



21st. Jan., 2009

Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance & Public Administration of the Senate

Parliament House

CANBERRA

A.C.T.

re Senator Bob Brown's private Member's Bill proposing a plebiscite at the time of the next election.

"A plebiscite is a glorified opinion poll; it does not have any constitutional significance whatsoever" )Professor George Williams).

As this plebiscite will ask the electorate if it wants to completely change our present Constitution and constitutional arrangements i.e. to (i.e. to have a Revolution), the instigators, for the exercise to have any meaning at all, must spell out exactly with what they would replace our Constitutional Monarchy.

This must be done prior to a plebiscite being held.

If the instigators can provide the above information, they must also ascertain that it meets with the approval of all republicans. There is no point at all in asking the electorate to express dissatisfaction with our Constitutional Monarchy, unless an agreed alternative is supplied. ~~As this~~ This was not forthcoming at the previous referendum.

If the proponents of a republic (i.e. of a Revolution) come up with an agreed future form of republic, the correct way forward would be to hold a referendum on the question of the electorate's preferred option.

It is the duty of the Parliament in some way to inform the electorate of the exact nature of plebiscites and referenda -- particularly if this private Member's Bill is to be debated, but probably in any case.

Deborah Foster.

(Mrs. D.M. Foster)