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The Assembly met at 2 p.m. The President (Hon. D.E. Buffett) took the Chair and read the Prayer.
MR PRESIDENT: Mr Sanders

MR SANDERS: Mr President. I move that this meeting of the House should not deal with any business other than condolences, Notice No. 1, the next day of sitting and the adjournment

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr Sanders. Is that the concensus of opinion amongst the Members this afternoon Honourable Members?

Question put
Motion agreed unanimously

MR PRESIDENT: Honourable Members, you will know that this meeting has been convened by the Administrator in response to a request by all Members of the Legislative Assembly who are present on the Island at this time pursuant to the provisions of the Norfolk Island Act and the format of the meeting has already been indicated by the motion which has been moved by Mr Sanders, and so immediately we have had condolences I in fact will call upon Notice No. 1. Mr Sanders

CONDOLENCES

MR SANDERS: Thank you Mr President. It is with regret that we do have a condolence. I record with regret the passing of Ivy Mabel Keren Buffett on Monday the 6th December 1982 at her home in Longridge. Bomps as she was affectionately called was the daughter of Peter Moore Buffett and Gertrude Evans. She was survived by her son Ivens Francois her sister Dora and brothers George, Charles and Arthur. To Ivens and his family, to her brothers and sister and their families and to her many friends this House extends sincere sympathies

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Honourable Members. As a mark of respect Honourable Members I would ask you to rise in your places in silence.

Thank you Honourable Members. In accordance with the earlier motion and the words that I have mentioned, the only matter that is to be addressed this afternoon is Notice No. 1 and I call Notice No. 1
NOTICES

REFERENDUM

MR SANDERS: This one stands in my name. I move that consequent upon acceptance of the cumulative system of voting at the referendum of the 1st December 1982 this House is of the opinion that - (a) a referendum should be held to ascertain whether the Norfolk Island community wishes to immediately have a general election under the cumulative system of voting; and (b) the question to be asked at such a referendum should be 'Do you want an election for a new Legislative Assembly to be called immediately?'

MR PRESIDENT: Discussion Honourable Members, Mrs Grey

MRS GREY: Thank you Mr President. The system that the community has decided upon is the cumulative system. The system fulfills one of the requirements put to us by the Department in Canberra and that is that it assures minority representation. Just as the system we have had in the past assures that representation so there is no reason to believe that given the same candidates and even the same set of electors the same Assembly could be here under this new system. At the time of the Minister, Mr McVeigh's visit at the end of September, I was one of probably a handful of Members who felt that a dissolution of the Assembly might be in order. However, since that time I have had approaches as many of the Members of the Assembly have from members of the community who have said why, are you going to have another election. There is no need for it. You have just begun to settle down. The uproar began I suppose at the time of the tabling of the budget and the customs. We had partitions in the community calling for various steps to be taken. However, time passes. Times heals all wounds. I think that most of the people who have spoken to me, in fact all of the people who have spoken to me have said, for heaven's sake, don't start disrupting things now, you have just begun to settle down. The survey which was conducted in August interestingly enough by the College of Advanced Education in Brisbane by Owen McCarthy brought
at that time and whether the public is aware of it or not we have begun to settle down. The atmosphere in this House apparently is not accurately portrayed by our radio broadcasts. In fact it often sounds as though we are continuing to brawl and to fight. In fact, I think there are many issues on which we have begun to agree to the atmosphere in the House and the atmosphere that is broadcast is not necessarily that which exists between Members in the House. We have just begun to tussle with land and immigration planning and that is going to take a lot of time but we are working towards the common good, not just what is good for you or for me and much as it may surprise our listeners, much as I think it surprised us, Members as a meeting the other day reached consensus on an issue within that Land Planning issue. It certainly surprised me and I think there were some surprised faces around the table at that meeting. So we have settled down. We have begun to get on with the job. The next couple of years are going to be difficult. Some tough decisions will have to be taken. This group of people have done it before. We did it last June at the time of the budget. We did it at the Customs stand. Nobody enjoyed doing it but we did it. We will have to do things like that again. We have already shown that we are prepared to do what is right for everyone across the board, not just the favoured few and if the electors believed that what is fair is what is right and if the majority of the electors believe that this Assembly has the guts to do what fair I believe that they will say so at this referendum. I support the motion Mr President

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mrs Grey. Mr Jackson

MR JACKSON: Mr President, the method of voting on Norfolk Island for the electors has been a problem. It has been a serious problem from the introduction in the first instance of the proportional representation to a referendum which was conducted on the 16th December 1979 and there have been disruptive tactics used in the method of voting under this system. Not all electors have supported proportional representation even though I would say in the result of the referendum that was held at that time, for a decision to be taken on what voting system would be required, whether it be first past the post or the proportional representation. It wasn't a large and substantial swing in my opinion. It was 57% compared to
representation method of voting has, as I have indicated, come under very severe criticism and in that it was this government that requested the Commonwealth to provide us with experts who would let us come to grips with the best method of voting that would be suitable in a collective manner for the people of Norfolk Island. Well the recommendation was quite clear, and I am certain that all nine members was aware when the two experts left the Island to go back to Canberra to give their report back to the Minister that the cumulative system was the system that they would recommend and a meeting was convened in the Committee Room for us to discuss this method of voting. And it was a unanimous decision, it was a unanimous decision in this House that we recommend that the cumulative system as coming from the floor of this Assembly, even though members, and I myself, showed some reservations that the 43% of the community who supported proportional representation should be protected, however, in the referendum that was conducted on the first of December a substantial majority indicated that they would prefer the cumulative system in preference to the proportional representation system. Therefore, I have no hesitation in saying that I would support this motion that has been put before us. The question that is to be put to the electors is a straightforward question. It is not one that has been clouded with an issue that may be confusing. It is one that states, do you want an election for a new Legislative Assembly to be called immediately. If this referendum is successful in this vein, that a new election be called well then, I do believe that with the confidence of the people of Norfolk Island, the electors, the confidence that they have shown in the Assembly Members up to date, what Mrs Grey has expressed, that we are just coming to grips with certain issues. I have had this question put to me also. We will break the Commonwealth record. Mr Fraser has had three elections in the matter of that number of years. Perhaps we are entering into the third one now. Therefore the public will have the decision when the date is set for the referendum if the advise comes from the floor of this Assembly this afternoon and it will be left to the public to re-elect us. Besides, who decides to decide. The electors will decide whether this question that has been posed here this afternoon will be answered and in what way. I support the motion
MR QUINTAL: Mr President, I feel that the electors should have their say whether they wish to have another election or not. The Commonwealth Government had offered us either the proportional representative system or the cumulative system. I do believe that if the electors had their choice the choice that they would choose would be first past the post. But we all know that the Australian Government would not allow us to have what the people want. And that in my belief is the first past the post. We were not given that opportunity because the first past the post system does not allow minority groups to have a voice in the system. I do support the cumulative system because it seems to me that that is the closest to the first past the post system that we can possibly get although it is not that at all but it is very close to being that. I do support the motion that is moved by Mr Sanders.

MR PRESIDENT: Thank you Mr Quintal. Mr Christian-Bailey

MR CHRISTIAN-BAILEY: Thank you Mr President. I support the motion Mr President. I feel, Mr President, that a referendum is the best way to ascertain the feelings of the people. It is my belief that a substantial majority does not want the disruption of a general election and the best way to find this out is to go ahead and have this referendum.

MISS BUFFETT: Thank you Mr President. I support the motion that is before us now. I believe that with the general acceptance of the cumulative system of voting which has been not only recommended by the Australian Government but also by the people who have studied electoral methods and advised us upon this matter. It has been accepted by the Assembly and by the people and I believe now that as has been indicated to both the Assembly and the people a little earlier on this year that should the cumulative system be accepted that the question of an election may come up and I believe that if we do the right thing by putting to the people the very question 'Do you want an election for a new Legislative Assembly to be called immediately, if they do they simply vote to do so and if not they do not. Their's is the answer, we are in upon their say and as far as I am concerned I will abide by their wishes at all times and I think this should clear the air for those who have partitioned and they may let the government know whether they have decided that
MR PRESIDENT: Further participation in the debate Honourable Members. There being no further participation I put the question.

Question put
Motion agreed unanimously

DAY OF NEXT SITTING

MR PRESIDENT: I seek a motion Honourable Members fixing the next sitting day, Mrs Grey

MRS GREY: Mr President, I move that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday 2nd February 1983 at 2 p.m.

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday 2nd February 1983 at 2 p.m.

Question put
Motion agreed unanimously

ADJOURNMENT

MR PRESIDENT: I seek an adjournment debate Honourable Members

MISS BUFFETT: I move that the House do now adjourn

MR PRESIDENT: The question is that the House do now adjourn

Question put
Motion agreed unanimously

House adjourned at 2.21 on 15 December 1982 until Wednesday 2 February 1983 at 2 p.m.