



**Remarks by His Excellency Governor Thomas Macan
Presentation of Certificates of Registration as British Citizens to 21 Persons
Government House
Thursday, September 8, 2005**

Good morning, and on the behalf of Janet and myself, welcome to Government House for this ceremony to present certificates of registration as British Citizens to you.

For most, if not all of you, this will be a second visit to Government House, or perhaps to an earlier ceremony in the chamber of the Legislative Council, to receive a certificate of naturalization. You will have probably heard me on that occasion talking about the commitment that the acquisition of citizenship brings with it. Commitment - on the part of the country or territory, which grants citizenship to protect and defend the interests of its new citizen. And the vital counterpart commitment, on the part of that new citizen, is to respect and defend the country or territory's laws and to contribute to its society.

Today you acquire, by the process of registration, the status of British Citizen. And for many of you the attraction will be the right to hold a British Passport. Not perhaps as grand a document as when it was signed personally by the Foreign Secretary who used to request "in the name of her Majesty all those whom it may concern"...to afford the bearer "**every** assistance and protection of which he [or she] may **stand in need**". Nowadays, it's only "**such** assistance and protection as **may be necessary**". Nonetheless, the British Passport is one which allows travel with fewer visa requirements than most and of course gives unrestricted access to not only the United Kingdom but also to the countries of the European Union.

It is a valuable document. The Registrar General has stressed the importance of guarding your certificate of registration as you would your most valued possession. Your passport also is valuable, not least sadly because if it is stolen, it can command a high price on the black market. To say nothing of the trouble its loss will cause you and the British Consul if you have the misfortune to become separated from it abroad. Please, please look after it with great care.

The British Passport is part and parcel of the relationship that as a UK Overseas Territory, the Virgin Islands have with the United Kingdom. It is a two-way relationship. The United Kingdom takes responsibility for certain areas of activity—particularly foreign affairs and defense—which the Territory does not wish to shoulder for itself. The corollary is that the Territory agrees to meet certain standards in the way that it conducts its affairs. And it's one of the Governor's jobs to ensure; with I hope as light a touch as possible, that this happens.

Which is why this week's election was so important. It has enabled the Virgin Islands to demonstrate again a political maturity and an ability to settle differences at the polling

station and not by more violent destructive means. The conduct of the elections, and I hope that everyone who is receiving a certificate today exercised his or her right to vote, was a tribute to our society. That society's continued success requires the active participation of all of us. It was Edmund Burke who observed that "For evil to triumph, it is only necessary for good men to do nothing".

I know that I can count on you, who have had to earn your citizenship, to be amongst the good men and women of the Virgin Islands.

Thank you.