad threw out the whole old one and enacted a new one, but we are not doing that we are doing half of that. They revoked the Independence Order and then they put a new Constitution in place. That is what they wanted to do that suited them,

we are not there. What we have provided in Section 4 (1), and remember this is our Parliament, we can pass any law, and it reads, “The Independence Order is revoked; but the revocation of that Order shall not affect the validity of the Constitution set out in the Schedule to that Order.” Now they are people who argue that we cannot even do that, but I will spare a minute on that in a moment. Sir, this law-making body has the full power to revoke the Order and at the same time say notwithstanding that we are revoking the Order we are keeping this. We are revoking the Order, it has no place here, but we are keeping the Schedule. Hence, we say, we revoke the Order, but the revocation does not affect the Schedule and it does not affect the validity of the Constitution. We say it and this Sir is the law-making body of this country.

and this, Sir, is the lawmaking body of this country.

If that was not enough, we go on in Clause 4(2) to state as follows:

“The Constitution referred to in subsection (1) shall be altered in accordance with the provisions of Section 49 thereof in the manner and to the extent set out in this Act;”

Sir, the most important words are to follow:

“and on the appointed day the Constitution as so altered shall become the Constitution and supreme law of Barbados.”

This Parliament is enacting it, Sir. We are saying that we are revoking the Independence Order. The revocation thereof does not affect the validity of the Constitution. We go on to say that the Constitution as we amend it now shall as from the appointed day become

the Constitution and supreme law of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition can choose to have no regard for my thoughts. There are people who went up and down this country saying that the Prime Minister “ain’t got no L.E.C.” However, what they cannot deny is the language of the Act that we are passing today.

This Act and its language, and never mind all of the fancy legal talk about if you “yuh get rid” of the Order the Schedule falls. Sir, we are not disputing any of that but what we are doing is taking it up and saying this we are keeping, and as from the appointed day this shall be the Constitution and the supreme law of Barbados. All of those things, the fancy legal reasoning and he got lost when he was reading the section with Guyana, at no time has the Leader of the Opposition referred to what we are passing today in this Chamber which so long as it passes here and in the Other Place with the requisite majority becomes the law of the land.

We are a sovereign State. Sir, what problem some of his friends have is that they cannot seem to come to grips with the notion that there comes a time when a country that says it was sovereign since 1966 could risk the chance of cutting the umbilical cord between us and the monarchy. I do not understand it. I do not understand why there are some who would feel that the BLP is looking to take our country on some perilous journey. I do not understand it; the fear mongers and scare mongers. When they cannot find a reason to frighten the people of Barbados who “ain’t paying them no mind”, they then say “wunna” doing it wrong. However, they cannot tell you how we should do it right. Let me school the Member who leads the Opposition. The Independence Order was made pursuant to something called the Independence Act passed by the UK Parliament.

The Act said, among other things, that on the appointed day Barbados Independence Act of 1966 pursuant to which the Order was made by Her Majesty stated as follows:

“On and after 30th November, 1966 in this Act referred to as the appointed day Her Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom shall have no responsibility for the Government of Barbados.”

It is their Parliament that said so, not ours. They say that on that day they shall have no responsibility for the Government of Barbados but they want to argue about if we are doing it the right way or wrong way. They go onto say as follows:

“No Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom passed on or after the appointed day shall extend or be deemed to extend to Barbados as part of its law and on or after the appointed day the provisions of the Schedule shall have effect.”

The UK Parliament is saying that after November 30, they cannot pass any law which has any force in Barbados. Therefore, let me work this out, Sir. Let us work it out because it is as easy as one, two and three. They say that we cannot revoke and if we revoke, we cannot save. Well, somebody has to be able to do it. Therefore, if we cannot do it, then it cannot be Japan. It would have to be England but England in their law said that after November 30, we cannot pass any law in relation to you. Is the argument then, if England cannot do and we cannot do it, who can do it? This is a jurisprudential vacuum that the law does not recognize.

Sir, remember in the Grenada Revolution when they argued that they had no Constitution, the court found that there something called the doctrine of necessity which says the law does not accept the vacuum. It is not there, Sir. There is no vacuum. It is a pretend vacuum but if your head is empty, then you would see vacuum anywhere. I do not

mean the Leader of the Opposition, I just mean the people who advise him to take us down this empty path. Mr. Speaker, the Independence Act of 1966 says that the Parliament of Barbados can alter any of its provisions.

What that means, Sir, and they go on to say that alter means revoke, amend and all kind of things. Therefore, if you can do it with the Act you can do it with the Schedule. It is all we have done, Sir. However, to satisfy some wrong-thinking people we figured to get some independent views and as far as we are concerned went to the finest legal minds in the region. The finest legal minds in the region confirmed, if I had any doubt, that we were on solid legal footing to do what we are doing, Sir. Even if you get rid of all of the legal theory, I ask the Leader of the Opposition only to look at Clauses 4(1) and 4(2) because this is our Parliament. Mr. Speaker, if we cannot do it, then tell me who can.

This is nothing to do with jurisprudence now, this is now plain commonsense. I am satisfied that the law allows us to revoke the Independence Order, to declare that part of it is valid and pluck it up from the dust and say, "We are passing this as from the appointed day as our Constitution and as our supreme law because we are a sovereign State." I have a softer side that most Members in this Chamber have not had the pleasure of seeing and that softer side involves a bit of poetry every now and again.

A man named Hilton A. Vaughan wrote a poem long ago that when I read it, it moves me to tears because he wrote that poem for such a time as this, if only you would recognise it, Sir. His poem is called "To the Unborn Leader." It reads as follows:

"You who may come a hundred years After our troubled bones are dust, Far-seeing statesman, born to lead, And worthiest of the people's trust, Turn these few pages in that hour when by dark doubts you are assailed, Of what it boots to shape their power read what we want and where we failed, And barb the word with wisdom fit And build, oh build, where we but dream: Expose, undo, repair, extend As you, O Master, best may deem But whatsoe'er of ours you keep, whatever fades or disappears, Above all else we send you this The flaming faith of these first years."

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Very few of us were around when people went to England to negotiate our Independence. It is a little known fact, Sir, and while we pay homage to people who we say negotiated our independence history tells us that, in fact, they used a standard form so there really was not that much to negotiate. You picked a word here and you moved a word there. None of us would have been around to help to create a Barbados and we are fortunate enough today, Sir, to be able to do it, but for those who are timid, for those who lack the courage and for those who want to hide behind

their absence of courage and claim that we are doing it wrong, be man enough to come somewhere and tell us what is the right way. For those who want to hide behind some imaginary legal technicalities, admit that it is nothing more than a ploy to try to put pebbles in the way of people who are following the path of Hilton Vaughan but we will not be deterred, Sir.

I have approved about 400 weddings in the last few weeks. I do not think there is a single groom who looks at his bride and said to her: "Oh but there is COVID-19, this is not a good time to get married." Not one. There say it is COVID-19, let us get married now because it is cheap. The world over, people are making decisions about expanding, about retracting, about moving on to a better day, nobody is saying: "this is not a good time because we got ..." Why is it not a good time? Sir, what about COVID-19 stops Barbados from saying the time has come to choose a Bajan as our leader? What is that to do with SARS-COVID-19? I cannot see it. It does not compute in my small mind, but what computes in my small mind, Sir, is the fact that on 25th May this year I was elected by the people of St. Joseph. They chose me to be their representative as they chose all of us, and I only said 25th May because I happened to do it two or three days before you -- and I went, Sir ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you mean in 2018 not this year.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Yes, in 2018. Sir, I went and took an oath before the Governor-General and I said: "I Dale Dermot Marshall do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors according to law, so help me God." I have never seen Queen Elizabeth, Sir. I have come within touching distance probably of one or two of her heirs and may even have met them, one of the many million people that they meet every year and our judges, Sir, we just appointed seven new judges and they went up to swear before the Governor-General. "I do swear that I will well and truly ...," Pardon Sir? At least I got to say: "I will be faithful and bear true allegiance" but hear what our judges have to say: "I will well and truly serve our sovereign Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors, in the Office of Judge of the High Court." That is what our judges went and swore, Sir. Are they dispensing justice any place in England? They are dispensing it here but instead of choosing to be able say I pledge to serve the people of Barbados, they pledge to serve Her Majesty our Sovereign Majesty, Sir, and there is somebody who could tell me that we should not change that now because of COVID-19.

Sir, Simeon McIntosh, a brilliant West Indian Professor of law argued, yes, we became independent. All of us became independent and we have made our way and we did this and we did that and we did the next thing, but

he argued that there were two things, two vestigial things that were needed before we could truly claim to have severed our colonial relationship with England. He said 1) was our relationship with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council where we looked to England, people who only ever come down here on holiday in a short pants and hang out in Sandy Lane to dispense justice for people in Checker Hall and Horse Hill. That is what we were doing, Sir. That is one of the vestigial relationships and the other one, Sir, is The Crown. We were brave enough when we were last in Government to get rid of the first one so we have said we will be the masters of our judicial fate even though we swear to serve our Sovereign Lady. We got the rid of that one, Sir, so following Simeon McIntosh's argument there is only one left and that one is our relationship with The Crown. None of us got to choose our parents, but for as long as Barbados has this umbilical cord connecting us with the Monarchy, Sir, we do not even get to choose who is our executive because in our Constitution the ultimate executive power is in the Governor-General who is the representative of the Queen.

Sir, I probably took up too much of my time dealing with the emotional side. Let me talk about what is here before us.

All that we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is amending the Constitution to the extent that it is necessary to achieve that singular purpose, bringing home our Constitution, making our Head of State a Barbadians. That is what is at the centre of it. You cannot do one without the other, Sir, and this Bill only goes so far. There are some who argue, oh, this is not a good time. I do not know when will be a good time, Sir. Oh, you should not do it halfway, you should do all now. Well we have said that we will get to that next year. We are not saying we are not going to get to it, we are saying we will get to it and we have committed to get to it next year. In fact, the Constitution that we propose to come with is largely a finished draft that have been with us for two decades, but for this point in time we are only making enough changes to the Constitution as will allow us to bring home, truly bring home the person who is our Head of State. Sir, we have had somebody who felt that they were 'pow'ful enough to run for the presidency of the United Nations (U.N.), a former Governor-General, Dame Nita Barrow. She ran for the presidency of the United Nations (U.N.). We have had Sir George Alleyne heading Pan American Health Organisation (P.A.H.O.). We have Barbadians who could do almost anything anywhere in the world. Now how is it possible, Sir, that we could feel good that a Bajan could seek to be the Head of the United Nations (U.N.) but she cannot seek to be the head of the country that birthed her. Sir, that is all we are doing today. We are making a Barbadians the head of the country and I can say because of the agreement on Both Sides, the country that birthed her. We are going no further.

We admit and accept that there are other amendments that need to be made and we have said it is no point of amending, amending, amending and amending and next year we will come with a whole new Constitution, we will have all the necessary consultations from every rum shop to every library to every church hall and that is going to happen but it is not happening now, all we are doing is dealing with one part, those things that are necessary to meet the promise that we made to the people of this country not last month because they are some who are saying "Man you pushed it down we throats" but we did not push it down anybody's throat, what are you talking about. This was announced in the Throne Speech of September last year so you have known for a whole year.

When the Barbadian leaders went to England to negotiate our Independence they went in July of 1966 and we were independent on November 30. August, September October, November, four months. They went in July and we were in independent four months later. September last year in the Throne Speech the Governor-General announced we were going Republic before November of the following year, 12, 13 and 14 months, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has very kindly and generously agreed to a joint nomination of the Governor-General. In Trinidad and Tobago when they took this step they proposed that whoever served as Governor-General then would automatically become President. We have taken a higher road and we want our first Governor-General to be the beneficiary of an embrace from both sides of the aisle. We want our new President to be acclaimed not by an Act of Parliament but by choice of the people's representatives.

Sir, in this Constitution amendment we have made provisions at Section 14 for a process of election. Happily, we are able to say to the country that we have a joint nominee and therefore some of the provisions that are here will not be relevant but Section 14 of the amendment Bill deals with what we would do in a case like this. Inasmuch as we have a joint nominee or inasmuch we intend to have a joint nominee because if the law is passed there is no such thing, at a date set by the Speaker Your Honour would summons both Houses to meet and you would put the question to them whether the individual jointly nominated meets the acclaimed of both Chambers.

We provide here, Sir, that if anybody objects each Chamber would repair to their place of sitting and they would then have to vote. We have provided in this instance and for future instances where there has to be a vote that the vote has to meet the threshold of a two-thirds majority of each House. Sir, that is a really tall order because we have had this Senate defeating some of our Bills so in a situation where you set that a high threshold, it is not that you are putting it beyond reach but you are establishing a

value system which says with a high threshold like that has to be met in both Chambers you have to dig deep to find a candidate that both sides can agree on and so we do it understanding that sometimes it would be easy and sometimes it would be difficult, Mr. Speaker, but Government has never promised anybody an easy run. The Lord knows this Administration has found that to be the case. We have not had an easy run from day one so this would not be anything new to us but future Parliaments will have to be able to dig deep because no single party may dominate a Chamber in the way in which we do in the Lower House so we have a two-thirds majority and it will call for us to put aside the worst parts of our nature and draw on the best but I believe that it will be in the end the best for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, what is found in this Bill is in large measure a repetition of what is in the Constitution but in some instances it was not just an easy case of saying let us find and replace, let us go to wherever Governor-General is and put in President, we could not do it that way, there are some cases where we had to simply re-express the Clause and one of the places that I want to touch on very quickly because I do not know how much time I have left...

Mr. SPEAKER: You do not have very much time left.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: I do not have very much. One of the places that I want to touch very quickly on is the issue of Executive authority. Sir, by the way in our early iterations of the Bill, in our earlier public discussions, we were speaking of an electoral college which was the term used by the Forde Commission in their Report and people felt that it was going to be the same kind of electoral college as in the United States of America and all kind of thing and that somehow fed into the idea that a President in Barbados because they have been elected by an electoral college would have the same kinds of powers as in the United States of America, not so, Sir. The current Constitution of Barbados says that the Executive authority of this country shall vest in the Governor-General, that is what the current Constitution of Barbados says, but nobody ever worries that the Governor-General would be a despot and would try to wheel all kinds of power across this country perhaps because somehow they figure that the Queen would restring them notwithstanding the provisions of the Independence Act. In this amendment, Sir, we have provided that the Executive Authority of Barbados shall vest in the President and even though the language is the same people are uncomfortable. Let me just say, Sir, that the powers of the President will be co-terminus with the current powers of the Governor-General so we will not have in any sense a President as the United States of America has a President who has executive authority, the provision in the Constitution that exists now will be replicated together with all of the conditions and checks

and balances. The fact is that even though our current Constitution says that the Governor-General exercises an executive authority, it also goes on to say that she must exercise it in accordance with the directions of her Ministers and that is the big fretter on the powers of the Governor-General and that *modus operandi* will continue. All across the rest of the Constitution, the rest of this amendment, we are just replacing provisions that exist now with appropriate provisions in relation to the Presidency. Sir, there are some things that are obvious so the Royal Barbados Police Force would stop being called the Royal Barbados Police Force because it will no longer be the Police Force of the Queen and it will be the Police Force of our country and so the Cabinet has agreed, and this Constitution provides, that the Royal Barbados Police Force would become the Barbados Police Service, that is what it would be called. Sir, there are two elements of this, (1) we have to get rid of the Royal any way but (2) and I say this as Attorney General the Police Force as it is now and as we want it to be in the future has to be more than the notion of brute strength, a force pushing against people and pushing against objects because policing has long ago stopped being centred on brawn and force, and therefore as we built out a police force dealing with IT and cybercrime and money laundering, a whole set of things which has nothing to do with your ability to kick and cuff and defend yourself, we recognise that the concept of a Police Service is more in keeping with the modern image of our police officers. Mr. Speaker, as we go through this process there are going to be statutes that need to be changed. They cannot all be changed now so we had to provide a mechanism for how we change them otherwise, Sir, you would virtually have to have a whole sitting or ten sittings making amendments to every single piece of legislation that mentions the Governor-General or the Royal this or the Royal that and so on, that is an impractical thing, so in this Constitution (Amendment) Bill we provide that the President can by order over the period of the next three years, so we do not have to come back to Parliament -- acting on the advice of her Ministers, make amendments to all of the other pieces of legislation and regulations and rules where the Governor General is referred to and the concept of the Crown, when in truth and in fact we want to refer to a President and the concept of the State.

Mr. Speaker, I have overstepped my bounds, I know. This, Sir, is a seminal moment and when you are doing the right thing, you can never do it too soon. My regret is that in 1966 our leaders at the time did not take us to this place, but there are deep-seated reasons why they could not. I remember well when former Prime Minister Owen Arthur, now deceased, was in Government and he broached the idea of a republic. There were people in our society who railed against it. They said, "It will destroy this, that and everything. We will stop getting British tourists," as if a man will decide that our sun and sand are any different

because we now have a President instead of a Governor General. A lot of fanciful stuff, Sir. Now I am happy to say that many of those people are now “real-real Bajans”, I believe, and recognise the symbolism and importance of what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, this Amendment, as I said, only deals with the necessary things. A lot of it -- I hate to say it -- is to repeat what is currently the law, but for drafting reasons, rather than saying “move Governor General and put President”, we had to repeat what the arrangements are. The one new thing, though, if you will permit me, Sir, is this: Under the current arrangements the concept of a removal of a Governor General is something that does not arise. That is in the hands of the Prime Minister. We are taking the removal of a President out of the hands of the Prime Minister. Sir, you really have to be courageous to do some of the things we have done. We have taken the power of appointment of judges out of the hands of the Prime Minister and effectively put it in the hands of the Judicial Selection Committee. We are now taking the appointment and removal of a Governor General out of the hands of a Prime Minister and putting them in the hands of Parliament, of the State.

Therefore, under this Amendment, Sir, because we will be appointing a President who, when appointed, will have a four-year term but will be eligible for re-appointment, we have to put special arrangements in place. No longer can the Prime Minister send a note verbally and say, “Please remove so-and-so. We want to appoint somebody else.” There is a process for the removal. A head of State, the President, will either die, have his or her term expire, or have to be removed in certain specified circumstances, perhaps because of inability to perform their duty, illness, mental health issues and so on.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you can start to wind up.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Yes, Sir. The removal of the President is set out clearly in this Bill. Two-thirds of each House must feel that in relation to that individual, if being removed for cause, there is good reason for the removal. Then it goes to a special review committee made up of eminent judges, only one of whom will be from Barbados. All the others have to be from within the Commonwealth, including the Caribbean Court of Justice. Then once that body investigates and reports, it comes back to the two Chambers, each of which would have to vote to remove the President by a two-thirds majority. Sir, we are whittling down bit by bit a lot of the powers that our Prime Minister used to enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honour last week to move the First Reading. I have the honour this week to speak in support of this Bill and hopefully to assuage some of the

fears of those people who feel that we are treading on treacherous constitutional ground. Read Section 4(1) and Section 4(2) and you will see the legal basis on which we are operating. I am proud to be in a Chamber that is brave enough, no matter how difficult it is, to do exactly what Hilton Vaughan exhorted when he wrote this poem back in the 1960s, Sir. He exhorted a generation of Barbadians yet unborn to undo, to expose, to amend, to correct as our circumstances saw fit. I am proud to be in a party, I am proud to be in a government that has the courage to take such an important step no matter may assail us at this time, Sir. I support this Bill.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on what will surely be one of the most significant dates of my parliamentary career. I have always been a lifelong republican in terms of Barbados having republic status. For the last 25 years or so I clamoured for it. In the late 1990s when I thought we were moving towards this status, I would have written a treatise on it. This would have been published in one of our daily newspapers and part of it was quoted, in fact, in a book entitled ‘Constitutional Reform of the Caribbean’ written by the late Professor Simeon McIntosh, whom the learned Attorney General just cited and spoke of. Today is a proud day in the history of Barbados, Sir.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph spoke about the legal basis of this Constitution (Amendment) Bill. I will speak a bit more towards the historical basis of it and the philosophical basis of what we are doing today. Presently, the Head of State of Barbados has been settled by a British Act of Parliament passed in 1701, over 300 years ago, by virtue of which the House of Windsor would rule as royalty over the United Kingdom and consequently, Sir, over Barbados. This is not something that we as a nation, independent now for 55 years, ought to be proud of. This day has been long in coming. Our transition to republic status would be the culmination of our country’s progression through Emancipation, through Universal Adult Suffrage and the Bush Experiment in 1954, then through internal self-government a few years after, through Independence in 1966, the naming of our ten National Heroes in 1998, and the removal of the British Privy Council as our final Court of Appeal to a Caribbean Court of Justice in 2005, Sir. The removal of the statue of Lord Nelson less than a year ago -- we cannot forget that as well -- was part of our coming together as a nation, Sir; as proud people of an Independent Barbados.

Barbados was never grant-aided. We are right now ineligible for concessionary loans from international

financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as a result of the overall standard of living of our people. Sir, England and the United Kingdom has not given us anything. We stand on our two feet as a people as we have done for decades, proud members of an international community, equal to everyone and better in terms of our intellect, resilience and development than most including many of the developed countries in the World. We have no special international trade relations as a result of being a monarchy, or having the Queen of England as our Head of State. That stopped way back in 1994, and even few years before that we were moving towards the removal of the preferential treatment that we used to have in terms of the UK and European market as a consequence for our sugar and other commodities. We get no benefit whatsoever from being a monarchy, from being a country that recognises the Queen of England as its Head of State. Hence, there is no economic value in continuing as a monarchy.

Sir, in fact, as the Honourable Attorney General said, it is something that really and truly ought to have happened in 1966, although I well understand why it could not be so. We will remain a member of the British Commonwealth with the Queen of England as the Head as all former British colonies are still members of the British Commonwealth, except one or two that from time to time might be expelled. There are 54 members of the Commonwealth, 30 of those 54 members are republic. Sir, more than half of the countries that were British colonies are republics. We are in a minority at present and in fact most of those 30 countries became republics on Independence. That was not so with our fellow Caribbean countries that are now republics like the Republic of Guyana and Dominica. The Commonwealth of Dominica became republic after their Independence as well as Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. However, there are only 15 countries globally that have the British monarchy as their Head of State. Most of them are fellow CARICOM countries represented by a local Governor General. Out of the 54 countries in the British Commonwealth, seven have their own monarchy and it is extremely important that we move towards republic status as has been named on November 30 this year. It will be an act of self-determination of political independence both as a country and as individuals.

Sir, anyone who have examined the role of the British monarchy in slavery cannot seriously and conscientiously be against what we are doing today. I know that my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, has on many occasions spoken about this role both inside and outside of Parliament about the role of the British monarchy in the greatest international crime of the history of this World. The transportation of slaves, black people from Africa to the Caribbean including Barbados into slavery as property of cattle of others. Barbados being

“perfect slave society” until the abolition of slavery. Sir this is something that we needed to be rid of long time ago. The monarchy of England used to give patents to individuals and to companies like the East India companies and all of those to transport goods from England to Africa and then slaves from Africa to the Caribbean, so the British monarchy is on slaves and sugar plantations. The history of the plantation slave society of which relatives of the monarchy, in fact the first cousin of this present Queen is well documented in many books by Sir Hilary Beckles including Britain’s Black Debt, which I am in fact presently reading. This is part of what it has been to be a monarchy and to have the Queen of England recognised as our Head of State.

This is something that ought to have been changed decades ago and quite frankly it is one of the only challenges that I had with the last Barbados Labour Party administration that cold feet was obviously ???..... and the then Prime Minister, the late Right Honourable Owen Arthur did not go through with the issue. First by talking about a referendum, which I am truly happy this Government did not agree to go with, because we do not need a referendum for this. This is something that the overwhelming majority of Barbadians way back in the late 1990s when we had the Constitutional Reform Commission better known as the Sir Henry Forde Commission, spoke and presented before it. I went to quite a few of those meetings here in Barbados, but that Commission also would have held Townhall meetings in the ???..... England, Canada and the United States, they would have taken 265 oral and written presentations and the vast majority of people then as the majority of people now, because we have progressed, agreed that Barbados needed to rid itself of the monarchical system and have its own President, born Barbadian or in the case of this Constitutional amendment, a Barbadian by descent. Sir, as I said, there is never a wrong time to do the right thing. For those apologist who are saying this is not the right time, we are dealing with economic challenges and a health pandemic, really and truly ought to be ashamed of themselves. I quite frankly am ashamed of the Democratic Labour Party and its leadership for the stance they have taken saying that they are not ready for this, and we should not be going into a republic status at this time. When the Forde Commission evidence speaks to the fact that on November 17, 1997, a meeting was held with the Commission at the Democratic Labour Party Auditorium with then members of Parliament, and in fact the then Leader of the Opposition, the late David Thompson who of course went on to become Prime Minister of Barbados. The late Sir Branford Taitt, by the time he died he was then a Member of Parliament. Joseph Tudor who was then a Member of Parliament under the Democratic Labour Party and Marjorie Lashley who was a leader of the Democratic Labour Party Women’s League. The Democratic Labour Party at that time as well as they ought to agree that

Barbados should become a republic, Sir. This was almost 25 or 24 years ago.

This is in keeping, in fact, with the philosophy of the founding member of the DLP, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, who said that we should not be satellites of anyone. He said that on us becoming independent, Sir. He also said that we should not loiter on colonial steps and this is something that we have continued to do 55 years after Independence, and which we will no longer do after November 30th this year. The British monarchy is not about who we are in terms of our culture, values, hopes and aspirations as a people. It is an undemocratic, hereditary system of class structured privilege, Sir, and traditions. It is something that is anti-everything that we as a Government of Barbados and a people ought to stand for.

Sir, the UK can keep their monarchy and will never get rid of it in my opinion. Any visit to England will show you why because you just have to tour all of the towers of London, palaces, et cetera, and you see the billions of dollars per year that the British Government earns from the monarchy, royalty and people visiting these places based on tradition and privilege of a House of Windsor. This has nothing to do with Barbados, Sir. We have to move and progress as a nation-state and have to continue to earn self-respect, honour, identity and dignity in this world as we have done because of the standard of our human resources and the people who we have produced. This transition to republic status will entail absolutely no alteration to the present relationship of our various arms of Government or to our international relations, Sir.

Our relations with countries will remain the same. Our President will have merely ceremonial powers as the Governor-General, as representative of the Queen presently has. Those who seek to create fear in the hearts of people about how we would become a Banana Republic and would have bloodshed, we have had six transitions of Government from the time we had Universal Adult Suffrage from the BLP to DLP and from the DLP to BLP. There was not an inch of blood shed by the people of this country. Life goes on. Life continues. I heard someone commenting on a Call-in Programme about how the Prime Minister or the President through the Prime Minister would be able to postpone elections.

Sir, elections will continue to be constitutionally due in 2023 as it is right now; absolutely no change. Sir, this fear mongering by those who ought to know better is something that quite frankly we do not need and there are some things that an Opposition should be able to join together with a Government, recognising that in principle it is the best for the country. The last Prime Minister of Barbados under the DLP declared in 2016 that he wanted to take Barbados to republic status, Sir. I knew that he was not really serious about doing that even though he might

have. I have no doubt understood that Barbados needed to go to republic but he clearly did not have any intention because we had just come out of 14 hours of debate of the Estimates.

He did not mention it then. He mentioned it the Sunday after that at a DLP Branch meeting and, of course, he would have required the agreement of the then BLP in Opposition who had 14 Members in Parliament at the time. You need two-thirds majority for this change. He never wrote any of us asking for support. He never wrote the then Leader of the Opposition, now the Honourable Prime Minister, asking for support. Therefore, he was not serious about that but that is the DLP for you. At least he agreed in principle that Barbados ought to have been a republic and no longer a monarchy of England.

We will no longer have a situation where the Queen of England has to give consent to the Prime Minister's choice or recommendation for Governor-General or where a Governor-General has to get the consent of the Queen of England to travel or where to travel, Sir. We will not have a situation as we have now where the Honourable Prime Minister has to get consent of the Queen of England for her appointment as Ambassador, High Commissioners or where members of the local Privy Council Mercy Committee have to be signed off on by the Queen of England. Sir, we are a sovereign State. All of this, quite frankly, is a stain on our Independence and nation. It is nothing to do with the individual. There are some who say that Queen Elizabeth II is a fine woman and we should wait until she is no longer Queen of England.

This is nothing personal against the Queen of England. I have never met her, Sir. As far as I know, she may be a fine lady. If you have all of that wealth and privilege, there is no reason why you should not be a nice person but the issue is what the monarchy and royalty stands for. The historical relationship of the monarchy of England to the majority people of Barbados is one of shame. It is one which circumscribes the greatest crime of world history and it is high time that we move to a different status whereby a Barbadian child born today can aspire to be Head of State of this country.

Sir, finally I speak about the oath of office and the changes which will be made in the oath sworn to by constitutional officials, such as the Honourable Prime Minister and of course Cabinet Ministers, judges and Members of Parliament. This change is extremely important. I will confess, Sir. On two occasions, I swore allegiance as required to become a Member of Parliament to the Queen, her heirs and successors. It stands, Sir, on those two occasions in 2013 and 2018 as perhaps the most hypocritical acts that I have ever done in my life. I always wanted to be a Member of Parliament and I really and truly

hope that by the time I became one I would not have had to swear that oath, Sir.

I went in before the Governor-General on the first occasion. I think it was either late February or early March 2013 and I said I will mumble this thing through. Of course, when my colleagues as Opposition Members of Parliament had to say this very clearly and I did, Sir. It is not something, quite frankly, that I am proud to have done. I have travelled all over the world in my individual capacity, to many international law conferences when I was a member and, in fact, an officer of a committee of the International Bar Association. We used to meet Africans, for example, and when we spoke about a Constitution and they ask you what kind of constitutional system you have and who is our Head of State and we say, well we are a monarchy and invariably they would say, oh so you have your own kingdom, but you have to tell them that the Queen of England is the Queen of Barbados. It is not something that you can be proud of and I give all commendations to the Honourable Prime Minister of this country for taking this bold step and saying that we have had enough foolishness in terms of our constitutional way of being and that this will end this year and we will no longer have the Queen of England as the Head of State of this country. As the Honourable Attorney General said, it will not one British tourist from coming to Barbados because, again, that was certainly one of the arguments when the last Barbados Labour Party (B.L.P.) Government spoke about moving towards a republic status, you had people saying, oh it would stop the British tourists from coming. The 37 per cent of our tourist market that comes from England will not stop coming because we no longer recognise the Queen. We took down Lord Admiral Nelson last year and it has not made any difference as to whether any British person wants to come to Barbados. In fact, more British people come to Barbados now that when we were a British colony so these kinds of arguments by apologists who ought to know better need to be addressed, Sir.

The last issue that I will speak about, Sir, is the issue by some people who ask why November 30 and how it will remove the legacy of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow. This Government does not want to do that and even if it did, Sir, it cannot remove the legacy of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, one of our 10 National Heroes. In fact, he was made a National Hero under the last Barbados Labour Party (B.L.P.) Government. He will always stand as one of the three or four most prominent National Heroes of this country, together with the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams and I do not think anyone in their right mind could not have those two greats as National Heroes at the top of the ladder. The Right Excellent Errol Barrow is the only person in the history of Barbados who has the whole day for himself as a public holiday, Sir, and this has nothing to do with the removal or any attempt to remove

his legacy. This has everything to do with the culmination, long overdue of Barbados, a sovereign country as a fully independent nation responsible for its own affairs and a people full of self-respect, self-determination, confidence, honour and dignity standing as well we ought to, among the top countries in the world in terms of our socio-economic development, in terms of resilience, in terms of resistance, given the harsh historical background of which we have come out.

I am deeply obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Ms. T. N. S-A. MOORE: Mr. Speaker, I think that we are all conscious that this constitutional amendment which, among other things, provides for Barbados to become a republic and to have a Barbadian Head of State. I think we are all conscious that it is under discussion at a time when our people are living through many challenges, challenges if we are not careful would cause many of us to only see the darker side of things and when our people are anticipating that the multiplicity and complexity of challenges that we face should be fixed now and if they are not all fixed now, then there is failure, it makes the situation seem a lot harder for all of us to bear. If everything is not fixed now when people want it, it means that nothing is happening in the minds of many of our people. I start there, Mr. Speaker, because as we move around this country, I am sure that I am not the only one who is hearing questions like: How does a republican status help us? How does that help me to put food in my fridge? What does that have to do with me? Then we are also hearing uncertainty which is clothe in suggestions that perhaps there is need for more discussion, more discussion than the talk around this issue that has been had for more than two decades. Mr. Speaker, I submit that these responses should not surprise us, not when from school age our people see their working futures or are caused to see their working futures in terms of whether they will be employed or unemployed, whether they would be an employer or whether they would be an employee, not when our system still enforces that there is a dominant class in our society, dominant class not necessarily being a planter class today, but a dominant class meaning those who have and the rest of us who do not have, not when this dominant class culture continues to shape our awareness of who we are, not when our people continue to be disconnected still, inasmuch as we celebrate the riots and independence and whatever, our people are still disconnected from their past, disconnected from where they are, and at best, apathetic about their future, yet the history of independence was an important step, a very important step that was taking back in 1966, independence which was to usher in for our island a period of self-reliance. It was supposed to mean to all of us that we would no longer have to be under the direct

control of people thousands and thousands of miles away, a period which meant that the administration system of our Government was to be the business of the people. It was to be 'we business', but in the near 55 years since independence, our people have had numerous conversations regarding whether becoming independent has taken us the full distance in achieving these objectives. Have we ushered in self-reliance? Have we been self-sufficient in managing our own affairs when we still have these colonial trappings that renders the Queen as our Head of State in Barbados? Successive Governments, Barbados Labour Party and Democratic Labour Party, have agreed on the need for us to have Republican status and here we are finally two months before that would actually be realised and I stand feeling very proud.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the union I come from when it was only 25 years old played a major role in its support to bring about Independence to give us the opportunity democratically to determine who should represent us. I am equally proud that at a time when that same union stands ready to celebrate its 80th birthday in just six days that that union which is a direct product of the riots and a direct product of the Barbados Progressive League sits in a position of leadership where it can support but more so advocate for removing yet another layer, yet another trapping of our colonial system that seems to have us still enslaved.

As the Honourable Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for St. Michael North East said, I am happy to be serving at a time when we are moving to close the circle. Mr. Speaker, the question that will still remain in the minds of many when they wake up on the December 01, 2021 and the question that will still in the minds of many after we have achieved Republican status on the November 30 would be have we indeed lose the power of the colonial system? Yes, we would have achieved Republican status but what about our mind-sets. Where do we as individuals or where would we as individuals stand on December 01, in relation to the colonial system in our minds. Who will we be serving? What vision would we as a people of Barbados that was independent for 55 years and that now has Republican status have of ourselves? What would it change? Will we be able to say with any conviction that the tradition of slavery still does not continue to shape who we are? Will we be able to say that and see it as evidence in how we view ourselves, the mirror image that we have of ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, permit to shift our focus therefore a little to an area that I might know something about, labour. Barbados remains a wage earning society and by a wage earning society it means that most of us work to earn a living, most of us are working for somebody, therefore when in practical terms a worker still cannot practice democracy 55 years after independence and as we

anticipate going to Republican status, how can that worker who is a citizen feel free. Mr. Speaker, very recently we were made aware of some of the positions and statements put out by companies that have been employing bullying tactics as I would call it in the name of health and safety legislation to get people vaccinated. We all want people vaccinated but as a country at the level of our Social Partnership we have determined that we will not be applying these tactics but there are some who proceed as laws unto them own selves. To date while this has not been the case in a unionised environment or at least not to the extent that am aware of, I can speak of one instance that was published very recently in our newspapers where the Barbados Workers' Union applied for recognition to allow it to be able to speak on behalf of workers at that institution for more than nine months now since December last year and up to this day recognition has not been confirmed. How can democracy thrive where our people are being denied their rights to organise, to bargain collectively, to speak for themselves on matters that impact them? As a former General Secretary of that union put it, why does our system still allow for people to be kept as industrial slaves? Why does our system of independence still sees labour begging for industrial democracy through mandatory trade union recognition? Mr. Speaker, where dignity of work especially in a society of wage earners is denied, true freedom will not be felt and true freedom cannot be expressed. Mr. Speaker, where is dignity in work where people might be able to find a job nowadays, the ones who are lucky, and in finding that job they find themselves in a position where they cannot still support themselves to even do house repairs let alone get a house, they cannot support themselves to buy a car, they cannot get National Insurance Scheme benefits so they cannot get sick leave if they take sick or end up in quarantine for instance and cannot go to work? Where is the dignity? Where is the progress? Where is the freedom? Where is the enfranchisement? These are the real feelings that our people have.

Mr. Speaker, I am heartened that the Government recognises that the journey will not end for us on November 30 this year. My personal hope for Barbados is that each citizen will equally challenge himself or herself regarding how he or she can move beyond Independence above the moment that we attain Republican status to move on to be truly free.

In a very real way COVID-19 has occasioned for us a period of reset not only health reset as we boost our health systems, not only economic and social reset but generally a period that we can reset our minds as well. Mr. Speaker, the time is now. Unlike previous Speakers I am not going to suggest that I agree with it and now is not a good time. I believe that the time is now for us to set ourselves a road map, a compass, today in 2021 for a post COVID-19 economic growth and development. May we therefore affirm this through our system of education, may

we affirm it within our work places, may we affirm it within our homes, within our society as a whole, that our people, our human beings, are not objects towards a particular end. Our people are deserving of our true freedom, deserving of the right to see ourselves as important because we know our worth. Our labour is important. Seeing people as human beings causes us to connect with who they are and where they are at. It does not presume that they agree with us because we get it and they do not but may we all always keep in focus that the struggle for freedom is limited by a number of things. Three of these things are our consciousness, our mind-set, our experiences and our circumstances. Where these are not all equal, it means that our struggle for freedom will be seen in a different light. Mr. Speaker, may we therefore not let the occasion of our 55th commemoration of Independence -- the day this year that Barbados will achieve republican status -- pass without us reaffirming our individual and our collective responsibility to ensure that in whatever way we can, that the consciousness, the practical day-to-day experiences and circumstances of our people equip us well enough to experience true freedom. This constitutional amendment takes us a step closer in that direction, and for that reason I join with all the others who have supported it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. the Hon. W.F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, first I too, like all of the other speakers before, certainly have to reflect on the seriousness and historic nature of this debate. Mr. Speaker, this debate is fundamental to our future as a people and as a nation. Although I listened intently to all speakers before and all of the legal concepts that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would have put forward, and the contrary arguments that the learned Attorney General put forward, it reminded of a very, very simple statement which the late Sir Harold Bernard St. John once told me. He said this, and I have told it to many people because I thought it worthy of sharing the idea. He said: "Parliament can do anything. It can go back in time. It can go forward in time. It can take away and it can give back. It can make the illegitimate legitimate", and you know of what I speak, Mr. Speaker. "The only thing," he said, and I always remember, "that Parliament cannot do is to make a man a woman and a woman a man," but everything else can be done; go back in time, go forward in time, make illegitimate legitimate, take away and give back, and this is one of those times that Parliament is going to exercise out of the bags of its abilities what it can do.

Once this is passed, this Parliament will make Barbados a republic. A republic is something that we wanted to achieve for decades. This Parliament will now get the opportunity to do that because this is one of those moments, Mr. Speaker. This is an opportunity for this

Parliament to complete the work that was started. I know everybody thinks of the work that was started at Independence, at 1966, and I understand that and I understand the significance of it. I go back a little further. I go back to Universal Adult Suffrage because without that and without the opportunity for the masses to vote, irrespective of whether they had land, irrespective of whether they had any sort of position, people got an opportunity to exercise their vote through Adult Suffrage. Without that we could not have experienced any of the other benefits, and that opportunity at Adult Suffrage and now to an opportunity to end that vestige, to end that connection with the Crown and to make Barbados a republic, to me, is the ending and full circle that we would have come to.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. W.F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, when we think about it, Barbados was a colony for centuries. From 1627, 1727, 1827, all the way to 1966. Hundreds of years. Mr. Speaker, when this Bill is assented to, when this Bill is finally proclaimed by the Governor General which she still will be, it will probably be the last Bill proclaimed by a Governor General. When this Bill is proclaimed, it will change forever the trajectory, the psyche, how our people think of themselves. It will change forever because no longer will we have that linkage of knowing that, yes, we are a sovereign nation but in case we have to do something we still have to get the approval of the palace. In case we want to give an award, you still have to send it to the palace. Let us be frank: A former Member of this House, a former Honourable Member for St. Michael South had to wait for the palace to give approval before he could go to serve as Ambassador in the United States. People say nothing changes. Well, that will change because no longer, for any decision that we make as a country or as a government, will we have to seek approval from a palace.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Attorney General say that he has never met the Queen. He has met some of her progeny. I have met the Queen. I have seen the Queen many times, and I have met some of her progeny too, and it is sad that as a country we have lived all of these years with nobody ever having the opportunity to become the Head of State of this nation, Mr. Speaker. Never, never had the opportunity. I could not have aspired to it, you could not have aspired to it, none of us in here could have aspired to be the Head of State because the Constitution said that the Head of State or her heirs and successors, to whom we all had to swear, would be the Heads of State of this nation. That is what the Constitution said and we all had to live and abide by that, but after today, after this bold action of this Government, after we sat and decided to follow a Commission and an idea and a principle that generation after generation aspired to do, this Barbados Labour Party Administration and this Government decided, "Yes, this is

the time to do it and we shall do it and we are doing it today.”

Mr. Speaker, there will always be dissenting voices. There is no question, and that is part of democracy. You will have the pros and you will have the cons. Dissenting voices I heard very clearly. Some people believe this is not the time but -- I have to agree with the Prime Minister -- if this is not the time, then when? Mr. Speaker, sometimes you have to gain ground when you can seize it and then you solidify and then you move to the next stage and I see this as one of those situations, let us gain ground now that we can, solidify the position and then move to the next. Or, for what other people often say, sometimes you can bite off more than you can chew, so sometimes it is better to take a little nibble, masticate and digest and then move to the next stage, because sometimes you bite too much and it might choke you and we would not want that for this country.

Some people say, if it is not broken why fix it. It may not be broken in their eyes, but as a progressive nation and country it was broken in our eyes, and that is why we have to fix it now. Others say that we need to have the Crown as a final check on political excesses. What is that? I heard people say this, but I was astounded to hear a learned person say something like that. From 1966 until now we have had transitions of Governments and administrations and yet still we have never had to rely on the Crown to come and get involved in a political check or crisis. We have never had it. We have had Governor General after Governor General, Prime Minister after Prime Minister and we always settled and manage our affairs. When we had the last hurricane, then we had the pandemic or whatever have you seen the monarchy running down here to help us? When last? They do not run to help us. We manage our affairs ourselves and we have been doing it well. Yes, you are going to make mistakes. Which person does not or which Government does not? However, you learn from your mistakes and you move on.

Sometimes, my wife looks at me and say, you always ready to make a decision and I told her yes. You have to be prepared to make a decision even if it is the wrong one, because too many times people cannot make a decision and that is why that last administration failed, because the then Prime Minister could not make a decision, and since he could not make a decision the country faltered and floundered. Let me tell you, we have a Prime Minister that can make a decision and decision after decision. Her decision to become republic is supported by the country of Barbados. Yes, you are going to have dissenting voices, but I would call them the usual suspects, because they would dissent no matter what. If you say today is Tuesday, they ask, are you sure, because that is what dissenting voices do. Dissenting voices dissent and they find all sorts of reasons, shenanigans and, because you know what I call it

throwing mud and see what stick. However, that will not deter us.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons I have to speak on the Forde Commission is that I have great respect for Sir Henry Forde. I came to public life representing a constituency that he represented for 30 plus years unbroken. He was a man of strength, integrity, and a man that could make a decision. Mr. Speaker, his Commission at Part 8.11., after he said there was overwhelming support and recommendation. The recommendation of the Forde Commission at Part 8.11., is that, “The Head of State of Barbados should be a President.” The reasons for this were given as, it is allowing for democratic choice of a Head of State not by the accident of birth. No more a Queen put heirs and successors that are democratically elected Head of State. The Head of State should be a person who lives here with first allegiance to Barbados and reflects the values of a nation and holds the values of a nation. Hence, somebody that understands the kind of people that we are, somebody who holds the values, somebody who understands the code that we live by, that is the kind of Head of State that we want. Another reason was that despite being independent we swear allegiance to the Crown and lands of Crown lands symbolic of a past era and definitely do not represent the reality of Barbados today.

Mr. Speaker, you could not want anything clearer than that as to why we must move to a republic. We are a strong and resilient nation. We have shown that we can handle ourselves amongst the family of nations. Indeed, the Prime Minister just gave a speech at the United Nations, and it was commended worldwide as a Leader among Leaders in this World at present. The recommendations still hold truth and our system would be a Parliamentary republic giving the executive power to a Cabinet headed by a Prime Minister.

The Commission goes on to say, the advantage of this is that it replaces the monarchy with an elected President while simultaneously retaining the present relationship between the former Head of State and the executive arm of Government. Indeed, I need not to make this a document of the House because the Forde Commission has been a document of the House for decades. It is through this Bill that we decide to that today.

Mr. Speaker, this decision, this Bill, the debate has been a long time coming, but as I reflect I think of the words of my late father who died 30 years ago and yet still his word are immortalised on me, the code he lived by and guidance he gave. He said to me and I listened very carefully and it is one of the codes I live by that anything worthwhile is worth waiting for. This country has waited and waited, but after this Bill is assented to that wait will be over, because what we know what we have been waiting for is more importantly worthwhile.

Mr. Speaker, there was a reason in May 2018 that the people of this country spoke with one voice and elected the Barbados Labour Party will all 30 seats. Not 20 to one, not 28 to two, not 26 to four, not 25 to five or not 20 to 10, but all 30 seats and there was a reason for that. The reason was to make wrong things right, to take us down a path that they could agree with. That path as enunciated by the Prime Minister when she was the Leader of the Opposition and the people of this country gave us an overwhelming mandate to take stock, redirect and be bold, bold because we have given you the full and complete support.

Do not be timid. Do not be aggressive but do not be timid. Be prepared to make those tough decisions. Be prepared to take us on the path that we all knew where we had to go. Finish the circle and take us to where we need it to be. Take us to that promise land. Take us to be becoming a republic to the people of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, that confidence that the people repose in the BLP has not been lost. We made a promise and today we keep that promise of making Barbados a republic. The path that we have taken is the path we must continue on to continue to make us the best we can be. When I think of this debate and I heard the Attorney General speak of the poem by Hilton Vaughn, somebody from outside.

However, when I think of this debate it took me back to song by Dr. Anthony “Gabby” Carter. I think everybody in here should know the “Miss Barbados” song based on the ages that I see. You would recall that was when somebody who was not a Barbadian won a crown to represent Barbados in the Miss Universe competition. It was an affront to the country because how could it be that somebody who was not a Barbadian was going to Miss Universe to represent Barbados? It was an affront and everybody was up in arms about it. This was so much so that a song was written. I am going to paraphrase that song a little bit. I cannot sing but I am going to paraphrase, Mr. Speaker. It states as follows:

“The Head of State must know about must know about flying fish. The Head of State must know about coucou dish. The Head of State must know about breadfruit and everything so. Our Head of State must know about Clement Payne. Our Head of State must know about sugar cane. Our Head of State must know about ackee tree. Our Head of State must know about Sir Garry.”

This is the essence of what we are trying to do. Our Head of State must be of the people of Barbados, for the people of Barbados and from the people of Barbados. This is the essence of being the people of Barbados, not the people of Barbados a subset of the UK. They are not the people of Barbados, the former colony and all the history that goes with that but the people of Barbados a strong, proud resilient and determined nation led by a strong and determined leader. Mr. Speaker, through you, I speak today

to that little girl in Bonnets who has just completed the Eleven-Plus examination. Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, she is now transitioning to secondary school. She dreams that one day she could be the Head of State of the land of her birth. Once this Bill is assented to, passes this House and the other place and becomes gazetted and accepted in our nation, for the first time after that that dream could become a reality. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I am a bit slow, Sir. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am really pleased to hear the various perspectives that preceded me but I am of different stock, not because I want to be. I do not want to be academic. I do not want to be ideological. I want to be very pragmatic about this exercise today. Let me make it very clear, I am unequivocally supportive of this constitutional change. I am not a constitutionalist. I listen to all the arguments about Order in Council and constitutions, but in other countries in order to get where we are about to go they use guns and bombs, and they got there. They wrote the Constitution thereafter because this is about our freedom. It is strange enough that these bodies and their fore-parents who now form the manure that occupy the lands of Barbados, the oppressed and children of the oppressed could spend lots of time trying to determine if we are doing the right or wrong thing.

All across these lands, Sir, there are bones, blood and bodies. In every space on this land belongs to the black people of Africa. They can be no argument about any form of an advanced stage of our freedom and our democracy. This is why I say to you, Sir, I am from the ‘nigger’ yard of yesterday leaping from the master’s whip and the shame of myself, so I understand that very well. This is Martin Carter, one of the greatest poets in the region. I heard my colleague spoke about Hilton Vaughn and then my other colleague spoke about the Mighty Gabby, but I believe that one of the greatest poems that will help us to be grounded in who we are is those poems by Martin Carter. I remember talking to one of my colleagues about reading the text by Martin Carter.

Sir, there is also another important Caribbean writer who speaks a lot about imperialism. We are all victims of imperialism. This country was the first slave site in the western world. We formed the model for the entire western world about slavery and how it must function. The Lascelles which is family to the individual to whom we speak owned the Belle Plantation. Drax owned Drax Hall; the richest man in the House of Assembly in England out of the extracts of the wealth of Barbados and Jamaica. In other words, we are family and I am not going to speak about this exclusively in relation to the sovereignty of Barbados. However, this is an important plank in our freedom since this country used to make sure we formulate all the laws that enslaved us and stripped us of manhood and womanhood.

Do you know how progressive thinkers in the Western world feel today to hear that Barbados, the pioneer in the exercise of slavery, not black people we have enslaved, but you get frightened when you believe that a modern educated Barbados you can find the children of the ex-enslaved then, because I do not want to say ex-slaves, attempting to find some element that would stop the process from moving freely. I cannot support that. This has been long, long awaking and the moment is now, the objective conditions for success is now. There has never been no better time. If there was a time before it was control over men that had no courage because courage is fundamental here. I have heard many Prime Ministers, Bee and Dee, spoke about the importance of reparations, you went around the entire country, all forms of consultation and prior to all of that consultation you had great advocates. This is no 1966 change along, extensions, you had Moses Small of the UNIA, the Garveyike moment in the forefront of the change. Some people call it self-government, some people call it independence and some people call it republican status. They were talking about what we are doing now and when they were struggling they were not discussing anything in any House of Assembly or becoming a part of what I heard a former Prime Minister called a special political class. This was a discussion on the ground and that is why I am saying to you, I am speaking from the bowels of the ground in Barbados to say that this discussion did not exist and that we must defer it for further discussion is a disrespect for the intellectual inputs that were in this country all during the 20th century. When Garvey asked where are your kings and queens, what do you think he was referring to? He was saying that in the 1920s. When Moses Small said it, it was in the 1930s. How all of a sudden, some people on the hill, not the progressive minds on the hill and some mischief-makers, victims of the imperialists phobia, they now start to talk about it and all of a sudden the world that was speaking about it for all of these years and talking about republican states these people do not exist or they never existed? This was the struggle not only in Barbados. This is a struggle that all African people who was inferiorised from the time they came here on the first ship they were talking about their freedom and about having their own sovereignty. Nobody volunteers to be enslaved. No human being would say: "I want to be a slave" unless he is from the Psychiatric "Mental" Hospital. It did not happen like that so we were always fighting for freedom. We knew that we could not get it by one leap that is why I told you I am leaping from the oppressor's whip and the shame of myself. How do you think the Haitian people became a republic? They had no constitutional debate and when we got the constitutional debate, Jean-Jacques Dessalines said the word black was enshrined in a constitution was as a consequence of Dessalines. He was the only man that was bold enough to say if you want to be a Haitian you have to be black. He was very, very clear on that. Nobody else had that courage. I wish we could say that too but some of us believe that we will suffer and we

will hear the same colonial argument begin to emerge again, Sir, but the Haitians were so determined to enjoy what we are about to enjoy now is that the Haitian fought off the Spanish, the British and the French, but we are not together. When all of the difficulties that they understood that they were likely to face, freedom was the primary interest, freedom was the primary cause. They had all of their difficulties after, but they were extremely clear. That is why I am saying, I am not going to just argue that this is a right that we ought to have as a sovereign State, I am going to argue that this is a right that we must have as a race, like it or not. That is what the struggle was all about and because of fear, false premises were put on the table for discussion. We are fighting here to be disconnected from the oppressors who placed white supremacy on the table as a form of dominance. They do not want to hear that in here either, white supremacy, because as a consequence of applying their ideology they said that we were not human beings. Who were the people who formulated the documents, the legal instruments? Go to the Barbados Museum and Historical Society (B.M.H.S.) and you will see that the Lascelles along with the Drax family were the people who drafted the documents to determine how you must control a slave. Who was a slave? Other people of lighter complexion from Scotland and Ireland were considered indentured servants. We all in here are children of the enslaved. How can you at this stage feel that you should hail the oppressor? How can you think about hailing the British monarchy? The British monarch must recognise that we are a civil people or not we would have done it differently long ago. When the Caribbean moved in the 1930s, St. Christopher and Nevis could not do it alone. The ball started in St. Christopher, but they did not do it alone. Barbados and Jamaica across the region, we intensified the efforts of resistance in order to give people a sense of liberty and freedom and justice as well, Sir. We have had moments, steps in history no matter how slow they were because Barbados, because of the influence of the very British, has always been very slow and having a gradualist approach because of both external and internal influences not only the lack of British education which we received in 1833, a basic education only concerned at that time with us being agricultural workers and unskilled workers to use probably a modern term that sounds well. We were slaves. If you wanted to graduate from there or if you wanted to look at vertical mobility from the slave ship, you would get a job inside the kitchen. It was a big thing to be inside the kitchen where you wear the old white woman clothes and the old pants of the slave master. It was planned. This is the time now where there is a call for the collective consciousness of a society, that is what today is all about, not being victims of a divide and rule system that we had even in the 1960s when the first brown skin molattoes entered the banking systems in Barbados. What we want to do is to put all of this to rest and become a collective force, harmonious, homogenous, in the sociological sense of the word one people, so that when we talk about who we are

we will know who we are because this thing about who we are sometimes I do not know who we is because this we, we, I do not know who is this we, that is what I am talking about we, so when people generalise and put us in one box... I am using the verb "is" here.

I see a society in which I would hope in the post-November 30 period we will be doing all that we can through an intensive educational system and the amendment to laws to help us to reach a stage of national consciousness where we could speak in a genuine sense as Barbadians and as black people in Barbados because the other aspect of it, the racial divide, is yet to be resolved. I am happy to be alive today but I do not want to live for whatever period the Master makes available to me to live in a country where I always have to be cap in hand begging other people that do not look like me. I do not want to live in that country. I know what happens. I do not know how we are going to escape it at this moment but we have to work towards that and that is why I am pleased to be in a position in the Government of Barbados to have to address not only reparations - because that is an important aspect and that is another step in our liberation efforts that at some point that same family that we are now talking about, that people do not want me to make reference to, who after extracting all of the wealth and contributing to the death of thousands of black African people do not have the decency to say I am sorry, so we know that there is a bigger fight if we are asking for some form of reparations. Mr. Speaker, do not allow the colonial confusion to make you believe that we are asking anybody for large sums of money. We are human beings and we are prepared to see that level of compensation come to us in many different forms. It can be through exchanges of students across universities in Europe, the Caribbean and Africa and wherever black people are in the diaspora. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that as we look at the Constitution that we begin to think in terms of not Barbadians within a given hundred 166 squares miles, I am hoping we begin to think of our people that had to leave this country in order to go to the United States of America and England in order to get some form of capital gains to feed their families after other people extracted the wealth from here and fed their families in Europe. This is a breaking of the ties with Europe, that is what this is about.

There was once a time when Africa met Europe not in the most pleasant way. On this occasion for me it is the most important country in the Caribbean breaking ties with England, and that that is why Haiti had to do all of that. Mr. Speaker, I am showing you the dangers of an imperialist system because after all that the Haitians went through the Americans and the French still placed an imposition on the black people of Haiti to pay them for the very value of the human beings which they enslaved. They calculate the worth of each person that they enslaved and put it into the aggregate assets as claims for property. Mr. Speaker, that is what they did. They did it in Haiti. They have been doing it

in Puerto Rico. Look at what the Spanish and the American did in Cuba, so when we pass this hurdle we are realists. We know that when we pass this hurdle imperialism, neo-colonialism, whatever we call it, those people will still find means of trying to restrict the liberties and the democratic practices of small states but we still have to keep on pressing on.

I believe that there will come a time, Sir, when collectively the Caribbean would be able to take up this fight for reparations. Reparation is important if all of these things are meaningful to us when we look back at the journey of history from the struggles of the 1930s, the struggles that proceeded the 1930s, the consciousness of people at the beginning of the 20th Century from Sylvester Williams coming through, the struggles that proceeds that as well, which we do not have to go into here, we will understand that we have not reached that consummate point where we throw our hands in the air and say we have been successful. Imperialism never give way to weak states. They never compromise with weak states. Any time you have a sovereignty in the Metropole most the time when they give in it is when they give in to military battle. We can stand up on all of the principles in the world, all the morality in the world, but at least if we can reach a level where we can agree that we know who we are.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I always used to say in here, long before this concept became common in here, and I can assure you, Sir, that the concept was espoused clearly in this book called: "The Wretched of the Earth", by Frantz Fanon. He also understood the psychological damage, the disorder that occurred. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that disorder that occurred was that there are always persons who subconsciously become agents of the defense of imperialism and they keep us constantly in confusion on how we must go forward. Sir, that is the reason since the 1960s the Owen Arthur Government, the Freundel Stuart Government -- I almost said "quasi Government" -- but that is the reason these persons who might even express anticolonial views [they] never had the most important ingredient, the virtue of courage. If you had to talk to them, based on ideological principles, they will agree with you but they always believe (not a fallacy) the fallacious argument that if you run into difficulty you need the British crown. I believe that arguments were advanced here today that were dismissive of that. These people, when they wanted money, would go to South Africa, even if the atmosphere was hostile in an apartheid system; they wanted money, they are going to go into the mines in South Africa, so you cannot do anything talking about the conflict between the oppressed and the oppressor to run them anywhere, they walked through broken bottles and fires when in search of dollars and cents, and they worshipped the mighty dollar. So we have a lot of great principles but you know, they have developed a philosophy that said money is the medium of exchange, so therefore if we talk

well and they wanted to put some “screws” on you whether at the international or local level, they can do it if they have the currency.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a form of education that we need to share with our people; most of our people because of colonial education do not believe that these things are important to them, but we have to have young people, persons outside of the university, persons who are still in the secondary system [all] discussing the importance of sovereignty and they have to be able to understand.... And I [have] said more than once, [that] history is nothing about dates, history is impregnated with so many other disciplines that if you really wanted to understand human existence, institutional development -- and if you do not understand history [then] you cannot that because you have to understand at specific times in life what cause people to behave in a specific way. And we should be proud that we do not have to flex any military muscle today... I do not know how many people think about that. The Cubans have to do that to get away from Batista but then they fall into the hands of American imperialist oppression and after all that fight in 1958, the Americans still have a big prison on Guantanamo Bay on the southern lands of Cuba. Sir, I just want you all to really understand all the dynamics in relation to where we are. Let us get over this hurdle today. I understand the programme is that you should have a lot of discussion on constitution and that the different public issues should help us to frame the Constitution but if have to do it in an uncommon way and it is necessary for us to get there, the major thing that is of importance today in our history is for us to cut ties with Europe, to cut ties with Britain. We do not want to feel glorified by being a “Little England”, we do not want to be guided exclusively.

Mr. Speaker, I was in the same place but for a different purpose, the Leader of the Opposition and I. I know that most people are going to say, well, this man seems to be more disruptive than anything else, but I am not going to be enslaved by colonial foolishness. If I am discussing something about criminal law, [then] I am not discussing civil law. I do not want to see any policeman around me when I am discussing civil law. That is how I am. We have to move forward and this Government, if there is one good thing... Do you know why it is better than anything I have seen throughout the 20th century? [I have seen] many leaders wanting to try it, they wanted to bring the constitutional change that will make us a republic. When I got here in this House, [and] on fire, the Leader told me: “Hold on, Pressy, let me speak.” And when I thought that there was all this discussion about the Forde Commission on Constitutional Reform, when we came here it was on the Order Paper (it was on the Order Paper), that is why we are ahead of that time because it went on the Order Paper but when the discussion started and the Leader of the Opposition and the same party then were talking about a referendum because they were making a political

calculation, but if we have the referendum and because of the lack of the required education on the ground, we were likely to be defeated in the referendum, they felt they should push that on us and the then Prime Minister retreated, he said that he thought that based on all the discussions coming from the Forde Commission and the findings of that Commission, that the Barbadian people did not want a republican form of government.

I heard people saying that there was a specific area of Barbados that the people do not want to let go of the hands of Queen Elizabeth II; some silly discussions were going on about if she was good looking, how tall was she, how pleasant was she. These are not things needed to be romanticised, these are serious matters. It has nothing to do with contempt for anybody, just because of who you are whether you have white or black pigmentation. Unless we can speak on these things, I have friends who are all different shades and colours with a lot of ignorance in their heads too, but they are my friends. They cannot stop me from saying what I want to say. A parliament must be made up of men and women who can share an honest view on any public matter under the sun at home or abroad. We can speak on anything and express our views on how we feel.

Mr. SPEAKER: Time to wind up, Honourable Member.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Sir. When I speak to academics who are responsible for helping me to understand things which you may all consider to be esoteric and complex issues, they tell me this is a positive move. When I speak to the man in the street, they are of the opinion that this is where we should go. They are not interested in whether it is COVID or anything like that. I have not heard a man ask what the republican thing has to do with COVID, because this moment presents us with the most favourable conditions for us to make sure we jump over this hurdle. We are not imposing anything on anybody, we are giving people a sense of pride, and it is mirrored in the concept of who we are. When you have that kind of ethos forming part of your conscious spirit, that helps you to be far more productive, helps you to feel as though you are an integral part of anything you do because you are a true Barbadian. You do not want people to be driven exclusively by salaries and when you want a man to do something, you have to give him \$300 or \$250 and another man is not doing it and does not care until he gets \$20 000-odd out of the state even in the middle of COVID. We will be governed if this is done right, and I agree with the view that we can have a debate.

For me, this is urgency. We can have a debate on what changes we need in the Constitution. It can become an aggressive and robust debate in the post-November 30 period. There is nothing wrong with that, and when the time comes you will see it will be like many things that

happen rightfully said before. All kinds of debates occurred before we removed Nelson, and nobody understood why we were removing Nelson. You did not understand the psychological damage done to every little child who came up Broad Street and saw that culprit. Nobody's child now even knows there was a man named Nelson there. That is what we have done for new generations. They do not have to worry about any Nelson, whether you see Nelson backing or facing you coming up Broad Street, children asking questions about a statue or monument that ought not to have been there in history, a man who did not even care anything about all the black faces who wanted to preserve his statue. That is what this debate means to me, Sir. I am extremely proud and grateful for the little 15 minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Fifteen minutes? Check your watch on the next occasion when you start.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: You know this is not an expensive watch.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just check it the next time. If you want, I will buy a clock for you.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to at least say a few words on this important Amendment to the Constitution.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Hon. C.E. JORDAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Like many who have spoken before me, I am very happy to be able to share in this debate at this time. A number of things have been mentioned in terms of what this Bill proposes to do. I say "proposes" because the Bill is not yet law. This Bill, this constitutional amendment proposes -- it feels kind of funny saying this -- to relocate the Barbados Constitution from the United Kingdom to Barbados. The Bill proposes to do that. The Bill also proposes to amend the Oaths or the affirmations which are taken so that when I take an oath or a judge takes an oath or anybody in the next generation takes an oath, they will be taking an oath to the rest of us as opposed to taking an oath to somebody who lives elsewhere. They are committing to this country and to its people.

Sir, we also know that the proposed Bill speaks to the continuity of appointment so that there is no break. Everything continues in terms of those who have been selected, elected, chosen to serve this country. Sir, I want for a few minutes to share on a fourth point, and that is that this constitutional amendment, this proposed amendment, the Bill before this Honourable Chamber, seeks to ensure that the one who is Head of State of this country is one of us. Mr. Speaker, I stand in this Chamber because the

people of St. Peter have asked me to be here. I asked them for the opportunity to be here and they have kindly consented and given me this privilege. Today, Mr. Speaker, the only thing that is eternal is God, and I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West knows that, and as the Honourable Prime Minister said this morning, this is a relay race.

The people of St. Peter also recognised that the evolution of history is about a relay race. All of us have a part to play as history moves from one stage to another. What I want to share is that the people of St. Peter recognised that in 1675, just fifty years after this island was claimed for King James I, the people of Barbados and in particular the people of St. Peter determined that their Head of State should be one from among us. This debate is not a recent debate. This is not a 20th Century debate. This debate is a 1675 debate because the enslaved people of Barbados back then said, 'We do not want this unjust imposition on us. We want to be able to choose one of us to lead us' and so the enslaved people of St. Peter devised a plan that was national in scope, the plan was not only for the enslaved people of St. Peter, but this was the first island wide plan to remove, and as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was indicating, it was not going to be by a vote, and it was not going to be by a referendum either, but the enslaved people of Barbados in 1675 determined that they had had enough of outside influence in terms of those who were determining what would happen in the country and they had enough of oppression. They believed they felt strongly enough that one of them should be the leader and they decided that Cuffy should be their leader. Hence, they planned that on June 12, 1675 the plan would be executed in that Cuffy would become the King of Barbados and that the tyrannical colonial power represented by the monarchy would be overthrown. Self-determination has always been a desire of the people of Barbados from as early as the 1670s in this country.

That plan was betrayed, by maybe a person in the category referred to by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, as one who would have had some upward mobility. I personally do not hold it too much against him, because I recognise that even back then a lot of psychological damage was happening but for who was also called Annette, betrayed, the plan. The result of that betrayal was the brutal execution of many of those who were planning the revolution. That brutal execution took the form of the beheading of persons and the burning of the bodies of those who were beheaded. It also took the form of burning some of those revolutionaries alive. After the burning, the flames would have been extinguished.

Mr. Speaker I submit to this Honourable Chamber that the passion for self-determination was not extinguished when those flames were extinguished. In spite of the barbarity of the response of the representatives of the

monarchy, the people of Barbados in 1692 attempted to do something similar, an island wide plan to overthrow the monarch and have one of our own as our leader. We have had skirmishes, various activities right up until 1816, when General Bussa decided that he was going to take the baton. He and those he led, like Nanny Grigg and all of the others including many from Boscobel, St. Peter as history tells us, determined that they were not prepared to put with rule from England, that they wanted self-determination, they wanted one of their own to be their leader.

1675, 1692, and 1816 was a step, but Mr. Speaker, none of these completed what was to have been done. These were all part of the process, the evolution of the historic process towards self-determination. 1834 and 1838 emancipation came, but the process was not complete because we were not in charge of our own destiny, even though we were told that we had some measure of freedom.

Nineteen thirty-seven came, which was the uprising of the people, a popular uprising, and a popular attempt at self determination to overthrow an oppressive system. However, 1937 did not complete the process, and I would just add here that in 1937 four of I think the 22 martyrs of that uprising were from St. Peter, three from Boscobel and one from Sherman's.

A lot of St. Peter blood has been spilt on the journey to this point, that journey of self-determination. However, St. Peter would have known that this process was not complete. Hence, in 1942 JTC Ramsay entered the Lower House of Parliament. The first tradesman to enter into the House of Parliament and indicate that he believed that he had a right to determine his own destiny. He came into Parliament and on his first day of Parliament, he wore his overalls, not the suits that I feel I need to wear into this Honourable Chamber. However, JTC Ramsay came to this Honourable Chamber in a different location, dressed in his overalls, to signal his opposition to the existing Order. I do not know if it was planned, but I think it is fortuitous and appropriate that the statute of Bussa is located in the JTC Ramsay circle, because history is a continuant. Even after JTC Ramsay representing the constituency of St. Peter and expressed that opposition to the existing Order the process was not complete. Then, another representative from St. Peter the now Sir Frank Leslie Walcott became General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union and started to agitate against the established Order, and even then the process was not complete. We were still tied to the British monarchy.

Then, we had 1949 with Sir K. N. R. Husbands, became the first black Speaker of the House of Assembly representing the constituency of St. Peter. Even then, when we had gotten to the point where we could be managing the Chamber, managing that organ that created the laws, even at that point the process was not complete.

Mr. Speaker, as recently as in the 1990s, where another representative for St. Peter, the late Right Honourable Owen Seymour Arthur was engaged in battles against the established Order. We remember the Shiprider Agreement and the position he took, self-determination is what was on his mind. We remember the fight against the OECD because as far as he was concerned, nobody from outside of us should be dictating to us. We have heard about his intention to do what we are now doing. He did not do it. History will analyze or continue to analyze whether it was the right or wrong decision. As I said at the start, Mr. Speaker, I have come to this Honourable Chamber and debate to say that in the bowels of St. Peter we understand that from as early as the 1670s that this process is one that each of us must take up the mantle or baton on and move the process forward. Self-determination is the aspiration of every right-thinking, respectable human being. Even children at the age of two and three want to do their own thing.

It is a natural. It is built-in. It is inherent in the human spirit. We want to be able to chart our own destiny. We do not want to have, as we heard earlier, that when we want to appoint an ambassador to the United States we have to write and wait until the palace responds. I do not know that any self-respecting country will want to be in that position. Self-determination, working out how we will move forward and how we will do it is what we intend for ourselves. This is what every child wants. It is what every adult wants. It is what every sovereign nation wants. Mr. Speaker, we are a proud nation. We are a confident nation but beside proud and confident, we are a nation of sensible, intelligent people.

One of us is capable of leading the rest of us. Many from St. Peter, like I said before, have lost their lives, spilt their blood and given of their energy in this process. As the Member of Parliament for St. Peter in 2021, I have a responsibility too as a part of this process. The time has come. I still believe that when right is to be done, the time is right. The time is always right to do the right thing. We as a nation cannot in 2021 continue to- and to use the words of the Right Excellent Walton Barrow- loiter on the premises of the colonial power after closing time.

Mr. Speaker, closing time has gone long time. It is time for this country to cut its ties in the current situation with the monarchy. It is time for us to have one of our own leading us as we attempt to close the circle to use the illustration that has been used. I want to say to this Honourable Chamber that St. Peter stands strong, proud and unapologetic in our support of this constitutional amendment because we believe that one of us. We believe like Cuffy and Tony in 1675. We believe like J. T. C. Ramsay in the 1940s, Frank Leslie Walcott, K. N. R. "Doc" Husbands and Owen Arthur. We still believe that we have it within us to lead ourselves to chart a path to

determine our destiny and so, Mr. Speaker, we support this constitutional amendment. We support the actions of those who have gone before. We build on the legacy that we have inherited. We support the aspiration to have one of us lead the rest of us. I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. C. S. V. HUSBANDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to join this debate and to share in this moment because it is certainly a moment in history that we all want to be a part of. As I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the message that he has brought to us tonight is that this fight did not start 55 years ago when we were seeking independence but this fight had started long ago when we were enslaved and when our ancestors said that a situation of oppression or a person cannot govern or manage himself or his affairs, and to live like all other men is unacceptable, intolerable to us and we will fight for that freedom. This fight has been a long fight.

This means that Barbados has not addressed the issue of self-governance lightly without thought. We have not addressed it from a point of view of rushing and not taking careful consideration, but this has been in our hearts, ancestors and passed from generation to generation down to the people of Barbados this day and certainly of the people in this Parliament. What is the attitude of the UK to this situation of a person wanting independence? I took the time to take a look at what was the British towards the overseas dependent territories; territories who decided that they did not even want independence. It was not that they were going for independence and just kept the Crown as Head of State. They did not even want it.

Jonathan Allan in 2018 shared a note on the attitude of the British to its dependent territories. He said very briefly, "Where the people of a territory choose to remain British, we the UK will continue to carry out all of our responsibilities towards them." He says, "Our aim is that territories re to be internally self-governing." Why are they saying that? It is because they recognise that it is time for territories to take ownership, take responsibilities for their lives, chart and guide their own path. However, it seems to me that underlying this is the note but if you do not feel that you are able to do so, and you still want to cling to us we will carry out our responsibility towards you.

I ask myself, "What if the roles were changed? What if the UK had found itself in a situation where its Head of State was someone from another country? Would this had been tolerable to them? Would it had been tolerable to the British people?" I can tell you categorically from history, both ancient past and not too long ago, that it would not. BREXIT tells us that even being part of the EU had its challenges for them because they felt it affected their

sovereignty so for themselves, they want that total independence, therefore, those who feel concerned about how they would see us, I am sure they would want for others what they would want for themselves. The other question I asked myself is what statement or message are we making when we say that we are uncomfortable with a Head of State that is Barbadian feeling that we have now put ourselves in a place where we are insecure, anything could happen, the whole country could fall apart, oppressors could take us over and our lives would be over. To feel that way, Sir, it can be challenging so I understand how the previous generations felt about that. It is the same feeling, Sir, perhaps, that wives have when they agree to get married and they are going to leave their mother's and father's house and they are going to go into a home with a person who now feels like a stranger, there is a little feeling of trepidation that can overcome a bride and she may ask herself several times if she should make the step, but the truth is, Sir, when you do make the step you would find that we can make it. We can manage our affairs, we do not need our mother and father to tell us how to run our lives. If we have problems we will solve it, that is the same thing that we have to say here as Barbadians. Believe me, because to do otherwise is to say that I am uncertain of myself, I cannot care for myself. To think otherwise I am saying that I am afraid of what is inside of me and I am afraid of what is inside of others who look like me. That cannot be. We are saying that somebody else is more righteous, more discipline, more principled than we are, and that their hearts are purer than ours and they are more generous than we are. By saying that we cannot trust ourselves and that someone else would do a better job of managing us, we are saying that there is someone out there who has a greater commitment to us, to our well-being than we have to ourselves. I am saying a thousand times, no. There is no right-thinking Barbadian who could ever feel that it is okay to present that image to the world that we do not trust ourselves to govern ourselves and to take care of our lives and resolve our issues.

Sir, I am of the view that it is important that we help Barbadians to understand why we have this confidence that we can manage ourselves. There are many Barbadians who feel that having remained with the monarch as our Head of State that somehow when we are in trouble they will come and resolve any issues that we create for ourselves. Some of them do not realise that Barbados has been standing on its own since 1966, that we have charted our own course, that the bread we eat is the bread that we earn, that the things we have provided for our citizens have come from the sweat of our brow, it has come from the good governance that we have given ourselves since 1966. Sir, Barbados is known as a middle income country. We are considered to be above leading overseas development assistance which is how the European Union (E.U.) and the United Kingdom (U.K.) see us. You have managed your affairs so well and have provided such a high level of

living for your citizens, your schools, your healthcare, your infrastructure, all of these things you have done and you have done well and we can see that you are doing well on your own. This is what you have acknowledge about us and all that we have achieved in this time. We too must acknowledge that fact ourselves to not take for granted the excellent governance that we have had from the time of Sir Grantley Adams, coming down to Errol Barrow, coming down to the J. M. G. M. “Tom” Adams, coming all the way through to Bernard St. John, Owen Arthur, Mia Mottley, Sir, we have been able to build a country and to do what is necessary because as a people...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you ought to be addressing them by their respective correct titles so that you could not really say “Tom” Adams and Owen Arthur, et cetera.

Hon. Ms. C. S. V. HUSBANDS: Right, the Honourable. Thank you for the correction and we would want to do that, Sir, because we need to respect our own so, the Honourable Sir Grantley Adams, now Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, the Honourable Errol Barrow, now Right Excellent Errol Barrow, the Honourable J. M. G. M. “Tom” Adams, Professor the Right Honourable Owen Arthur, the Honourable Bernard St. John, the Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, we have chosen persons who have been able to lead this country well and that is all that Barbadians need to consider. To investigate and understand what is going on around them internationally and how it will affect them, to understand what is happening domestically, and to be able to make a good judgment as to who is capable of giving us the governance that will continue this country on its trajectory of growth and prosperity. Who is competent in the time of challenge to pull us out from where we are. That is all Barbadians have to consider because as long as we give ourselves the gift of good governance we would be safe in our lands, we would be secure and we will have prosperity and opportunities for the further and this is what COVID-19 has been trying to snatch from us and with the help of God, this Government and this country will find a way to move forward to be able to restore to people the opportunities that they need to be able to take care of their lives.

Sir, this country has distinguished itself for a number of things and it has been driven not just by people in governance, but by ordinary citizens who applied themselves to the spirit of excellence and have served in many ways to bring credit to this nation wherever they have gone and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph shared that this morning, who are some of those people who have done that, but we are right now beginning to distinguish ourselves in the area of speaking up and making representation on environment and climate change. We are making a name for ourselves in our management of our COVID-19 situation. We are creating new heroes who are

serving this country day and night to help us manage this COVID-19 scourge so this is not a time to be doubting ourselves, but to know that what we are stepping forward to do is not a whim, it is not rebellion, but it comes from our sober judgment of examining our capabilities and our confidence in ourselves and who we are as a people that we can and we are competent to manage our own future so let us not give way to some of the little foxes that are trying to destroy our grapes. Let us not give way to indiscipline and irresponsibility, but let us continue to channel ourselves in a way that we can move forward.

I want to say to citizens, we are asking you to join us in civic responsibility. Join us in this moment of declaring a Barbadians a Head of State, but that is only one small part of this journey. We are asking them to join us in looking at our Constitution and look at the changes that are necessary to make it more suitable for the Barbadians of this 21st century and we are asking them to engage the process of discussion. We are asking them to help hold accountable those who govern, to have the courage to execute judgment when it is called for, to pay attention to our national affairs and most of all, going forward they need to be committed to contributing to our national life. In this, our selection of our first Barbadian Head of State, Sir, I congratulate the Government on choosing a method that allows us to make this first step with dignity and to give it the ceremony which it deserves so that it becomes a celebration of our heritage, a celebration of our human qualities and a celebration of the Barbadians capacity. Let us not be taken in by arguments from those who sail in on a whim, the carpet baggers who come wanting to turn the process into a contest to bring us into political wrangling and creating a circus of this transition. We do not choose to go down that road. That is not the Barbadian way. I prefer this very dignified way of making our transition. Fifty-five years ago when we were first becoming independent we debated this question. Twenty years ago we were still debating this very question. In 2021, do we really need to ask this question again? Well here is my question to Barbados: If not now, when, if not here, where, and If not this generation, then who? I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Hon. J. A. KING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to lend my voice to this particular debate and I am very passionate about it because I do not think there is anyone else in here who has the unfortunate thing of being born in England but myself, so it is unfortunate. I cannot make any excuses for my parents' behaviour, that is their business, but I can only speak from my standpoint.

Sir, it pains me, and I want to be very serious now, when I hear Barbadians talking in a way that suggests that

they do not have the confidence in themselves to manage their own affairs, to be self-determined, to chart their own course or to believe in their own abilities, a people who against all odds - and when I say a people I am not only speaking about Barbadians of African descent, I am talking about Barbadians across the board, white, Indian, Asians, you name it - continue to live in what really is... If you look at what is happening across the world and you compare us to a number of places, Barbados is a virtual paradise even with its problems, a place when you look at it you ask yourself how can so many different people from different cultures, different religions and different ideologies but you never ever once had any sort of a civil war, any bloodshed or any problems of this sort. In other parts of the world people cannot even get up on mornings to go to school without killing one another just based on the mere fact that they have a different ideology, and you take these things for granted, but the time has come when we as Barbadians must get serious about things like this. It cannot be that we are just yapping because it might be politically expedient at this particular time to try to make a nudge at something to suggest that you cannot walk and chew gum at the same time so that you are having problems with the economy so nothing else matters, the only thing that matters now is how we are going to make money, where money is going to come from, and how we are going to do this and do the next. These things matter and they do not only matter for this present generation they have ramifications for those coming and for those yet to come and it is important that the people who grace this room stand united and steadfast in ensuring that on this occasion we get this done.

One of the biggest shames that people do not like to talk about because they do not want to make anybody feel as if they failed was the failure of our past leaders to have a federation. Let us be genuine. It is a monumental shame and a stain but everybody wants to keep their mouth shut because nobody wants to be offensive. If we could not get that done... The same people that you are talking about come years after us and formed something called the European Union. The same Britain, as already mentioned but I am going to double up on it, was a part of it and came up with something called Brexit. Why would you want to leave? It is because you want to be able to be self-determined to do your own things. If you watch British television as much as I do still there is a movie called "Britannia" and they are very good to show you how they got away from the Roman Empire, so if it is good for you to get away from the Roman Empire, you fight Germany because you did not want to become German as you tried to tell me in World Wars I and II, and now I want to get away from you I am the bad guy. Mr. Speaker, let us think about it. A man got up in Parliament in England and said that Barbados is getting tied up with the Chinese putting pressure on them to become a Republic, what madness I am hearing at all, and nobody challenged him on it at all. These are the same people who in the British Parliament

signed off on reparations for themselves and loss of property with the abolition of slavery. Now if that is not a criminal act I do not know what one is because the very people that you exploited for years, killed indiscriminately, starved them, raped them and do all kinds of things with them but when the time came for them to be "set free", you decide in your Parliament, the same Parliament that is the coloniser's Parliament that I am standing in here today, that you got to get pay for loss of property and the black people like me so now are fighting for reparation in 2021, "my lord man, cud god man".

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I wonder if people in Barbados really understand what it is that they have suffered at the hands of the British and their policies and the way that they view us as human beings or less than human beings whichever one it is. Mr. Speaker, they still want me a sensible man to hang on to the British coattails and would like me to come in here and be nice about it, you definitely do not know John King, you cannot be serious. In my artistic life I remember I sang once called "Come Leh We Break Away from the Broken Trident". I sang a song called "Family Ties". The "Mighty Gabby", Dr. the Most Honourable Anthony Carter, has graced us with songs like "West Indian Politicians" and Stedson Wiltshire "Red Plastic Bag" said "Home Drums Beats First". You have all of these songs that have been sung, books have been written by our authors and poetry that has been done speaking to this very issue of complete separation from all things colonial and yet it seems as if for all of these years there are still some sections of the society who are coming up with all kinds of reasons why this cannot happen and should not happen. Mr. Speaker, all of that comes out of fear; the fear of the unknown, the fear of you having no confidence in yourself. Rather than come and say, "I am afraid because I do not know what will happen if I do not have that coattail to hold onto any longer," they will come up with all kinds of things. They will come and tell you, "When you go back to the Constitution you cannot do this," but who made that Constitution? The same people whom you are saying you want to get away from. Yet you are going back to a document that they handed you to tell you now that you cannot make a decision to separate yourself from that without following these particular rules.

Now, let us get real. I think somebody made the point here earlier that in other parts of the world people fought, there were bloody wars, people killed each other and did all kinds of things and then changed Constitutions. We are not seeking to do that. You must forgive me because I hear people talk all the time about artistes thinking in this airy-fairy, wild way and all of these kinds of things, so forgive me. You want me to accept a paper written by people who do not have or did not have my best interests at heart, and I must now live my life in 2021 based on that and I do not have the ability to go forward and do what I have to do in order to make myself more self-reliant,

so that when I speak to the rest of the world I speak from a position of Barbadian-ness? When we take decisions are to who our friends will be or who we do business with, it will be based on our own reality and our own expectations. What could be the problem with that? You are saying that a piece of paper can stop you or can be the problem to prevent you from making a simple move like that, which would permeate from one generation to the other, knowing full well that you are giving people their dignity, their confidence and a sense of self-worth and value.

Mr. Speaker, I find it hard. I will not fool you. I find it real hard to understand how people do not get it. I go back to my earlier point: This is not just a conversation about race. This is a conversation about sovereignty of a people, and that people is made up of a whole set of different ethnic, racial groups or whatever terms one may want to use, but we are Barbadians and I want people to understand that. It goes way beyond politics. A person who is a Democratic Labour Party supporter is still a Barbadian. A person from the breadfruit party -- I cannot remember its name -- and who belongs to that party, you are still a Barbadian. If you are from the Barbados Labour Party, you are still a Barbadian. There has to be a time when the conversations go past all of these little boundaries and people begin to see the bigger picture. I have listened very carefully to a lot of people saying, "We want a Barbadian to be the Head of State" and so on. That is fine. I agree, but there are some deeper psychological problems that our people have. When we make the transition, we are going to have to put things in place to deal with them because nobody has dealt with them since the Abolition of Slavery. If we do not deal with them, we are going to find ourselves later with the same types of problems coming back at us all the time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time I have had to put in my two cents' worth, so to speak, but I want Barbadians, whenever you open your mouth or whenever you have to say anything about anything, speak on it as a Barbadian first, not a follower of others. Thank you.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. I.A. WEIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being cognisant of time I rise to offer my contribution to this very historic debate because, to my mind, it would certainly be remiss of me if I did not use this opportunity to speak in one voice with the Government of which I am a part but equally on the behalf of those people from St. Philip South, who themselves would have relished the opportunity to participate in a similar debate were they here in this Parliament instead of me. Therefore, being cognisant of that fact that they have reposed their trust and confidence in

me, I deem it necessary for me to take them through this historic moment in time.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I refer to it as an historic moment because in 1966 when we became independent, we became a nation free, free to make our own decisions but equally giving birth to a new Barbados which was removing the shackles of its colonial masters and charting its own destiny. Mr. Speaker, I find it a little difficult to understand how you give birth but keep the umbilical cord attached. Therefore, after 55 years, Sir, how much longer can you ask us to hold the umbilical cord of a nation that said to us, "Go your way in peace"? Essentially, that is the message that was sent by the colonial masters when they said to all of the colonies in the region, "You are free to take your independence." The fact that we allowed pressure at the time to keep the umbilical cord attached was just part of what transpired throughout the many years afterwards; so that 55 years later we are standing in this Honourable Chamber to carry on a 21st Century conversation that belongs to a 17th Century construct, Sir. To my mind, that speaks volumes about who we are and where we really, really need to anchor this conversation.

Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to be held back by Constitution arguments, to be held back by law when I know for a fact that in history we can cite a number of cases where you can look at First World countries which have determined that they wanted to chart their own destiny. Sir, they did not do so by law at first. The American Revolution, for example, took place before the Constitution was revised. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, you will find that the United States, the great democracy of the world, when they had determined that they were not satisfied with British rule, even going to the Boston Tea Party where they had determined that taxation without representation was not the way to go. Therefore, they were inspired enough to take decisions in their own interest without going to law, Sir. So the fact that we as a people would want to come to a Parliament in a 21st century construct, where you have to be bold because you are managing a COVID pandemic, bold because you had to manage an ashfall from a volcano, bold because you had manage the disaster from hurricane Elsa, bold because we came to a Government at a time when the economy was on the brink, and I have to contextualise this way so that I can give those Barbadians a clear understanding of where we are and where we need to get to. Therefore, within that construct I hold a very solid posture, not only in size, but that we as people need to close the gap and we cannot continue with the umbilical cord of the colonial masters when they have already told us to take our Independence since 1966.

Sir, republic in Latin says *res publica*, it means public thing, public matter and public affair, public, public, public and not monarchy. Whereas, if it is public, my

understanding of public is that you are referring to people. A Government selected by the people, for the people and by the people. Therefore, I cannot understand why it is that anyone would even seek whether right or wrong to put obstacles in the way of progress where we are trying to that which is right to remove the umbilical cord from our colonial masters.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things that certainly make me proud about this moment. One, is the nominee who is from the soil of St. Philip, and Sir you would know going back to the days of General Bussa, St. Philip has always led the way and that is the reason why we have carried the name for a long time as a republic. I supposed going into this republic there is a lot to draw from the people of St. Philip. The reality of it is that we were not called republic simply because somebody just wanted to toss a name at us, but we have solid family structures and the nominees from one. We also have a construct in St. Philip where we all operate as one family, touch one touch all. That is what the republic in St. Philip is all about. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, Barbados is now transitioning to what I personally have experienced in St. Philip and I am glad to know that we have leadership in this country now that can make such a bold decision even against severe opposition.

Now, I have heard all of the talk that there has not been enough consultation, but in a Throne Speech, it was announced that we were going to republic this year for Independence. Sir, what is significant about Independence, is that on November 30, 1966 we celebrated Barbados's Independence. We gave birth to a new nation. If we are going to cut the umbilical cord, what is the most suitable day? It must be the day of the birth. Therefore, I have absolutely no problems with cutting the umbilical cord on the day of the birth. That is my position. I have heard all of the talk about other days that you can examine. Sir, there is a process to giving birth, so if you tell me July 26, I understand you that is part of the process. Sir, there is a process through which a woman is impregnated and a child is born, and so all of those other things you want to tell me is fine, but the day of the birth is the day you cut the umbilical cord and that is significant for me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind Barbadians that we are constantly consumed by the notion that if you remove Her Majesty this and Her Majesty that you are offensive and that you cannot remove the Royal Barbados from the Police Force and you cannot remove Her Majesty from the prison. I am dumbfounded, when every single year, particularly around Independence and I as a boy stood up holding hands and singing a song called "Let's join hands and show we love Barbados" and up came something called a national pledge written by a Barbadian Scholar, Mr. Lester Vaughn. Mr. Speaker, what is it that we say? "I pledge allegiance to my country Barbados and to my flag,

to uphold and defend their honour, and by my living to do credit to my nation wherever I go". Where did it say the Queen? Where did it say the monarchy? Where did it say anything about royalty? "I pledge allegiance to my country Barbados and to my flag,". Hold it, that is all I know and that is all I want to know and that is where this conversation should be anchored, because we cannot extol the virtues of Lester Vaughn and his good work and then turn around and tell us that we must be held up by Constitutional Law simply because we want to block it, it is not the way you want it done, so it cannot be done. It does not make sense if I agree with you because we do not get any politics out of it Sir. The same people who said they would do it, but did not have the boldness or tenacity to step forward and say let it happen. Mr. Speaker that is the reason why I can do nothing other than join this debate and part of this historic moment in Barbados where a Parliament for the first time has detached itself completely from colonial rule, colonial masters and from the monarchy and give Barbados a fair chance to say this is our Parliament. That is what this is also saying.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Leader will no longer be Her Majesty's Opposition Leader. That is significant. Therefore, if I am to cite in reality where we have to go with this, I want to say a couple of things in closing because, I recognise the hour and it is not often for you to tell me to land, but I do not want you to tonight, so I will cite a couple of things. I always encourage Barbadians to read and the reason why I do so is because I like people to be informed.

Thomas Paine, in leading up to the republic of the United States of America wrote a pamphlet called Common Sense. In that he made it very clear where point number one was about governments. What did it say? It said that the government is to provide its citizens with security from the vices that are inherent in all human beings. Sir, the vices that are inherent in the politics of this discussion are wrong. Therefore, I want to encourage people to read Common Sense by Thomas Paine, so that they can understand that the great United States of America, which all of them line up, go through hassles to get visas and do all kinds of things to get foot on that land do it willingly. I am pleading with Barbadians and with the people of the good parish of St. Philip, particularly St. Philip South to join us on this journey in support of Barbados becoming a republic. Equally, I want to remind all Barbadians, particularly those in St. Philip South to go out and get the job so that you can protect yourselves and your family. I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Member for St. Philip North.

Dr. S. E. BROWNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You should have remembered St. Philip North considering that the nominee of which we speak today is indeed from St.

Philip North. I am boasting the fact that I am the only Member of Parliament here that can say that. I congratulate Her Excellency Dame Sandra Mason on this nomination. I think she is probably the most fitting person I can think of to take that position right now. Before I begin fully, I am hearing conversations about the people of the nation are uneasy with the republic. Let me just say that it might be more a case of people being uneasy because they are unaware.

People usually are uncomfortable with what they do not know. This is why I was happy to hear the Prime Minister and other Members in here speak about the education that will follow after the republic is formed. I was also asked by a prominent Barbadian and I am almost shame to say that I really quite did not know the answer on the definition of a republic. I looked it up like everyone else. I googled it. Google is famous for everything; the doctor, lawyer, everything. It read as follows:

“A state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives and which has an elected or nominated President rather than a monarch.”

I used this as the frame for the rest of my speech. I know the time is short and of all the people in here, I should be wary of the protocols so I will try to make it as brief as I can. I want to say that although the republic is upon in terms of making it official, I think Barbados has been a republic off the books probably since 1966. In essence, this is just the icing on the cake that was already baked and prepared when the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow instituted the whole process of Independence leading up to this moment right now. Dame Sandra Mason can only inspire the girls and boys of the nation to try to reach the heights for which they want. In other words, it might not necessarily be the leader of the country to hold the highest office but to aspire to the highest heights that they can reach in any profession or skill they so desire within the legal framework of course of the country.

This matter, and it was noted previously, that it was agreed to by successive Governments over the last few years, so I do not see it as a problem for anybody. The Leader of the Opposition also agreed and I believe every Member in here would agree unanimously to the nomination. However, I want to note and want the population to note that because we are formally a republic as of November 30th, we must be weary that on December 1st of this year that things will not magically change immediately for the better. There will still be issues with societal problems, political problems, economic circumstances and I know the Government through the Cabinet and Ministries are working hard, and making strides in terms of getting the country back to where it was and even beyond where it was.

There is work to be done but the Government needs help. I want to speak a bit on COVID-19. Since we are becoming this independent nation, we need to work hard at it. I am normally quiet on the issue of COVID-19 for my own reasons but tonight will give me the opportunity to speak on it, especially as I have seen the numbers have risen to 217 positive cases as of yesterday with one death. Mr. Speaker, we need to start taking this thing a little more seriously. I heard the Prime Minister say that this is not a sprint, it is a marathon.

This is one time I will disagree with the Prime Minister when it comes to COVID-19. This is a little faster. It needs to be a little faster than a marathon. We need to get these numbers down and under control which would mean getting tourism back, getting unemployment figures down and it would mean` 1 children can get back into school and education would be in progress more so than ever. It would mean that the health system will no longer will be overwhelmed and I believe that it is bordering on being overwhelmed, but Barbadians continue to take the issue lightly. We continue to wrestle with the Winstons. Much like the Karens in the US, we have the Winstons in Barbados that see it fit to spread the misinformation about COVID-19.

Who sees it fit to undermine the efforts of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Tourism. Basically, the frontline medical staff and other staff, including myself who have spent sleepless nights and days trying to convince people to have the vaccination. I face it every day in my office. Every day I need to worry about going home and giving it to my family. My father is 91 years old. He would die if he gets COVID-19. Luckily, he has been vaccinated so obviously his chances are less. We have to bear in mind as a country this is not a personal responsibility now. It involves the entire nation where we need to be unselfish in protecting those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons and protecting the babies that are under 12 years old that have no other choice but to wait until the vaccine could get here to come to them.

I am basically sick to my stomach of the misinformation on social media whether it be Facebook, WhatsApp messages, Instagram and all the others I am not a party of. It makes us sick. I go out every day and argue why you should get the vaccine. I met a 13-year-old boy two weeks ago. His mother brought him in to my office terrified of the vaccine because his dad who does not live with him told him if he got the vaccine he would be dead in two years. I do not know how on earth he could possibly know in two years he will be dead.

We have not reached the milestone yet but that took half of an hour of my time convincing this young man about the pros versus the cons of having the jab. This is something that I never thought my country would come to.

I never thought when COVID-19 hit that I would be standing up here begging people to take the vaccine, begging people to take the protocols seriously and begging people on the eve of becoming a republic to do what is right to protect our nation. Medical staff have no right putting up with the physical attacks from patients and visitors to the hospital. This is nothing new to us who worked in the hospital. It has happened but now with COVID-19 it seems to be happening more often.

If I were at the hospital, I do not know what I would do. I do not know how I would put up with it. I do not know what laws could be put in place. Abuse is abuse regardless to how you look at it but this needs to stop. I do not think the average member of the public can empathize about what doctors, nurses and frontline staff have to go through on a daily basis. I am dealing with mental illness right now and depression throughout children and adults. Children cannot see their friends. They are operating on screen. These are kind of things that I am facing every day. An area that is dear to me and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, you have people that are working in the newly formed Elder Care Programme that have refused to have the vaccine.

I know the Honourable Member for St. George North spoke about businesses not putting down their foot with respect to having the employees take vaccines but I think personally that the time has come that some businesses need to be able to say you cannot look after these old people without having the vaccine unless you get tested every week to two weeks at your own expense. I am willing and prepared to take the beating for that but I think we have come to point where we need to do that. I have patients coming in and telling me, one in particular, that it is the mark of the devil. Mr. Speaker, the devil does not need a mark to find you. I do not know what is the logic for this thing comes from, but we have to deal with COVID-19, I know the Minister of Health is working like he probably has never worked before to get this thing under control, the doctors and nurses are ready to lead a hand. I gave of service whatever little way I could the other day at one of the, what I call the 'Pop-up Clinics'. We need to all come together to fight this thing. With this Republic -- and I am reading now -- the Honourable Prime Minister actually said that the transition to Republic seeks to change the oath of allegiance to from The Crown to us Barbadians, but we cannot truly do this unless we begin to respect the rights of women, to respect that women deserve as much as men do that women are able to perform any job that any man can do. I know women that are carpenters, masons and joiners, they can do any job men can do. We need to start to respect that when it comes to employment and promotion. We need to respect as parents, as men that children need to be supported both financially and emotionally from fathers, but by the same token - and I am expecting to get licks if I do not add this part - men need to

be respected as well from these mothers who withhold visitation rights to children in lieu of not paying child support. We need to respect women. A woman should be able to walk anywhere in this island, through any track, through any cart road regardless of what she is wearing without risking being raped. We have what is termed the 'sex worker', I am not sure why we termed it that but we have the sex workers' and they have a right like anybody else to live. I do not agree with the work part but to live and not live in fear of being assaulted and murdered in this country. We cannot be a successful republic if we do not address some of these things. We have children to think about in informing this republic. It will not change overnight and I already said that. From 1st December, I do not expect these things to change immediately, but the thoughts have to be our children. We will not be true guardians of our heritage if we do not take children into account and ensure that they are protected in every single way. They need to be protected when it comes to education and I know the Ministry of Education is working hard to see that every child has a device to do the online school, but we have to work harder to see that they can get back into to school and this cannot happen unless the vaccination is on board. The Prime Minister says that we are over 50 per cent, if you exclude the children that cannot have the vaccine. While that is all well and good we need to reach 80 per cent of the total population to say that we have a possibility of herd immunity. Rather than saying we have reached over 50 per cent of the adult population or over 12-year-old population in terms of vaccination we need to reach 80 per cent for herd immunity for the entire population. We have to protect our children.

I understand that we are in the process of making education fit for purpose that would be all inclusive for every child in Barbados which means that the child without the academic ability, but that are good with their hands and have skills will be elevated just as high as the child that is good and master English and Science, which means that the child who is an athlete and the child who is good in the arts has equal opportunity for scholarship and funding to expand their horizons. Right now I have been fighting, without success, so if any member of the private sector is hearing me within earshot and is ready to take the help, a child who has been accepted, young adult into university of New York to do the performing arts cannot get funding and we have a Student Loan Fund that is willing to donate for charity. There is something a little wrong about that. We need to promote these things. If a child wants to be a fisherman, I had a little boy that wanted to be a fisherman from the time he could speak and that is what he is doing now. We need to put things in place to educate the ones that want to do something different, support them, make them feel that what they do counts and I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is working on that area too.

I met a lady today - we probably have to take a look at that -- who was one of the unfortunately students who had to pay for tuition when the last Administration put a stop to free education for tertiary free education and she is battling without a job, well qualified, battling to pay back loans which she had to take out. I think we need to have a look at those people who are struggling, I mean everybody is struggling now, but we need to have a look at those people who are struggling to pay back student loans and do not have a job. That is important if we are truly to say that tertiary education is free. Our children need protection from abuse. I was the happiest person in this camp to hear that the particular department in the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs was looking to amalgamate the Child Care Board and the other players, for example, the Welfare Department because it is difficult to call. If you report a case of abuse of a child and then that person puts you on to the Welfare Department and then that person puts you on to some other place and then that person asks you if you have called the Police and then it takes months and months and this child is in danger and then it takes forever to reach the law Courts. Yes, we have put judges in place and I am hoping to see that this list or the Ministry of Health people that have been raped over 10 years ago are still waiting to be heard. Children that have been abused that the parents are not bothering, because the case and the length of time. We need to address these issues if we are to call ourselves a Republic, Mr. Speaker.

We cannot truly say that we are an independent nation when we have to deal with the bank fees. I was at the Bank Teller the other day to deposit a cheque. I was already at the Bank Teller doing other business and there was a charge of \$6 on a \$20 cheque. How is the average man supposed to deal with that? I walked outside to the Bank Teller this morning -- I went before the House of Assembly started -- and you can no longer extract less than \$50 from an Automatic Teller Machine (A.T.M.). How are we a Republic? The country is hard; things are hard. A man may just want a \$20 pay something. This is ridiculous to ask of a bank that is holding money that you put into it. These things we need to be looked at.

I will be short, as I said. We are adding another paragraph really to history's page and there are many things that need to be fixed, many things that need to be worked on and I know the Government is trying. We are trying, we are trying, we are trying, but we need the support of the public.

Lastly, I look forward to walking in to our refurbished Parliament Buildings, if I am so fortunately, hopefully in months to come, and not see the paintings of the British monarchy and the paraphernalia that graces the walls of Parliament. I have been blamed for shutting it down and I want to see this happen. I do not want to see the

Queen or the King when I look up, or whosoever they are because I did not get a chance to read the pictures.

Asides.

Dr. S. E. BROWNE: Pardon? Asides.

Dr. S. E. BROWNE: I want to see you. That is not a problem. We are good, but I want to be able to say this is my country. We stand alone and we stand fighting and we can do it, as the Honourable Member for St. James South said. We can do it, we just need to have the confidence and that comes with the education of the public. I am not a lawyer, I cannot speak in depth on it like some of the other Members, but my head is not empty. Not at all, my head is not empty and I am grateful that you accept these few words.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the occasions where I stand proudly as the Representative for Christ Church East Central knowing that this particular motion that is before the Honourable Chamber is simply the right thing to do on the behalf of the people of Barbados.

Sir, on November 30 this year we will celebrate 55 years of Independence. Under normal circumstances when an individual reaches age 55 they start thinking about early retirement and those types of things with respect to their golden years. What we are seeking to do, Sir, is to send a clear signal to Barbadians that this country reaching this far cannot now take that posture as we would normally do in our individual lives because we now have to prepare a new course to ensure that the young people of this country can see and appreciate all that Barbados truly has to offer. I do not say so lightly because I spent most of today and certainly yesterday, Mr. Speaker, working on ensuring that we can build the bridge literally with the African Continent. We have welcomed the President of the African Export-Import Bank to Barbados and the reason we have done so is quite deliberate because we want our young people to be able to understand that we are part of the story of the African continent and Africans globally and to the extent that we want to build bridges and opportunities for investment, enfranchisement with respect to our young people and the young people across the African Continent, that this Barbados Labour Party Government is working to bring that to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, this is not just an exercise as some people may argue with respect to the Constitution but I say that at 55 years old we can pass any law in this Chamber

that gives more rights to any Barbadian, whether by birth or descent or naturalisation for that matter, and any suggestion in my view... Sir, I am not a lawyer, I am not a legal scholar of any type but I am a Barbadian, and we were all sent here three-and-a-half years ago with a very clear mandate to chart a different path for Barbados, and to the extent that this expansion of rights is consistent with respect to claiming our destiny because you have to be confident in yourself to be able to take on some of the battles and the challenges that Barbados will face and retreating to what people may describe as days of old cannot be the way that Barbados operates in the 21st Century and so I stand proudly here in support of this measure because building a future for Barbados means that we must not rest on our laurels by any stretch of the imagination. I reiterate, Sir, that we have to take the fresh guard and commit to ourselves what we will stand for and what we will fight for as we have stated in the "Covenant of Hope". I know that through the consultation not the Charter of Barbados that we can come to a reasonable conclusion in terms of what type of Barbados we want to live in as part of creating a new national consciousness.

The reason I started in this vein, Sir, is quite simple because a lot of misinformation is going out there. I have heard people ask all kinds of questions - Some constituents and other Barbadians have reached out to me - and I have made it abundantly clear that if persons who are retired in Barbados who happened to be working in England Barbados' transition to a Republic does not in any way affect any pension right, any liability that the British Government or any other Government for that matter may have with respect to the status of Barbados becoming a Republic.

Mr. Speaker, there are people out there who are creating unnecessary fear and circulating nonsense in relation to the stuff with COVID-19 and are just confusing people simply because we want to ensure that ordinary Barbadians can for the first time state that they can chart a total path with respect to the management of the affairs of their country. It is important, Sir, that Barbadians trust in the credible sources of information that is put out there and I ask citizens to engage with the Government and with the stakeholders on this path because I believe that the concept of the consultation with respect to a new Constitution is perhaps the most fundamentally important thing that any of us as adults could engage in with respect to the charting of a new path for the future.

Sir, I do support this Bill unreservedly because I was a young university student when the Forde Commission was started, and for me that is a little over 23 years, but the truth is we take too long to make these decisions and to put things behind us and deal with the things that we need to deal with. As a young man, Sir, I think I am perhaps the youngest persons to speak in this debate, I can say to

Barbadians that as young people we are frustrated with the slow pace of implementation and decision-making and therefore the extent to which we are here today to make a decision I can say on behalf of those young people out there that this, as I have heard other Honourable Members of the House indicate, has been a long journey. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter chart clearly the path with respect to which this journey has been on and I say to the young people of this country that becoming a Republic on November 30, 2021 is not the end of the journey because we will pass to them a Barbados that is worthy of competing and working and collaborating with any country in the world but we must have the confidence to go out there and introduce ourselves proudly as Barbadians. Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of Barbados that we want our young people to be able to come up in, to believe in and to take the mantle from the long history of sacrifice, the long history of oppression, and turn those mental chains, forget the things that we are holding on to with respect to the colonial past and make a clear determination that we will support these young people to move Barbados to a higher level and therefore I say to all in the country let us come together now and make a clear decision that we would work together as one people to ensure that we equip all of our young people not to feel inferior to anybody or to feel superior to anybody but that we will work with whoever cares to work with us in this country Barbados to ensure that we could create not just a standard of living but that we can improve the lot and the opportunities for young people, our families and our communities such that the name of Barbados can be restored and improved and that we can we can lead in the areas where we need to lead. Sir, that is the kind of Barbados that I want my son to grow up in and that is the kind of Barbados, Sir, that I want your children and your grandchildren to grow up in such that as the children so to speak of Independence that we can create a legacy that is worthy of the sacrifice of all of our ancestors.

With those few words, Sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by thanking all Honourable Members who have participated in this debate and to say that this has been an opportunity for us to speak on issues that are fundamental to the nation-state and the wellbeing of this country. As I wrap up the debate - and I shall not be long because I am aware that the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness has to address the country at 8.00 p.m. tonight - I want to say that this Government has been very clear about certain things since coming to office and one of them to which we committed was the deepening of our democracy as well as the recognition that some of the powers that previously would have been exercised one way ought not to be continued in that way. What... Mr. Speaker, prior to my assumption of this office

and indeed upon the assumption of this office I would have had the power to be able to appoint judges without reference to anyone other than to consult the Leader of the Opposition. We took a decision that it should not fall within the power of any one person to have that single right, especially as it relates to the functioning of another arm of Government. Mr. Speaker, we passed legislation in this Honourable Chamber to have a Judicial Advisory Appointments Committee to assist in the appointment of judges and to assist in the appointment of the Chief Justice. Mr. Speaker, I gave the country the assurance as well that I felt strongly that, with respect to the appointment of the Head of State which hitherto once again lies within the exclusive gift of the Prime Minister, to have a Prime Minister appoint a person solely and only on consultation with the Leader of the Opposition -- which simply means that you have spoken but have not agreed -- was not something I felt comfortable doing as a child of Independence. That is one of reasons we are here today, because we also believe that that power can be exercised by the Members of this Parliament in the Upper and Lower Houses, and it to that which we have gone in this legislation.

Sir, there was concern about whether it should be a special majority or a simple majority, and I must add -- and the Honourable Attorney General was present -- that for those who felt that eventually a failure of this House to receive an agreement on the first and second time with a special majority, a President should be able to be appointed on the basis of a simple majority. Mr. Speaker, we have rejected this as a Government and we believe that this country must always be able to find someone who can command the respect and support of all, or the majority at the very least, of persons in the Honourable the House of Assembly and the Honourable the Senate. We also agreed that we would not seek to have a vote with respect to both Houses together, because if we did that we would effectively, as we do with the majority that we have in the Lower House, command the two-thirds majority simply by having 30 and 21 which is 51. Once we could have 34 persons, which would effectively mean the 28 excluding yourself in here and six in the Senate, it would mean that we could literally install anyone we wish.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has chosen not to govern for ourselves but to govern for the country for the times and to ensure that, for all through time, in the same way those who passed the Constitution and structured the Parliament in the way that it is understood that there could have been no passage of a Constitutional Amendment in the Senate without there being the approval of either the Opposition Senators or some of the Independent Senators. Mr. Speaker, this is a principle to which this Government remains fundamentally committed because in spite of the fact that we have commanded the majority of the popular will in an electoral process, we believe that you should as a

Government be forced to work with others in order to be able to bring about fundamental change in this society. That is what we have done. As it relates to this, we said from the very beginning in our Manifesto -- and we were very clear on the matter of the decriminalisation of cannabis -- that we would go to a referendum. On this we did not feel that there was a need to go for a referendum because of a Barbadian being the Barbadian Head of State, but what we always committed to was consultation with respect to the Constitution.

The Leader of the Opposition disagrees with us and feels that we are putting the cart before the horse. I regret that he feels that way but we fundamentally differ because we believe that the first act of the Republic of Barbados must be to settle its own governance arrangements and its Constitution.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: We believe that should not be an act done before but that should be the first act governing as we would want to continue. The old people tell you that you need to start as you intend to continue, and the message which we are sending then is that once that is completed, the process of having a Barbadian Head of State and the process of removing Her Majesty as the monarch as has been the case since the country was claimed by King James in 1625, our first act must be to decide as a deliberate act how we want to govern and what the role of governance is that should be reflected in our Constitution. I do not expect there to be unanimity on every single thing but the truth is that is the perspective we have brought to this matter, and we feel strongly that it will make the fundamental difference once Barbadians understand -- as we did with the Thorne Commission -- that we want people to participate chapter by chapter and break it down into bite-size chunks so that people can speak to each aspect of it rather than speaking glibly and globally nobody catching what they are saying.

Mr. Speaker, I also accept that there must be continued public education and I say to the Leader of the Opposition that I hope he will join us in that effort of ensuring that there is public education for the benefit of all generations, because this is our country and we need to ensure that there is a level of appreciation and recognition of rights and responsibilities such that we have active citizenship as the hallmark of Barbados and not simply passive citizenship. We can achieve that if we work together on these things. Mr. Speaker, we do not see this as a republic by any other means but as a clear example that this is where we are going and this is how we want to govern ourselves going forward.

As to the legal issues, lawyers are perhaps like economists. The first Prime Minister of Jamaica, Sir

Alexander Bustamante, asked for a one-handed economist because he said every time he talked to an economist, each told him “on the one hand and on the other hand”. I do not necessarily want to associate the legal profession with that but I will say this: The late Jack Dear would tell us all the time that you argue a case once in court, and the truth is that the courts are always open to those who believe that there is a different and better way. However, we are satisfied that we have chosen the way which accords not only with legal precedent but also with our interpretation of the law and the various rules, Mr. Speaker. Ironically, when the Leader of the Opposition was reading what he was reading from Guyana, it referred to the adaptations and modifications as necessary, and the Honourable Attorney General can tell you that, in and of itself, you can repeal a Section and hold back and save another Section. Sir, that is for another time and another day but suffice it say: Why now?

Sir, we are in the middle of a pandemic. Yes, we have had the worst pandemic in 102 years. We have had the worst ash fall in 119 years and we have had the worst hurricane in 66 years, but this Government stands today to say that that shall not dampen our spirits nor shall it leave us in the ground.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: There are times when you simply have to be able to pick up and move on, and this is one of the few things that we can do: Giving the people the confidence that what has eluded us thus far does not need to elude us anymore, and we can, yes, face the challenges we face while at the same time settle the arrangements that govern us and ensure that as we go into the 55th year of Independence that we do not carry this. I would have loved if the last Government had done it in the 50 year, and I am conscious and sanguine enough to know that on almost every occasion when there has been a momentous moment like this, you do sometimes regrettably get partisan politics playing. I am happy that the Leader of the Opposition, in spite of his concern about timing -- and I want to thank him for it -- has agreed to jointly nominate Her Excellency as the President for this Parliament to determine if they are in agreement with our joint nomination.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, you can look at a glass as half-empty or half-full. We will look at it as half-full and we will continue to take the higher road with respect to these matters. We know that there are difficulties in this country. We know that there are things that we have to continue to fix particularly since COVID put us from at 8.9 per cent unemployment rate, in December 2019, to one that went as high as almost 18 per

cent at its highest, and is back down to just over 15 per cent and we will continue to bring it down God willing, because we know that there is confidence ultimately in the management of this country and the management of this economy.

Mr. Speaker, how do I know that? As I said earlier, we have a country that in spite of us inheriting four weeks in import cover on May 25, 2018, today has the benefit of 41.4 weeks of import cover, higher than any other time in the history of this country. Some may say yes but you borrowed some, yes we did, but every other country in the World today is borrowing or printing money in the middle of a pandemic. Not one country has been excluded from that. Indeed, the advanced economies, there has been about \$20 trillion in fiscal and monetary expansion globally and the advanced economies, the handful of countries have taken \$19 trillion of that \$20 trillion. However, the difference is that the international community, the international credit rating agencies and the IMF and others have determined that they have confidence in Barbados and in the manner which we are managing our affairs. If you thought that that might just be because that is the international diplomacy aspect of things, let us look at our bonds and what is the market showing us. Yesterday, our bonds were trading at 101.5, Mr. Speaker, what does that mean? It is trading above par, it is trading for more than it is worth.

Mr. Speaker, this is a country in the middle of an IMF Programme, in the middle of a pandemic that has lost one per cent of GDP to ash and this is a country that says yes it is rough, yes we are fighting the battle of our times, but you will not keep us down. Mr. Speaker I say that and I thank all Honourable Members and I ask us simply, the confidence that is necessary to continue on this road to bring our country back and to build forward better, starts first and foremost in the acceptance that we are equal to all and that there is no one superior to us in this World. It starts in the realisation that a person cannot be our Head of State simply because of circumstances of birth or circumstances of conquest for 396 years. Mr. Speaker, that was the kind of nonsense and I am not going to read the whole thing, but I am going to make it a document of the House because we have to understand what went in to that attitude that led to colonisation from the 17th century right into the 20th and 21st centuries. The first sentence that drew my attention.

Today I met with the President of the African Exim Bank, because they have come to the Caribbean and to Barbados in particular because they believe that what we have said about reclaiming our Atlantic destiny is a matter of moral necessity and historical necessity. They understand that the only thing that is stopping goods from moving from the Caribbean to Africa and from Africa to the Caribbean are people or information is us. No one else

can stop it. We have to have the confidence and at the core of getting that confidence is the ability to say that a woman that was born in St. Philip can rise to be the President of this great country.

Indeed, when I spoke, the President of the African Exim Bank said, we are surely, there is no one who is opposing this, because it is impossible for us to contemplate that there could be anything wrong about a Barbadian being the Head of State or about not referring to the Crown as the owner of our lands in this country, or about not having to go to Buckingham Palace to do certain things. We respect Her Majesty the Queen. I believe that she is one of the major iconic leaders of the 20th and early 21st century. However, we can respect her without her being our Head of State and that is the fundamental point. Mr. Speaker, when I therefore say that this is an idea whose time has come, I mean it. Do you know that the only other Barbadian ever to be a President born in this country, to be a President any part of the World is the President of Liberia, one Arthur Barclay from 1904 to 1912, the grandson of London Bourne. London Bourne is not just the name of the towers in Bay Street... These are the things and the stories that we must tell. I commend you to go and watch Journey of an African Colony on Netflix and see that when we talk about King Ja Ja, they talked about King Ja Ja of Opobo, a powerful king that was duped and brought into exile by the British because of his power and his refusal to let them go in further into the Delta. We talked about King Ja Ja in a folk song that he would not leave Beka alone, because we were treated to the reality that we were not to respect him as a king of his own people but as a man who was brought here and to be treated as if he was a madman.

Mr. Speaker, this is the beginning of changing the wrongs that have literally stifled this nation and constrained this nation from being a great nation. We may not be a large nation, but we can be a great nation. Mr. Speaker, I therefore say that on behalf of the people of this nation, on behalf of this Government, on behalf of those who went before and dreamt of this moment, it gives me the greatest pleasure to ask you Mr. Speaker that this Bill which seeks to bring to an end 396 years of a state of affairs where someone not born of this land could be in charge of this land, that we complete the process of Independence so ably started by Sir Grantley Adams, with the right to vote in 1950 with the Representation of People Act, and completed so ably by the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, the fathers in democracy and the fathers of Independence, that we now as children of Independence, not for any acclaim, because there shall be none, not for any name to be called on Independence Day because there shall be none. The only things we will continue to celebrate are those that went before, the actions of the father of Independence and the father of democracy. Mr. Speaker, this Government ask tonight deliberately, not because we want our name

recorded in history, but because history has remained too long in not correcting an unfortunate situation that should never have lasted for 396 years. If this Parliament is the one to bring it to an end, then so shall it be.

Therefore Mr. Speaker, it gives me the greatest pride to be able to move this Bill and asked that it be read a second time and this ultimately shall be a cornerstone upon which all little boys and girls in this land shall know that they are as equal as any other one of 7.5 billion people on this earth. I am obliged to you Mr. Speaker.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that.

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Dr. S. E. BROWN, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

Madam CHAIR: This Honourable House is now in Committee.

Part I, Clauses 1 to 19 was called and passed.

Part II, Clauses 20 to 30 was called and passed.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Madam Chairman, I beg to move that in Clause 21 which seeks to amend a number of the clauses of the Constitution that clause which refers specifically to 34D 1 (c) instead of reading as follows:

“The motions adopted by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the total membership of the Senate and the House of Assembly in joint session”

It now reads instead as follows:

“The motion is adopted by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the membership of each House.”

I also beg to move an amendment to Clause 34D 1 (e) which is again found in that clause. Instead of reading as follows:

“The Senate and the House of Assembly sitting in Joint Session on the summons of the Speaker considered a report and by Resolution supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of total membership of the Senate and the House Assembly in Joint Session declare that he shall be removed from office.”

It shall read instead as follows:

“The Senate and the House of Assembly sitting in their respective House on the summons of the President of the Senate and the Speaker consider the report and by Resolution supported by the votes of not less than two-thirds of the membership of each House, the Senate and the House of Assembly in joint session declare that he shall be removed from office.”

The question that Part II stand part, as amended, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

First Schedule was called and passed.

Second Schedule was called and passed.

Third Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. Ms. M. A. Mottley seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill, with amendments, in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Ms. M. A. Mottley, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Constitution (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2021.

The question was put.

A Division was called for.

Ayes: Hon. Ms. M. A. MOTTLEY, Lt. Col. Hon. J. D. BOSTIC, Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID, Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND, Ms. T. N. S.-A. MOORE, His Honour N. G. H. ROWE, Hon. Ms. S. J. O. BRADSHAW, Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY, Hon. I. A. WEIR, Hon. C. S. V. HUSBANDS, Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, Hon. P. R. PHILIPS, Dr. S. E. BROWNE, Hon. J. A. KING, Hon. C. E. JORDAN, Hon. Ms. C. Y. FORDE, Hon. R. ST.C. TOPPIN, Hon. A. R. FORDE, Hon. G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL, Hon. C. MCD. GRIFFITH, Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY, Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS

Noes: None.

Mr. SPEAKER: The results of the Division, 25 Honourable Members voted aye, and no Honourable Members voted no, the Bill is therefore now passed and so cited.

Mr. CLERK: Mr. Speaker, messages from her Excellency the Governor General.

Mr. SPEAKER: Her Excellency the Governor-General wrote to the Honourable the House of Assembly.

“Her Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly of the following: Section 28, subsection 1 of the Emergency Management Act, CAP 160(A) states that: Where the Governor-General is satisfied that an emergency has arisen as a result of a person or an animal having a communicable disease or a notifiable disease the Governor-General may by proclamation on the advice of the Prime Minister after the Prime Minister has consulted or has been advised by the Chief Medical Officer (C.M.O.) declare that a public health emergency exists. Her Excellency further has the honour to inform the Honourable the House of Assembly that in accordance with Section 28A, subsection 3 of the said CAP 160(A), she has declared a public health emergency. Signed Governor-General Government House Barbados 28th September, 2021

PAPERS (REVERTED)

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay a Statement in the matter of the National Vaccination Fund of Barbados Acquisition of Vaccines signed by the Director of Finance, Mr. Ian Carrington before the Honourable Chamber as promised. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that we have come to the end of today's Sitting. I beg to move that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 5th October, 2021 at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, 5th March, 2021 at 10 o'clock a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Order No. 6, the Prime Minister's speech, passage on 1937 and 1938. The paragraph 'I disagree and humbly so...' appears twice word for word, and each copy is preceded by a paragraph ending with the same sentences about Martineau House and the July 26 speech. The second copy (two paragraphs, about 270 words) appears to be a repeat typed in error and has been left out, keeping the paragraph that goes on to the founding of the Barbados Progressive League. Please confirm.

Q3. Order No. 6, after the Prime Minister's opening. The procedural sentence 'The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.' comes straight after the Prime Minister's opening speech and before the Leader of the Opposition speaks; it appears again, in its proper place, after her reply. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee. The procedural sentence puts 'Dr. S. E. BROWN, Chairman of Committees' in the Chair, the Chair is labelled 'Madam CHAIR' and addressed as 'Madam Chairman', and the report is made by 'Mr. CHAIRMAN'. The PRESENT list and speech labels have Dr. S. E. Browne. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Adjournment. Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw moves the adjournment 'until Tuesday, 5th October, 2021', but the procedural sentence reads 'Tuesday, 5th March, 2021'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Division on the third reading. The division list spells 'Hon. P. R. PHILIPS'; elsewhere the label is Hon. P. R. PHILLIPS. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Committee, clause 21. Hon. D. D. Marshall's second amendment is typed as an italic procedural line. Its wording, 'sitting in their respective House... the Senate and the House of Assembly in joint session declare', keeps 'in joint session' although the amendment removes the joint sitting. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at the Worthing Corporate Centre at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 28th September, 2021, with Mr. Speaker in the Chair; prayers were taken by the Reverend Mark Harewood. The Minutes of September 21, 2021 were deferred and Standing Orders were suspended. On the motion of the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, the House agreed to replace the Constitution (Amendment) Bill of which notice had been given on September 20, 2021 with a revised Bill dated September 27, 2021.

Under Order No. 6 the Prime Minister, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, moved the second reading of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2021. She said it did four things: it revoked the Barbados Independence Order of 1966 while keeping the Constitution that had been its Schedule; it provided for a Barbadian Head of State; it changed the Oath of Allegiance from Her Majesty to the State of Barbados; and it vested in the State everything previously vested in the Crown. She traced the journey from the 1937 rebellion and the founding of the Barbados Progressive League in March 1938, said work on a new Constitution and a Charter of Barbados would follow, with consultation from January, and gave vaccination figures of 132 000 people, about 58 per cent of those eligible. She asked the House to end a period of 396 years in which a British monarch had been Head of State.

The Leader of the Opposition, Bishop the Hon. J. J. S. Atherley, said she had promised to speak for about 45 minutes. He warned that 'it is but a small step to tyranny from absolute power', quoted Thomas Jefferson on inclusion, and pressed the question whether the Barbados Parliament could lawfully revoke an Order in Council of the United Kingdom, with sharp exchanges across the floor. Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw called the moment long overdue, and the House was suspended until 3 p.m.

After the suspension Hon. D. D. Marshall read from the preamble to the Constitution, recalled his own oath of office in 2018, and explained that removing the President would need two-thirds of each House and a review committee of eminent judges. Mr. E. G. Hinkson called himself a lifelong republican. Ms. T. N. S-A. Moore, Dr. the Hon. W. F. Duguid, Mr. T. A. Prescod, Hon. C. E. Jordan, Hon. C. S. V. Husbands, whom the Speaker reminded to give former Prime Ministers their correct titles, Hon. J. A. King, Hon. I. A. Weir, Dr. S. E. Browne and Hon. R. R. Straughn supported the Bill. Dr. Browne congratulated Her Excellency Dame Sandra Mason, a native of St. Philip North, on her nomination. The Prime Minister replied and the Bill was read a second time.

In Committee Hon. D. D. Marshall moved amendments to clause 21, so that a motion on the removal of the President, and the later Resolution, would need the votes of two-thirds of the membership of each House rather than of a joint session. Part II was agreed as amended and the Schedules passed. On a division on the third reading the Bill passed by 25 votes to none and was cited as the Constitution (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2021.

The Clerk announced, and the Speaker read, a message from the Governor-General that she had declared a public health emergency under section 28A of the Emergency Management Act, Cap. 160A. Reverting to Papers, the Prime Minister laid a Statement on the National Vaccination Fund of Barbados Acquisition of Vaccines signed by the Director of Finance, Mr. Ian Carrington. The House was adjourned until Tuesday, 5th October, 2021 at 10 a.m.