IS THE WEST INDIES WEST INDIAN?

Eleventh Sir Archibald Nedd Memorial Lecture

by

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My first words must be of tribute to the great West Indian jurist this Lecture series memorializes: Sir Archibald Nedd – a Grenadian learned in the law, a West Indian distinguished in its practice in regional jurisdictions. I congratulate you all on so honouring a worthy son; in doing so, you honour too this land of his birth and this region that nurtured him in the law. May the example of his professional life inspire generations of West Indian lawyers. I believe we honour Sir Archibald best by allowing these occasions in his memory to have a sweep beyond Grenadian shores from which he himself sallied, and a breadth that encompasses our ambitions for the larger regional community of which Grenada is such a cherished part. To do so, we must be honest with ourselves even if, in our candour, our sweetest song is that which tells of saddest thought.

And I must, at the outset, pay tribute to Grenada itself on the eve of its 38th year of Independence. You were not the first West Indian island to attain freedom from colonialism; but you were in the very frontline of those aspiring to it and engaging the struggle that led to it. For over a century, you have been a champion of progressive thought and action – sometimes not without setbacks – but thrusting ever forward. Congratulations!

I thank the Bar Association of Grenada for inviting me to deliver this Lecture. It is a privilege to join the ranks of distinguished West Indians who have done so over the past fifteen years. I am specially grateful to the President, Mr Francis Alexis, for allowing that I should speak to a theme of my own choosing. Determining that theme was the easy part; for I believe that at this moment there in no more urgent issue for West Indians to address than that encompassed by the title I have given to this Lecture: IS THE WEST INDIES WEST INDIAN?

PART I

As all Grenadians know, it was here in St.George's 95 years ago that T.A. Marryshow flew from the masthead of his pioneering newspaper *The West Indian* the banner: *The West Indies Must Be Westindian.* And on that banner *Westindian* was symbolically one joined-up word – from the very first issue on 1 January 1915. What was 'Teddy' Marryshow signaling almost a century ago? What was he proclaiming? To what destination was he bound? That first issue looked to "the day when, our islands linked together in an administrative and fiscal union, the West Indian Dominion will take its place, small though they may be, in the glorious Empire." As Jill Shepherd has written in her introductory biography of Marryshow: "This, and the replacement of Crown Colony Government by representative democracy in each of the territories that it entails remained his steady goals in years of continual journalistic and political struggle in Grenada (under the slogan 'Educate, Agitate, Federate')".

And who was 'he'? for Marryshow was not alone on board. There were others, from other islands, like Capt. Cipriani of Trinidad and Rawle of Dominica and Critchelow of British Guiana and Grantley Adams of Barbados and Bradshaw of St. Kitts. They were a

collective – these early regionalists – not yet bound by a blueprint of structured unity – but united by an intuitive awareness that, if they were to go forward to the goal of freedom from a still cramping colonialism in their several homes, they had to struggle together in their regional homeland: that the West Indies had to be West Indian.

In the slogan was a *double entendre.* To be West Indian was both the goal of self-determination attained and the strategy of unity for reaching and sustaining it. That was the 1920s and '30s. As we ponder that goal and strategy still unfulfilled by us, it is intriguing to remember that, at that same time, today's united Europe had just fought one civil war and was about to fight another. Of course our goal of freedom kept changing its form as the world changed: internal self-government in the pre-war years; formal independence in the post-war years; the reality of freedom in the era of globalization; overcoming smallness in a world of giants. But the strategy of regional unity, the strategy of oneness, would not change, at least not nominally: we called it by different names and pursued it by different forms – always with variable success: federation; integration, the OECS, CARIFTA, CARICOM, the CSME, the CCJ. It is that 'variable success' that today begs the question: *IS THE WEST INDIES WEST INDIAN?* Nearly 100 years after Marryshow asserted that we must be, are we yet? Worse still, are we less so than we once were?

As 'West Indians,' we have always faced a basic contradiction of oneness and otherness, a basic paradox of kinship and alienation. Much of our history is the interplay of these contrarieties. But they are not of equal weight. The very notion of being West Indian speaks of identity, of oneness. That identity is the product of centuries of living together and is itself a triumph over the divisive geography of an archipelago which speaks to otherness. Today, CARICOM and all it connotes, is the hallmark of that triumph, and it is well to remember the processes which forged it – lest we forget, and lose it.

Throughout history our geo-political region has known that it is a kinship in and around an enclosing Sea. But, through most of that time it suited local elites – from white planters, through successor merchant groups, to establishment colonials – to keep the Sea as a convenient boundary against encroachment on their 'local control': to ensure that the West Indies did not become too West Indian. Political aspirants in our region jostled for their Governor's ear, not each other's arm.

Times changed in the1920s and '30s – between the 'world wars'. The external economic and political environments changed; and the internal environments changed – social, political and most of all demographic. Local control began to pass to the hands of local creoles, mainly professionals, later trade unionists, and for a while the new political class saw value in a strategy of regional unity. Maryshow's slogan 'the West Indies must be West Indian' was evocative of it; and for two generations, West Indian 'unity' was a progressive political credo.

It was a strategy that was to reach its apogee in the Federation of The West Indies: due to become independent in mid-1962. It is often forgotten that the 'the' in the name of the new nation was consciously spelt with a capital 'T' – The West Indies – an insistence on

the oneness of the federated region. But, by then, that was verbal insistence against a contrary reality, already re-emerging. The new political elites for whom ‘unity’ offered a pathway to political power through ‘independence’ had found by the 1960s that that pathway was opening up regardless.

In the event, regional unity was no longer a pre-condition to ‘local control’. Hence, Norman Manley’s deal with McLeod and the referendum in Jamaica; and Eric Williams’ self-indulgent arithmetic that ‘1’ from ‘10’ left ‘0’; even ‘the agony of the eight’ that ended the dream. Despite the rhetorical passion that had characterized the latter years of the ‘federal movement’ the imperishable impulse for ‘local control’ had revived, and the separatist instincts of a controlling social and political elite had prevailed. Within four months of the dispersion of the Federation (on the same day in May 1962 that it was to become a single independent member state of the Commonwealth) Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago became so separately. We can act with speed when we really want to!

But objective realities are not blown away by winds of narrow ambition. As in the nineteen twenties and thirties, so in the sixties and seventies (almost on the heels of the federal debacle when the West Indies recklessly ceased to be West Indian) the environment changed against separatism. Independence on a separate basis had secured ‘local control’; but the old nemesis of colonialism was replaced by the new suzerainty of globalization. Independence, particularly for Caribbean micro states, was not enough to deliver Elysium. ‘Unity’ no sooner discarded was back in vogue; but less a matter of the heart than of the head.

In an interdependent world which in the name of liberalization made no distinctions between rich and poor, big and small, regional unity was compulsive. West Indian states – for all their new flags and anthems – needed each other for survival; ‘unity’ was the only protective kit they could afford. Only three years after the rending ‘referendum’ came the first tentative steps to ‘unity’ in 1965 with CARIFTA; ‘tentative’, because the old obsession with ‘local control’ continued to trump oneness – certainly in Cabinet Rooms; but in some privileged drawing rooms too; though less so in village markets and urban street corners.

Despite the new external compulsions, therefore, the pursuit of even economic unity, which publics largely accepted, has been a passage of attrition. It has taken us from 1965 to 2010 – 45 years – to crawl through CARIFTA and CARICOM, through the fractured promises of Chaguaramas and Grand Anse, and through innumerable pious Declarations and Affirmations and Commitments. The roll call of unfulfilled pledges and promises and unimplemented decisions is so staggering that in 2011 a cul de sac looms.

At Grand Anse in 1989 West Indian political leaders declared that “inspired by the spirit of co-operation and solidarity among us (we) are moved by the need to work expeditiously together to deepen the integration process and strengthen the Caribbean Community in all of its dimensions” They agreed a specific work programme ‘to be implemented over the next four years’ with primacy given “towards the establishment, in the shortest possible time of a single market and economy”. That was 22 years ago. The

West Indian Commission (also established at Grand Anse) confidently charted the way, declaring it a 'Time for Action'. West Indian technicians took their leaders to the brink with the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. But there was no action – no political action, no political will to act. In twenty-two years, nothing decisive has happened to fulfill the dream of Grand Anse. Over those two decades the West Indies has drawn steadily away from being West Indian.

Not surprisingly, when Heads of Government meet here in Grenada next month [February 2011] it will be at a moment of widespread public disbelief that the professed goal of a 'Single Market and Economy' will ever be attained, or even that their political leaders are any longer "inspired by the spirit of co-operation and solidarity" or "moved by the need to work expeditiously together to deepen the integration process and strengthen the Caribbean Community in all its dimensions" – as they proclaimed at Grand Anse in 1989.

Words alone are never enough, except to deceive. As Paul Southwell used to remind us in Shakespearean allusion: "Words, words, words; promises, promises, promises; tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow." Nothing's changed. In the acknowledged quest for survival (including political survival) the old urge for 'local control' by those in control has not matured to provide real space for the 'unity' we say we need. Like 19th century colonists we strive to keep our rocks in our pockets – despite the enhanced logic of pooling our resources, and the enlarged danger of 'state capture' by unelected groups and external forces while we dally.

The West Indies cannot be West Indian if West Indian affairs, regional matters, are not the unwritten premise of every Government's agenda; not occasionally, but always; not as ad hoc problems, but as the basic environment of policy. It is not so now. How many Caribbean leaders have mentioned CARICOM in their New Year messages this year? Only the Prime Minister of Grenada in his capacity as the new Chairman of CARICOM For most West Indian Governments Caribbean integration is a thing apart, not a vital organ of national life. It seems that only when it is fatally damaged or withers away will Cabinet agendas change.

When the unsung benefits of regionalism are no longer available as instruments to bolster local development, and bargaining with larger countries, and coping with the destructive reach of drug trafficking – only then perhaps will Governments be forced into reconstructing those vital elements of regional support that neglect had helped to destroy. We will then, perhaps, as with CARIFTA in 1965, resume the old cycle of rebuilding what we once had, but carelessly destroyed; and so *ad infinitum*. But let us remember, a civilization cannot survive save on a curve that goes upward, whatever the blips in between; to go downward, whatever the occasional glimpses of glory, is to end ingloriously. Caribbean civilization is not an exception. It is now as it was ninety-five years ago with Marryshow: *The West Indies must be West Indian.*

Nor is this a solitary *cri de coeur* of a bereft West Indian. Writing in *Which Way Latin America?* on 'Repositioning the Commonwealth Caribbean' the eminent British scholar of contemporary Caribbean affairs, Prof. Anthony J Payne, concluded in 2009:

> *Since the West Indies Federation ended in 1962, the region has, in effect, wasted a generation. It partially redeemed itself with the establishment of CARICOM in 1973, but it now needs to seize the (Rose Hall) moment, to establish and properly fund a CARICOM Commission and to charge it with nothing less than charting all aspects of a region-wide development strategy capable of coming to terms with globalization.*

The West Indies did not seize the moment; instead the generational waste worsened.

Last year, Adrian Augier of St. Lucia received the Anthony N. Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence in Arts and Letters. He ended his acceptance speech with words that gave me hope that Marryshow's banner still flew with a younger generation. He said this:

> *As for me, I have not reached the summit. I am merely one outcrop of a submerged mountain range of talent and energy ready to rise above and erupt onto the surface of the sea which binds us. In this spirit, and on behalf of my village of St. Lucia, my community of the OECS, and my country of the Caribbean, and all our aspiring artists, and the many persons who have helped me along this path, I accept this award and most sincerely thank you.*

I felt we should have thanked him for recalling us to our basic reality of oneness and our basic need to respond to its compulsions.

In the 21st century, despite all we know in our minds of the brutality of the global environment and the need for collective action to survive it, the isolationist claims of 'local control' still smother the demands of unity of purpose and action. We are still so many plantation enclaves obsessed with outdoing each other. It is puzzling that it should be so; for we have assuredly made large gains in what 'unity' most demands – 'identity'.

There may be exceptions; but does not every citizen of every CARICOM country regard himself or herself as a *West Indian?* – not first and foremost, perhaps, but after his or her 'island' identity (and I regard Belize, Guyana and Suriname as 'islands' for this purpose), a member of the society we call 'West Indian'. There may be grouses, even anger, at not being treated 'properly' at immigration counters, but that is because as 'West Indians' we expect to be treated better. Our anger hinges not on the absence of identity but on its assumed reality; on the conviction that our common identity is not a garb we wear outside but shed when we come home. We groan together when West Indian cricket grovels; and jump together when it triumphs. What is all this but identity?

It is not an identity crisis that we face. We are a family; we know we are. But our family values are less sturdy than they should be – those values that should make regional unity real, should move it from rhetoric to reality, should make integration an intuitive process

and the CSME a natural bonding. Until we live by these values, smoothing out the wrinkles so that all the family prospers, we degrade that identity.

I applaud Prime Minister Tillman Thomas' call as current Chairman of CARICOM for the West Indian people to be better informed and more intimately engaged in the regional project. CARICOM is essentially about people; about West Indian people; but, in truth, it is an infusion of people power that is needed to resuscitate CARICOM.

PART II

Nothing speaks louder of this current debilitation than our substantial denial of the Caribbean Court of Justice. The Bar Association of Grenada is host to this Lecture Series which is a memorial to a great West Indian lawyer. It is poignant that the Inaugural Lecture in this series delivered in 1996 by J.S. Archibald Q.C. was entitled: *Essentials for a West Indies Supreme Court to replace the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the final Appellate Court for Commonwealth Caribbean States and Territories.* Fifteen years later, it is still apposite that I address this issue when we talk of being West Indian.

In 2001, twelve CARICOM countries decided they would abolish appeals to the Privy Council and establish their own Caribbean Court of Justice serving all the countries of the Caribbean Community with both original jurisdiction in regional integration matters and appellate jurisdiction as the final court of appeal for individual CARICOM countries. As of now, only Guyana (which had abolished appeals to the Privy Council on independence, believing it to be a natural incident of 'sovereignty'), Barbados and now Belize – have conferred on the CCJ that appellate jurisdiction. It is instructive that in Guyana's case, in adopting the CCJ as its final court of appeal, it dispensed with its own national final Court of Appeal, subordinating its own sovereignty to the logic of a Community Court of Appeal – a Caribbean Community of which it is a part with all the other member states of CARICOM, with whom one would expect the same logic to prevail.

Constitutional amendment is required for the abolition of appeals to the Privy Council. In practical terms, this means bipartisan political support for the CCJ. In Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (where the Court has its much sought after location) that political consensus does not exist – because the political party now in office in each of those two major regional jurisdictions has turned its back on its regional court. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a referendum last year rejected the transference of appeals to the CCJ.

The situation has been complicated by the issue of the death penalty on which the Privy Council, reflecting contemporary English (and EU) mores and jurisprudence has been rigorous in upholding Caribbean appeals in death sentence cases. Someday, the Caribbean as a whole must accept abolition of the death penalty – I believe we should have done so already – but, in a situation of heightened crime in the region, popular sentiment has induced political reticence. Even so, however, the Privy Council's anachronistic

jurisdiction persists; and the Caribbean Court of Justice remains hobbled in pursuing its enlightened role in Caribbean legal reform.

It is almost axiomatic that the Caribbean Community should have its own final Court of Appeal in all matters – that the West Indies at the highest level of jurisprudence should be West Indian. A century-old tradition of erudition and excellence in the legal profession of the Region leaves no room for hesitancy. As a West Indian I despair, as a West Indian lawyer I am ashamed, that the West Indies should be a major reason for the unwelcome retention of the Privy Council's jurisdiction within the halls of the new Supreme Court in England. Having created our own Caribbean Court of Justice it is an act of abysmal contrariety that we have so substantially withheld its appellate jurisdiction in favour of that of the Privy Council – we who have sent Judges to the International Court of Justice, to the International Criminal Court and to the International Court for the former Yugoslavia, to the Presidency of the United Nations Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (from Grenada); we from whose Caribbean shores have sprung in lineal descent the former and current Attorneys General of Britain and the United States respectively.

As I recall this register of West Indian legal erudition let me pause to pay tribute to the memory of Prof Ralph Carnegie who left us this month – a veritable icon of learning in the law and of service to it – and always a West Indian. As CCJ Judge Winston Anderson acknowledged at his funeral service last week, he died sadly without attainment of his vision of a fully functioning Caribbean Court of Justice, and fearful of the prospects for the legal monument he strove so hard to build. We owe him a more lasting memorial.

This absurd and unworthy paradox of heritage and hesitancy must be resolved by action. In law, as in ourselves, the West Indies must be West Indian. Those countries still hesitant must find the will and the way to end this anomaly, and perhaps it will be easier if they act as one. The truth is that the alternative to such action is too self-destructive to contemplate. The demise of the Court itself is not an improbable danger when in both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago the creation of a local final Court of Appeal is being canvassed. Loss of the CCJ will almost certainly frustrate progress on a Single Market and Economy – the vision of Grand Anse. We will have begun tearing up the Treaty of Chaguaramas whose Preamble recites "that the original jurisdiction of the CCJ is essential to the successful operation of the CSME". If West Indian lawyers, in particular, remain complacent about this absurdity much longer – and I am afraid some are – we will begin to make a virtue of it, and in the end dismantle more than the Court.

So grave and present is this danger that in August last, five West Indians to whom the Region has given its highest honour, the Order of the Caribbean Community, took the unprecedented step of warning publicly "with one voice of the threat being posed to the Caribbean Court of Justice and the Community's goals more generally". I was among them. "We warn against these developments" we wrote, "which, as in an earlier era, could bring down the structures for advancing the interests of the people of CARICOM … carefully constructed and nurtured over many decades by sons and daughters of all CARICOM countries". We were warning of the mire of despond we would stumble into if in this matter the West Indies ceased to be West Indian.

But let me add what we all know, though seldom say: to give confidence to our publics in their adoption of the CCJ as the ultimate repository of justice in the West Indies, our Governments must be assiduous in demonstrating respect for all independent West Indian constitutional bodies (like the Director of Public Prosecutions) lest by transference, Governments are not trusted to keep their hands off the CCJ. And Courts themselves, at every level, must be manifestly free from political influence and be seen to be sturdy custodians of that freedom. In the end, the independence of West Indian judiciaries must rest on a broad culture of respect for the authority and independence of all constitutional office holders – for the Rule of Law.

We must not forget that the structure of the CCJ goes further than does that of any court in the Region, and most courts in the Commonwealth, in securing independence from political influence, much less political control. It is at least as free of such local control as is the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; and freer than any national or sub-regional Court. West Indian people who want such a Court that is beyond the reach of politics must understand – and must be helped to understand – that they have it in the CCJ. The question, therefore, cannot be avoided: is a regional political leadership that conjures with rejecting the CCJ doing so because it is beyond political reach? I cannot believe that; but in my own judgment, with the Privy Council no longer a realistic option, the CCJ is the most reliable custodian that West Indians could have of the Rule of Law in the region. Despite this, will we once more, with the gains of oneness in our grasp, forego being West Indian?

PART III

There is another major respect in which the West Indies in not being West Indian in the Marryshow manner; is not being true to itself. We are failing to fulfill the promise we once held out of being a light in the darkness of the developing world. Small as we are, our regionalism, our West Indian synonymy, inspired many in the South who also aspired to strength through unity. We have all but withdrawn from these roles, and in some areas like the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Europe we have fallen into the trap of not preserving unity with our brothers and sisters in other countries of the South – whatever their own lapses. Recently, the former President of Tanzania, Ben Mkapa, who was our brother in arms in the North-South arena, was warning Africa against the same EPA of which we have made Europe such a gift. Solidarity has been lost not only amongst ourselves, but also collectively with the developing world.

And, perhaps, therein lies the ‘rub’. Were we making a reality of our own regional unity we would not be false to ourselves and we would have inspired others who, in the past, had looked to us as a beacon of a worthy future. Instead, we are losing our way both at home and abroad.

Have we forgotten the days when as West Indians we were the first to daringly bring the 'Non-Aligned Movement' to the Western Hemisphere, when we pioneered rejection of the 'two China' policy at the United Nations and recognized the People's Republic; when, together, we broke the Western diplomatic embargo of Cuba; when we forced withdrawal of the Kissinger plan for a 'Community of the Western Hemisphere'; when we were in the front rank (both intellectual and diplomatic) of the effort for a New International Economic Order; when from this region, bending iron wills, we gave leadership in the struggle against 'apartheid' in Southern Africa; when we inspired the creation of the ACP and kept the fallacy of 'reciprocity' in trade at bay for 25 years; when we forced grudging acceptance in the United Nations and in the Commonwealth that 'small states' required special and differential treatment? In all this, and more, for all our size we stood tall; we commanded respect, if not always endearment. We were West Indians being West Indian.

Is it not a sad commentary on our present lack of cohesion and, indeed of collective courage, that today we have succumbed to threats from the EU into signing a full EPA while other ACP regions have not, and have failed to build in the WTO and in the IMF on our previous success in convincing the UN and the Commonwealth that, as small states, we should be given special and differential treatment? Today, amid rampant globalization, those failures are already taking their toll on our Caribbean economies.

Unless we have the collective political will and the resolve to join-up our individual capacities – including the capacities of our economists, lawyers, and finance and trade experts from each of our governments, our private sectors, our trade unions, our regional universities, and our regional NGOs – each of our countries will be compelled to accept individual prescriptions that place statistics not people at the centre of concerns. It is already happening. Meanwhile, the region as whole will fail to develop alternative models of economic growth and development that maintain the autonomy and the identity of the West Indian people.

And beyond the respect from others that was freely given in the past, was self-esteem; because in all these actions, and others, we were guided by principle: principles rooted in our regional values; principles we were not afraid to articulate and by which we stood, mindful of, but not deterred by, objections to positions we once took boldly on the global stage – not recklessly, but in unity, with honor and circumspection.

For what do we stand today, united and respected as one West Indies? We break ranks among ourselves (Grenada, I acknowledge, no longer) so that some can bask in Japanese favour for helping to exterminate endangered species of the world's whales. We eviscerate any common foreign policy in CARICOM when some of us cohabit with Taiwan. Deserting our African and Pacific partners, we yield to Europe – and take pride in being first to roll over.

What do these inglorious lapses do for our honor and standing in the world? How do they square with our earlier record of small states standing for principles that commanded respect and buttressed self-esteem? The answers are all negative. And, inevitably, what

they do in due measure is require us to disown each other and display our discordance to the world. This is where 'local control' has led us in the 21st Century. We call it now 'sovereignty'. In reality, it is sovereignty we deploy principally against each other; because against most others that sovereignty is a hollow vessel.

It is easy, perhaps natural, for us as West Indian people to shift blame to our Governments; and Governments, of course, are not blameless. But, in our democracies, Governments do what we allow them to do: they themselves say: 'we are doing what our people want us to do'. It is not always true; but who can deny it, when we accept their excesses with equanimity, certainly in silence.

No! There is fault within us also. We have each been touched with the glow of 'local control'; each moved by the siren song of 'sovereignty'; have each allowed the stigma of otherness, even foreignness, to degrade our West Indian kinship. The fault lies not only in our political stars but also in ourselves that we are what and where we are; and what and where we will be in a global society that demands of us the very best we can be. When the West Indies is not West Indian, it is we, at least in part, who let it be so. And what irony: Marryshow and his peers demanded that we be West Indian to be free together. We were; but in our freedom we are ceasing to be West Indian and in the process are forgoing the strengths that togetherness brings.

When are we at our best? Surely, when the West Indies is West Indian; when we are as one; with one identity; acting with the strength and courage that oneness gives us. Does anyone doubt that whatever we undertake, we do it better when we do it together?

Thirty-five years ago, in 1975, on the shores of Montego Bay, as I took leave of Caribbean leaders before assuming new roles at the Commonwealth, my parting message was a plea *TO CARE FOR CARICOM.* Among the things I said then was this:

> ***Each generation of West Indians has an obligation to advance the process of regional development and the evolution of an ethos of unity. Ours is endeavoring to do so; but we shall fail utterly if we ignore these fundamental attributes of our West Indian condition and, assuming without warrant the inevitability of our oneness, become casual, neglectful, indifferent or undisciplined in sustaining that process and that evolution.***

The burden of my message tonight is that we have become 'casual, neglectful, indifferent and undisciplined' in sustaining and advancing Caribbean integration: that we have failed to ensure that the West Indies is West Indian, and are falling into a state of disunity which by now we should have made unnatural. The process will occasion a slow and gradual descent – from which a passing wind may offer occasional respite; but, ineluctably, it will produce an ending.

In Derek Walcott's recently published collection of poems, *White Egrets,* there are some lines which conjure up that image of slow passing:

With the leisure of a leaf falling in the forest,
Pale yellow spinning against green – my ending.

This must not be a regional epitaph. But, if CARICOM is not to end like a leaf falling in the forest, prevailing apathy and unconcern must cease; reversal from unity must end. The old cult of 'local control' must not extinguish hope of regional rescue through collective effort; must not allow a narcissist insularity to deny us larger vision and ennobling roles. We must escape the mental prison of narrow domestic walls and build a West Indies which is West Indian. We must cherish our local identities; but they must enrich the mosaic of regionalism, not withhold from it their separate splendors.

In some ways, it must be allowed, our integration slippage is less evident among the smallest of us. The OECS islands, Grenada among them, have set out a course for more ambitious and deeper economic integration among themselves which would be worthy of all, if it could subsist for all. The Treaty establishing the OECS Economic Union is now in force. But, it is early days; it remains to be seen at the level of action, at the level of implementation, whether, even for them, for you, the earlier 'agony' (of which Sir Arthur Lewis wrote so ruefully in 1962) lingers still. Meanwhile, however, congratulations are in order, and I extend them heartily. In moving closer to 'freedom of movement' among the OECS countries you have set a vital example to the rest of CARICOM. The OECS West Indies was being West Indian. May it translate into an ethos among you, and in time infuse the wider Community with an end to 'foreignness' among all West Indians. You have taken the first steps in a long journey whose ultimate goal must be a larger union.

Collectively, we must recover our resolve to survive as one West Indies – as one people, one region, one whole region. Imbued by such resolve there is a future that can be better than the best we have ever had. Neither complacency nor resignation nor empty words will suffice. What we need is rescue – by ourselves, from ourselves and for ourselves. We cannot be careless with our oneness, which is our lifeline. As it was in St. George's in 1915, so it is now: ***The West Indies must be Westindian!***

Let me end with some lines which will be familiar to very many of you who have sung them so often: the final verse of the School Song of the Grenada Boys' Secondary School:
Sing them now, if you will –

And when our boyhood days are over,
Our motto must still remain;
For only by earnest endeavour
The highest we shall attain;
A truly great West Indies
Be this our constant aim;
Surmounting insular boundaries;
A people in more than name.

THANK YOU.