
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

THE SENATE

Wednesday, October 19, 2005

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, October 19, 2005, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP, K.A. (President)

Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E., G.C.M., B.A. (Hons) (P.G.C.E.), J.P. (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, G.C.M, J.P., B.A. (Econ. & Hist.) Dip. Pub. Admin. M.Sc. (Financial Studies) (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. J. E. D. WILLIAMS, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., M.B.A, J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of the Civil Service)

Senator Sir John Stanley GODDARD, K.A., G.C.M., B.Com., F.C.A. (Hons.), LL.D. (Hons.) (U.W.I.)

Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A. (Spec. Hons.), M.A., LL.M. (Hons.) (U.W.I.), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

Senator R. W. GRANT, B.A. (Econ.) G.Dip., M.A. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator I. St. C. LINTON

Senator Miss P. E. PARRIS, J.P.

Senator G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL

Senator Miss. S. C. V. HUSBANDS, B.A. (Hons.)

Senator F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Senator Dr. D. S. LOWE, Ph. D., Dip. Theology, B.A., MED, ED.D.

Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLow, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (Dunelm)

Senator Dr. F. L. CHANDLER, B.Sc. (Hons.), Ph.D.

Senator Sir Allan FIELDS, KCMG

Senator R. O. MARVILLE, B.A. (Hons.), M.A., African Studies, M.B.A.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received excuses for the absence of Senator Eastmond, Senator Nicholls, Senator Barker and Senator Sir Roy Trotman.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: I am commanded to lay the following documents:

1. Protocol V of the Social Partnership, 2005 – 2007.
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Barbados Light & Power Co. Ltd.) Order, 2005.
3. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Bico Limited) Order, 2005.
4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Refund) (Marva Scott) Order, 2005.
5. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Halco Group Limited and H.N.R. Walinford) Order, 2005.
6. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Contracting Consulting Engineering) Order, 2005.

7. Income Tax (Amendment) Regulations, 2005.
8. Annual Report of the Enterprise Growth Fund for the year 2004.
9. Agricultural Diagnostic and Other Services (Fees) Order, 2005.
10. Markets and Slaughterhouses (Amendment) Regulation, 2005.
11. Annual World Cup Barbados Inc. for the year 2004.
12. Annual Report of the Barbados Port Authority Inc. for the year 2004.
13. Report of the National Conservation Commission for the period April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003.
14. Financial Statements of the National Conservation Commission for the period April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003.
15. Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation for the period April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005.
16. Chairman's Report and Financial Statement of Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited for the year ended June 30, 2004.
17. Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation – Annual Report on Land for the Landless Programme for the year 2004.
18. Insurance (Catastrophe Reserve Fund) (Amendment) Regulation, 2005.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Order No. 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this Sitting.

The question was put and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following Bills:

1. Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation Bill, 2005.

2. Barbados Investment and Development (Amendment) Corporation Bill, 2005.

The question was put and agreed to.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: I beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation Bill, 2005.
2. Barbados Investment and Development (Amendment) Corporation Bill, 2005.
3. Referendum Bill, 2005

The question was put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – REFERENDUM BILL, 2005

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, the Bill before us is a simple and straightforward one even though it has its origins in a subject that is of great significance to us as a nation moving to its full maturity, in the same way as one moves from childhood to adulthood, and along that path has to undertake a number of responsibilities and make a number of decisions which would have far-reaching results in one's life down the road.

Mr. President, the Bill seeks to make provision for the holding of a referendum at a date to be determined on the question of whether Barbados should become a Parliamentary Republic with the Head of State being a President with the executive power continuing to remain and be exercised by a Cabinet, with the Prime Minister as Head of Government. Mr. President, as you are aware, there are two well-known forms of republican Government, of which I am sure most persons are familiar. On one hand you have the form which is practised in the United States of America and on the other hand, for reference purposes, we have the system which is practised in Trinidad and Tobago and then you have a number of variations in between. You have countries like France and Guyana with different degrees of powers exercised by the Presidents and the Prime Ministers of those respective countries.

11.20 a.m.

Sir, what is being proposed, in the case of Barbados, is a form of republican government similar to that which is used in Trinidad and Tobago, with the President being the Head of State but with the executive powers continuing to be exercised by a Cabinet and the Prime Minister as the Head of Government.

Mr. President, this is a matter which has been canvassed far and wide over a fairly extensive period by the

Barbados Labour Party. In fact, it was an issue, in its Manifestos between the period 1994 and 2003, discussed on a number of occasions. It was an issue that gained a fair degree of prominence during the consultation held by the Cox Commission in 1979. If you refer to that document, you will notice that the persons who appeared before that Commission expressed the desire to see a republican form of government instituted in Barbados. However, when that Commission came to its conclusions, it recommended that we should continue with the existing form of government in spite of the overwhelming support for the change to a republican form of government.

Sir, the matter was again the subject of much discussion during the consultations held by the Constitution Review Commission, which was Chaired by Sir Henry Forde, from which the recommendation that we are now discussing came.

In spite of the wide consultation that took place on that occasion, this Barbados Labour Party's Administration, having raised the issue over the years and having been convinced to some extent that it had been widely aired and discussed, nevertheless decided that it would stay with its original decision that the people should be given a chance to express their views, not only before the Commissions but through the form of a referendum. That is why this Bill is before us today.

Mr. President, the Bill seeks to do that at a date to be determined in the future. We refer to the section IV of the Bill, which indicates that the Governor-General shall by proclamation appoint as Referendum Day, a day for the holding of the referendum, being a day not earlier than the sixtieth day and not later than the ninetieth day, following the date of the proclamation. The idea here is, the Governor-General will give a minimum of sixty days notice for persons to prepare themselves when the decision is taken to hold the referendum.

The Bill before us is not setting a date for the referendum. It is simply creating the legislative authority for a referendum to be held on the occasion that a decision is taken.

Mr. President, I understand that there is no explicit reference, in any of the pieces of legislation, which we now have in place to the holding of a referendum. Hence, the necessity to provide this piece of legislation to authorise a referendum.

The Bill mandates the referendum to be held in the usual manner of an election with the administration by the Electoral and Boundaries Commission.

Sir, the question to the electorate requires a yes or no, that is all it requires. Many persons enquired whether this proposed step is necessary, and many of them, trivialise the discussion asking what may appear to them to be an important question, but to me is not as important as they may believe. The question is: What are the benefits for the ordinary man in the street? Sir, they conclude that if there are no benefits for the ordinary man in the street, then there is nothing to bother about, for there are more important things that are going on that one should pay attention to.

Sir, that is usually the response of people who do not want to support the exercise. Even though at heart, they are convinced that it is something they should support but they have to find a reason to deny themselves that support.

The truth is this. In this life, there are many decisions we have to make, as we move from one stage to another in our development process, that do not necessarily lead to financial reward, but are still important to us, as persons growing from children to adults and assuming responsibility for our own affairs.

Sir, a matter like this must not necessarily be seen within the context of whether the ordinary man in the street will, as a direct result of this decision, benefit financially. We have to ask ourselves if as a nation, we should continue with the present structure of Government where the Head of State of our nation is a non-Barbadian, and whether as persons who want to believe that our nation is a mature one, should not go the next step beyond 1966 when Independence was declared.

Mr. President, if you trace the history of this country, starting from 1625, when we had the first settlement, you will discover that along the road, during the period 1625 and 1966, there were a number of milestones which showed the steady progress and development of this country as a nation. Underpinning all of them, regardless of who was in charge of the political affairs of the country, you will notice certain characteristics. You will discover that there was always a spirit of independence and a desire for self-determination if you look at all of them... starting in 1651 with the events which took place in Oistins at that Tavern where the settlers declared their independence from the Commonwealth of Britain and where words that are attributed to those who were involved in the 1776 Declaration of Independence of the United States really originated.

11.30 a.m.

Sir, we know the words, "no taxation without representation", but we are always relating them to 1776 when, in fact, they were first uttered in Oistins within our own jurisdiction. It was actually January 1652.

As you go from that, Mr. President, you will see along the way another milestone which I have chosen to highlight. There are others in between. In fact, when I was going through the long list of important developments that took place in Barbados' history, in terms of our maturity and growth from being a child, as it was moving towards adulthood, there were many significant sign posts to show how we developed into the country that we now know and have.

When the British Government... in fact, I should go back even before 1651 and I should mention 1639 because I hear a lot of people, and people that one would normally expect to reason differently, make the non-point that if we go to a Republican State within the Commonwealth, the British tourists who now come here would stop coming to Barbados.

I have visited London on a few occasions and I saw people in Hyde Park and heard them criticising the Monarchy and these are British people who were born and live in England. I do not know why some people in Barbados must go around trying to create doubt and fear in people's minds by saying to them that do not follow them, the day we become a Republic the British tourists would stop coming here and we rely so much on tourism. This is not true.

The tourists that may stop are ones like those same people in Barbados who express that same view but I am sure that the bulk of them will not stop coming to Barbados because of that, because a number of those same people hold the view that even in Britain where they live, the system needs to be changed.

In 1639 when the Parliament of Barbados was first established, at that time Britain, with the rule of Cromwell, even the British Parliament was not meeting. Now, if you study English history as I have done, you will know the chaos that took place over those years in England even though it was a Monarchy.

Mr. President, I hear people say, when they want to dismiss the issue of a Republic to look at Guyana and ask is that what we will become if we become a Republic? In truth and in fact, the issues in Guyana have nothing to do with Guyana being a Republic. The issues have to do with the question of who is responsible for management and whether or not they make the right decisions.

Sir, in order to create fear in people's minds, they also choose certain countries which have problems and ask if that is what we want to be. They suggested by inference that is what is going to happen in Barbados if Barbados becomes a Republic but nothing is further from the truth.

Sir, this is not what will happen because it can happen even now, if we do not manage our affairs well, so it has nothing of being a Republic or otherwise. The point though is that we have to decide, if as a people, we are going to remain where we are in terms of the system of Government or if we want to go that final step and become fully mature.

Mr. President, if you go back to the 1876 when the British Government took the decision that it wanted a number of the Colonies to go back to the Crown colony status, and Jamaica was one of those countries that gave in, the settlers here refused. Therefore, the point I am making is that if you look at all of these situations, you will discover that, historically, this country has been inhabited by persons who determined that they wanted to be in ultimate control of their affairs.

All along, regardless of who was responsible for the political affairs of the country, there was a certain degree of independence from the British Government and that is what brought us through the ages up to 1966.

In the 1951 you had the Adult Suffrage, then in 1954, you had ministerial Government and the process continued. Therefore, what you are seeing is an evolution. We did not begin where we are. Over the years the system evolved and that is how I see the process.

Therefore, by 1966 when the decision was taken for Barbados to become an independent State but remain as a Monarchy that took us another step beyond where we were previously. I am saying now that we have a final step to make to be truly in charge of all of our affairs.

Sir, a number of persons who want to trivialise the proposal asked what will be different. Now, the small point that is always made is that if His Excellency wishes to leave Barbados to go anywhere, even to St. Lucia, he has to get permission from Her Majesty. People may not regard that but even that, apart from the fact that everybody else has to swear allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen and so on.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, that the time has come for us to become mature as a nation and to move beyond where we are now. It is that same spirit of independence and self determination that were reflected in all of those milestones along the way that we as a nation develop, and as our system evolved over the years, which is guiding and inspiring us now to make this final step.

The question which has been put before us in this Bill is one which goes as follows, having set out the preamble, as it were, it says:

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW COMMISSION THAT BARBADOS SHOULD BECOME A PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC WITH THE HEAD OF STATE OF BARBADOS BEING A PRESIDENT WHO IS A CITIZEN OF BARBADOS?

YES //

NO //

The answer is yes or no and that is all to which the electorate will be asked to respond. On the basis of the outcome, whenever the referendum is held, the Government will then decide.

There are those who say to me that there is no need for a referendum that the Government has the majority and it could go ahead and do that. Mr. President, all of that may be true but this Administration will always make sure that when it has to make fundamental decisions that the people have the opportunity to say how they feel about them. Sir, that is the reason we have decided that at an appropriate time the people will be given the opportunity to say yes or no, so the people's voice will be our guide on this matter.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. President, with those few remarks, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, the Bill before the Senate is intended to be an enabling piece of legislation because at present there is no law in Barbados that authorises the holding of a referendum, so the passage of this Bill and the assenting to it by His Excellency the Governor-General and its proclamation, would enable the Government to put the machinery in place for the holding of a referendum on the question identified in the Bill.

Mr. President, the issue has to do with whether or not Barbados should move to a republican status. Quite a bit of discussion has taken place in the country over the last seven years on this question. What I have found troubling about the discussion, if I may say so, is that after all of it, if you were to walk up to the average Barbadian and ask him or her what is a republic, he or she is not able to tell you with any degree of clarity, cogency or conviction because much of the discussion has proceeded on the assumption that all we are talking about is the changing of our Head of State from a Monarch represented locally by His Excellency the Governor-General, to a President who is a citizen of Barbados.

Mr. President, there is no need for me to go into any long speech on the merits or demerits of Barbados becoming a republic because as I said the legislation is not about

whether or not we should become a republic, it is just an enabling piece of legislation that will put the Government in a position where it can put the machinery in place for the holding of a referendum on the question.

Mr. President, I believe that I am under some obligation to make the point that the transition from a monarchy to a republic is nothing new, it has a very long history. I can go as far back as my memory leads. Mr. President, those of us who studied ancient history will recall that Rome, according to the ancient historians and in some cases according to legend, from the foundations of the city in 753 B.C., was ruled by kings and continued so to be until, I believe, about 511 B.C. when the last king, King Tarquinius the Proud, referred to by classicists as Tarquinius Superbus, was driven out. He of course was accused of raping the daughter of a Roman Noble, so even that is not new.

Asides.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: I was reading a commentary recently on the late Military Leader of Zaire, President Mobutu Sese-Seko, who was described, apparently very endearingly, by many in the population, as "the cock that moves from hen to hen knowing nothing called fatigue". As far back then as 510 B.C. the Romans drove out King Tarquinius for what they regarded as revolting conduct. Of course that was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Mr. President, there were dissatisfactions with other kings before him and they moved to a republic which was governed on a completely different basis and headed by two Consuls who were elected annually by Praetors and Quaestors. Of course, after republican status they moved to one-man rule, dictatorship, under Octavian and all the others who followed him. That too may not be too unnatural a progression either but this has a long history.

Senator Griffith referred to England in the 17th Century. Before that the united 17 provinces in the Netherlands revolted against the Spanish monarchy and around the year 1568 declared themselves a republic as well, which is survived, I believe, to this day. Then in the 17th Century in England, as a result of the arbitrariness and highhandedness of the Crown, particularly under Charles I, there was a revolt against the monarchy. Charles I paid for it with his neck, and for a while under Oliver Cromwell, as Senator Griffith mentioned, England was declared a republic. It was not until the restoration in 1660, when Charles II came to the throne, was that situation reversed. Of course by 1688, what historians called the glorious revolution, the bloodless revolution occurred and as a result compromises that only the British can make, resulted in the preservation of the monarchy and appropriate powers being given to Parliament.

In the 18th Century, we have the example of the United States of America revolting against the monarchy in England under George III, and declaring themselves independent. Mr. President, Senator Griffith is correct. The catchwords of that revolutionary period were the words "no taxation without representation." He is correct in saying those words had their genesis here in Barbados. Sir, they became a Republic because they were dissatisfied with how Royal power was being used and the extent to which its arbitrary exercise was causing them pain, inconvenience and disadvantage. 11.50 a.m.

Mr. President, most historians think that the modern period began with the French Revolution in 1789, when Louis XVI had to face a revolt from the Third Estate. The bulk of the French population consisted of Royalty, the Clergy and the Nobles. That constituted a privileged class in France who had to face the might and resentment of the Third Estate, the bulk of the population who were dissatisfied with the way Royal power was being used. Sir, to add insult to injury, Louis XVI was perceived to be a very weak man, who had a very strong but equally odious wife in the person of Marie Antoinette, who was not French by birth but was Austrian, that fact having tended to exacerbate feelings against her.

Sir, there was the transition in France. They had quite a bit of turbulence before they settled down but certainly the transition was from Monarchy to Republic, with France having remained a republic to this day, having passed through some turbulence and a few mountains to climb, to its present stability.

Mr. President, if we go into the 19th Century, as far as I can recall, all of the Latin American countries are Republics. These countries have all either revolted against Spanish Monarchy in the 19th Century or, in the case of Brazil, against Portuguese Monarchy. These countries have all associated the Monarchy with oppression, repression, suppression and depression, and have declared themselves Republics after having won their Independence.

Mr. President, moving into the 20th Century, there is evidence all around us. Senator Griffith pointed to Trinidad and Tobago, which has a Ceremonial President and the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, which has an Executive President. Sir, all of the instances which I have cited, with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, have been instances where people felt that a dignified life was being denied them, as a result of the arbitrary exercise of Royal power. Therefore, when Senator Griffith ridicules, as it were, persons who ask what difference it is going to make, historically, that question was asked as well.

Mr. President, people also saw how becoming a republic and getting away from an oppressive monarchy was going to change their lives. Therefore, in every practical respect, their lives were changed for the better because they

were dealing with monarchies that wielded the same kind of power that has now been bequeathed to modern cabinets. They were dealing with monarchies that wielded executive power and, therefore, monarchs that had the capacity to affect their lives directly, such as to the kind of housing they had, the kind of food they eat, how often they got that food and the taxes they paid, *et cetera*. Of course, when the Romans drove out Tarquinius Superbus, they drove him out in order to succeed to a better and different kind of life from that under which they had to survive, thanks to the arbitrariness and the highhandedness of monarchical forms.

Mr. President, the difference we confront today is that the Monarch we are trying to get rid of, to put it as neutrally as I can, is not an Executive Monarch here in Barbados or in her own country even. She is a Ceremonial figure. What powers she has derive from what lawyers and constitutional historians call the Royal prerogative, which is that residue of powers that remain with her, which have not been bequeathed to the Cabinet of the United Kingdom, Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. President, even though the Queen is our Head of State, real everyday power is wielded by the Cabinet of Barbados. Therefore, we do not have a Monarch in our constitutional life, who has the capacity to cause us any discomfort, pain, or one whose wife has the capacity, as Marie Antoinette did, to flaunt herself and to accentuate the differences between royalty and commoners. Sir, ours is a completely different situation and, therefore, the question has to be asked, what is it that we are trying to get away from.

Mr. President, this question can best be answered by trying to come to grips, first of all, with what we mean when we say that a country has become a republic in the first place. Sir, as said earlier, my disappointment with the discussion that has taken place in Barbados over the last seven years, is that none of the publicists has bothered to take the time to concretise a definition or an explanation of a republic, in such a way that people would be able to distinguish between what we have now and what it is that we are supposed to be moving to, if a majority votes in favour of the transition when the Referendum is held.

Mr. President, James Madison, who became the President of the United States of America in 1809, was an activist in favour of the American Constitution, after the war of American Independence succeeded and the Americans were trying to hammer out a Constitution under which the American people should be called upon to live. President Madison was trying to ensure that as many people in the United States of America, and certainly in the larger States, supported the rejection of Monarchy and supported the move to Republican status.

12.00 noon

Sir, in order to do that, he had to explain to the American people what the Constitution meant when it talked about a republic. He indicated then that when we speak of a republic, we speak of a Government that derives its powers directly or indirectly from the mass of the people and is administered by persons who hold their public offices for a fixed period of time during pleasure or during good behaviour.

There are two components of the Madisonian concept of a republic. The source of power coming directly or indirectly from the mass of people and then the extent to which officeholders could trace the holding of their offices to ordinary men and women on the streets, who could be affected by decisions that they would make from day to day.

Mr. President, the deriving of power directly from the masses of people takes place in Barbados every five years when we have to face the people in a general election, or in such a case as in the present where we might have to face the people in a referendum. Outside of that, the direct influence of masses of people on the decision-making process in Barbados went through the window a long time ago. In fact, I do not think it really existed since the Europeans came to this region. The best example of that direct exercise of mass power took place in old African States, the real originators of genuine democracy but concepts which were appropriated by the Athenians and marketed as their own. The whole concept of direct democracy among the Athenians had to do with people meeting whenever important decisions were to be made in an open square, debating the issues and taking decisions there and then with their leaders taking the cue from them directly.

Mr. President, as societies became more complex and as there has been a greater degree of functional specificity, people having to perform specific functions in a highly complex and political and administrative environment, we have had to rely, not on direct democracy but rather on representative democracy where we appoint representatives to make decisions on our behalf.

We satisfy the first limb of the Madisonian definition of a republic in that our officeholders, be they the politicians themselves, the elected representatives or be they the vast bureaucracy that is responsible for the daily administration of the State, these all derive their power indirectly from the masses of the people of Barbados. Sir, this is so in most countries of the world because public administration has become so complex and human needs have become so diverse that the practice of direct democracy, such as the Athenians and the Africans before them did, is not possible. It would be very clumsy if every decision that had to be made here in Barbados, we had to call people to

Independence Square or the Garrison Savannah to discuss it. We would spend all our time doing this because there are so many decisions to make in any one week, month or year and, therefore, we practise a representative form of democracy.

Mr. President, not only does the Madisonian definition deal with where the power in a republic comes from but it also has to do with how people who administer the republic have to function. Madison makes the point that these people hold their offices for a fixed period during the pleasure of the Crown or society and, in some cases, during good behaviour, as is usually the case with judges, persons responsible for the judicial arm of Government, who hold their offices during good behaviour. I believe the Latin expression *quamdiu bene se gesserint* as long as they are not subject to any infelicities or any thing of the kind.

Mr. President, both limbs of the Madisonian definition, the exercise of power deriving from the masses of people and people holding their offices like in the public service where people have to hold office for a fixed period, there is a retirement age at which they have to go. Sir, even though the retirement age has recently been extended, there is still one at which they have to go so they hold their offices until that fixed period comes during the pleasure of their employers. Of course, provision is made for the possibility that they could be removed for malfeasances of this or that kind.

Mr. President, if we satisfy both limbs of the Madisonian definition of a republic, the question has to be asked, is Barbados not a republic already. The argument has been put quite cogently, with some justification by constitutional theorists, and with very good reason, because the core issues that relate to republicanism already exists in Barbados. In fact, there are people who argue with equal cogency that Britain is also a republic because both limbs of the Madisonian definition obtain in the United Kingdom as well but for this exception, that there is an abnormal outgrowth on our Constitution and that excrescence has to do with the fact that we have a Head of State who does not derive what power she has from the masses of the people of Barbados. She does not derive it from the people of the United Kingdom either. She does not hold office for any fixed period of time, the present monarch has been on the Throne, I seem to recall, from 1952. Sir, speculation has been rife for the last twenty years that she might abdicate the Throne but it has not and nobody can send her anywhere because she does not hold office for any fixed period of time. Sir, her status as the British Monarch does not derive from any exercise of a franchise by the masses of the people of the United Kingdom. Mr. President, what applies in the United Kingdom applies here in Barbados as well.
12.10 p.m.

Mr. President, we have no control at all over the exercise of power by Her Majesty. She does not derive her power from the people of Barbados and there is no time limit. She does not hold office during our pleasure or during anybody's pleasure. She holds office on the basis of birth and connection and, therefore, by inheritance. That is the only facet of the Barbados Constitution that is out of sync with genuine republican sentiment. Every other facet of the Barbados Constitution conforms to republican standards but for this excrescence, the apex of the Constitution of a Head of State does not derive her power from the people and does not administer or hold office for any fixed period of time.

Sir, it is with that I think the people of Barbados are called to rustle. Her Majesty being the Head of State does not affect us here from day-to-day. She has no executive powers. The powers that were hers and those of her predecessors from time whereof the memory of man runs not to the contrary, are powers that are now vested in the Cabinet of Barbados, powers that are now vested in the Cabinet of the United Kingdom, but as the Head of State of Barbados her status does not conform to genuine republican sentiments. She represents something of irregularity, an excrescence at the apex of our Constitution if one embraces, as I think one cannot help but do, Madison's concept of what a genuine republic should be.

It is that question, which I think, has to be put to the people of Barbados; how do they feel about this contradiction between the bulk of their Constitution and the fact that we have a Head of State, the origin of whose power and the exercise of whose influence has nothing to do with the people of Barbados or even with the people of the country in which she normally resides.

Sir, that is where the Democratic Labour Party will be discussing this issue. I made it clear before, that the movement from a monarchical system of government to a republican form of government is not simply a question of the changing of the title of the Head of State or the nationality of the Head of State. All the other historical examples, which I gave pointed to changes that were going to take place in the daily lives of ordinary men and women. When Guyana moved from a monarchical form to a republican form of Cooperative Republic, even though the thing prayed for came short of the prayer during the Burnham and Jagan years, the point is, there was a promise that the people of Guyana would have been better off. That republican status would deepen democracy and would make the lives of the people of Guyana better.

Sir, I agree with Senator Griffith 100 per cent that those people who vilify Guyana and link its present problems to the fact that it became a republic are far off mark. A country divided down the center by race in circumstances where racial differences based on religion and cultural differences

are virtually irreconcilable, is bound to have problems no matter who is in charge and no matter what form of government. In my view, the problems of Guyana, and history is on my side, in 1953, when the Guyana Constitution was suspended, they were not a Republic but they still had serious problems there, problems based on racial antagonism and that kind of thing.

Mr. President, these are problems that do not admit of easy resolution. At one stage, in the very recent past, there was a discussion on the partitioning of Guyana as a solution to that country's problem. Certainly, at the last biannual congress, there was talk of shared government as a means of trying to deal with some of the more intractable difficulties that have befallen that country.

Sir, if the truth is to be told, Guyana has an Executive President and Trinidad and Tobago has a ceremonial one, but because the same demographic dynamics obtain there now, the same difficulties have begun to surface. It has nothing at all to do with a republican form of government but more to do with the composition of the population and the deep cleavages based on race and culture that have scared those societies. Sir, to use either Trinidad or Guyana as an argument against a move to a republican form is really to miss the mark altogether.

Mr. President, there still has to be, in my view, some promise of a better life. It cannot just be psychic satisfaction that we need to come of age, that taking the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty is beneath our dignity or we cannot take an oath to Prince Harry. We take it now. When we take an oath before His Excellency the Governor-General, we swear allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen and her successors. If Prince Harry is one, we have already taken it, so, it is not an argument at all.

Sir, it is not psychic satisfaction of which we are in search but a better life for our people and that is where the Republican Constitution comes in.

Mr. President, as long as this change is made, if the people vote for a change, there has to be a completely different grundnorm as it were in the Constitution of Barbados. Its preamble, has to say different things, make different affirmations, and the whole structure and organisation of the society has to undergo certain changes.

Sir, what our position as a Party will be on this issue will depend on what is contained in the Republican Constitution and the extent to which we think that it promises to make the lives of the people of Barbados better, to keep tensions down to a minimum and to enlarge opportunity for the people of this country.

Mr. President, modern Barbados had its genius in the 1930s when there were disturbances across this region and people clamoured for a better life.
12.20 p.m.

The challenges facing Barbados in the 1930s, in fact, facing all the countries of this region were social, political and economic. Politically, the challenge facing us was the fact that we operated on a very limited franchise and that men of property occupied this Chamber and the Other Place and were voted for by men of property. So property was voting for property, obviously to protect the interest of property. The mass of the people of Barbados were kept outside like dejected suppliants.

This challenge was met, I believe, around 1950 when the country moved to Universal Adult Suffrage on which basis, we were then able to chart a course for ourselves that led, eventually, to independence.

It must always be borne in mind that unlike the Latin American countries and quite a few of the African countries, ours was not an independence fought for in the same sense in which people in Latin America fought for independence. Ours was really a negotiated independence. What battles there were, were fought here in Barbados but basically, when we went to the United Kingdom, it was really to negotiate independence and a Constitution that was acceptable to the Colonial power which had been responsible for us from 1627 when this island was settled.

Therefore, we have met the political challenge but as I said, there is an excrescence on the independence Constitution with which we are now seeking to grapple, as a result of the provisions contained in this Bill.

The economic challenges, of course, had to do with the dominance of a merchant planter elite in Barbados which had defined life in Barbados for the better part of its history. The challenge was to modernise the economy to move it away from merchant planter dominance and in the direction of a more diversified economy, where a larger number of people participated in the productive process and, of course, where the consumer exercised more choice.

We are still fighting that battle but we have made considerable progress, thanks to the input and the contribution made by the two mass institutions which were established coming out of the 1930s, which are the trade union and the mass political Party. These were two creatures of the disturbances of the 1930s.

Charles Duncan O'Neal's attempt at a mass political Party in the 1920s was a continuing source of inspiration but he himself was not able to establish that mass political Party

in the same sense in which we know mass political Parties today. Both the trade unions and the mass political Party have made a massive and substantial contribution to the development of the people of Barbados over the last 50 to 60 years.

The social challenges, of course, had to do with meeting head on, an endemic racism in Barbados and also a society that was stratified in such a way that the bulk of the population, very much like in France in 1989, was outside the pail of economic and political grace. Of course, all of this was sanctified and propped up by an established church.

The late Rt. Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams, initiated the discussions for the disestablishment of the church and those negotiations were completed under the late Rt. Excellent Errol Barrow, when religion was freed up in Barbados and the church was no longer an arm and mouthpiece of the State.

I believe when the same thing happened in Europe, a former British Politician, John Strachey made the point that in the same way that capitalism meant free market in goods that Protestantism meant free market in God. You no longer had to find God through the Bishop of Rome, but you could find him independently of any contact with the Bishop of Rome.

In the case of Barbados, you no longer had to find him through the Archbishop of Canterbury but you could find him at the Sons of God Apostolic, the Nazarene or wherever else you wanted to go, so that we have made substantial progress over the years. This debate on the possible move from a Monarchical form to a Republican form is an attempt for another step into the future.

As I said, there are those who argue that Barbados is already a Republic. There are those who argue that Britain is already a Republic. There is an abundance of literature already on this subject but we have to make peace with the fact, if we accept James Madison's characterisation of a Republic that Royalty represents something of an abnormal outgrowth on our Constitution.

Mr. President, I find no fault, I have no problem and my Party has no problem with a Bill, which is but an enabling piece of legislation to facilitate the holding of a referendum in Barbados. There is really nothing in the Bill itself that merits opposition. Certainly, that is my opinion because all we are doing is empowering the Government to hold a referendum, since there is no law in Barbados at the present time that can validate the holding of a referendum, so we are not opposing the Bill.

We look forward to the circulation, soon, of the Draft Republican Constitution, which will put flesh on the dry bones of what this Bill contains. Sir, if there is going to be a referendum, I hope that there would be an enlightening debate on the subject that puts the people of Barbados in a position where they could make an informed choice, based on honest argument placed before them by credible politicians and other publicists.

With those few words, Mr. President, I am obliged to you. The Bill will have our support. Thank you very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator the Very Rev. H. E. Crichlow.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW:
Thank you, Mr. President.
12.30 p.m.

Mr. President, I rise to comment on the Bill, which is asking this Senate to support the idea of having a referendum. I thought that the presentations by both the Leader of the Senate, Senator Griffith and the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Stuart, were both very instructive.

Mr. President, I think that the idea of a referendum needs to be discussed among the population. This is a constitutional matter and it is not fair to our people to ask them to make a decision on a matter that even lawyers are very divided on. Most lawyers do not spend much time on constitutional affairs because the Constitution does not pay much money. They have to do it in their legal training but very few lawyers spend much time studying constitutional law.

We have heard the difficulties outlined by Senator Stuart and I would want us to have this sort of discussion shared by most of the people who would have to vote on this matter. The referendum idea is very widespread on the continent of Europe and in countries that have received their form of Government from that part of the continent as opposed to Britain because their way of life and governance is different from ours.

Mr. President, as was very well outlined by Senator Stuart, we have representative Government, that is, our representatives are in the Other Place and the nominated representatives in this House speak for the people and on behalf of the people, and so the idea of a referendum is quite new to the people of Barbados, so when it comes to a matter so complex as the Constitution, I do not really think it is fair to put them in this kind of difficulty.

Mr. President, I know that this will be stoutly opposed because it seems to strike at the heart of the democratic freedom but I do not think that democratic freedom should be based on feeling as much as life in Barbados is based. People vote as they feel to vote and they do things because they feel like doing them and in many cases they are acting out of ignorance, therefore, I do not think that people should be put in a position where they have to act out of feeling and ignorance, that is why I think that the representative idea is the better one.

Sir, it is just unfortunate that we have had to discuss the matter of a referendum in this case. As was also stated, Barbados is a republic in form already, just as Britain is. It has been widely acknowledged that the constitutional monarchy is a contradiction in terms, that is why Britain does not have a written constitution. A monarchy is where the monarch reigns but in Britain the monarch does not reign, the Cabinet has the power and we were shown how this evolved, and in Barbados the same thing happens. Power is centred in the Cabinet. The Cabinet has responsibility for the good governance of Barbados.

Mr. President, this point has to be made over and over again because a lot of people think that only the Prime Minister is responsible for the good governance of Barbados but the Cabinet is responsible and we ought to support this business of the responsibility of Cabinet because ministerial posts are really a matter of patronage almost. A minister is not sure of his position. Sir, once he has been made a minister he could be demoted at any time and without notice, so that the Prime Minister of Barbados has already a lot of power, that is why Ministers of Government should be free so that they can express their candid opinions in Cabinet.

The Prime Minister is first among equals. It is the Cabinet that can allow a country like Barbados to be turned into a dictatorship. That is why I think that in recent Barbadian history, one has to salute those Members of Cabinet who stood up against the Prime Minister. I think this is healthy.

Mr. President, a constitutional monarchy is a contradiction in terms because a monarch should have the power and authority to rule but that does not happen in Britain nor in Barbados. I really think that before this matter of referendum is brought to the people, that the whole of the report that was submitted by the Constitution Review Commission should be discussed because that would enlighten us into the type of Government that we are really voting for in the referendum.
12.40 p.m.

Mr. President, regarding this Bill, I do not believe that in this Bill the Constitution Review Commission have been given the prominence which it should be given. It has done a very fine job but it was set up to advise and to

make recommendations concerning repatriation of the Constitution, so as to ensure that it draws its authority and validity on an Act to the Parliament of Barbados.

Mr. President, in relation to the Referendum, the question that would be asked should not include the words: "...with the recommendation of the Constitution Review Commission." In other words, people should be asked: "Do you agree that Barbados should become a Parliamentary Republic, with the Head of State of Barbados being a President, who is a citizen of Barbados?"

Mr. President, I say this because the responsibility should not be passed on to the Constitution Review Commission. When I was Chairman of the Gambling Commission, I made it quite plain to the authorities that as a Commission, we were not responsible for what the law would say, we were simply asked to make recommendations. Therefore, I think that if it was thought that we were going to be republic, the Cabinet should have agreed to this and then put it out to the people as to whether or not they would agree that Barbados should become a Parliamentary Republic.

Mr. President, people are confused about the idea of a republic. When they read the daily Press, they see a lot about the Latin American Republics. We do not find much stability among them and therefore people are genuinely confused. Sir, as a matter of fact, I do not think we should be discussing Referendum at this time, now that people are in such a state of confusion about so many things. At this time, people are not capable of making the kind of judgment, which this matter requires. That is why I think it should be left to Parliament to decide on the matter as to whether or not we should become a republic.

Mr. President, I know people would say that we are fully mature and that we are independent, but I do not think that generally speaking our people are fully mature when it comes to constitutional matters. It is very difficult to get most of our people to trust the governance of the State and the Church which we have today. People have not reached that level of maturity where they can feel comfortable with qualified people who were born and educated in Barbados. Our people have not reached that level of maturity where they can accept that we ourselves can be experts. They think that experts come from overseas.

Mr. President, if one goes through our system of governance, one would find this level of immaturity. On the other hand, we have very highly qualified men and women in the public service, but most people do not respect them for the kind of people they are, while people from overseas, with less ability, are highly respected. Sir, it is not that Barbadians know the qualifications of these people but the fact that these people are coming from Metropolitan countries seems to

make Barbadians respect them more. Therefore, those who speak of our people as being fully mature are not being fair to the people themselves.

Mr. President, we are talking about service excellence all the time but when one looks around the country, one sees the inefficiency that there is. Sir, some people are made to feel that they are excellent workers, when, in fact, they are mediocre. We, therefore, need to bring the country up to a position of efficiency before we can think of excellence.

Mr. President, I am not saying this to minimise the importance and effect of the National Initiative on Service Excellence (NISE). Attaining excellence should be the goal but I think we need to pass through efficiency before we get to the goal of excellence. Sir, I wish the National Initiative on Service Excellence (NISE) well and I hope that it would inspire some persons to strive for excellence.

Mr. President, our people as a whole are not politically mature as yet, although we have been independent since 1966. Sir, despite the fact that countries become independent, they take a long time before they can reach full maturity. Therefore, without having thought these matters through for themselves, most of our people simply ask those that should be leading them what they should believe, what they should say or how they should vote.

Mr. President, as far as public maturity is concerned, I think that this Bill has come at an inopportune time and that national consideration should have been given to the whole document, including the review of the Barbados Constitution. Sir, I hope when this measure is passed, that there would be a long time before setting a date for a referendum.

Mr. President, I also think we are going down the wrong path in relation to a referendum. We have not had that kind of history and people are not accustomed to making this kind of decision. Therefore, without the level of intellectual participation, which a subject such as this demands, I think we are putting too much responsibility in the hands of our people.
12.50 p.m.

I said earlier that Cabinet is responsible for the good governance of Barbados and not the office of the Prime Minister. A lot of people do not know that the leading person in Barbados is the Governor-General and not the Prime Minister, that the First Lady is the wife of the Governor-General. There should not be any doubt about this but from time to time, you see it in the Press and on the news that somebody else is spoken of as the First Lady but the First Lady is always the

wife of the Governor-General. Sir, people should be told this because it confuses the roles and things that should be reserved for the Governor-General, sometimes, without being consciously done, Prime Ministers have tried to have these courtesies done to them, which are extended to the Governor-General alone. Sir, I speak from personal experience.

Mr. President, this sort of thing is embarrassing to discuss publicly but I have mentioned it to let the general public know that if we have a republic where we have a Ceremonial President with the powers of the present Governor-General, that the Governor-General or the President of Barbados is the first person in Barbados and not the Prime Minister, whoever he or she may be. Sir, without knowing it, we are sliding into an autocracy and would have done this as our own choosing. This is not the kind of democracy that we have here in Barbados.

Mr. President, one last bit of advice to the Ministers who surround the Prime Minister. I want to encourage them to stand on their own feet and give the Prime Minister the advice that he really needs because far too many people who surround leaders tell them what they think they want to hear and so the country does not progress.

Mr. President, at the consultation last week, the Prime Minister asked one group whether there was anything they have left out of their report because they thought that the Minister of Finance would not be in favour of it. This can be said of a lot of areas in our society. It is not the first time because it has been done with several Prime Ministers, where people who surround them give them what they think they ought to hear and leave out important advice because they are afraid he might not countenance it and they may go down in his favour.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have one minute left.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: I think that this is doing a disservice to the people of Barbados.

Mr. President, thank you very much.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
12.56 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds.

Her HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I sat here and listened with almost customary admiration to the sound sensible comments made by our leader, Senator Griffith, and I agree wholeheartedly with the things he said, especially pointing out that this is an evolutionary process. We have reached a stage of maturity where we are ready to complete Independence. I would say, not only maturity but a certain sense of sophistication in some instances.

2.00 p.m.

I also listened to the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and it brought me back to my Sixth Form days, when I studied English History and European History and I was listening to hear him say at one time that a famous, or perhaps I should say, infamous comment had been made: "let them eat cake". I did not hear that and with his sense of humour, I thought that was going to be mentioned. However, he educated us in here today and I would daresay listeners as well, and I think his performance would have been very useful. I need not mention the eloquence, we have come to expect that.

Again, as Senator Griffith said, this creates a legislative framework and that is what is expected today. It does not present a date so that it allows for flexibility. What I would like to empathise personally, Mr. President, is that people have absolutely nothing to fear.

I know the thought of a Republic brings to people's minds the concept of what is called, a Banana Republic or a Totalitarian State. Of course, there is absolutely no intention to have that sort of a Republic, not from a people, as was pointed out today who, over time, has shown that it values its freedoms.

It is certain that the executive power, as stated in the Bill will continue to be exercised by Cabinet with the Prime Minister as Head of Government. There will be the same freedoms which we value and the Constitution guarantees will be maintained, freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of worship, freedom of association.

Sir, with an excellent educational system, in spite of some flaws, I feel that people who do not really understand will quickly become aware of what a Republic means. There will certainly be public education on this matter and I am confident that will be done very soon, and done thoroughly.

Mr. President, with this Bill, the Government is certainly carrying out the wishes of the Forde Commission. It is being consistent and that too was pointed out, and it shows that the Government is prepared to listen. It is the first time in the whole history of Parliament that there is going to be a referendum and we have a Government that listens to people. It is the Government that gave adult suffrage.

I smiled when I heard Senator Stuart quoting from the motto of the Barbados Labour Party, a better life for our people. He need not worry because we always had that in mind. I have referred to adult suffrage, so did he, the status of children reform, Tenancies Freehold Act, public servants and Senator Williams may possibly elaborate on that, who now have permanent employment in the civil service with all that this implies.

The continuation of the start of secondary education and, yes, I will give Senator Stuart's side credit, the continuation of free secondary education and the social partnership which is unique and in some instances, the envy of many other states.

I note too that the Government of Barbados considers that as a Parliamentary Republic, Barbados should retain its membership of the Commonwealth. I would just like to point out here that there are 17 Constitutional Monarchies ruled by Queen Elizabeth II in the Commonwealth. There are six Monarchies with other Monarchs as Heads of State. There are ten Parliamentary Republics and there are 21 Presidential Republics. Mozambique is unusual in being a former Portuguese, rather than a former British colony but that is also a member of the Commonwealth.

Mr. President, as I said in the beginning, I am confident that in Barbados we have nothing to fear and that people who are not only I would say, mature, but in many ways sophisticated will be able to understand and appreciate the differences between a Republic and a Constitutional Monarchy. I am sure that they will not in any way be deterred by trivialities.

I have taught in what is perhaps considered the most prestigious school in Barbados, certainly one of the best in the Commonwealth and up to the present, students there go on to study at some of the best universities which are ranked among the highest in the world.

Therefore, I do not think it is true to say or even fair to say that we are not mature people. Even those who have not had the benefit of a university education speak with knowledge and commonsense. You hear them discussing all sorts of issues. They watch television and are aware of what is going on and as I say, with public education on this particular topic, I am sure that our people will be ready and informed, if there is a referendum on which to vote.

The Bill today is really confined to the legislative framework. Other discussions to do with a Republic at any length will most likely follow.

Mr. President, with those few words, I just want to say that I support the Bill and thank you very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Linton.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I rise to support the matter that is before us, in relation to a referendum on the question of a Parliamentary Republic with a Barbadian as Head of our State. I listened to the presentations this morning on my way here and as I got here, particularly Senator Stuart's presentation. There is no mischief in Barbados becoming a parliamentary republic with a Barbadian as its Head of State. As one of the commissioners of the Constitution Review Commission under Sir Henry Forde, I spent two years listening to Barbadians from all walks of life, with every qualification and intelligentsia, and less than one per cent of those who came before us disagree with our Report even before it was made.

2.10 p.m.

Indeed, Senator John Stanley joined us at the death of Commissioner Thomas Roach. The Commission itself had a wide representation from across Barbados particularly the political parties, educational institutions, the church, businesses, intellectuals and the youth in young Melanie Newton.

Mr. President, when we met at George Street, as a commissioner I put the question in regard to Barbados becoming a ceremonial republic. I remember that clearly. When I put that question, the President of the Democratic Labour Party at the time, even without any major discussion, gave unequivocal support to the recommendations for Barbados to become a ceremonial republic with the Head of State being a Barbadian, so what is the mischief.

Mr. President, I am one who believes that we should not be discussing any referendum here today, but the people asked for a referendum and it has been given. One of the things that I hope would not happen in a referendum is that it would not be used for mischief.

Mr. President, I happen to travel to the United States of America with the delegation at the point in time where we interviewed Barbadians in Boston at Massachusetts State House and in New York and we received solid support for us to become a ceremonial republic with a Barbadian as Head of State. The Barbadian spirit has been with us in its evolution throughout the centuries even before the Mayflower came.

Sir, could you imagine the Caribs and others who were here in Barbados when they came? We were not discovered by anybody. We were 166 square miles of real estate in the Atlantic Ocean, where, as history that may be unwritten tells us, that those who lived here had the skill to know when to get in a boat and travel back to Africa and through the Caribbean. There was always a 'spirit of Barbadianism' in our people from the very beginning of our existence because they wanted to have self-determination for themselves. The 1816 revolution was violent but the intention was to have self-determination as Barbadians.

Mr. President, I had the distinct privilege of my great grandfather whose nephew Menzies Chase in 1937 put our self-determination this way when he said that: "Today is a funny night", for which he spent six months in Glendairy Prison. That was thought to be a crude way to put it but it was true. It was truly funny because here you had a Barbadian people with the spirit of self-determination in 1937, who faced the powers of the police under British rule with British managers.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Crichlow speak about immaturity. Mr. President, we had 14 elections under adult suffrage. We changed governments that when the polls were declared, the next day was one of celebration and peace. Could one want more maturity than that? Could one want more maturity that today a delegation from Barbados, in their self-determination, is before the Court on the Law of the Sea carrying out an act of self-determination at the highest level? When we go through the annals of our history, we come to the great men of our times as Barbadians, our National Heroes and others who are heroes, even those before 1937, as Senator Stuart mentioned, Duncan O'neal and perhaps others, who by self-determination made every effort for Barbadian self-determination.

When we come to the time of the maturity of mass political parties and a trade union movement that has played a tremendous role in the development of Barbados on behalf of workers, a history that can be untouched by no other small independent country, to the extent that we now have trade union, business and Government sitting down planning the future development of Barbados. Can one say that we are not mature?

Mr. President, we are in no business of getting rid of the Queen or even dismissing her. The recommendations of the Constitution Review Commission is that we would be a parliamentary republic within the Commonwealth.
2.20 p.m.

Mr. President, we are not denying the fact that Britain has done so much for us. My mother gave birth to me. Fortunately I was not stillborn and in my 73rd year, I am here. I am developed in personality beyond anything that I thought I would be. I am now a grandfather. The evolutionary process of family life goes with our existence. Therefore, why as Barbadians should we not guide ourselves in these difficult times, with a Barbadian as Head of State within a Parliamentary Republic in this country?

Mr. President, when we could have gotten a presentation like that of Senator Stuart this morning, should we be here discussing whether we should have a no or yes vote as a Barbadian being Head of State? I think we should be discussing the Constitution of a Ceremonial Republic of Barbados and that we should have the repatriation of the Constitution from Barbados sitting in a document somewhere in the Parliament of Britain.

Mr. President, I am simply saying that I am one who feel that sometimes in order to give the people the right to what they want, that becoming a Republic is the best thing to do. Sir, I hope those who are listening to us today and that as they had listened to the discussion in the Other Place, would understand the fact that we as people of an independent country within the world and the Commonwealth, we have the right to decide our future at every level.

Mr. President, we live in a world today that has never been. We live in a world in which as Barbadian we are challenged on every front. We are being challenged in economics, in social development and in the political life of this country. Sir, as a small country, we are faced with institutional difficulties in which the mighty powers of this world want to tell us with whom we must trade, with whom we must associate, and what we must do. They are telling us if we do not adhere to their dictates, that they would not be assisting us in any way.

Mr. President, we face a new world order in trade. We face the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which is part of the same order. We face countries and individuals whose idea it is to recolonise us, but whether as a family, an individual, or a country, the Barbadian spirit has always been that we have a right to determine what is best for us.

Mr. President, with respect to the Monarchy and what we were able to develop through its association, we want to thank them. We want to thank the Church for the opportunities in the early days for allowing the leaders of this country to receive a good education. Sir, notwithstanding that, in every sphere of our life we have the right to determine our educational status, our Parliament and what kinds of institutions we must established in keeping with our rights.

Mr. President, can you imagine that Europe and particularly Britain, which have developed themselves out of the labourers of this country in the sugar cane industry and who have built their empires, are now telling us that we can produce sugar but that we cannot get much money for it. Sir, I would want all Honourable Senators to understand the kind of world in which we live. I would want them to understand that we have to see what is best for us and that we have to do what is best for us. Sir, I would want them to understand that we do not have to disrespect the monarchy or anybody else but that we have a right to self determination.

Mr. President, as Senator Stuart said, I must give support to the political systems of this country when it comes to the real issues in life. When it comes to the real

issues in life, we must all come together. Sir, while speaking in this Parliament, I will always talk of my education at the Wesley Hall School. I had the ability but my mother did not have the wherewithal to send me to another school but one must be thankful for the good grounding of the educational system through the Church in Barbados. One must ask the Church to continue speaking to the moral issues in this country and that when amendments or any other legislation in this country are going down the unsocial ladder, the Church must try to rein them back because we have an objective.

Mr. President, when one looks on the world map, one cannot find Barbados with ease but the 166 square miles of us have demonstrated to a world what we are all about, now and in the future. Therefore, I am simply appealing to Barbadians who are hearing me, that it is possible that we can have different opinions and ideas but that when it comes to the crux, we are going to gather around it, build it and develop it.
2.30 p.m.

One glad day the same way that my great nephew determined that, "today is a funny night", a name will come when one of my family line, coming with a matriarchal family out of Ghana will sit in the seat of President House. The truth is that the privilege is extended to everyone of us in here and elsewhere outside as Barbadians. We must stand together in this further step of our development and self-determination.

Mr. President, perhaps in the future it is possible that our grandchildren will come to Parliament whether constituted as a House of Assembly or Senate and bring a Bill before it for us to become an executive republic. Since we are evolving and are in this developmental mode, we have to give that opportunity to our offsprings. Sir, there is no disquiet or mischief about it.

Mr. President, in supporting this measure before us, I am calling on all Barbadians to support ourselves in the future so that as Barbadians we can stand up proud and happy anywhere in any institution in the world and that we can take this little rock, east in the Atlantic Ocean in the archipelago of the Caribbean and demand respect for who we are, what we are and what we will be in the future.

Mr. President, I thank you very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Dr. Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I totally support the Referendum Bill, 2005. I am surprised that there appeared in the past, some question as to whether a referendum should take place. I think that in the 21st century and in a country like Barbados whose people are said to be so independent of spirit who do not like people to tell

them what to do, it would have been inconceivable that the people had not been allowed to have a say in such an important matter.

Mr. President, I also think the referendum should be used in other matters like the introduction of flyovers, a move which will permanently change or, to be more accurate, maim our landscape. Furthermore, it is not to say that the matter of Barbados becoming a republic was ever a foregone conclusion because, as far as I can see, it was put forward since 1970. The Cox Commission in 1979 found at that time that Barbadians preferred to maintain the monarchical system. The poll of 1994, as far as I am aware showed that the monarchy was preferred and the poll just recently conducted shows no clear preference for the republic. Under these circumstances, to my mind, a referendum is essential.

Mr. President, a referendum would serve no useful purpose if the people do not have all the necessary facts to allow them to make a sensible decision. To my mind, the emphasis so far has been on a relatively trivial matter, that is, whether the Head of State should be Barbadian. As far as I am concern, that is only the tip of a very large and potentially dangerous iceberg related to possible increased power for the political directorate.

Mr. President, the public needs to be reassured on this issue. It is the planned changes in our Constitution which are important and should be available to us to guide us in that decision. Therefore, before we have the referendum these changes must be made known in a clear and understandable way to the electorate.

Of course, as has been said by one close to these matters, you must take a leaf out of the lawyers' book and ask a question which will get the answer you want. In my opinion, this is the thinking being used with the referendum question. I repeat that it is not fair to ask this question when it is obvious that there are many more implications. Sir, we want to know what these are before the referendum.

Mr. President, I trust that the period between proclamation and the actual referendum would be used to educate us about the detailed changes in the Constitution and not just to lobby blind support for the establishment of a republic. As far back as February this year the launching of a non-partisan group, the Citizens for the Republic, was mentioned in the Press. At that time, it was recognised that there is a dearth of information on the republican status and people were reportedly concerned about the functioning of the system.

This group was apparently to form a platform for those people who want to play a significant part in ensuring that the wishes of the majority of the people are met. I do not remember hearing any mention of the activities of this group since then.

Mr. President, whether or not the Head of State is a Barbados is, in my opinion, immaterial. I have not seen any harmful effects resulting from the Queen being Head of State because it is only ceremonial and this fact could be used as an advantage where tourism is concerned. Sir, someone was reported in the Press as saying that she brings some graciousness to us which, certainly, cannot do us any harm. I feel that Barbadians consider the Governor-General to be our Head of State and he is a Barbadian.

Mr. President, our past Governor-General and certainly our present one as representatives of the Queen have provided us with a non-political figure behind whom the country feels comfortable to unite. Would this continue to be so when, as is entirely possible, the Prime Minister, Chief Justice and the President could all be active or past politicians from the same Party? As the question of our Governor-General having to seek permission from Buckingham Palace to leave Barbados, I ask whether the answer has ever been no. I think this is only traditional and a little bit of tradition never hurt anyone. Sir, in this world we all have to answer to someone. I am sure that the Ministers have to answer to the Prime Minister and the President would have to answer to someone but who will that be?

Mr. President, if Barbados becomes a republic but will remain in the Commonwealth is the Queen not the Head of the Commonwealth? Would we also find this unbearable? As to the apparent question of having to address the Queen as Ma'am, first of all, I am not sure that anyone would be arrested for not addressing the Queen as Ma'am. Secondly, will we, if Barbados becomes a republic address her: Hi Liz, old girl, how are you going? Furthermore, I was not aware that one genuflected to the Queen. As far as I know, Ma'am is used as a mark of respect and is not associated with subservience. It is used to address numerous people in all walks of life, of all countries, including Barbados. If we become a republic and the Head of State happens to be a woman, would we address her as Ma'am? In fact, have not members of this Honourable Chamber ever been addressed as Ma'am. Mr. President, I have been speaking to a number of people who originally had no problem with the Republic but who regard the level to which the discussion on the issue has been lowered by these scathing remarks centered around Her Majesty, as totally unsatisfactory. This had, in fact, changed their attitude towards the Republic since they fear that this is setting the tone for the future. Sir, are we in danger of insulting the intelligence of the populace?
2.40 p.m.

Mr. President, as I said before, all these issues are trivial, and to my mind petty. The real issue is how our Constitution and hence our lives are going to be affected as a result of Barbados becoming a republic.

I am not referring to financial implications that the Honourable Minister referred. I am talking about implications for our fundamental rights. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be on the political agenda at the time. In my opinion, the referendum should be based on the proposed constitutional changes. After all, the recommendations for the Republic came out of a report of a review of the Constitution but some seem to have lost sight of this and have reduced the discussion to name calling.

I have seen it mentioned in the Press that the change to a republic will not make any tangible difference to our lives. Then, pray tell me, why are we changing?

Mr. President, I am not usually a fan of modern calypso but I was attracted to the lyrics of one of them recently. It warned, "You know what you got, don't know what you gine get." These are my feelings on the matter. If we are saying, as I have seen mentioned in the Press, that this is the final step of Independence, why are we still fighting for preferential treatment for our sugar, *et cetera*?

Finally, I am asking for a major change like this. What level of turnout would be considered adequate? Also, will a simple majority be acceptable or will, as is often the case where major changes are contemplated, a two-thirds majority be required?

Mr. President, I repeat my support for the Bill, which I think is essential to preserve our democratic stability.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Newton.

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Bill before us and to make a few comments on some of what I heard in this Honourable Chamber during the past few hours.

First of all, as usual, we have to thank Senator Stuart for taking us down the highways and byways of history on the subject of republicanism. I am sure that all persons listening here would be grateful for the education that he gave us today.

Sir, I know that there are a lot of misconceptions about what republicanism means to Barbados, some of which we heard here today. It is clear that even some of us in this august Chamber are confused about what the republican process is and what the Government is all about.

Mr. President, as we all know, the Constitution Review Committee did not recommend a referendum. The Government could have gone ahead and made the changes to the Head of State as part of a package that makes other changes to the Constitution, which I believe are coming. As other persons said, quite rightly, they will wait until they see that total package and what it brings.

As we all know, some of us wanting to exercise our democratic right, felt that an important change such as the type of Constitution which Barbados has, whether we remain monarchical or republican should have some input from the populace and the Government has acceded to that request.

Sir, I would have to reiterate that the concept of republicanism for a place such as Barbados is important for several reasons. First, we are one of a number of countries and we became Independent during the latter part of the 20th century and most of those other countries have adopted republican status. Some of us are afraid of republican status because we think of the banana republics, revolutions and coups every other day. This is not necessarily the case.

In fact, if you look at the list of the republics in the world today there are very few which have that sort of history. There are only one or two where things have gone wrong. It is not a part of the Barbadian tradition to settle our affairs by the bullet and other violent means.

I am quite certain that a change to a republic status, if we change the Head of State, will be done in a way that we normally do things. We will vote on whether Barbados should become a republic or not and will accept what the majority of Barbadians want. I do not think it should be any two-thirds or four-fifth or anything like that. I think a simple majority should do. This is the way referenda usually work. A simple majority is enough and we will go about our business the next day in the way we have always done. I do not see there is any need to fear that bad things are going to happen if we become a republic.

Sir, the stories floated that the British Government will withdraw aid and so on, but Barbados has been fighting its own way for quite a long time.

I remember some years ago, this is in the early 1990s, I was asked to do an assignment for a financial institution; they had to wait three years until they could find funding from an independent source because I was a Barbadian, and Barbados had graduated from a lot of international institutions. We have been looking after ourselves for quite some time.

Sir, we have to remember that some time ago, I think it was about four years, when this talk surfaced about the British Government withdrawing and not coming to our aid if we were invaded, I do not know by whom. The British Prime Minister wrote a very lengthy article in the newspaper saying that the British Government did not really care what sort of Government Barbados adopted because they, like some of us, have confidence in Barbadians to go about doing business in the right way and that they would not stand in our way. I do not see how others can think that being a republic is going to change anything.

Sir, with regards to the Queen being a gracious lady, everybody knows that she is a gracious lady. The point is, how many of our youngsters have seen the Queen or know anything about her. They do not. The Queen is a figure Head far removed from us. Many do not know that the Governor-General is a representative, but we who know feel quite strongly that the cycle of Independence is not complete unless we have a Barbadian as the Head of State, not just in a name but defacto and in places where it matters, in our written Constitution.

It is true that the Governors-General have discharged their duties with decorum and in a manner in which we have been proud. There is no reason to think that is going to change either. With regards to the Executive using the guise of a republic to increase its powers that is not the way we do things. I do not see if the Head of State is going to remain largely ceremonial, and this is what we have been assured, I am certain that when we see the amendments to the Constitution that is going to be the fact.

I do not see how the Executive can use the fact that we are going to change the Head of State to be a local person, to increase its powers, not when the Head of State is supposed to have mainly ceremonial powers, just as the incumbent.

Sir, we are just looking for red herrings and problems where they do not exist, if we go down that path.
2.50 p.m.

Another point, Mr. President is that some people have criticised the wording of the question that is being asked. I will recall that this is the second attempt. When they drafted the question that was supposed to go to the public, I think, it was justly agreed that the Head of State should be a Barbadian.

Now, they have come back with an expanded question which draws very heavily on the actual language used in the Constitution Review Commission. I would not say that it is a way of ducking responsibility by trying to put the responsibility in the commission or anything like that.

I think this is a way of trying to give more information to persons who are going to vote on the issue on the type of Parliamentary Republic to which Barbados is going. Now we have to say that lots of Barbadians do not really know what a Parliamentary Republic is and I am certain it has to be that the Government is going to engage in a massive publicity campaign between the passage of this Bill and when the referendum does take place to make sure that Barbadians are aware of what is involved in being a Parliamentary democracy and as to what powers the Governor-General now has and how and whether they will change.

I also have no problem with the question. Any time you look at a referendum, and there is no mystery about it, several countries have had referendums, there is usually one simple question because you do not want to complicate the issue as some people are trying to do. Do you want this? Do you want that? And you say, yes, you say no, that is how it is and 50 per cent of the people say yes or no and the Government flies with it, as it is supposed to do.

The fact that the question is long, yes, but I can see where it is coming from. It was an attempt to be a bit more explanatory than the previous question but I am sure they said that the necessary public education that has to be undertaken will be done.

Last, Mr. President, I would be very happy if in the next three years or so, Barbados becomes a Republic. I am one of those who firmly believe that it has nothing to do with whether or not the Queen is nice and gracious but it has to do with us as a people.

We have been independent for many years. We have been running our affairs for many years and to become a Republic in my view is taking us that one step further. Senator Griffith and Senator Symmonds spoke about the Barbadian tradition of not liking to be told what to do and of always wanting to say how our affairs are being managed. This is absolutely true.

The history of Barbados has been one of Constitutional conflict from the 17th Century. The Barbadian House of Assembly always wanted to do things in its own way and to make sure that things which are important to the island were not determined from overseas in Britain without proper consultation by local people. Sir, to become a Republic, just as we became Independent is just one more example. It is the ultimate example as far as I am concerned in wanting to do things which we consider are in our interest, an example of our dignity as a people and of our independence.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. President.

I am very pleased to be sitting in this Chamber at this time to have the opportunity to engage in a debate such as this. Of course, in 1966 when Barbados would have pursued and successfully gained its Independence, I would have been a very small kid in more ways than one, to be frankly honest.

I remember going to St. Saviour's Primary School and during the period of 30th of November, being put on a bus and shuttled to the East Coast Road to witness the appearance and parade of Her Majesty the Queen. My encounter with that experience was merely a passing glimpse of this all-consuming figure that represented the personalty of our Statehood at the time.

Years later, I asked myself what is different today as an Independent Nation from what was prevailing then. I must admit, Mr. President, that I found some difficulty in trying to decipher a difference of any great substance as it would relate to the identity of Barbados and by extension, the collective identity of the people of Barbados.

Mr. President, I said that to say this. In all good faith, I do not think any Barbadian anywhere would have any objection to move from a position of symbolism to a position of actuality that would give them rise to believe that how they are now defined is a definition derived from their own collective and individual journeys of autonomy. Of course, we seem to think that Independence can be defined by some as more ceremonial than it can be defined as a state of autonomy, where there has been or there is a final detachment from all that has been thrust on us as a colonial State.

Mr. President, because of those realities, the Democratic Labour Party has made its position clear on the matter of the country moving towards Republican status, particularly if moving in that direction is singularly defined by the removal of the current symbolic Head of State, to one where the Head of State breathes and lives the Barbadian experience as an indigenous member of this emerging society.

Barbadians should not believe that the Barbadian Head of State scenario means a black Barbadian. Barbadians must be told that it can be anyone who is so legally and legitimately defined as a citizen of this great country. Perhaps, the whole quest for independence then as is the quest for republican status now is enfolded in a kind of context where there are those who believe it should happen; where there are those perhaps who believe that things should be left as they are and where there are those who believe that it should happen, but that it should happen in a certain kind of way.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. President, what has happened in recent months is that a number of psycho-emotional energies have been emanating from Barbadians across all walks of life, energies that have their bases for some in race, for some in class and yet for others in status and what should be a journey contemplated with the consideration of the question, who are we as a nation, why are we who we are and what are we going to leave the next generation that makes Barbados a place more aptly defined as Barbadian.

Mr. President, as I think through these things I begin to ask myself what ought to be the parameters of the ensuing debate that would give us full exposure to what would become our new Constitution and what should be involved in that debate. I believe that this debate is more so about setting the stage for a wider debate than it is seeking to generate any doubt, suspicion or any other virulent emotion in anyone as to the intention of the policymakers that make up the Parliament of Barbados.

Mr. President, I also have my own psycho-emotional contemplations and I keep asking myself if I were the Governor-General of Barbados today how might I feel when I hear people talk about bringing a Head of State on board who is a Barbadian without creating the distinction as to what is ceremonial, what is symbolic and what is real, because our current Governor-General serves us proudly and well, and he is a Barbadian.

Mr. President, there is a generation of Barbadians out there who would tell you that for them the Head of State is the Governor-General but many of us have not been courteous enough to suggest that His Excellency has done a most tremendous job in his role and that perhaps has assisted us in the educational process of understanding what it would mean to have one of our own as the ultimate place where perhaps 'the buck stops' with regard to the ascension of power of the State.

Mr. President, I believe that my colleague Senator Stuart did a most wonderful job on giving us an extended exposé on the historical ramifications of what we are now contemplating in this Chamber.

Sir, I was not fashionably late, but I was a little late, my apology is most graciously extended in that regard. On my way in I heard the Honourable Leader of Government Business, in his usual flair, likening this passage in time to a developmental journey and likening that developmental journey to what human beings encounter as they move across the life span. Mr. President, you might imagine that I was quite delighted when I heard that because I was troubled at what kind of context would be created in this Chamber for

debate, and since I always feel a little fear of falling into the hands of the Honourable Chair, particularly when he reels you in, I did not want to get outside of the rope so to speak.

Mr. President, when I heard that, I thought what a line of thought, that we would see our nation really as an individual who has gone through extended periods of development and has now reached a stage that would be called in psychology, self-actualisation. Some of us call it self-determination and some call it self-governance but it really is self-actualisation. What we understand that to mean is not necessarily reaching to the heights where there are no further passages to go on but reaching a state where the level of maturity that defines us also suggests that we have accomplished or attained certain milestones of achievements that are critical to defining who we are.

Mr. President, when the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow asked the question about the mirror image, he was onto something special because at the end of the day if I am not sure of who I am, succeeding generations would come into a world or in a society where the uncertainty about self-identity continues to be so riveting, and where instability at the social, economic at the distribution level could be a part of the journey of individuals. That is why this debate is not so much about who is Head of State, as it is about the journey of a country moving from one stage of independence to a stage of consummate autonomy, where who we are now is what we will be tomorrow, as it would be reflected in the generations who take up a Barbados that is much brighter and better than what it was when we left it or when we found it as the generation now in occupancy of the society.

Mr. President, what I want the policymakers to contemplate is that when all is said and done and a decision has been achieved by the policymakers that that decision would reflect for us the continuing political, social and economic maturation of a country which, at the time of its initiation, was proud to stand small and alone and was a tower of hope for its citizens and others who observe its courage of moving forward to gain its autonomy.

There is something, Mr. President, in human growth and development called arrested development. Arrested development, whether you are a stage theorist or you believe in spiral development, is a case where someone has become unnaturally captured in a stage of development that has stymied the maturation at the psychological, the emotional, the spiritual and the physical level. Arrested development by some is an amusing state but for others it is a psychologically dysfunctional existence where what people do and say does not reflect the reality of what they should be, who they should be or where they should be in life.

Mr. President, I do not want Barbados to be locked in any arrested development because some of us may not have had the courage to stand up and say it is time for the rite of passage to occur when Barbados truly becomes autonomous and where it makes that final break from the clutches of colonialism, the legacy of slavery and that emerging self-doubt that is now crippling our society where people seemingly of the new generation had so many questions about whom they are, where they are going and about what or whom they ought to be for the future.

Mr. President, I contemplate these issues because I would not restrict my thinking to simply trying to elucidate any concept as to who should be the Head of State. It could be me, 100 years from now. It could be any one of us in here. Any of the honourable men and women in this Chamber should so be able to move ahead and to aspire to that level, but is that all there is about this debate, I say no, because a Constitution does not simply settle the question of who should be Head of State. It lays out the parameters that govern the culture. It lays out the parameters that govern our governance systems. It tells us how we should live and how we must live, both domestically and internationally. Therefore, when we talk about moving from the current state of Government to another state, we must actually talk about how do we sit and seriously contemplate what kind of society we should have tomorrow and what should be the role of Government in that society.
3.10 p.m.

Mr. President, therefore, I ask myself four questions:

- (1) Is this debate simply about the final act that puts the scars of slavery behind us?
- (2) Is this debate about the final rejection of colonial domination?
- (3) When ushering in a new era of standards of governance, will this transition ensure a freer society and a fair society? or
- (4) Is it simply a passage of achieving a state of psychological being that both puts to the fore, the ultimate status in life as an individual or as a collective group of individuals?

Mr. President, when we talk about the individual and about collective maturity, we talk about individual maturity at the psychological level. I have heard many persons in this debate, in different places, talking about the individual and about collective maturity, but this debate is really about the psychological maturity of the country.

Mr. President, what is the psychological maturity of a country? My understanding of the psychological maturity at

the individual level brings into play how well-balanced is an individual, both psychologically and socially. It talks about certain types of cognitive achievements that allow persons to be able to think rationally and clearly. It talks about moral development. On the other hand, in looking at the collective level, it goes on to look at political and economic development.

Mr. President, we cannot deny the fact that Barbados has long been noted for its standard of education. Therefore, a population that is perhaps more politically astute than other populations in the region or the world over... Sir, when we talk about economic development, we can also say that Barbados has achieved a level of economic sophistication that has seen it through some very turbulent economic times, under both sets of Government. Sir that is an indisputable fact.

Mr. President, therefore, we are able to achieve certain types of political and economical tactics that, once put in place and managed well, we can be said to be a society that is evolving more so as a cycle of growth than as a biological or psycho-biological state of attainment.

Mr. President, when we talk about evolution, according to Darwinism, the purist theory of evolution is that one must die for one to live. Therefore, I do not want to tease into being, any notion that we believe that some are survivable and others are expendable. This is society where the weak must be brought along by the strong. In addition, wherever we go in terms of how we are governed and what style of Government, that we must always create, recreate and extend a society, whether one is old or young, disabled or able-bodied, black or white. It does not matter of one's state but this must be a society where one must feel at home, if Barbados becomes one's home.

Mr. President, I think when we look at the issue of moral development under this psychological system, we also talked about creating a compassionate society and the fact that we want our style of Government to be one that involves a greater degree of compassion in the society. Those are the things that matter to me, not simply who is Head of State. Sir, I would want Government to be teased into contemplating what kind of governing system we will have under this new arrangement. Will it be one that advances the standard of governance beyond where they are today, in terms of where they need to go, as we continue to make our entrance on the global stage?

Mr. President, the essence of this endeavour then must be the quest for a better life under the new arrangement, indeed a quest for a brighter future for all Barbadians. Therefore, individual development, as I have heard discussed in other places, derives a kind of maturation.

When you look at us as individuals, there are known to be three different stages of maturation in human growth and development, and perhaps that could inform us as to how our nation has matured over time and where it needs to go.

Mr. President, the first level of maturation is called the lower level needs, where consideration for sustenance is of critical importance. What I hope that Honourable Senators would do, would be to look at their own lives and look at the symbolisms they have had to remove, even in managing their families and see how they had to contemplate making decisions, some of which might have been non-traditional decisions for the family but decisions that perpetuated the growth and maturation of the family.

Mr. President, the area on which I want to focus is that second tier of needs or middle level needs, where the primary development for that age group is what is called identity formation. Sir, I would want to proffer the view that this debate is more about identity than about the installing of a new kind of arrangement for how we manage our country politically.

Mr. President, it is said that when identity formation has not been achieved, the resulting psychological fallout is despair for some and confusion for others. Sir, when I look across society and ask myself what do I hope would come out of this debate and this transition, I say to myself that I want to see a society where, from the youngest to the oldest, they can speak proudly and with assurance of who they are as Barbadians, or what makes them Barbadian versus that of an American or Vincentian.

Mr. President, there was a time when what would become the old system of Government still engendered in us those kinds of cultural uniqueness that made us stand out, even when we leave the shores of Barbados. Sir, I would make the point, as was made earlier, the shifting of the symbolic figurehead of the Head of State, does not make people mature. What causes citizens to mature are the kinds of practices employed, not by the style of Government but by the state of governance. Therefore, as I think about what it could be in five years in this country, under a Republican form of Government, what I am thinking of is more than just the symbolisms of statehood. I am thinking about the actual journey of the culture and how that culture is going to grow as a result of what takes place under that arrangement.

Mr. President, how does one form an identity? According to the literature, one forms an identity by studying either casually, formally or informally, what has gone before, what is present, and prospecting what could be in the future. Sir, as people do that, so too must the country.

Mr. President, for those who would like to dump all of the virtues of Independence, for those who would like to see Independence as just a small step to a larger objective, they must remember that the journey of nationhood started there. 3.20 p.m.

A Constitution lays out the parameters that govern the culture. It lays out the parameters that govern our governance system. A Constitution tells us how we should live, how we must live both domestically and internationally so that when we talk about moving from the current state of Government to another state of Government, we are talking about how do we sit and seriously contemplate what kind of society we should have tomorrow and what should be the role of Government in that society.

Mr. President, I ask myself four questions. Is this debate simply about the final act that puts the scars of slavery behind us? Is this debate about the final rejection of colonial domination? Will this transition then usher in a new era of standards of governance that ensure a freer and fair society? Is it simply a passage of achieving a state of physiological being that both puts in the fore the ultimate status in life as individuals or as a collective group of individuals?

Mr. President, when we talk about individuals and collective maturity, we speak about it at the psychological level. Sir, it is really about the psychological maturity of a country. My understanding of psychological maturity at the individual level brings into play how well-balanced is an individual psychologically and socially. It talks about certain types of cognitive achievements that allow persons to be able to think clearly and rationally. It talks about moral development and, if you are looking at the collective level, it goes on to look at economic and political development.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot deny the fact that Barbados has been long noted for its standards of education and a population that is perhaps more politically astute than most other populations in the region and the world over. When we talk about economic development, we can also say that Barbados has achieved a level of economic sophistication that has seen it through some very turbulent economic times under both Governments.

Mr. President, we have been able to achieve certain types of political and economic tactics, that one put in place and manage well, we can be said to be a society that is evolving. Sir, I use the word "evolving" carefully moreso as a cycle of growth than any psycho-biological state of attainment because when you talk about evolution, we have to remember that the purest theory of evolution according to Darwinism is that one must die for one to live. I do not want to tease into being any not that some are survivable and that some are expendable.

Mr. President, this is a society that the weak must be brought along by the strong and wherever we go in terms of how we are governed, what system and style of Government, we must always create, re-create and extent a society where whether old, young, disabled, abled, black or white, it does not matter your state, this society is one where you must feel at home in Barbados.

Mr. President, when we look at the whole issue of moral development under the psychological thing which we speak about, we are talking about creating a compassionate society. We want our style of Government that causes to come into being a greater degree of compassion in the society. Sir, for me, those are things that matter, not simply who is the Head of State although that maybe the critical question. I want Government to be teased into contemplating what kind of governing system will we have under this new arrangement and will be one that advances the standards of governance beyond where they are today in terms of where they need to go as we continue to make our entrance on the global stage.

Mr. President, the essence of this endeavour must be the quest for a better life under the new arrangement. Indeed, a quest for a brighter life for all Barbadians. Sir, individual development as I have heard in other places derives a kind of maturation. Sir, as individuals, there are known to be three different stages of maturation in human growth and development. Perhaps that could inform us as to how our nation has matured over time and where it needs to go.

The first level is what they call the lower level needs where the consideration for food and water – sustenance, if you will – is important. I hope that the Honourable Members in this Chamber would look at their own lives and the symbolism they have had to remove even in managing their own families and see how they had to contemplate making decisions, some of which may have been non-traditional decisions for the family but decisions that perpetuated the growth, development and maturation of the family. Sir, the lower level needs, food, water, love, safety and so on are critical.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I rise to support the legislation which allows for referendum. I did not quite understand the specificity of the Bill. I was not sure why it was simply provision for a referendum as to whether Barbados was to be a republic or not and not a provision for holding of referenda. I do not have any other referendum in mind but I assume that this is always a possibility when we once open the democratic door of referendum.

The Minister in introducing the Bill asked what was in it for the ordinary man in the street. The answer to that

question is not simply one of finance. Sir, I want to put it this way. I am a believer in the old African democratic tradition, which provided from 50 or 60 little villages one representative who went to a council at provisional level, who provided one or two people who went to the national level. Sir, that was representative democracy at its most basic not the Athenian version, which to my mind, was a lot more like Apartheid in South Africa than anything I consider democracy.

Mr. President, I am making the point that any positive change should also have in a democratic system a positive affect on the ordinary man. If that change is from monarchy to republic, the ordinary man in the street would be affected if it is a serious and substantial change even if we are talking about a ceremonial President in a republic.

Mr. President, I really do not want to confuse the matter of whether or not we hold a referendum and the matter of a specific referendum. On the question of a specific referendum, I have quite a bit to say, not as much as some of my colleagues but a little bit more than I normally would say.

Mr. President, at the outset, I wish to make it clear that I am not or never was a monarchist. Monarchy is an elitist system, which runs counter to my notion of total democracy. The only form of elitism that I understand is an elitism of talent. You would discover that in this elite group of talented people, you sometimes find the most modest human being. When I talk about such elitism, I talk about Einstein and about The Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers. It would be noted that in spite of their elite status, these persons have been the modest human beings not believing that their supreme talents should earn them special status.

Mr. President, Imhotep – I am not sure everybody knows who I am talking about – was perhaps the greatest talent who ever lived. He was a philosopher, an architect who designed the change from the step pyramids to the pyramids which is still perhaps the most monumental architectural construction. He was also a doctor of medicine. In fact, he was such a monument in Ancient Egypt that the Greeks adopted him as a God.

Mr. President, to my mind, monarchs have lived on their societies. They have ignored the social ills, claiming either in early time to be children of the sun or later in Europe to be divinely appointed. Sir, when forced to see most of their political power, they continue to maintain their elite status and in a single way to remain the Heads of their society, representatives of the ills of that society, while now in no way being responsible for them. Monarchs, not only our own at that time but some in Africa and all of Europe, condoned slavery, participated in it and profited from it. 3.30 p.m.

Sir, there was an interesting situation where King Alphonso... Alphonso was the Christian Portuguese name that he adopted, King Alphonso II was second of Congo. Congo was an immense Empire which consisted of most Angola and a large part of present day democratic Republic of Congo. He appealed to his Christian Portuguese counterpart to halt slave trading in his part of western Africa, at least. The result was, the Portuguese King organised a coup, got rid of him and slavery prospered.

Sir, none of these Monarchs, except, I believe a few African ones, has ever apologised for chattel slavery. Even President Bush, not known to be particularly concerned about such issues, declared slavery to be the most egregious, he did not use that word, cried against humanity. Sir, briefly, that is one reason why I am not a monarchist.

Mr. President, having explained why I am not Monarchist, I should first point out that Barbados has been excellently served since Independence by six very able Governors-General and our Monarch has done us no specific harm.

However, turning to the motion before us, I have never encountered anything, I think, more cart before the horse. The idea of making Barbados a republic is only part of a number of recommendations of the Forde Commission, which dates back to 1998 and which to some extent builds on the foundation laid by the Cox Commission of 1979.

The first operative chapter of the Forde Commission Report, chapter 2, says:

“The Commission recommends, as did the Cox Commission, that the Order-in-Council, to which the present Constitution of Barbados is a Schedule, be replaced by a statute enacted by the public of Barbados.”

Sir, I am actually amazed that we did not first patriate the Constitution of Barbados, converted it to a statute of our Parliament rather than letting it languish as a Schedule to an Order-in-Council, as the first act, even before we talk about republicanism versus monarchism.

Mr. President, if I had written the play, in Act I Scene I, would have said, let the Constitution of Barbados be replaced by a statute enacted by the Parliament of Barbados. Sir, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, a French Canadian, with no intentions of making Canada a republic for all sorts of reasons that you have in Canada, repatriated the Constitution of Canada. I am making the point that he saw that as the first step towards genuine autonomy. I am not sure how we missed it.

Sir, my other concern basically lies in the fact that we are hearing about a referendum without hearing about any of the things I consider absolutely important in the recommendations of the Forde Commission. Sir, section 5.9.1 says that persons must: “obey the law and abide by the Constitution and respect the ideals which it enshrines and the institution which it established”. S. 9.8, create and maintain a clean and healthy environment and have compassion for living creatures; S.5.10 – State Responsibility: S.5.10 (2) endeavour to operate the machinery of Government including the use and disposition of public finances with the greatest degree of transparency, consistent with good government and the national interest, and in a manner in keeping with the democratic vocation of Barbados: S. 5.10 (4) safeguarding the economic interest: S. 5. 10 (5) making sure that private enterprise so conducted to ensure reasonable efficiency: S.5.10 (6) directs the policies of State towards securing that the operation of free competition is not allowed to develop in such a manner as to result in a concentration of ownership: S.5.10 (8) fashion and direct the policies of State to ensuring that land is not so owned and used as to result in a concentration of ownership and control of a few individuals to the common detriment of its people: S.5.10 (9) give the highest priority in the planning and execution of Government policy to the preservation and protection of the natural environment of Barbados.

Sir, that is one area that I would have expected to hear something about. I want to know what is in it. It cannot just be a change from monarchy one day to republicanism, however you flush it.

Mr. President, chapter 6 is also instructive. If we are going to patriate the Constitution we also have to ensure that the language is simplified in areas so that the provisions are more readily understandable. That is a recommendation of 6.4., I should have taken 6.19.

Sir, the wording of section 5 of the Constitution has in the past resulted in the wrongful recognition of the citizenship where the non-national parent is recognised as a citizen of Barbados. I do not think that is what I was looking for. I was looking for the question of citizenship by descent. Having worked in the United Nations system or the foreign service for ‘zillions’ of years, I have one daughter who was born in Sierra Leone, when I worked with the United Nations, and one son who was born in Washington, D.C., when I worked for the Barbados Government and both of them are citizens of Barbados by descent but they should be citizens by birth.

The fact of the matter is, if my son is born to me as a diplomat in Washington, he is not a citizen of the United States of America by any form or means. He should have been a citizen of Barbados because I am functioning as an

instrument of Barbados in that context. These are little things that should long have been dealt with before we talk of a change.

One of the recommendations is that the President be responsible for the appointment of the Judiciary. I would like to know whether that provision is in place. In fact, I would like to know what is in place. The point is, we have so many things in the Constitution that are inappropriate. The first one is the absences or inclusions in the preamble, the first one. The third would have been to remove the archaic laws on the books. Most important is the existing law clause which says that any law passed before 1966 should not be construed as in contradiction to the Constitution, hence we retain laws like the Vagrancy Act, that flagrantly fly in the face of the Constitution. Sir, any of us who is old enough to know what the Vagrancy Act was meant to do, will tell you what it was meant to do.

The Forde Commission made a number of other recommendations which would suggest a limitation on the present power of the Prime Minister. I need not repeat the disclaimer of one of our Prime Ministers of the region, who said that Whitehall invested our system of Government as a dictatorship of the Prime Minister. I think he knew what he was talking about. Our Whitehall system does not bear too much of a resemblance to the Westminster system that we often claim it belongs to. I would like to see or hear something about those things before we get into a matter or talk about a republic. As I explained, I am not at all against a republic but I want those things out there.
3.40 p.m.

Let me explain something. I have dealt with all sorts of people in our society. What amazes me is sometimes the level of unawareness, prejudice or whatever you want to call it that you can find at the highest levels.

While teaching a class in Caribbean Government, when the question of a Republic and Monarchy came up, one student said that we do not want a Republic because whenever there is a Republic there is a devaluation in currency.

I know you have heard some absurd things but I do not think you have heard anything as absurd as that but the point is that this was a student at the university. This was not somebody in a rum shop who crept out of primary school to live in a rum shop. This is somebody who has gone through the system and does not know.

If we want to talk about a referendum, the only way it is going to work is if there is a proper education programme, long before we decide to start any notion of a referendum. I would like to see some of these things in it so that people

will know what they are getting, where we are going and what it is all about.

If that is the case I think you can get overwhelming support. Otherwise, I have to consider this as a ploy where we float something and see what happens and if it does not look too good, you drop it.

I thank you, Mr. President,

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands.

SENATOR Miss. S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to join my voice to the debate looking at the Bill for the referendum. As I listen to things both inside and outside of Parliament, I realise that a lot of the issues seem to be confused or mixed in people's minds. Sir, for some people, it creates some level of uncertainty and for others, they are very clear about what it is we want, where we are going and what we are going to do to get there.

One of the things I look forward to is that as we proceed along this path, the education programme will help to make clear and bring on board everyone so that they can appreciate what it is we are talking about, what it is we are voting for and why we consider it to be necessary.

Today, as we look at the whole matter of becoming a Republic, and looking at having a referendum to allow our people to have a say on what they think about it. I think some of what we have heard today has been instructive, in terms of helping us to understand what it is about and what it means to us as a people.

A republic is a form of democracy that recognises for me the following:

We are making a statement about ourselves.

We are totally self-governing.

We have the confidence as a people that we have the capacity to look after and manage our affairs.

We are completing the journey of our Independence.

We are celebrating how well we have done over the years since 1966.

Sir, as I listen to the public discussion, I realise that people seek to draw into the discussion of the Republic, economic and social issues. Both are very important. They are issues that we have been taking care of since 1966 and

we will continue to take care of long after we become a Republic and which we will have to look after for ourselves from now on as Barbadians.

Some people see it as it is going to create a free for all in which political people are going to be able to get up and do any and everything that they care to do. This is not true because we are governed by a Constitution and that Constitution is something where the fundamental rights, freedoms, responsibilities and liberties of the people remain and they cannot just be easily overturned. Many of those things can only be changed by the will of the people.

Yet other people feel, and I remember hearing this as a little girl when it was coming on the Independence, that we would be so much safer with England. So many people felt that we did not have the ability to manage and govern our own affairs. So many people had doubts about our capacity to take the reigns of Government under our own control and chart a path for ourselves.

I remember those discussions floating around my head as a child as we talked about Independence. I have often felt that based on the concerns, anxiety and the fears of some Barbadians at that time that if it had been put to a referendum, it might have been difficult to determine whether or not the vote would have passed.

I am glad today that our leaders at that time took the decision to take us into Independence. I think it is something that every Barbadian can be proud of but I think that they recognise that in order to appease and to help settle some of the anxieties of the Barbadians at the time of Independence, they felt that to do a total severance might create such chaos within the society, that it was better to leave them with a remnant of the monarchy to create some comfort to those who existed in the society with the belief that if something were to happen, England would come running to our rescue.

The truth is, Mr. President, what has happened to us since Independence, I think is a remarkable testimony to the will, the spirit, the strength of the Barbadian people and who we are and who we have become in this 40-year journey.

We have taken on the challenge of managing our economy. We have taken on the challenge of building a society that ranks at number three in the western hemisphere for the quality of its human development. What we are faced with today is looking at the possibility of completing that journey of Independence by going to a Republic.

People ask what difference will it make? Whenever I think about that question, these are the answers I come back to. The day that people go before the altar to state before a minister that they wish to be married, they put on a symbol

of that marriage to reflect their state and their status before each other and before the world and to make a statement to others about what they believe about themselves.

Sir, to me to take on Republicanism and to complete our nationhood does the same thing. I am making a statement to the world about whom I am as a Barbadian, what I believe as a Barbadian, and the confidence that I have in myself and I am not afraid to make that statement. Therefore, I am not afraid to walk the path of bringing Barbados into being a Republic. It is a recognition of ourselves and our status as Barbadians. It is a testimony.

Sir, to fail to take the step towards becoming a Republic to me would signify what happens where two people live together in a house and to all intents and purposes, they want to have a permanent relationship with each other but they do not want to take the step of sealing that and creating the symbols around that to demonstrate it by the bonds of marriage. They do not wish to make that level of commitment or to formalise their union.

I would not like to think that as Barbadians we would want to stay one step back from completing our journey of Independence, our statement about ourselves, our union with each other and our belief in ourselves. Sir, to me it is a celebration of the Barbadian spirit. I think that as we embrace becoming a Republic what we are doing is honouring the work of the workers of this country. The people who worked in the sugar cane fields and built the foundation of this economy. We are honouring the people who work in tourism and those who work hard to earn foreign exchange to ensure that Barbados is able to ensure a quality of life for all of its citizens.

When we go and embrace a Republic, we are honouring the work of the other workers in our country who work in manufacturing, who work in the various elements of life, who do this every day, not only earning and seeking a living for themselves, but seeking a living for every single Barbadian that we can take care of ourselves. We demonstrated the ability to do that. There is a recognition of those who bravely go out and form enterprises and build businesses that generate employment that are able to think about competing and engaging with others across the seas in competition for wealth.
3.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I feel that we need to honour the work that has been done in the years past by how we honour ourselves in embracing the item of being a republic. It speaks to what the church has done over the years in shaping the values of this nation and in shaping in terms of the dignity which we have as Barbadians in shaping our commitment to a certain quality of life and behaviour that has been the hallmark of Barbadians.

Barbadians are known as people who have a pride and a sense of dignity. Mr. President, for me personally, as I walk through Barbados when I look at our vendors and at the ordinary citizen in the street, I can see that dignity on Barbadians, and what we are doing is honoring that spirit. When we give recognition to ourselves through embracing being a republic we are giving honour to the professionals who took the time to work in the Civil Service, whether as teachers, engineers, police officers or judicial officers, who have the confidence not only to acquire the skill but who day after day have done an excellent job in helping to shape the social services and the social system of this country and guarded that system over the years.

Mr. President, becoming a republic would be a celebration of what they have done as well as a recognition of what political leaders both present and past have done in giving such governance to this country that this country is one of the most respected countries in the Caribbean and is respected throughout the world for what it has been able to do with the little that it has had. Becoming a republic would be a celebration of that journey, a celebration of that work and a recognition of what we have achieved as Barbadians.

Mr. President, I was proud to hear in the news today that Barbados was recognised as having the lowest level of corruption in the Caribbean. An international agency that assesses corruption around the world made that statement about this country. That is evidence that we are able to govern and manage our affairs well where we can be measure at any level in this society and not be found wanting. This is a progressive society and it should recognise that fact by completing its independence.

Mr. President, we are good at what we are, we are good at what we have done and we are good in terms of what we can be in the future. However, it is a sad day when as a people we are not able to recognise this and want to celebrate it. To me it would be a slap in the face for those who died to procure our freedom from slavery, from the economic depression of the 1937 period and the ones who sought to bring freedom to us to be able to determine our own destiny and our own future by bringing independence. If we fail to take the last step, it would be a slap in the face for all that they have done.

Mr. President, I think that the average Barbadian is not conscious of the fact that the Head of State is not a Barbadian. Most Barbadians feel that the Governor-General is the Head of State because the monarchy does not intrude on the daily lives of Barbadians, and so it is easy for it to be just a wispy memory somewhere in the back that we do not remember.

Mr. President, that is where I used to be until I went to an Independence celebration at Government House where

people were being knighted and given honours. I was startled by the fact that people had to pledge allegiance to the Queen. I did not know that this was what took place. As a Barbadian it gave me a slight shock because I did not realise that this is what that meant. I said to myself we have an anthem, a pledge, independence and a flag and yet here today we are pledging allegiance to someone who is not a Barbadian. Therefore, when the discussion about becoming a republic came up, I could say yes because I remember how it jolted me as a Barbadian to realise that that ceremonial head does mean something at some level.

Mr. President, I am eager to see that day when we could vote and make our statement and be able to say to ourselves and to the world we are completely independent. It reminds me of statements in our Anthem that we are: "Firm craftsmen of our fate" and "We loyal sons and daughters all do hereby make it known". So by completing our independence we are making it known who we are and that we are craftsmen of our fate.

Mr. President, it is time for us to move on and to demonstrate our maturity. This is no time to linger. Lingering is not going to change anything, it is not going to cause a back-pedal in terms of being gathered back into the bosom of the colonial mother. It is time for us to move on and continue to take care of ourselves. Mr. President, when the time comes for me to vote, I would be voting yes because I know that when I do so, I would be making a statement by which I would validate all that my foreparents have fought and died for and demonstrate the confidence which I have in our nation, our leaders and in myself as an individual. So when I vote yes, I would be making a statement that I anticipate our continued good governance and prosperity for the future as we continue to govern ourselves and about my dignity as a Barbadian.

Mr. President, I want to give my fullest support to the Bill. I want to encourage every Barbadian that as the information comes out and they are concerned about things to ask questions. I also want to encourage them to get involved, whether it is in town hall meetings, call-in programmes, discussions or lectures and let us as proud Barbadians rise up and complete our independence by embracing the republic.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SENATOR Sir John Stanley GODDARD: Mr. President, we have heard some excellent contributions from all sides here today on this constitution debate and I wish to congratulate all of those who have spoken before me. However, I do not intend to repeat much of what they have said but I have learnt.

Mr. President, I have not heard the Constitution discussed in such passion since 1998, when Senator Linton and myself were two of the commissioners on the Constitution Review Commission. I think that maybe because seven years have past between the submission of that report and today, but there may be good reasons for that delay. Mr. President, I think that is unfortunate because I think the whole question of the Constitution revision has been put on the back-burner but I think it certainly has been enlivened in the Other Place and here with the discussion on this Bill.

I see this debate today as getting pretty close to the finishing line of a race. A race is really more of a process than a race. The process of completing our independence, as Senator Husbands has expressed it so well, is not only the completing of a process, it is a celebration. When I think back – and I could think back to the 1940s – and when I see the changes that have taken place in this little island, politically, socially, economically and in every which way, we have a lot to be proud of and lot to be thankful for.
4.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I am glad that the Government has decided to put this matter to a referendum, so that in later years there can be no doubt as to, did it or did it not have the support of the people. I would also caution the Government not to rush the referendum and I am pleased to see that no date has been set in the Bill. I think this matter today will require a tremendous amount of discussion and public education and I am hoping this broadcast today would add to that public education and what is involved.

Mr. President, changing the Head of State from that of a Governor-General to that of a President is important but it is only one of many recommendations. Therefore, while we have to focus on that today, as it is the topic of the Bill, there are other matters of substance in the recommendations made by the Commission which require more study and more debate. I certainly hope that the call-in programmes and the newspapers would be useful and that radio stations would play their part. This matter is not just a question of yes or no. It is a question of arriving at an informed opinion and being able to justify to oneself, one's family and to one's neighbours.

Mr. President, while I felt it was important and necessary either to support or not to support the recommended change, I know that the Commissioners were unanimous in their recommendation and that they have met for a period of about two years, to get a very wide cross-section of opinions, both locally and from Barbadians abroad.

Mr. President, it was not a recommendation which was simply pulled out of thin air but in the final analysis, it is for

the electorate to decide whether or not they want this change. Sir, this change to a Head of State is only a part of more fundamental changes in the Constitution. Sir, I again repeat, I do recommend that Government, the Opposition, civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), schools, *et cetera*, must make the time to explain what are the changes in the Constitution.

Mr. President, I thank you for this opportunity and I fully support this Bill.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Mr. President, I wish to give my support to the Bill before this Honourable Chamber. I think that as we reflect on our history, no one would disagree about the contributions which have been made to Barbados's development and to our growth, through the strong link which we have with Britain and through the system of governance which we have today.

Mr. President, the developmental process to create a true identity in Barbadians and to create a true awareness of what it means to be Barbadian did not start in 1966. Indeed, it would have started before that. Sir, there was a time when Barbados was a colony, guided and dictated to from outside. We were able to move to full internal self government, during which time we saw the start of social revolution taking place in this country, which was led by the Right Excellent Grantley Herbert Adams.

Mr. President, we then moved from that period to one where we have achieved Independence, and to where we are today, where we are seeking to move even further in our development and our growth, in achieving the full awareness of being Barbadian and having that full identity of what it means to be Barbadian.

Mr. President, I agree that it is simply not a question of who should be Head of State. I believe that it is of significance for our young people, for Barbadians in general, to be able to identify a Head of State who is Barbadian. I am sure in this debate that some Honourable Senators would have made reference to the taking of the oath of office and the swearing of allegiance. I believe it is important that as we seek to chart the road for that continued growth and development, not only of the country but for individuals to develop and to grow, that we must be able to identify certain aspects within our country for which we as Barbadians can be proud, and to which we can encourage our young people and all Barbadians to strive to achieve.

Mr. President, I believe it is significant that today a young Barbadian boy or girl cannot have a dream or a hope of being the Head of State. I, therefore, believe that in the development of many things, in the quest to achieve, that, in many respects, it must start first with a dream.

Mr. President, the architect who conceptualises a building, first dreams about what it is he or she wants to see. Therefore, in the same way we must ask ourselves what type of Barbados is it that we want for ourselves and for our children. Sir, the reality is that today we face the global challenges and that we as Barbadians must develop the strategies or must create the policies for our continued development, not by looking outside Barbados but by focusing within.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. President, when we face the challenges from the OECD countries with respect to our international business sector, we had the commitment as a people to fight for what we believed to be right.

Sir, we no longer have special benefits receiving loans at concessional rates, we have to function on our own. Every day, we face the challenges of trade liberalisation and globalisation and our various sectors deal with those challenges. We do not look outside but we accept the reality and deal with our circumstances as a mature and responsible people. Sir, we face the challenges in relation to our tourism sector with respect to issues of SARS, the Asian Bird Flu, but we do not look outside Barbados for guidance as to how we should deal with those issues.

Mr. President, immediately after September 11, 2001, we strategised as a people in order to determine how we should go forward and how we should ensure that we continue to grow and develop as a country. Sir, I reflect on those things because I think we have to accept that we function not in a static environment but in a dynamic environment.

Mr. President, very often the things we do and say have an impact and an effect on our people. I believe as Barbadians we should be proud for an opportunity to have a Barbadian as our Head of State. It is my opinion, that it would contribute to our national pride. It is also my opinion that it would help us in our quest in determining what it is to be Barbadians.

Mr. President, there are some who have fear about what Barbados would be like with a change to a republican state. There are those, who in 1966 and prior to 1966 had concerns and fears too but our stability has been maintained and the vital institutions for governance have been maintained. We have an independent judiciary, a functioning Cabinet, as the Executive, and a functioning legislature. Sir, these are the elements that fundamentally provide for good and stable governance. There need not be any fear that as we move to the next stage in our growth development that there will be any action taken that would retard the development that has been taking place in Barbados.

Mr. President, it is important that as we seek to ensure that we are able to properly shape the minds of our young

people, that as we seek to ensure that they travel, what some refer to as the straight and narrow path, that we are able to identify as Barbadians those specific areas where we have been making progress.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that as we contemplate moving from one form of Government to another, from one system to another, I suggest to you that there are many positive things that have happened as we traveled on this developmental road.

Mr. President, I agree that this is not an issue that could be dealt with on one occasion. There would be other opportunities to speak to it and I am sure, to other specifics dealing with this issue. Sir, we as people must take in ourselves and in those institutions which have contributed to our stability. Mr. President, I believe that a Barbadian Head of State would instill a greater level of pride in our people.

Mr. President, I listened to the contribution of Senator Lowe. He started a sentence by saying, a better life but I thought he was going to say a better life for our people, embracing a statement and a philosophy of the way to move forward in the development of our country. Sir, a better life for our people not simply by talking about what we would do. A better life for our people, not simply as a political party identifying how we will take the country forward in a Manifesto but recognising that the Manifesto represents a social contract and a commitment to the people of Barbados.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. President, we are here today debating, because a commitment was given in the 1994, 1999 and 2003 Manifestos of our Party as to where and how we would wish to take Barbados forward. We accept the highest standards of democracy and believe that in fundamental issues, the voice of the people must be heard.

Sir, it is truly an honour for me to support this Bill. I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Williams.

SENATOR THE HON. J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, I rise to support a Bill, which on the surface may appear to some of us as simple but in truth and in fact it has great significance and importance for us as a country. I want to begin by offering my thanks to those persons who spoke today. We had contributions that went straight across the spectrum and I want to, in particular, make reference to the contribution of Senator Lowe.

Sir, having heard Senator Stuart – and of course we all in this Honourable Chamber benefitted from his sense of history, I then heard the contribution of Senator Lowe which

was one given with passion. That was a person who spoke based on his own sense of history but clearly his own experience as a Barbadian, he spoke to the kind of legacy that he felt we should want to leave for our children and our children's children.

Mr. President, certainly for me, I would want to feel that as we move forward as a country, I can say to my children and grandchildren that there is no office in this land to which they cannot aspire. Notwithstanding references of how gracious Her Majesty has been over the time she has been our Monarch, I too feel that there are Barbadians who would graciously hold that office. We had Governors-General who held the office with the greatest of dignity. I believe that if the Governor-General is replaced by a President, that person will continue to do us proud as a country.

I also want to say that the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow said he did not believe that he should be caught loitering on the colonial premises after closing time. I too believe that had he thought he could have moved from the first phase to the second phase in one jump, already this beloved country of ours would have been a republic.

I believe that were he here with us today, there is no other person to my mind who would have been more in the vanguard for the decision that this country has been called upon to make. He was a person who never thought it necessary to look behind his shoulder, so much so that while we – rightly so, because we continue to demonstrate the highest level of democracy – are taking the step to say to the people of this country that we would like to invite their views on how they see us moving forward. Mr. President, when I juxtapose what we are doing with what the Right Excellent Errol Barrow did in 1966, there was no evidence of fear. He thought what he was doing was correct and it is passing strange that there is no reference to a referendum in our Constitution because the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, as he is referred to now, back in 1966 said that this is the direction I am taking this country. Sir, none of us can say it was not the best direction for the country at the time.

Sir, we had almost forty years since to reflect and it brings us to a point in our history where we have to demonstrate whether or not we have reached a point of maturity. I know that Senator Crichtlow, in his contribution this morning, suggested that, maybe, as a people we have not yet reached that level of political maturity. I do not hold that view, neither do I hold the view of Senator Chandler, who suggested that whether the Head of State is a Barbadian is immaterial.

I would like very much to dissociate myself with those comments. I believe that we are matured, confident people

who have a history of doing it the Barbadian way. From time to time, people have reflected on what might have happened in other countries that are Republics, but may I say, we do it differently as a people. We do things with a sense of dignity and maturity. I believe that when invited to do so, Barbadians will, in the majority, signal to the country and ourselves that indeed we are mature enough and confident in ourselves to demonstrate to the world that we continue to make our decisions, and as a country, we do not have to have our Constitution as an Order-in-Council somewhere outside of our shores. I do agree with Senator Marville that one of the things that we have to do with the greatest of haste is to repatriate that Constitution.

Sir, you will find that the two things will happen once you talk about having a Head of State, which is our own, quite naturally our Constitution of necessity will have to be brought back. We all look forward to that day when our Constitution becomes firmly entrenched in the laws of this country and not in anybody else's laws.

Occasionally, people say that at the stroke of a pen someone could possibly wake up a morning and decide that they are going to change it and not our Parliament but somewhere else beyond our shores. I know that is something we think would not happen, but I believe the best place for our Constitution is within our own country.

Sir, unlike Senator Chandler, I am not doubtful about us as a people, or our capacity to look after our affairs, or for that matter for any one of us, whether it is black, white or in-between to be the Head of State of our country. The decision, of course, in 1966 stopped short of giving the people the right to choose their Head of State.
4.30 p.m.

Mr. President, before I go further, let me say to Senator Lowe that, mention was made about the citizens of the Republic. While listening to him today, I thought that, maybe, he should make himself available to help talk the country through this process, why the step is the right step at this point in time and to help us understand what type of Barbados we are trying to build. When history reflects on us, we all have to be able to say that when called upon at the critical juncture, we were all able to make a difference.

This is not a time, Mr. President, for any doubting Thomases to my mind. I believe that there are many brave men and women who have given of their time, some have even given of their lives for us to become the best democracy that we could be and, of course, in trying to reach that goal, we have to make changes.

I am heartened today by the comments made by most Senators, in particular Senator Marville, who simply said that there are things we would also like to see, by way of any

new Constitution because it would help to add to the debate. It also helps us to understand that, yes, we agree with the move of the Head of State being a Barbadian but by the same token to have a feel for what is contained in the Constitution.

I am also heartened by the fact that the Attorney-General elsewhere made the comment that the Constitution is more than 90 per cent complete in draft but there are one of two other things that have to be closed out on and resolved. She was hopeful that even before the question is put to the public that Barbadians by and large would have a chance to be able to see the Constitution in draft.

I firmly believe that most of the amendments would reflect the work of the Forde Commission. Therefore, I support those persons who were simply saying that, yes, we understand that part of your focus is that of a Head of State but at the same time the Constitution that is going to govern us going forward is equally important.

Mr. President, I know that we have been discussing this today and most Senators have spoken. I too would not have wanted the occasion to miss me without registering my fullest support to this Bill and to say that it is a point in time in our history when we all have, as a people, to demonstrate that, in truth and in fact, we have reached that sense of maturity where we can take the final step to simply say that our Constitution is one which is within our shores and the Head of State can be a Barbadian man or woman of whatever class, of whatever race black or white.

I think, Mr. President, it is my bounding duty to simply say to this Honourable Chamber that this Bill has my fullest support and I encourage all Senators and Barbadians to support it.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Gooding-Edghill.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to support the Bill before this Honourable Senate. I consider this the first and indeed an appropriate step in the process of Constitution reform to facilitate one of the recommendations of the Constitution Review Commission in its Report of 1998, which recommended that the State of Barbados should become a Parliamentary Republic with the Head of State being a President.

Barbados, Mr. President, has been well-served by six Governors-General of whom five have been natives of Barbados and they have made Barbados and Barbadians very proud.

The Head of State, in my opinion should be the focal point of national unity and patriotism. It is important for Barbadians to recognise that the Bill before us today sets out that very framework, which would add additional patriotism and national unity and pride to all Barbadians. There ought to be no divide at all on this issue of a Head of State, because this is essentially something that has to do with national pride and patriotism. We should all be very proud that we could continue and maintain a tradition of having very fine persons serving us at the highest level in Barbados.

We have been able, Sir, to manage our affairs over the years. Since Independence, Barbados has managed its affairs successfully and if we are to continue to go in that direction, it is very necessary that we have at the highest level, a symbol of recognition that individuals who are charged with heading our State should be individuals whom we identify with and whom we see every day.

It is important, Sir, that as we pursue a national agenda and as we have witnessed and achieved much success in our national strategic development, it is important that we recognise that within the context of our Constitution, within the context of our Parliamentary system, within the context and framework of our Constitution, that we should have a Barbadian as our Head of State.

I am confident, Sir, that Barbadians will embrace the whole notion of a Barbadian Head of State. I am not fearful. I would want to join with other Senators in calling for all Barbadians to support the referendum, whenever it is announced and to ensure that they go out there in their numbers to ensure that Barbados has a Barbadian as its Head of State.

Mr. President, we have come a long way as a country. We have been through a process of change. We have gone through a process of maturity and we have seen a Barbados that has developed, of which we are all very proud. I think that the crowning glory of it all now, would be for Barbadians to have a Barbadian as their Head of State.

Sir, it is with those brief remarks that I pledge my support to this measure.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Parris.

SENATOR Miss P. E. PARRIS: Mr. President, I rise to give my wholehearted support to the Bill before this Honourable Chamber today. We are in the 21st Century and it is time for Barbados to join the other 32 Commonwealth States that have already gone the road to a Republic.

I can appreciate the measure of apprehension that the citizens of the country would have at this time because it is a change and in some instances, they are not aware of what will be done with the referendum. It is a bold step to them that we are taking but we have to go that route because we have already started with Independence and this is yet another course that we are going.

This is giving us an opportunity for one of our own, a Barbadian to be Head of State. There is no question as to whether we have persons in Barbados who are qualified to hold such a position, so Barbados stands to benefit. There are many persons in this country who have made contributions to it, who are qualified to hold such a position.
4.40 p.m.

Mr. President, at the Constitution Review Commission meetings, 99 per cent of the persons who participated were of the view that there was time for a change. The Barbados Labour Party has listened to the voices of those people and that is why we are here today putting the framework for the legislation in place so that we can have the referendum. This is also one of the manifesto pledges of the Barbados Labour Party, and it goes without saying that the Barbados Labour Party takes its manifesto pledges seriously.

Mr. President, as the country prepares for the change to the republic, we see that there are a number of persons who are not educated as to what would be coming with the republic, so I am asking, and I am sure that this would be done, that we will spare no effort in educating Barbadians as to what the referendum brings. I also hope that when the opportunity presents itself that Barbadians would take hold of the opportunity and gather all of the information that is available.

Mr. President, in pledging my support to this Bill, I am urging all Barbadians, when the opportunity presents itself, to go out and vote and let us have a Barbadian as our Head of State.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to thank all Honourable Senators for their contribution to what I consider have been a useful and interesting discussion, even though I must admit that at times some Senators got a bit ahead of the object of the Bill.

Mr. President, the Bill, as I indicated in my introductory statement, is simply to create the legislative authority for the holding of a referendum. It is true that it makes reference to the question which has to do with whether or not Barbados becomes a republic, which, whenever that day comes, would be put to the voters.

However, this is not the real debate about the republic. The real debate about the republic will come some 60 days away from the day when the Governor-General, by proclamation, according to Section 9 of the Act, fixes the date for the referendum.

Mr. President, in debating the Bill we could not avoid making reference to a republican state or otherwise but this is not the real debate. This is also not the debate about the recommendations in the Constitution Review Commission Report. That debate will come when the amendments to the Constitution are put in a draft piece of legislation, which will be circulated for discussion and which will eventually find its way to Parliament. Therefore, when those recommendations are put into legislation everybody will have the opportunity to speak about them and to determine whether or not they are adequate.

Mr. President, my advice, and as Senator Williams said, is that the working party, which is chaired by the Attorney-General, has virtually completed its work on that piece of legislation. They have not only taken into account what was recommended in the Review by the Commissioners, but also the other four areas, which persons involved felt needed to be addressed. This legislation would be made available in due course.

Mr. President, one of the reasons for indicating in the legislation before us today that there will be a minimum of 60 days from the time the Governor-General fixes the date is to give people adequate time to prepare for the discussion. Different views were expressed as to whether the people are mature enough or not, but I am not in a position to determine that.

Mr. President, I would be surprised if after 60 or possibly 90 days, I do not find or hear people saying that the people do not understand. Mr. President, sometimes people, for reasons best known to themselves, like to make the statement that the people do not understand without asking the very people if they do, but I am sure that if they do so that very often they would discover that the people do understand. Mr. President, it is not really that the people do not understand, it is that those particular persons do not want them to understand and they speak for them, but I am not going to engage in that.

Mr. President, the matter before us has nothing to do with preferences, that is a completely different matter. On that, all I would say is that whenever I speak about preferences, I speak about it within the context within which it arose. Colonies are being made to produce raw material for imperial governments to fuel their industrial revolution. They in turn pay the colonies very little for the raw material,

process them and sell them back to the colonies at exorbitant prices. In other words, they rob them. Now that they have had their industrial revolution and have shaken off the colonies, they have join forces with other countries to create unfair trading rules to hurt those same colonies. All they would be doing, if they give them some preferential treatment, is giving them back some of what they stole from them. That is as simple as that and as simple as I see it, so I am not going to get engaged in any discussion on preferences and relate it to a subject that it has no relationship to. If it is taken in its true context, they are getting off lightly even with the preferential prices.

Mr. President, even though there is abundant evidence from the Report of the Constitution Review Commission that the vast majority of Barbadians are in favour of a republic, this Administration has committed itself to giving the people at large, another opportunity to air their views. When they vote on the matter, whenever that date is set, their voices would be the guide to the Administration. If they say yes, the matter is concluded in that respect. If they say no, well then it would have to be thought of in a different light. However, I am not joining that group of persons who want to give the impression that we are not capable of looking after our own affairs.

Mr. President, Senator Lowe was right. In 1966, there were people who felt that we have reached the limit having achieved independence and there were also people who expressed the view that the persons who were taking us into independence were going to create a dictatorship and they were sowing doubts in people's mind about whether or not it was the correct thing to do. Some of them even went to the extreme of saying that they were going to move from Barbados, so I am not surprised that some of them are starting to talk about all of these adverse things that are going to be visited upon the people, thereby creating doubt in people's mind as to whether those who are responsible for managing the affairs of the country will move from a republican status to some other status.

Mr. President, they can go and live in England and when another Cromwell comes they can decide what they will do. Cromwell was an Englishman and Cromwell took control over England for quite a while, so much so that in 1639 when the Parliament of Barbados was established there was no Parliament in England as Cromwell was ruling.

Mr. President, any time you visit the tower of London you would hear the history of England repeated there such as which King died in that rule and which one was beheaded. 4.50 p.m.

Mr. President, fortunately I know it and, therefore, would not be sidetracked by persons who would expect me to believe that simply by creating a republic, which will be managed by persons who have managed our affairs well for

as long as I can remember, that we are suddenly going to be visited by some serious problems and that British tourists who come here would stop coming because we would have done something wicked and ridiculous.

Mr. President, in the House of Commons or the House of Lords at Hyde Park, people speak freely daily about whether or not there should be a Monarchy. Therefore, when these two Houses reach the stage at which we have now reached and decide to go to Republic, and I am sure they will at some time, I wonder what people are going to say.

Mr. President, I am not going to spend any more time discussing that, I will wait for the real debate on the referendum to take place. When it does, you can be assured that I have begun my preparation for that day because I think that will be a very important day.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time. I thank you.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 9, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to HIS HONOUR the PRESIDENT, the passing of the Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Referendum Act, 2005.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Honourable Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.

The question that the Honourable Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly. 4.56 p.m.

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