



2011/12 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

November 2011

Sittings 1–4 of the 2011/12 Session
(pages 1-314)

Hon. Stanley W. Lowe, OBE, JP, MP
Speaker

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BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****4 NOVEMBER 2011****10:45 AM***Sitting Number 1 of the 2011/12 Session**[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker]***OATH OR AFFIRMATION
OF NEW MEMBER**

The Speaker: We are going to now do the swearing in of our newly elected Member.

Will the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Moniz, and the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Crockwell, please escort the newly elected Member into the Chamber.

[Pause]

The Speaker: The newly elected Member, Mr. Cannonier, is now going to take the oath of allegiance.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE
MR. L. CRAIG CANNONIER**

Mr. L. Craig Cannonier: [Off microphone] I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Honourable Member is now going to take the oath of an Assemblyman.

**OATH OF AN ASSEMBLYMAN
MR. L. CRAIG CANNONIER**

Mr. L. Craig Cannonier: [Off microphone] I, being a Member of this present Assembly, do swear by Almighty God to use and employ my best endeavour therein for the general good without any respect to private interest, gain or advantage, striving to discharge a good conscience in all equity and integrity during my continuance therein.

[Pause]

The Speaker: The Honourable Member, Mr. Cannonier, has been duly sworn in as a Member of this House.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. K. H. R. Horton, from Southampton West.
Mr. Horton has the floor.

**SUSPENSION OF
[STANDING ORDERS 14 AND 21]**

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Mr. Speaker, good morning. I move that [Standing Orders] 14 [and 21] be suspended to enable me to move that a message be sent to His Excellency, the Governor, Sir Richard Gozney, KCMG.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER'S MESSAGE
TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR**

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: May it please Your Excellency: We are directed by the House of Assembly to inform Your Excellency that the House has met.

The Speaker: Was there any objection?
Very well.

*[Gavel]**[Motion carried: Standing Orders 14 and 21 suspended.]***MINUTE OF SILENCE FOR THE LATE
MR. WALTER S. BRANGMAN
AND THE LATE MR. CECIL V. CLARKE**

The Speaker: During the break of the House, two former Honourable Members passed: the Honourable Member, Mr. W. S. Brangman; and the Honourable Member, Mr. C. V. Clarke, who sat in these Chambers. Will you please join me in a minute of silence for these two honourable and gallant Members, former Members of this House?

[The House rose to observe a minute of silence]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Members.
Will the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Butler, and the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Hunt, please take the message to His Excellency the Governor.

[Inaudible conversation]

The Speaker: Please do not be long because we are going to await the arrival of Black Rod.

[Pause]

The Speaker: We are awaiting the arrival of Black Rod.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Do not go too far away. Make it quick. We are awaiting the arrival of Black Rod. Momentarily, he should be knocking on the door.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Butler and Mr. Hunt.

“Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to inform the House of Assembly that I will deliver the speech on the occasion of the convening of Parliament at 11:00 am today, Friday, the 4th of November 2011, on the Cabinet Office lawn.

[signed] Sir Richard Gozney, Government House.”

[Three knocks at the door]

The Speaker: That is a good knock, I can tell you that.

[Laughter]

Black Rod: Mr. Speaker, you have a message from His Excellency the Governor, Sir Richard H. T. Gozney.

The Speaker: Please bring him forward to the bar of the House.

Black Rod: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor to request the attendance of your Honourable House on the Cabinet Office lawn forthwith.

The Speaker: I thank you.

Madam Premier has returned, so that we get a procession.

The procession to Cabinet Lawn will be led by the Sergeant-at-Arms, who will follow, of course, Black Rod; the Clerk to the House; Madam Premier; the Leader of the Opposition. I believe that the Clerk has the list of the way Members should proceed to the Cabinet lawn to assist the commentator. Now, if you get out of line she might call the wrong name, or the commentator may call the wrong name. So they have done a list, and we would like for Members to follow that list as closely as they can.

Madam Clerk, do you have that list?

The Clerk: You will be ably assisted by the Government Whip and Ms. Nea Talbot.

[Pause]

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thanks. Yes. We have the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Chief Inspector (I think already left); the Clerk to the legislature, Ms. Shernette Wolffe; Speaker of the House, the Honourable Stanley Lowe. Next in line, of course, is Madam Premier. And alongside of her is the Opposition Leader, the Deputy Leader, the Deputy Speaker. I will follow the Deputy Speaker.

Then there is the Honourable Wayne Perinchief, the Honourable Dame Jennifer Smith. (We are going singularly.) The Honourable Michael J. Scott, the Honourable Patrice Minors, the Honourable Glenn Blakeney, the Honourable Walter Roban, then the Honourable Zane De Silva. The Honourable Michael Weeks, the Honourable Wayne Furbert, the Honourable Marc Bean.

We will have the Youth Parliamentarians behind the Honourable Marc Bean. And then from the MPs on the Government side, the Honourable Alex Scott, the Honourable Neletha Butterfield, the Honourable Elvin James, the Honourable Walter Lister, Mr. Dale Butler, JP, MP, the Honourable Dennis Lister, Mr. Terry Lister, JP, MP, Mr. Ashfield DeVent, JP, MP, Mr. Darius Tucker.

Following from the Opposition will first be the Opposition Whip, Mr. Shawn Crockwell, and then his Members: Mr. Trevor Moniz, Deputy Opposition Leader; Mr. Cole Simons, Mr. E. T. Bob Richards, Dr. the Honourable E. Grant Gibbons, Mark Pettingill, JP, MP, Donte Hunt, JP, MP, Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, JP, MP, and Ms. Louise Jackson.

Following Ms. Jackson is Mr. Kim Swan, JP, MP, and Mr. Charles Swan.

That is it.

Proceedings suspended at 11:02 am

The Speaker: We are just going to give Honourable Members a few minutes to compose themselves. I know that that walk was very challenging. We are going to have a group photograph done by Mr. Rayner in a minute or two.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Yes. Ring the bell. Press the bell.

GROUP PHOTO BY DCI AND LOOKBERMUDA

The Speaker: We would like to proceed with the taking of the photographs. Is everybody present? We are

going to proceed. If you want to be in this official photograph please make certain you are in the Chamber. Are you ready, Mr. Rayner?

[Pause]

The Speaker: Let us proceed because otherwise we will be here all day trying to get people organised for a photo shoot.

Proceedings resumed at 12:31 pm

[Hon. Stanley W. Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]

[Pause]

The Speaker: I want to thank Mr. Rouja from Look-Bermuda, and also Mr. Steven Rayner from DCI, for taking the official photograph. Some of us will want it, I am sure.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is going to replace the bar of the House.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Fox.
Now we will turn to the Orders of the Day.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 15, 22, AND 25 JULY 2011

The Speaker: Is there any objection to the Confirmation of the Minutes of July 15th, 22nd, and 25th? They have been circulated and should be on Honourable Members' seats.

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: Minutes of 15, 22, and 25 July 2011 confirmed.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER OR MEMBER PRESIDING

SESSIONAL SELECT COMMITTEES

The Speaker: I wish to make the following announcement regarding sessional committees:

Standing Orders Committee: S. W. Lowe; Premier P. A. Cox; Ms. L. F. Foggo; Mr. L. C. Cannonier; Mr. H. K. E. Swan; and of course, the Clerk is the clerk to the committee.

House and Grounds Committee: The Honourable Member, Mr. K. H. R. Horton; Mr. D. M. Tucker; Mr. N. C. H. Simons; Mr. C. Swan; and Mr. A. E. DeVent.

Regulations Committee: The Honourable Member, Mr. E. G. James; Ms. L. Foggo; Mr. N. H. C. Simons; Mr. K. H. R. Horton; Mr. C. Swan.

Speaker's Panel of Chairmen: The Honourable Member, Mr. K. H. R. Horton; Mr. D. Butler; Mrs. P. J. Gordon-Pamplin; Mr. T. Moniz; Mr. H. K. Swan. And Mr. D. P. Lister is to head up the panel of chairmen.

APOLOGIES

The Speaker: We received a communication from the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons, who is overseas on business, expressing his regrets in not being able to be in attendance at the official convening of Parliament.

PARLIAMENTARY PRAYER BREAKFAST

The Speaker: One further announcement. The Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast is going to take place on Friday the 18th of November, at 7:25 am, at the Fairmont Hamilton Princess Hotel. That is on Friday the 18th. Honourable Members will have received an invitation. We are just emphasising that fact.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: There are none.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: There are none.

PAPERS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE

The Speaker: I now recognise Madam Premier.
Madam Premier has the floor.

INSURANCE APPEAL TRIBUNAL REGULATIONS 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Insurance Appeal Tribunal Regulations 2011 made by the Minister responsible for Finance under provisions of section 44D of the Insurance Act 1978.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The Speaker: There are none.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: We will do it next week then. There are none.

There are two Honourable Members we should have something to say about them, but we will hold that in abeyance until next week.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: There are none.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The Speaker: There are none.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Speaker: I recognise Madam Premier.
Madam Premier has the floor.

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (NO. 3) ACT 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I am introducing the following Bills, which require the Governor's recommendation in accordance with section 36(3) of the Bermuda Constitution.
Specifically, Mr. Speaker, firstly the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011.

BERMUDA AIRPORT (DUTY FREE SALES) AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: And, Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.
I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban.
Minister Roban has the floor.

WASTE AND LITTER CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I wish to introduce the following Bills: The Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011.

PROTECTED SPECIES AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Walter H. Roban: And the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Roban.
Are there any further introduction of Bills?
There are none.
Under Standing Order 28, there is no leave of the House required.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. K. H. R. Horton, from Southampton West.
Mr. Horton has the floor.

TAKE NOTE OF REPORT OF PARLIAMENTARY JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON CAUSES OF VIO- LENT CRIME AND GUN VIOLENCE IN BERMUDA

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I would like to reinstate a motion that was tabled during the last session. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that at the next day of meeting I propose to move the following motion:

That this Honourable House take note of the report of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on the Causes of Violent Crime and Gun Violence in Bermuda.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: There are no Orders of the House. I now recognise Madam Premier.
Madam Premier has the floor.

**SUSPENSION OF
[STANDING ORDERS 14 AND 21]**

[At 12:39 pm the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 18 November 2011.]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that [Standing Orders] 14 [and 21] be suspended to enable me to move a motion relating to the Governor's Speech from the Throne.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: Standing Orders 14 and 21 suspended.]

**MOTION THAT THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH
BE TAKEN AS READ AND SET DOWN FOR CON-
SIDERATION AT THE NEXT DAY OF MEETING**

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech with which His Excellency the Governor was pleased to open the present session of Parliament be taken as read, and that the said speech be set down for consideration as the first Order of the Day for the next day of meeting.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier. No leave of the House is required under Standing Order two-eight, 28.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Madam Premier, there are no further matters before the House. We will now entertain the motion for the adjournment.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the House do now adjourn to the 18th of November.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: I move that the House do now adjourn, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: The House stands adjourned until Friday the 18th of November at 10:00 am, Friday, the 18th of November at 10:00 am.

BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****18 NOVEMBER 2011****10:05 AM***Sitting Number 2 of the 2011/12 Session**[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker]***CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES****4 NOVEMBER 2011**

The Speaker: Is there any objection to the confirmation of the Minutes of the 4th of November? I believe the Minutes have been circulated. Honourable Members should find the Minutes in their seats or on their desks.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the 4th of November. Any objection to the confirmation?

Agreed to. The Minutes stand confirmed.

*[Gavel]**[Motion carried: Minutes of 4 November 2011 confirmed.]***ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING****DEATH OF DEPUTY CLERK'S MOTHER MRS.
SOMNER**

The Speaker: I just wish to add that the Deputy Clerk's (Mr. Somner) mother passed away this week. All Members of the House extend to Mr. Somner our profound sympathy.

We do not know when his mom is going to be funeralised. He is in our prayers.

APOLOGIES

The Speaker: I have received correspondence from the Honourable Member, Mr. Z. De Silva. Minister De Silva from Southampton East Central regrets not being in the House as he is away on Government business.

The Honourable Member, Mr. K. H. R. Horton, sends his apologies for not being able to attend the proceedings of the House.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO MS. L. F. FOGGO FOR
ACHIEVING MASTER'S DEGREE IN
PUBLIC POLICY**

The Speaker: Also, we wish to extend hearty congratulations to the Government Whip, Ms. Foggo. Ms. Foggo had the good pleasure of achieving her Master's Degree in Public policy.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: We certainly congratulate you, and we hope that that is not the end of it for you.

MR. JOHN BARRITT'S RESIGNATION

The Speaker: For the proceedings of the House, I am going to read, or refer to, a letter from the former Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. J. Barritt.

"September 14th, 2011

"Hon. S. W. Lowe, OBE, JP, MP

"Dear Sir:

"I hereby tender my resignation as the Member of the House of Assembly for Devonshire South Central (Constituency Number 12) effective immediately.

"I am very grateful for having had the opportunity to serve in this capacity for 18 years. In particular I should like to acknowledge and thank the voters of Devonshire South [Central] who over those years have made my service possible through their support at the polls.

"I am also grateful to you too, sir, and all other colleagues in the House, past and present, who through their assistance, encouragement and friendship, have made my tenure both memorable and rewarding.

"It has been an honour which I shall always cherish.

"Respectfully and sincerely yours,
[signed] John Barritt"

That is for the proceedings of the House so it is properly recorded.

I think we have got all the announcements now. We will move on.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: There are none.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: There are none.

PAPERS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE

The Speaker: Dame Jennifer, you have something, do you? I now recognise the Honourable Member, Dame Jennifer Smith, from St. George's North.

Dame Jennifer?

BERMUDA COLLEGE ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Bermuda College Annual Report 2010/11. I will so table.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dame Jennifer.

Any further papers or communications?

We will move on.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. G. Blakeney. Minister Blakeney, from Devonshire North Central, has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have, if you would indulge, a second Statement as well.

The Speaker: Yes.

MIRRORS PROGRAMME

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to provide Honourable Members with an update on the Mirrors Programme.

Mr. Speaker, the Mirrors Programme was established in 2007 to address challenges facing our at-risk youth population and, by extension, our community. We recognise delinquency, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, and school dropout as serious issues that are costly to our society both economically and socially.

These problems can ruin adolescent lives by leading them to early criminal behaviour, by limiting their education and vocational training opportunities, by having children before being adequately prepared for parenthood, and by risking their personal health due to destructive lifestyle choices.

Mr. Speaker, the pilot programme launched in 2007 focused on the 15- to 18-year-old population and later included three cohorts in the 19 to 24 age group. All Mirrors populations enrolled on a voluntary basis. To date, Mirrors has serviced 406 youths. With regard to education, 83 per cent have graduated or re-enrolled in education within one year of completing the Mirrors Programme.

Although these results are very encouraging, analysis of the programme caused us to consider whether we could achieve even greater success by engaging youth at an earlier age. Mr. Speaker, last year Mirrors piloted for the first time a Coaching for Success Programme aimed at the 11-through-14-year-old middle school population, allowing more youth to participate at an earlier age in order to prevent or divert potential inclinations towards dysfunctional behaviour by encouraging and fuelling a refocus on education, and thus increase the potential outcomes at the high school level and beyond.

The results from the 2010–2011 Coaching for Success Programme introduced to students at Sandys Secondary and Whitney Institute Middle Schools were impressive, as 94 per cent of 111 students who enrolled in the programme passed at the fourth-quarter marking period in the June 2011 school exams. Two of the youth in the programme—one female and one male, respectively—became head girl and head boy at Sandys Middle School and Whitney Institute Middle School, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the focus on prevention is the right step for the Mirrors organisation and will yield much success for Bermuda. This will allow us to place special emphasis on the younger population in order to help strengthen their resistance skills to gang-related activity and other antisocial behaviours, and to develop the motivation they need to flourish in education and become positive examples of productive youth in our community.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry will now determine what level of effort to place on the Mirrors Coaching for Success Programme as we develop our budget plans for fiscal year 2012/13. Mr. Speaker, we will build upon the success of Mirrors to date by prioritising resources, including the current partnerships, parental engagement, volunteers, and methodology, in order to build the capacity to influence youth at the front end with a vision to stop the wave of challenges moving through to the high school level. Mr. Speaker, in this regard, Mirrors will collaborate with other Government and community initiatives, focusing on the older adolescent youth populations.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may recall that on the 17th of October 2011, I issued a press release announcing the deferral of the six-day residential for 15- to 18-year-old youths, which had been scheduled for November 2011. At that time, I indicated that the Ministry will reschedule the deferred residential event in the next fiscal year. I further indicated that the Mirrors Programme will continue with the Coaching for Success series, which focuses on middle school students. Furthermore, the Ministry expressed its gratitude to the many volunteers, schools, agencies, and vendors for their ongoing support of the Mirrors Programme.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of an article in the *Bermuda Sun* printed on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, which had incorrectly stated that the residential had been cancelled, I issued a second press release on Thursday, 10th of November 2011, in which I again clarified the Government's position regarding the Mirrors Programme. In the second press release, I clearly stated that the residential would be deferred and not cancelled.

Mr. Speaker, the *Bermuda Sun* article also reported that the Mirrors Alumni and Friends Association would gather outside Cabinet Office the following week to protest cuts to the Mirrors Programme. Since the Mirrors alumni group has been a strong supporter of the Mirrors Programme, I undertook to meet with representatives of the Mirrors Alumni and Friends Association to clarify the Mirrors Programme's objectives. My colleague, and Minister of Community Development, the Honourable Michael Weeks, also attended the meeting to share information about youth initiatives underway in his Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, Government was advised that the intended purpose of the public event was not to protest Government, but rather to share stories and successes about the Mirrors Programme. I took the opportunity to clarify for members of the Mirrors Alumni and Friends Association the objectives and future direction of the Mirrors Programme.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is fully aware of the significant positive impact that the Mirrors Programme has had and continues to have on youth in our community. For this reason, the Ministry of Youth, Families, and Sports remains committed to the Mirrors Programme, which we see as important to our objective of empowering youth and strengthening families.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of Members of this Honourable House, let me state clearly that there is no threat to the Mirrors Programme and that the Ministry of Youth, Families, and Sports looks forward to working with all members of the community, including the Mirrors Alumni and Friends Association, to ensure that the Mirrors Programme's success and effectiveness is publicly understood and appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, no government can do it all. However, this Government will continue to prioritise our expenditures in our unequivocal commitment to

achieve the greatest success possible. We therefore encourage the private sector and the philanthropic sector to expand their partnerships with us. In this regard, I am pleased to note that the Mirrors management staff has recently engaged in promising discussions with private sector interests, looking at the possibility of supporting Mirrors programming with supplemental funding commitments in partnership with the Ministry of Youth, Families, and Sports.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to expanding Mirrors programming so that we can service all middle schools and some primary schools in addition to providing a continued service for the 15- to 18-year-old high school age group. We believe that with strong input from the private sector, we can deliver and sustain the desired level of programming.

Mr. Speaker, together we can make it happen. Indeed, we can. We must continue to encourage and enable a more healthy community that uplifts our youth and provides real opportunity for them to realise their full potential. Mr. Speaker, we must ultimately prepare our young people now, many of whom could eventually produce future generations of change agents in a fast-changing world, which I believe would surely help secure Bermuda's continued growth and success as a First World country during the twenty-first century and beyond.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

Minister Blakeney has a further Ministerial Statement.

Go ahead, Minister.

ADOLESCENT INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT PROGRAMME

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for Youth and Families, I take pleasure in informing this Honourable House about a new initiative called the Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Programme, which is an innovative private/public sector initiative between Bermuda Youth Counselling Services and Caron Bermuda, with sponsorship by HSBC Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, November 15, 2011, this past Tuesday, I had the pleasure of participating in a joint press conference with Gita Blakeney Saltus, Caron Bermuda's Regional Vice President, and Philip Butterfield, Chief Executive Officer of HSBC Bermuda, to formally announce the launch of the Adolescent Intensive Outpatient Programme initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the programme offers an individualised therapeutic response to the acute need for intensive substance abuse treatment for adolescents and young adults aged 13 to 21 in Bermuda. Young people will experience a 10-to-12-week intensive outpatient programme which will provide a daily continuum of care that emphasises group therapy, educa-

tional support on the effects of drugs and alcohol, and family involvement. There are currently six youths being serviced by the programme, with the potential to accommodate up to 20 persons during each 10-to-12-week session.

Mr. Speaker, the programme is designed specifically for students who have been displaced from their schools because of substance abuse, or abuse or addiction issues; and these students will be referred to the intensive outpatient programme by Bermuda Youth Counselling Services, schools, and other agencies, and will receive treatment at no cost to their families. The programme will facilitate connection between adolescent clients and their schools, as well as a seamless transition back to school following treatment.

Mr. Speaker, this partnership opens opportunities for remarkable and rewarding advances in meeting the needs of our youth and families and has brought people together around common ideas, principles, and goals. At its core is the strengthening of youth and families.

Mr. Speaker, with this partnership working effectively, we can unlock new possibilities, increase shared knowledge, and progress towards a more positive future for Bermuda's youth. The partnership is committed to ensuring that Bermuda's youth are supported appropriately during the challenging times of adolescence. Our youths are preparing for an important journey—adulthood. We believe this partnership can expand our collective organisational capacities and provide skills to effect social change. We are working at all levels to ensure a sustainable future for our youth and families. And this innovative programme is set to become an important tool to achieve just that objective.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Dame Jennifer Smith, from St. George's North.

Dame Jennifer, you have the floor.

BERMUDA EDUCATORS COUNCIL (EXEMPTION) ORDER 2011

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on the 4th of November, eagle-eyed Members may have noticed in the official *Gazette* an item entitled "The Bermuda Educators Council (Exemption) Order 2011." Section 6 of the Bermuda Educators Council Act 2002 establishes an Exemption Committee. The Exemption Committee advises the Minister on proposals for exemption. The current committee is chaired by the Honourable Dale Butler, JP MP, and includes Mrs. Helle Patterson, Ms. Sonia Grant, Mrs. Diana Dill, and Ms. Michelle Squire.

I am thankful to the members of this committee for the advice and recommendations they have

made regarding the exemption requests that were received. The committee met as needed to consider proposals for exemptions, many of which (you will not be surprised to hear) arose as a result of the Ministry of Education's crackdown on individuals who were either uncertified or unqualified. Bermuda Educators Council (BEC) also reported that some persons who were previously noncompliant with the Act produced their credentials and submitted them to the BEC as a direct result of the actions the Ministry took in June.

Mr. Speaker, section 5(1) of the Bermuda Educators Council Act 2002 provides that "the Minister, acting on the advice of the Exemption Committee, on being satisfied that there is a need in schools in Bermuda for persons who possess knowledge of, and skills in, particular subjects taught at schools" may exempt the specified person or persons falling in the specified classes who possess knowledge and skills.

The intent of the Act is to ensure that when there are shortages of staffs in schools or when there are legitimate reasons, the Minister may provide exemptions in specified circumstances subject to conditions to an individual or group of persons. Therefore, in hard-to-fill subject areas, the Minister, based on a recommendation from the Exemption Committee, may exempt an individual in order to fill that need in our schools.

While we must protect our students and also consider the integrity of the teaching profession, we must also ensure that we are able to ensure instruction when we are unable to fulfil a position with a fully qualified individual. Therefore, an exemption might also include conditions that must be met or establish a time limit by which the individual will no longer be allowed to continue in the school system.

Mr. Speaker, the gazetting of this information creates a layer of accountability that ensures that these persons are known widely and lessens the possibility of their being used outside of the area for which they are approved and/or qualified. This is a positive step forward regarding our focus on teaching and learning because only by ensuring that we have qualified and certified staff in our schools can we raise student performance.

Proposed amendments to the Bermuda Educators Council Act, which were mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, will also strengthen our teaching profession and ensure that our teachers meet international standards. The front line of our focus on teaching and learning is growing the capacity of principals and raising the quality of our teachers, who are all integral to the success of our students.

Thank you.

I have another Ministerial Statement.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dame Jennifer.

Dame Jennifer has a further Ministerial Statement.

Carry on, Dame Jennifer.

BERMUDA COLLEGE INFORMATION BOUTIQUES

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Statement is on the Bermuda College Information Boutiques, and Members may have noticed an advertisement to the same in Wednesday's paper. And I did cut one out to table so that you may see it.

Mr. Speaker, one of the key findings of the Bermuda College 2009 Public Perception Survey was that close to three-quarters of residents would probably or definitely have a household member attend Bermuda College in the future. More specifically, the survey found that those between 18 to 24 years of age who have had some college experience are more likely to express a positive intent to attend the Bermuda College. They desire the higher education opportunity so that they might pursue their career dreams.

Mr. Speaker, the general psychographics of a typical 18- to 24-year-old include the following:

- are leaving or have recently left home
- are newly emancipated
- are renters
- spend money on partying, travel, entertainment
- dislike spending money on necessities like insurance
- are cynical of advertising
- have an always-on-the-go lifestyle that makes it hard to reach them through typical media

Therefore, the Bermuda College has created fast-track programmes for the demographic as an attractive and achievable option to changing from unfulfilling jobs that are currently held, or to achieve career dreams that remain on their to-do list.

In conjunction with these fast-track programmes, the College, in tandem with industry partners, has also introduced the pilot programme of off-campus interactive information boutiques to increase enrolment in the fast-track programmes.

Mr. Speaker, the College's intent is to enrol 20 young people between the ages of 18 to 24 who were identified as positive intenders in the 2009 Public Perception Survey into the College's fast-track programmes. The first information boutiques were held yesterday in the Dame Lois Browne-Evans Building at Global House and at Salon Pink. They focused on careers as legal executives, office technicians, accounting assistants, and in hairdressing. All of the boutiques are focused on careers that require Bermudians, based on the latest labour statistics, and with training that can be completed in one year or less. Each boutique features presentations by industry professionals who outline career pathway options.

Mr. Speaker, Members will be interested to learn that there is a boutique scheduled for today at the Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute, which will focus on

careers as dental assistants, nursing assistants, and in elder care. This boutique will begin at 5:30 pm and conclude at 7:00 pm, and I invite Members or the listening public who are interested to attend.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda College is inviting Bermudians to choose a career of interest, greet and meet career professionals in the field, hear firsthand what "a day in the life of" is like, and ask questions. I am certain that this will not be the end of such boutiques, and I invite the public to listen out for future announcements regarding this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, this is yet another example of Bermuda College operating outside of the box to meet the needs of Bermudians and assist them to retool in the present economic climate.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dame Jennifer, the Honourable Member from St. George's North.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. M. Perinchief. Minister Perinchief, from Pembroke Central, has the floor.

Minister?

BERMUDA POLICE SERVICE

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with this Honourable House a summary of the findings of a Public Perception Survey commissioned and conducted for the Bermuda Police Service.

Mr. Speaker, between June 20th and July 4th of this year random telephone interviews with a representative sample of Bermuda residents aged between 18 and older were conducted to determine the public's views on the activities of the Bermuda Police Service in the community.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members should be pleased to note that the study found that residents are increasingly confident in the Police Service. Concern about crime remains high, but residents have seen the positive impact of bringing criminals to justice and convictions in the courts as the result of police investigation.

Mr. Speaker, criminals are being caught, and in many cases suspects are apprehended and brought before the courts quickly. These actions significantly enhance public confidence in the Police Service's ability to solve crime.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Bermuda demanded stronger police presence, and this has been implemented. The increased contact with the police in the community has been positively received, and 42 per cent of those persons who had a positive experience with the police indicate that personal, helpful service from officers was the reason. In fact, Mr. Speaker, respondents described the officers of the

Bermuda Police Service as “professional, respectful, and courageous.”

Mr. Speaker, these are encouraging trends which speak volumes about the effectiveness of the Island’s policing strategy and the men and women who execute it daily. This Government fully supports the Office of the Commissioner, his senior command, and the officers of the Bermuda Police Service in the execution of their duties.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most significant findings of the study is that 67 per cent of responders expressed a level of interest in the neighbourhood involvement as a means to address crime. Mr. Speaker, I believe that strong, empowered communities are the building blocks for a safer Bermuda. The confidence inspired by police presence and action has created a groundswell of community involvement that will promote public safety throughout the Island.

Mr. Speaker, community action teams are led by officers of the Bermuda Police Service and engage communities in their neighbourhood watch activities by providing guidance and on-the-ground assistance at the grass-roots level. I was privileged to spend some time in these areas with the officers of the community action teams and found a spirit in these communities that is, quite simply, awesome.

Mr. Speaker, in each of the community action team areas, residents have bonded with the officers. They have cleaned up overgrown sites formerly seen from antisocial behaviour and have stamped their positive authority on the neighbourhood, driving the elements of negativity away and on the ground. The leaders of these groups hail from all backgrounds, and they are united in the common purpose of providing a quality of life in this country commensurate with the welcoming business and tourism jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, the work of policing in these times is not easy. On all fronts, social and economic issues have added to the existing pressures of life in this affluent society. The Bermuda Police has proven to be firm, but fair, present, but not overbearing, effective without persecuting. And, as a result, 83 per cent of respondents in the study were either completely satisfied or had a high level of satisfaction with the police.

Mr. Speaker, these findings are no accident. The strategy is working. Criminals are being brought to justice, and communities are confident and empowered. We must continue to support these efforts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Perinchief, the Honourable Member from Pembroke Central.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mrs. P. K. Minors. Minister Minors, from Smith’s North. Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I start, I would seek your approval that I have three Ministerial Statements to read.

The Speaker: Yes.

EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL TRAINING BOARD

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The first one is that I rise today to speak on the Evolution of the National Training Board. You will be aware that the National Training Board (also known as the NTB) was established with the assent of the National Training Board Act 1997. Its remit is to set technical skill competence and qualification standards and to grant certificates of efficiency, as well as promote, encourage, and assist employees in providing on-the-job training and retraining of employees.

One of its primary functions is to manage the National Apprenticeship System and the National Occupational Certification System. Mr. Speaker, since its inception, the NTB has worked at building relationships with the Bermuda College and accredited overseas technical colleges and universities to ensure Bermudians have better opportunities at attaining gainful employment.

The NTB consistently sponsors over 200 students both locally and overseas on an annual basis. Most recently, the board has nationally certified 244 electricians and 47 welders. Automotive service technicians are expected to participate in examinations prior to the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of the National Training Board (Apprenticeship and Training) Regulations 2009 has to date provided for 30 young people to enter into a contractually binding relationship with employers to carry out specific job tasks and training within a specified time period. Mr. Speaker, in 2009, the NTB launched a Summer Cadet Programme in partnership with Holland College in Prince Edward Island (PEI). The programme is fully sponsored by the NTB and allows for up to six recently graduated high school students to travel to PEI to participate in a maritime programme for three months.

The coursework includes basic survival training, search and rescue, advanced marine first aid, and radio operator training. In order to qualify for an international accreditation certificate, participants are required to complete two months at sea on a merchant vessel. The NTB, with the support of the Marine and Ports, has been successful in placing all trainees on Bermuda-registered ships to ensure that the requirement is met. These three young men have represented themselves and Bermuda well, and congratulations go out to Vernon Harrison, Daniel Galloway, and Brendon Flemming.

Mr. Speaker, trade certifications and the delivery of the related services represents an important component of a diverse and sophisticated economy. It is paramount that this work continues. This notwith-

standing, the work of the NTB must now evolve to address the needs of the economy on a more macro level. Over the years, Bermuda has evolved from a service-based economy to a knowledge-based economy. Some argue, Mr. Speaker, that for the first time in many generations there are Bermudians facing structural unemployment because there are too few jobs for the skills they currently have. This must change.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may recall that the Arnold Group, LLC, a national workforce development consultancy firm from Rhode Island, USA, was commissioned by the Bermuda National Training Board several years ago to conduct a study on workforce issues in Bermuda and to draft a workforce development strategy for the Government of Bermuda.

One of the key recommendations in the Arnold report was the creation of a one-stop career centre system for Bermuda. This model of workforce activity has been highly successful in other jurisdictions and has been regarded as an exciting innovation that connects employment, education, and training services into a coherent network of resources. The Government accepts that this model, properly modified to address the specific needs of Bermuda, will be an organising vehicle to provide integrated service delivery for job seekers and employers.

So today, Mr. Speaker, the tabling of the National Training Board Amendment Act 2011 paves the way for the amalgamation of the National Training Board and the Department of Labour and Training to create a one-stop career centre. Simply stated, and in accordance with the Arnold report, Mr. Speaker, a one-stop career centre attempts to place as many work-preparation activities and as much labour-market information as possible in one convenient location to connect job seekers through education, training, and employment opportunities. The intent is to bring together in a coordinated fashion those stakeholders who provide these services and supplement these services when gaps are identified.

Now is the right time to create a system which equips Bermudians with all of the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the workplace, and we plan to do this under the leadership of a National Training Board.

Mr. Speaker, the role of the National Training Board will broaden to ensure strategic direction and oversight of the one-stop career centre. Also, Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that the makeup of the board will be expanded to include participation from all sectors. I envisage that new partnerships with existing training bodies across all sectors already engaged in training activities relative to their specific industries will be established, and representatives from these bodies will be appointed to the board. These appointments will allow us to quickly close the gaps and draw on industry-specific expertise, as well as leverage existing programmes that are already in channel, as we

endeavour to take a coordinated approach to developing and implementing a national training plan to serve the needs of the Bermuda economy and its future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as I move on to the next Statement.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Minors.

Minister Minors has a further Statement. Carry on, Minister.

LAUNCH OF THE LONG-TERM WORK PERMIT

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on the 1st of November, the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry officially launched the 10-year work permit. These long-term work permits are for positions in job categories designated as positions that are critical to the continued success of the company and to Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the 10-year work permit policy is an important step towards gaining the balance we need to strike with regard to work permit holders. The policy is holistic in nature as it is linked to meeting specific criteria to make certain that those holding the permits are in positions that will help build the Bermudian economy.

Therefore, to qualify for a long-term work permit, the employer must demonstrate that they meet certain requirements. That is, the company must have significant presence in Bermuda and must have a staff of at least 20, of whom 50 per cent should be Bermudian. Also, the company must provide entry-level positions to young Bermudians and must provide equal payment and benefits to both Bermudians and non-Bermudians.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the work permit policies are designed to enable Bermudians to realise their full employment potential. To this end, it is not unreasonable that the company will be required to demonstrate that it has programmes in place for developing and promoting Bermudians.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of a 10-year work permit is \$20,000. Positions eligible for this long-term work permit must be responsible for making decisions that are critical to the continuity of the company in Bermuda and be one where either the company's presence in Bermuda is contingent on that person's remaining in Bermuda, such as the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer, or the Chief Financial Officer; or where it can be demonstrated that Bermudians are unlikely to have the qualifications to fill the position and, historically, no Bermudians have applied for the position.

Mr. Speaker, the presence of non-Bermudian workers in our workforce is directly related to globalisation and our economic success. There are insufficient Bermudian workers with the appropriate skill sets to fill all the available jobs. We are quickly working to establish programmes that will help those in

transition to acquire new skills. With this in mind, I trust that it is clear that the Government is indeed evolving how we strike the balance between work permit holders and the Bermudian workforce.

Mr. Speaker, the Government acknowledges and appreciates that there are many non-Bermudian executives in companies who do much to contribute to the Bermudian economy and have done so for years. Our aim is to keep these individuals thoroughly involved in investing in the Bermudian economy by taking the necessary steps to help maintain business continuity for these organisations.

Simultaneously, Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility to make certain that qualified Bermudians are protected and assisted in this process. It is therefore our hope that the “balanced” criteria associated with the 10-year work permit is viewed as fair and equitable by all parties and reinforces that Bermuda is indeed open for business and to business.

And my final one, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Minors.

Minister Minors has a further Statement.

Carry on, Minister.

2012 HOSPITALITY JOB FAIR

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide an update on the recent [2012] Hospitality Job Fair and to share new information with respect to an exciting programme designed to retrain Bermudians to prepare them to become participants in the industry.

Mr. Speaker, you will know that as a direct result of the current economic downturn, many people who want to work are challenged to find employment. As a responsible Government, we have devised many programmes to expose unemployed persons to viable employment opportunities. To this end, we are working with employers more closely because it is in everyone's best interest to employ more Bermudians.

Our collective role in employing Bermudians is critical to the sustainability of the country. It is my belief, Mr. Speaker, that we, as the Government, are more important as a “life line” than we have ever been. There is a need to educate and help people adapt to the new realities of the Bermuda economy and the employment opportunities that are available.

One of our roles at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is to assist job-seeking individuals to make the transition to the new economic circumstances. Mr. Speaker, job fairs have proven an effective method of building awareness about the availability of jobs in various sectors and bringing together those seeking employees and those seeking career opportunities.

The Hospitality Job Fair, the second of its kind under the direction of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, was held on the first of November at the Fairmont Hamilton Princess in partnership with the

Bermuda Hotel Association. Mr. Speaker, more than 600 jobs, spread over 14 hotel properties in all categories—entry level, skilled level and managerial level—were available for application by those seeking employment in this sector.

Of the 600 jobs, 397 are currently held by work permit holders whose work permits will reach term prior to the start of the season; and 268 posts are vacant wherein the hotels are seeking to fill these posts prior to the beginning of the 2012 season.

All jobs posted are considered available posts and may be filled by suitably qualified Bermudian applicants.

Mr. Speaker, our records show that a total of 684 persons officially registered at the job fair on the first of November. Of that total, 479, or 70 per cent, of registrants indicated they are currently unemployed. A further 205 indicated that they were working; however, some were either working part time or expected to maintain employment only until the end of 2011.

Mr. Speaker, post job fair, we are now working with our partners via the Bermuda Hotel Association to ensure proper consideration of all applicants. Further, Mr. Speaker, such is our commitment to ensure that all barriers are removed and that the recruitment process is expedited that the Ministry of Finance has agreed to waive the \$100 security vetting fee for the 14 participating properties for all job fair related posts requiring security vetting by the police.

Also, an expedited process has been established between the Bermuda Police Service and the Bermuda Hotel Association to ensure that recruitment is not delayed with respect to the filling of the available posts.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, our immediate priority is securing employment for displaced Bermudians as quickly as possible. But, Mr. Speaker, our efforts are not limited to job fairs. Today I am pleased to officially announce that the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, in partnership with the Bermuda Hotel Association and the Restaurant Division of the Chamber of Commerce, has launched a Waiter/Server Retraining Programme.

Mr. Speaker, the estimated number of substantive waiter/server work permits approved on an annual basis is in the region of 400, and this number can grow to as many as 600 waiter/server work permits during the height of the summer season with the issuance of seasonal work permits to hotels, which are valid for periods between March and November. The waiter/server programme, open to all persons seeking to reinvent themselves and pursue a career as a waiter or a server, is one that will require four weeks of coursework in technical and soft-skills areas and prepares students for the Dining Room Associate designation from the Federation of Dining Room Professionals.

Mr. Speaker, no experience is required. I repeat that: No experience is required, and the training

programme is being offered at no cost—and I repeat that—no cost to the trainee.

The Bermuda Hotel Association and the Chamber of Commerce have developed programme acceptance criteria and will vet the applications to ensure that the applicants accepted into the programme possess all the necessary qualities that will enable successful recruitment by their members upon successful completion of the programme. Our goal is to reduce the number of waiter/server work permits by 100 in the first phase of this programme.

Mr. Speaker, this retraining programme opened for applications at the 2012 Hospitality Job Fair, giving job fair participants the first opportunity to make application for the entry into the programme. However, today, I am pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted from the general public for this Waiter/Server Retraining Programme via the Department of Labour and Training.

This programme is designed for those with minimum dining room experience. It covers basic food, wine, and beverage service. The standard of performance for the techniques of service presented, as a part of this programme, is based on the International Business & Gourmet Standards of Hospitality (IBGS). The beverage service standards portion of this course, which is also included in the IBGS Standards, received the International Sommelier Guild (ISG) Seal of Approval.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be working in partnership with industry to deliver a retraining programme that carries the promise of employment. I encourage anyone who is seeking employment to register today for the opportunity to acquire new skills, reinventing themselves to take advantage of jobs that are currently available.

And, finally Mr. Speaker, please allow me to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to all industry partners, and in particular, the Bermuda Hotel Association, who continues to work on these important employment-generating initiatives. I look forward to positive employment results on behalf of all unemployed Bermudians seeking employment opportunities.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Minors, the Honourable Member from Smith's North.

The Minister has been very busy.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. L. Furbert. Minister Furbert, from Hamilton West, has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Does this mean I can make a speech, Mr. Speaker?

[Laughter]

WORLD TRAVEL MARKET EXHIBITION

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Last week I had the pleasure of travelling to London for the annual World Travel Market Exhibition to reawaken the UK's consumer and trade love affair with Bermuda. This event was held at the Excel Centre in the Docklands area of London. Our presence did not go unnoticed with our "pink aura," or rather our "pink shorts" attracting TV crews, photographers, journalists, trade partners, and visitors from around the world. They came in the hundreds to the stand to engage with us and find out more about what our beautiful Island has to offer.

Mr Speaker, to those of you who are not familiar with the World Travel Market Exhibition, it attracts over 26,000 global businessmen and women in the travel industry, and this year the attendance was up by 8 per cent. In total, there were over 5,000 exhibitors from around the world, including Bermuda, the aim being to make the most of this opportunity by influencing the hearts and minds of those who can help us drive new tourism business from this market to Bermuda in 2012.

Mr Speaker, on the stand were the leaders from six influential hotels: Cambridge Beaches, Fairmont Southampton and Fairmont Hamilton, Grotto Bay, Elbow Beach, and The Reefs Hotel and Club. These representatives played a key role in driving enquiries into what is new and exciting about the destination. Over the three days, we had a fully packed itinerary that witnessed over 90 face-to-face briefings across media, bloggers, tour operators, travel agents, and airline industry partners.

Bermuda really stood out amongst this competitive arena. We were pleased to welcome Miss Bermuda, Jana Outerbridge, and a Gombey dancer to shake things up. They brought the destination to life and helped create an unforgettable backdrop to many broadcast and photographic opportunities, as well as handing out literature and marketing collateral to visually engage visitors.

As the newly appointed Minister of Tourism, I have some very clear ambitions to drive visitation to Bermuda in 2012. We aim to continue building our strong relationship with key trade partners and tour operators alike, and we will continue to ensure that the Island's economy benefits from our global efforts to promote and support existing events that will ultimately increase visitation to our shores. Our newly appointed publicity team and trade representation in the UK have hit the ground running to ensure that Bermuda is being seen as an aspirational holiday destination by all the right people, at the right time, and in the right places.

Mr. Speaker, showcasing Bermuda as an accessible, yet aspirational, destination has undoubtedly been one of our keen aims during our time in the UK. An unforgettable highlight of the week was our appre-

ciation dinner hosted at the Plateau Restaurant in Canary Wharf. Transported by a traditional British red double-decker bus, guests were invited on board to enjoy an evening of good company at a restaurant renowned for its breathtaking views across this thriving financial quarter of London.

To the surprise and delight of our evening guests, within hours of landing in London, I was serenading the audience, backed by Bermuda's band, Tempo, by beginning my address with the opening verses of "Bermuda is Another World" and sharing one of my greatest passions, singing, with the guests!

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Do not get distracted.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Over 25 travel bloggers who were in attendance on the night instantly began tweeting and recording my performance for their captive audience, and within 24 hours it had reached an audience of over 130,000 people.

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Let us not get carried away.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Appreciation Dinner offered us the chance to recognise some of our key partners with awards for their continual support. Winners on the evening included tour operators Purely Bermuda and British Airways Holidays, who were both awarded Excellence in Partnership Awards. Adventures in Radio took the prize of Outstanding Partnership for their broadcast promotion that took place earlier this year. Our collaboration brought together several radio stations who broadcasted remotely from Bermuda to the UK, touching over 4 million listeners. It is this type of teamwork that we need to build on for 2012 to see Bermuda continue to rise as a top partner destination.

Mr. Speaker, ultimately, our week in the UK has demonstrated that we must all pull together as one to ensure our beautiful Island remains at the forefront of people's minds in this highly competitive marketplace. With the global recession still entrenched, our offer must, more than ever, be compelling and showcase new reasons to visit Bermuda, as well as highlight the heritage and cultural links we have with Britain.

We must continue to position the diversity of this Island all year round, whether that's enjoying a round of golf, relaxing in a world-class spa, or exploring coastal shipwrecks. We have a primetime opportunity to illustrate our unparalleled qualities. To further

enhance the opportunity, moving into 2012, we will be working closely with our New York, Boston, and Philadelphia partners to maximise the opportunity for UK travellers to literally "shop and flop" in Bermuda with twin-centre agreements.

To close, I am sincerely looking forward to a successful year ahead for the Tourism Department.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Furbert, the Honourable Member from Hamilton West.

The Minister will have a further opportunity to regale us out in the coffee room about his performance.

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Minister M. J. Scott, from Sandys North. Minister, you have the floor.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CISCO LOCAL ACADEMY IN BERMUDA

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a Statement with reference to the establishment of the Cisco Local Academy in Bermuda. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise this morning to provide for Members of this House and to the people of Bermuda additional information with respect to an extremely important initiative announced by the Government in the Speech from the Throne that was read by His Excellency the Governor just under two weeks ago.

His Excellency read as follows, and I quote: "The Government is pleased to share that it is engaged in advanced discussions with Cisco Systems, the worldwide leader in networking products and services, for the establishment of a Cisco Academy in Bermuda."

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Government Estates and Information Services, I am delighted to provide you with additional details with respect to the establishment of a Cisco Academy here in our Island, a facility, Mr. Speaker, that will provide certified training for Bermudians and prepare them for opportunities in the realm of information technology.

Mr. Speaker, the Cisco Networking Academy is a comprehensive e-learning program which provides students with Internet technology skills that are essential for the development of countries in the current global economy. Sir, the Networking Academy programme delivers web-based content, online assessment, student performance tracking, hands-on labs, instructor training and support, and preparation for industry standard certifications.

Mr. Speaker, in October of 1997, the Networking Academy programme was launched in 64 educational institutions in seven states of the United States of America. It has now spread to more than 160 countries. Since its inception, over 1.6 million students have enrolled at more than 10,000 academies located

in secondary schools, technical schools, colleges, universities, and community-based organisations.

Honourable colleagues will be interested to know that 70 per cent of the Internet traffic uses Cisco network systems. Indeed, Cisco is dubbed “the plumbers for the Internet.”

Mr. Speaker, the Cisco Local Academy Initiative dovetails with the Government’s overall commitment to develop the Island’s human potential by means of enhanced training opportunities in various areas, in particular, training that will meet the emerging needs of the next few decades. IT stands at the forefront in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of establishing a Cisco Local Academy emerged as part of the response to a Request for Proposal, which was issued by the Information Technology Office to reengineer the Government’s network infrastructure. The successful vendor was required to provide a state-of-the-art switching fabric and network management system that would form the backbone for the Government-wide network that supports information technology applications and Internet access.

Mr. Speaker, I pause here to pay tribute. Earlier this year, the then-Minister, the Honourable D. Neletha Butterfield, JP, MP, visited the HEART Trust Stoney Hill Academy, the location of a Cisco Academy in Jamaica. Upon the conclusion of her visit, then-Minister Butterfield advised that Bermuda and Bermudians would benefit from a programme of this nature. Preliminary discussions were held, and the proposal has taken shape. Links have been established with Cisco Regional Manager Mr. Navid Ghandeharioun, and with Ms. Georgette Shirley, the Programme Coordinator of the Caribbean Institute of Technology.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ghandeharioun met with me in Bermuda on Thursday of last week, together with Senator Jonathan Smith, the Junior Minister within the Ministry of Government Estates and Information Services, and with the ITO Director Mr. Oatley. We were heartened, Mr. Speaker, to hear Mr. Ghandeharioun reaffirm Cisco’s commitment to Bermuda and its willingness to work cooperatively with both the Government and with the private sector partners to ensure the success of the enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, reference to the Cisco Academy initiative in the Throne Speech has already generated a great deal of interest among the private sector in our Island. Major companies in Bermuda obviously value internationally recognised Cisco certifications. Consequently, they are adopting Cisco technologies. A local Cisco Academy, Mr. Speaker, will provide Bermudians in the IT profession with the opportunity to gain Cisco certifications and re-certifications. Local companies, both large and small, will benefit from a larger pool of skilled Bermudian IT personnel from which to draw.

Mr. Speaker, although we are seeking to establish a bona fide Networking Academy here in Bermuda, I wish to make it plain that we have already

embarked upon a pilot prototype of such an academy. Personnel from the Information Technology Office of the government departments and persons from the private sector participated in training led by Cisco in October of this year. Mr. Speaker, the curriculum of the networking academies combines the theory and practise of designing, developing, and implementing the networks that drive modern organisations. The curriculum, Mr. Speaker, is designed to teach teamwork skills that are essential for success in today’s marketplace.

Sir, just by way of the offerings, Cisco Network support certifications include the Cisco Certified Network Associate (that is, CCNA), the Cisco Certified Network Professional, the Cisco Certified Internet Expert, and the Cisco Certified Internet Expert ISP Dial Technology. Acquisition of the CCNA is regarded industry-wide as the foundation for most careers in the field of information technology.

Mr. Speaker, whilst employment opportunities have been curbed as a result of the economic downturn, the Cisco Academy provides an excellent opportunity for Bermudians to train and position themselves to take their places in this ever-changing exciting world of IT. Bermudians with a Cisco certification are able to compete more effectively and offer their services to Bermuda-based companies currently employing Cisco-certified guest workers. Additionally, a Cisco certification provides the opportunity for mobility for Bermudian IT professionals, whether in Bermuda or overseas, as Cisco qualifications are plainly recognised worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, a steering committee for the establishment of a Cisco Local Academy in Bermuda, under the leadership of the IT Director Mr. Oatley, has been formed. The steering committee’s primary objective is to secure a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Bermuda and the Cisco Regional Academy based in Jamaica. Working jointly with the regional manager, the steering committee will strengthen the increasingly important public and private partnership component of the Cisco Local Academy initiative.

Additionally, sir, the steering committee will make the recommendation regarding the most suitable location for the Cisco Local Academy.

It is anticipated that instruction at the first formally established Cisco Local Academy in Bermuda will commence no later than the second quarter of 2012. Finally, Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, it ended with a reiteration of President Nelson Mandela’s awe-inspiring exhortation: “Let us build one another, together.”

Members of this Honourable House and the people of Bermuda may be assured of the commitment of the Ministry of Government Estates and Information Services to advance this most laudable and, indeed, essential goal, as demonstrated by the Cisco Local Academy initiative and the Ministry’s participa-

tion in the job corps programme and in, yes, the Youth and Parliament Scheme, also announced in the Speech from the Throne.

During the course of the year I shall share information with respect to other Minister Government Estates and Information Services initiatives that will advance the "Let us build one another, together" theme.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Scott, the Honourable and Learned Member from Sandys North.

Any further Ministerial Statements?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Burgess. Minister Burgess, from Hamilton East, has the floor.

Minister?

CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today I will share with this Honourable House an analysis of the experiences of Carnival Cruise Lines with their 2011 Bermuda cruise deployments. You will be aware that recently we learned quite by accident that Carnival Cruise Lines had withdrawn 11 of its 12 arrivals scheduled for the 2012 season. We have since had an apology from Carnival, as they made this decision in May and neglected to inform us. Even though the number of cruise visitors resulting from the Carnival cancellations will be lower than 2011, it will still represent the second-highest number of cruise visitors in Bermuda's history.

Mr. Speaker, cruise deployment decisions are generally made 12 to 18 months in advance of the actual sailing. This is to ensure that berth availability is secure and the cruise lines can redeploy their ships in market and sell the cruises. When we initially entered into discussions with Carnival in early 2010 for cruises to Bermuda, they expressed concern that Bermuda was not offering them the premium cruise berths at the Royal Naval Dockyard. The premium berths are from Monday to Friday between mid-May and Labour Day. This is when demands for cruises to Bermuda are at their highest, and cruise lines can charge higher ticket rates. Our long-term cruise partners, Royal, Caribbean Cruise Line, and Norwegian Cruise Lines, currently occupy these premium cruise berths, leaving the less desirable berths available for other cruise lines.

When the decision was made in early 2010 to deploy their ships to Bermuda in 2011, both Carnival Cruise Lines and the Ministry knew that the deployment schedule had considerable risks, including the high number of weekend stays and a majority of the cruise calls being on the fringe months of the season. Ultimately, this impacted the ticket prices Carnival

could charge for their Bermuda cruises, thus impacting their profitability.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that it was unlikely that the Ministry could have filled the Carnival berths with other brands, due to the high risks associated with the berths and the times that were available. It is for this reason that no formal contract was required. Given the high degree of risk that Carnival was taking, and as there were no other brands available to occupy the weekend spots, the earlier or the late in the season berth, it was deemed by the Ministry to be a risk worth taking. Hence, the Ministry did not require a detailed contract with Carnival for non-compliance.

Mr. Speaker, five out of the sixteen cruises in 2011 occurred in April. Most Carnival cruises dock in Bermuda for multiple days, often as long as three nights. Bermuda requires shipboard stores and casinos to stay closed for the duration of their stay in Bermuda, which has a significant impact on the revenues of the cruise lines. Over 30 per cent of the profit is onboard revenue. A total seven of Carnival's cruises in 2011 took place during the weekend when fewer stores are open. Sunday store closings proved to be challenge. Lack of activity on weekends impacted their guests' perception of Bermuda.

Finally, a total of eight of the Carnival Cruises in 2011 were scheduled to occur after Labour Day, where the conditions since Labour Day had resulted in a number of service disruptions with later arrivals and some cancellations.

Mr. Speaker, emails and phone conversations with the executives of Carnival Cruise Lines have confirmed that the combined impact of the issues outlined above resulted in their decision to reduce the number of calls in 2011. Mr. Speaker, since Carnival made the announcement, we have managed to get the following cruises in two of the berths: The *Grand Princess*, estimated to bring in 2,600 passengers contributing up to \$450,000 to Bermuda's economy; and the Holland-American *Ryndam* estimated to bring in 1,200 passengers, contributing up to \$225,000 to Bermuda's economy.

The impact of losing Carnival Cruises is projected to be \$3.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, the combined effort of not having the prime slots in Bermuda resulting in lower ticket prices, the higher number of weekend stays (including Sundays when fewer shops are open), not allowing the cruise ships to achieve onboard revenue while in port, requiring stores and casinos to close, and transfer challenges, particularly early in the season, coupled with the weather disruptions, contributed to Carnival's decision to reduce the cruise ships' calls for 2011.

Mr. Speaker, Carnival Cruise Lines have stated that their decision to reduce the number of calls was made in May 2011 when it became apparent that the 2011 Bermuda cruises were not meeting their expectations. But while it was a business decision that

Carnival felt they had to make, it is inexcusable that Bermuda was not notified of these cancellations at that time.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, it is important that we understand and appreciate the decision-making process cruise lines use when they deploy the ships. It is my objective to dramatically improve the delivery of transportation for our cruise guests in 2012, and we are already putting in place some measures to achieve that objective. In addition, allowing the cruise lines to achieve some revenue while in port if they overnight, such as allowing them to open the casinos late in the evening, is an important part of their profitability and will form a discussion in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, I do have another Statement.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Minister Burgess has a further Statement.
Carry on, Minister.

2012 CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the completion of the 2012 cruise ship schedule. For 2012, we are projecting that approximately 363,000 cruise ship passengers will visit Bermuda. Although the number of cruise arrivals for 2012 will be lower than 2011 due to the reduction in the number of calls, it will be substantially higher than the 347,000 cruise arrivals experienced in 2010.

We have strategically positioned ourselves to be in an enviable position regarding our cruise product, and Bermuda remains an attractive destination, not only for the larger cruise lines that typically operate in the United States and the Caribbean, but also with the smaller luxury lines that generally do world cruises who will stop in Bermuda.

The 2012 cruise ship schedule projects 163 cruise calls, making a financial contribution of \$79 million to Bermuda's economy. This includes government taxes on Island purchases made by cruise visitors and cruise members, and shore excursions taken by cruise visitors. Heritage Wharf alone has generated over \$75 million to Bermuda's economy during the three years the cruise ship here has been in operation. Mr. Speaker, that investment has paid for itself in that period—a very good investment.

Mr. Speaker, I will take this opportunity to share the highlights of the 2012 cruise ship schedule. The premium line Aida Cruises, a German-speaking cruise line, will return to Bermuda with the *Aidaluna* with three cruises planned in 2012. In 2009, we approached Aida Cruises with the intention of attracting the fast-growing German-speaking market to Bermuda, and these meetings resulted in their providing three cruises in 2011 and three for 2012.

The luxury line Regent Seven Seas Cruises were deployed with the *Seven Seas Mariner* and *Seven Seas Navigator* with two cruises to the Island.

We have had a close relationship with the Regent Seven Seas Cruises for many years, and are gratified that they continue to deploy cruises to Bermuda.

The luxury brand Silversea Cruises were making two cruises with the *Silver Cloud* and the *Silver Whisper*. The premium line Oceania Cruises will be making four calls, with the *Marina* and the *Regatta*. We have been successful for the past few years to attract a limited number of Oceania cruises to Bermuda. The premium line Azamara Club Cruises will be making two calls with the *Azamara Quest* and the *Azamara Journey*.

Norwegian Cruise Lines will be deploying the *Norwegian Star* from New York for 25 cruises. The *Star* will replace the *Norwegian Gem* which sailed here in 2011. Norwegian Cruise Lines will be deploying the *Norwegian Dawn* on their Boston route, with 22 cruises scheduled for 2012.

Royal Caribbean and *Enchantment of the Seas* will be making 25 cruises from Baltimore. Royal Caribbean *Explorer of the Seas* will make 30 cruises to the Island from Cape Liberty, New Jersey. Celebrity Cruises will be deploying their *Celebrity Summit* from Cape Liberty, New Jersey, with 19 cruises scheduled in 2012. Holland-America Line will deploy their *Vendam* from New York with 19 cruises. She will sail directly to Hamilton, arriving on Tuesday morning and sailing on Friday afternoons.

Mr. Speaker, we have crafted the 2012 cruise ships scheduled to provide maximum benefits for the many Bermuda businesses relying on cruise visitors and crew members, including taxi and minibus tour operators, water sports operators and retail and restaurant businesses. I believe that we will be able to meet the demands for the next year, and I am presently working with all the various stakeholder groups to ensure that we have a successful 2012 cruise ship season. The 2012 cruise ship schedule will be made available in late December at the Department of Marine Imports.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.

Any further Ministerial Statements?

I now recognise Madam Premier, the Honourable and Learned Member from Devonshire North West.

Madam Premier, you have the floor.

UNITED KINGDOM WHITE PAPER—FUTURE RELATIONS WITH OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may recall that the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign Income and Wealth Affairs, Mr. William Hague, MP, issued a written Ministerial Statement to the United Kingdom Parliament on September 14, 2011, noting the UK Government's intent to publish a White

Paper in 2012 on its future relations with the Overseas Territories.

Mr. Hague's statement was followed by a visit to Bermuda later in September 2011 by the Undersecretary of State for Overseas Territories, Mr. Henry Bellingham, MP. Minister Bellingham's visit coincided with the UK's launch on 26 September 2011 of its public consultation process on the proposed White Paper. The stated intent of the UK White Paper on Overseas Territories is to:

1. strengthen the engagement and interaction between the UK and its territories;
2. work with territories to strengthen good governance, public financial arrangements, and economic planning where necessary; and
3. to improve the quality and range of support available to territories.

The Government has invited the Opposition parties to participate in the public consultation process by reviewing the questions published by the UK and to respond as appropriate.

I have attached the questions for quick reference, but full details may be found at the following site:

<http://ukoverseasterritories.readandcomment.com/>

Mr. Speaker, the consultation process is intended to be as wide as possible, and Government will be contacting entities in Bermuda to apprise them of the opportunity to comment. Respondents may send their submissions directly to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office via mail; to Government House in Bermuda via mail; online at the website that I have given; or to the Cabinet Office in Bermuda at either of the following e-mail addresses: advertucker@gov.bm or mcsharpe@gov.bm.

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has requested that submissions arrive no later than the 31st of December 2011. Mr. Speaker, the [questions](#) that I referred to for consultation on implementing the Overseas Territories strategies are as follows:

1. Challenges: What are the main challenges facing your Territory?
2. Cooperation with the UK the questions are: What are the most important areas of cooperation between your Territory and the UK? In what areas would you like to see greater engagement and interaction between the UK and your territory? How can the UK and your Territory strengthen cooperation and build more effective partnerships?
3. Governance, Financial Management, and Economic planning: The questions are, How do you assess the quality of good governance, public financial management, and economic planning in your Territory? What are the priorities for improvement? How can the UK best work with your Territory to strengthen these areas?

4. External Support: the two questions are, What do you think of the quality and range of external support—that is, support other than from the UK—available to your Territory, including from regional bodies? And they cite the Commonwealth and the European Union. They also ask, What can the UK best do to help Territories access external support?
5. Cooperation between Territories: there are two sub-questions under that, which are, What potential do you see for increased cooperation and partnership between the Territories? And in which areas does your Territory provide support to other Territories, and how might this be expanded?
6. Global Profile of the Territories: there are three questions underneath this, How does your Territory promote its successes? What more could be done to raise your Territory's profile internationally? And how can the UK best support this?

Those are the questions, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, the e-mail address or the site is www.ukoverseasterritories.readandcomment.com, and e-mails can be sent to the UK and Foreign and Commonwealth Office via mail; to Government House in Bermuda via mail, online at the website, or at the local Cabinet Office address, advertucker@gov.bm or mcsharpe@gov.bm (and that is "Sharpe" with an "e").

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier, the Honourable and Learned Member from Devonshire North West.

It seems like something is missing. We will just move on.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: I think the next thing should be Questions. It is missing, though. It is missing from my—yes. Nevertheless, I do remember.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Mr. C. Swan, the Honourable Member from Southampton West Central, wants to put questions.

Try to be as succinct as you can because we do want to move on to the Orders of the Day, and we do not want to short-change anybody when it comes to the reply of the speech.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: I just have questions for three different people.

The Speaker: Mr. Swan has questions for Minister Blakeney.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Yes, first for the Honourable Member Mr. Blakeney, who presented a Statement on the Mirrors Programme.

The Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION NO. 1 ON MIRRORS PROGRAMME

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: I would first like to ask . . . He does go at pains to say the Government is committed to the programme and what-have-you. I am just wondering if he could answer my first question, Why would—

The Speaker: Well, you have not put it yet. I am waiting for you to put it.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Why was it deferred, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Why was the programme deferred?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney? The Minister is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes. I thought I was pretty clear. There is a commitment to refocusing, because the philosophical belief is that we should be proactive with preventative commitment at an earlier age so that when they do reach the substantive age of later adolescence there would be less of a need for people and/or resources as a result of having to react to the problem. So what we want to do is prevent, by getting into the psyche and the minds of the youth at a very early age, starting with the middle schools, where we already have a middle school engaged. Two more are identified, and we have identified as well a primary school because we believe that prevention, an ounce of it, is sometimes worth the best cure.

An Hon. Member: On the front end.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: On the front end. You got it, sir.

The Speaker: Mr. Swan, is there a further question?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Yes, a further question.

The Minister is mentioning refocusing. So, was it deferred or refocused? But I do not want to

keep beating that up. The fact that the programme was deferred, I'd like to find out from the Honourable Member if any contracts of any sort were affected by this deferment.

The Speaker: Supplementary one.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes. There was a contract that required an overseas consultant to be on-Island for the residential. Because remember, what we are talking about in the context of what was deferred was a one-week residential in a programme that lasts for nine months.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Swan, is there a further supplementary?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I just wonder if the Honourable Member can tell this House if the Government had to pay out any money because of this action. Were any penalties of any sort [paid] for that particular contract?

The Speaker: Minister, any penalties involved?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Mr. Speaker, I am not absolutely sure with regard to penalties, but if there were penalties, there was also a cost-savings as a result as well. I do not believe there were, but I stand to be corrected, and I will get the substantive answer in due course for the Member.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do have other questions for other Members.

The Speaker: Yes. We will come back.

The Honourable Member, Mr. Hunt, has a question to the Minister.

QUESTION NO. 2 MIRRORS PROGRAMME

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first question is, Can the Honourable Member provide us with a date when the next residential treatment programme will be offered, a specific date when that will be offered?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to reply.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: At this point in time, we have not made a commitment to a date.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Further question?

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Further question.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Can the Minister provide us with a definition from his perspective of “deferred” versus “cancelled”? What is the difference here?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I am surprised because I am sure—

The Speaker: *[Laughing]* Minister? Go ahead.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I am sure the Honourable Member, Mr. Speaker, attended, not only school at the local level, but probably tertiary education and would have probably been, as soon as he could read the English language, introduced to a *Webster's* or some other dictionary.

But suffice it to say—I will make it real easy for you. “Cancel” is the same as termination. “Deferred” is postponed, protracted, do it later.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member made some reference to my intelligence. I will tell him this: I understand that, but deferred in this case—

The Speaker: Supplementary two?

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Yes, it is.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Deferred in this case, when the particular Mirrors Programme happens every year, I would say that the residential programme was cancelled for this year.

The Speaker: What is the question?

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Can the Honourable Member clarify whether the residential programme for this year has been cancelled? Because if it was deferred, then it would happen this year.

The Speaker: Okay, fine. Give the Minister a chance to respond.

Minister Blakeney?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes. It was deferred, as stated in the Statement, to 2012.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: It was deferred until 2012. It just will not happen in 2011.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Point made; thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another question, Mr. Speaker, not a supplementary; another question.

The Speaker: No, no, not a supplementary. It has to be a main—

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Question two. Question two.

The Speaker: Question two, yes.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Question one; supplementary one; question two.

The Speaker: Question two. Yes? Question two. Yes?

QUESTION NO. 3 ON MIRRORS PROGRAMME

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What contingency plan is in place if the private sector does not materialise itself in terms of offering funding for the Mirrors Programme?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I do not have a crystal ball. But I can tell you with regard to the ongoing engagement of the corporate community, we are very encouraged. I am not going to be hypothetical with a less-than-hopeful mindset with regard to our very benevolent corporate community stepping up to the plate, as they always do and continue to do. We are a Government that is encouraging private/public partnerships. There has been a commitment. There is a historical legacy of some very, very sensitised and sensitive corporate community citizens that continue to partner with this Government. And we have a track record of success, and we continue to hope that it will be even more successful with that commitment.

So we will be engaging the corporate community and, as of now, I do not have a mindset with regard to not getting the kind of support that we are looking for.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, question two.

The Speaker: What is the question?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: The question is, Can the Minister provide us with a yes/no answer to whether we have a

contingency plan in place if the private sector does not materialise itself in terms of funding?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Obviously, yes. There is a budgetary process. And if Mirrors is going to continue—because we do not intend to terminate it—there will be allocated funding to provide to the programme for what we feel is the appropriate resources necessary for the refocusing of prevention as opposed to reactionary and reactive intervention. So, yes.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Let us move on.

I thank the Honourable Member from St. George's South, Mr. Hunt.

I now recognise Dr. Gibbons, from Paget East. Dr. Gibbons wants to put a question to Minister Blakeney, I believe.

QUESTION NO. 4 ON MIRRORS PROGRAMME

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do. I have got a question and a supplementary for the Minister on his Mirrors Programme Statement.

The question is, How were the 111 students who were enrolled in the Coaching for Success Programme chosen? Did they volunteer, or were they selected, for example, by teachers?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I think it would have been a combination of both. Some volunteers, some referred, some encouraged.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: I have got a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: There is a supplementary.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Yes. The supplementary is . . . The Minister has noted that 94 per cent of the 111 passed at the fourth-quarter marking period. The question, Mr. Speaker, is, What was the pass rate for those same 111 students in earlier marking periods?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I cannot say, because the students may have not been in the programme at that time, earlier. I cannot say. How could I hypothesise on that?

An Hon. Member: Were they enrolled?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: They may have not been enrolled. I am not sure. I do not have that information. I will get it for you. But as far as I am concerned, we are providing the statistics based on what we do have and what we do know.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, Paget West. Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin has a question.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Member, the Minister of Transport, the Honourable Member Derrick Burgess.

The Speaker: I thought you said . . .

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No. I am going to pass on that.

The Speaker: All right. Let us put the question.

QUESTION NO. 1 ON 2012 CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay. And it is with the cruise ship schedule Statement. The question is—will the Honourable Minister advise us of the effective date for the withdrawal of the *Veendam*, given that this Statement indicates that there will be 19 cruises in 2012?

The Speaker: Minister Burgess is going to respond.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Gladly, gladly respond to Pastor Pamplin.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: In 2013. Yes.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I have another question on the other Statement on Carnival Cruise Lines.

The Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION ON CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Can the Minister advise this Honourable House what regular processes were in place or in effect to obtain feedback from the principals of Carnival, given that their presence was considered to be high risk?

The Speaker: Minister Burgess is going to respond.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: May I?

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Minister indicated that the Carnival berths were considered high risk; hence, there were no contracts in place. The question is, What regular processes were in effect to obtain feedback from the principals of Carnival, given that their presence was considered high risk?

The Speaker: Minister Burgess is going to respond.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: That is not in my Statement, but I would be glad to answer.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as I said in the Statement, the prime days are Monday to Friday. And to get a cruise in here on weekends is very difficult. That is why they have to lower the price. It was a risk. It was a risk for any cruise line to come in. And we were grateful that they came. Out of the 16 cruises, two were cancelled because of the weather. One was late. But we did benefit. We benefited by 36,000 visitors they brought in during that time.

So it is not an easy time to negotiate with any cruise line in what we call the fringe months or the fringe time. April is not a good . . . The peak months are from May to Labour Day.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess. The Honourable Member, there is a further question?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Supplementary, supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Will the Minister clarify whether there were any meetings with the principals during the period of time, given that there was a sensitivity to the risk factor?

The Speaker: The Minister is going to respond.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes. Mr. Speaker, the Government and Carnival recognised there were risks. And communications occurred during that period. Right? Whether communications occurred—“whether” they have be cancelled or not. That is something that was a wait-and-see how the proctor was.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.

The Honourable Member, Mr. H. Swan, has a question.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: What is your question?

QUESTION NO. 2 ON 2012 CRUISE SHIP SCHEDULE

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. The question is for the Honourable Member, the Transport Minister, Mr. Burgess, regarding the cruise ship schedule for 2012. With regard to small luxury lines, what efforts have been made to attract smaller cruise lines, luxury liners, to the exotic port of St. George's?

The Speaker: Minister Burgess is going to reply.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I know the former Minister has indicated to this House the difficulty with getting smaller ships; they are not making them anymore. But even though that is true, we still continue to try to get smaller ships to come into St. George's in the present form.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.

The Honourable Member, Mr. C. Swan, from Southampton West Central, has a question.
Your question?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have questions for the Honourable Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry, Patrice Minors.

The Speaker: Yes. What is your question?

QUESTION ON LAUNCH OF THE LONG-TERM WORK PERMIT

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: The first Statement talking about work permits (that was not the first one; well, the second one). The stipulation that a company must have a significant presence in Bermuda and must have a staff of at least 20 persons, 50 per cent of whom should be Bermudian . . . I think my question is, this new policy—

The Speaker: Yes. What is the question?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Is it aimed at specific companies or specific industries? That is my first question.

The Speaker: Minister Minors is going to respond. Yes.

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. It is available to those that make application and fit within the criteria, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. The Honourable Member Mr. Swan, do you have another?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify. That includes local companies as well.

The Speaker: Is there another question?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: I would like to hear it from the Minister.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Are you talking to me? The Honourable Member is talking to me, I hope. Are you finished?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Well, put the question again.
Yes, Minister?

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Mr. Speaker, as I had answered the first question, it applies to the second question. Those that make application that fit the criteria could qualify.

The Speaker: Right. Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan.

QUESTION ON EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL TRAINING BOARD

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: The other question is on the first Statement about the amalgamation of the National Training Board and the Department of Labour and Training. I could do some advertising here because this party has long called for that.

But I just wondered, the three gentlemen who took part in the overseas training . . . I just wondered which schools or companies they were from and how they were selected. And that is Mr. Vernon Harrison, Daniel Galloway, and Brendon Flemming.

The Speaker: The Minister is going to respond.

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: I can only speak for . . . Yes. I can get further details, but I am aware that one of the gentlemen was home-schooled or attended a private institution. But I would imagine that they all made application and met the criteria that warranted them being selected for participation in this programme. They,

I believe, are still engaged in the programme. And I can provide further details at a later date.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Minors.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you.

The Speaker: Mr. C. Swan, from Southampton West Central, there is another question?

QUESTION ON WORLD TRAVEL MARKET EXHIBITION

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Yes, last question. This is for the Honourable new Member of Tourism, the Honourable Mr. Furbert.

The Statement mentions two awards being presented, two winners, to key partners in the tourism effort to get visitors to Bermuda, one being Purely Bermuda and the other British Airways Holidays. I would wonder if the Honourable Minister, if he cannot provide the answer today, would provide this House with the answers to . . . Are there statistics on the numbers of actual visitors that each of these companies has brought to Bermuda over the last year?

The Speaker: Minister Furbert is going to respond.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I have no problem getting that information to you.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you. That's it for me for questions.

The Speaker: Pardon?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: That is all for me for questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan.
Any further questions?
We will move on.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Member, Dame Jennifer Smith, from St. George's North.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I am sure I will be doing this for awhile over this session. There are so many things that happened that are worthy of our attention. But, Mr. Speaker, today I rise to ask that we recognise the accomplishments of senior school students who were successful in being accepted into dual enrolment at Bermuda College for the spring semester.

You will note the names of the students. From CedarBridge Academy there were 13 students—Che

Durham, who will be doing freshman English; Asha Hassell, who will be doing Freshman English; Donyae Hollis; Chiamo Knight; Erajah-lashae Leverock; Jah-lae Outerbridge; Tres Richardson. All of them will be doing freshman English. Jaret Simmons will be doing freshman English and college algebra. Courtney Simons will be doing freshman English. Antione Williams, freshman English and college algebra; Mahlah Saunders, Shallette Spencer, and Phillip Burgess will all be doing college algebra.

From the Berkeley Institute, Trae Trott, college algebra; Jordan Renfro, music appreciation; Michelle Onyia, college algebra and freshman English; Dejah Denbrook, world history and freshman English; Tashel Bean, who was accepted, but declined to participate, as did Deken Saunders, Kevin Wright, and Sudan Furbert, who is now studying overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I also want us to recognise some Bermuda College students who earned international certification. In total, there were 12 graduates who completed the five-year programme to earn their National Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (NJATC) Journeyman Wireman Certificate. They earned the certification in electrical wiring, and they were honoured in a ceremony at the Bermuda College with representatives from the National Training Board, the Construction Association of Bermuda, the Bermuda Electrical Construction Association, and friends and family.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to send congratulations to Victor Scott School, who celebrated its 80th anniversary on Thursday (yesterday), and to Troika at City Hall, who had a tour de force, as it was described by the reviewer, when they presented the production "Misunderstood." Mr. Speaker, this group of actors and singers have been described as "brilliant," and they are all students in the public school system, and I want us to acknowledge their accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, finally, for today, the Cancer and Health Centre picked two outstanding students for scholarship—LeRhonda Mills and Ereik Fox, who will receive \$10,000 each from the charity. Normally, only one student is picked, but they picked them both because they were so outstanding. Ms. Mills is a graduate of Saltus Grammar, and Mr. Fox has already attained his bachelor's degree and is pursuing his goal of becoming a doctor in internal medicine.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dame Jennifer, the Honourable Member from St. George's North.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. H. K. Swan, from St. George's West.

Mr. Swan, you have the floor.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a solemn note, to ask this House to send condolences to the family of the late Roseann Pitcher, a friend of mine and a friend of many people around this country. I know I can associate the Honourable Member, Ms. Foggo, the Honourable Member from St. David's, and the Honourable Member, Dame Jennifer, with these comments. Ms. Pitcher did an awful lot of good work in the community, and it is hard to get into all that without getting too emotional, Mr. Speaker. But I would just like a suitable letter sent to someone that led by example in the community and will be sadly missed.

I would also like for a suitable letter to be sent to the family of the late Landro Minors, who has also passed recently, succumbed to a tragic cycle accident. His father is one of my dear friends, and his mother also, Mr. Speaker. And this family was closely associated with the Pitcher family, and I know it has been a very tough time for those families coping with these losses.

I would like to associate the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, the Honourable Member, Ms. Foggo, and the Honourable Member, the Opposition Leader, and the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons, as well, and all Members in the House that wish to be associated.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I would like a suitable letter of condolences sent to the family of Mr. Eric N. Parker, who passed away and had a memorial service this week. Mr. Parker I knew personally as well through golf, Mr. Speaker. He was the President of the Bermuda Golf Association. He was the President of Belmont Golf and Country Club many years ago, former president of both of those associations, as well as a member of the Senior Golfers, Mr. Speaker. Also, a director of Purvis Limited.

Mr. Speaker, he was my partner in the Senior-Junior when I was about 15 years old. We won the National Championship Senior-Junior, and he certainly was one of the people that showed me that if I could learn how to putt I would be a far better player.

But I want to recognise Mr. Parker's contribution to the development of golf in Bermuda, particularly his involvement at Port Royal Golf Course during its infancy stages as a trustee, and chairman of the agronomy committee. He was one of those trustees who spent a lot of time at the course, practising his putting, and also looking at how the course could be improved. He and his widow Muriel Parker, Mrs. Muriel Parker, who is the Secretary of the Golf Association, and his son Jeff, who was a Pioneer Virginia Golf, all have done a great deal for the advancement of golf in Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. G. Blakeney. Minister Blakeney, from Devonshire North Central, has the floor.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to take this opportunity to have this House send congratulatory wishes to the following athletes for their accomplishments in various sports:

In martial arts, I congratulate Mr. Jermal Woolridge, who won Bermuda's first-ever medal at the World Wushu Championships by earning a bronze medal in the men's, plus 90-kilogram weight division. In sailing, I congratulate Torvar Mirsky, who won a sudden death final against Johnie Berntsson at the Argo Group Gold Cup in Bermuda, to claim his second consecutive victory in the 2011 World Match Racing Tour. In tennis, I congratulate young Chris Foggo, playing in his second under-16 tournament in Canada. He won the Ace Under-16 Tournament. Chris defeated the tournament's second and fifth seeded players on his way to winning the title.

In golf, the Bermuda Four Ball Basketball Championship, or the Four Ball Championship was held recently with the young team of Ebonie Burgess and Elizabeth Parsons winning by four shots. Ms. Parsons, age 13, became the youngest winner ever of this event. Her partner Ebonie has now won this event for the third time with different partners, and there were other winners as well.

In football, I congratulate our Bermuda National Football Team for their back-to-back victories against Barbados recently. They also won against Trinidad and Tobago, and they drew as well against Guyana. Unfortunately, they did not advance in the World Cup Brazil Tournament to be held in future years; however, because of their impressive home victories and draws will now climb up the FIFA rating list. That is great. The result put Bermuda in second place until Trinidad and Tobago defeated Guyana, which resulted in Bermuda finishing the qualifying tournament in third place.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Parapan American Games—Bermuda's Jessica Cooper Lewis—Jessica Cooper Lewis deserves our congratulations on her very fine history-making accomplishment. When she became the first-ever track and field athlete to represent Bermuda at a major para-sport championships at the 2011 Parapan American games in Guadalajara, Mexico. Lewis just missed out on claiming a medal by 0.03 of a second in the Women's 100-Metre when she finished fourth with a time of 20.78 seconds. A day after that performance, Jessica Cooper Lewis competed in the Women's 200 Metres, which was her second event at the games, and she once again finished fourth, this time clocking a time of 38.35 seconds.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

I am going to take Minister D. Burgess, from Hamilton East. Minister Burgess has the floor.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for this House to send a condolences letter to the family of Mary Ann Marshall, the mother of Cup Match player, Bermuda player Charlie Marshall, a stalwart in the St. John's AME Church.

Also, Mr. Speaker, earlier, whilst we were in recess, I would like to send condolences to the family of Ms. Olive Trott. Ms. Trott, as you probably know, introduced the Majorettes to Bermuda. We all know she was a giant in the entertainment scene in Bermuda.

The Speaker: That was Olive Trott.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Also, Mr. Speaker, on another note, I would like to send congratulations to Ms. Carol Everson. She has returned back to the UK, and she is now a qualified honorary welfare officer for the Royal Air Force Association. Ms. Everson has done a lot of work for Bermuda to help the veterans, and also was instrumental in helping us to finish the war memorial down on the Cabinet Grounds.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess, the Honourable Member from Hamilton East.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. C. Swan, from Southampton West Central. Mr. Swan has the floor.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to start by first having this Honourable House send condolences to the family of Joel Benevides, the late Joel Benevides. Those who were around in the early 1970s will remember Mr. Benevides as the person who constructed the original Port Royal Golf Course and St. George's Golf Club as well. I might add, in those days Port Royal was constructed for \$1.2 million, and his family is quite proud of the actual accomplishment.

He has had a very varied—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Yes. Well, I did that math as well, for inflation. But anyway, I will not go there.

His family is very proud of him. He had a very varied life, more recently sponsoring charities associated with his church. My colleague, the Honourable Kim Swan, would also like to be associated with that, and I do not know if there are any others.

I would like to be associated with the congratulations to the National Football Team. You know, it is one thing that I know all of us as Bermudians rally around when we are playing internationals. And for our team to finish third in the group, and I believe

three points behind the eventual winners, is a tribute to them. And I just hope we can build on that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from Southampton West Central.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Madam Whip, Ms. Foggo, from St. David's constituency. Ms. Foggo has the floor.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Honourable Member Kim Swan for associating me with his remarks for both Ms. Roseann Pitcher and Landro Minors. However, I think as constituents of mine, and also people that I knew very well, I think I should put my own voice out there. Personally, I would like to say that Roseann highlighted what it is to have civic qualities. She was recognised in the educational arena, and also in the AME family she was a well-known figure. She embodied what one would call *community spirit*. And Roseann and the Pitcher family, indeed, were very supportive of my political career. Indeed, she was the sister-in-law of the former Member of Parliament, Mr. Arthur Pitcher. I just thought that I would highlight that. She is sadly missed by all of St. David's and, indeed, by her family members, and St. George's—indeed, St. George's as well, all of St. George's.

Landro Minors was the son of Ms. Tanya Minors, who was a classmate of mine at the Berkeley Institute. I have known Tanya and her young ones all of their lives, anyway. I would just like to recognise Landro's sporting abilities. He was a very well-gifted sportsman. The Minors family definitely mourn his loss, Landro, indeed. Like I was Tanya's classmate, yet Landro was my younger daughter's classmate at the Berkeley Institute and a great friend of hers. I certainly want condolences to be recognised for the Minors family in their time of bereavement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Foggo, the Honourable Member from St. David's constituency, Government Whip.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. M. A. Weeks. Minister Weeks, from Pembroke East Central, has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

I would like this House to send a letter of congratulations to the Victor Scott Primary School on their 80th anniversary Founders Day celebrations that are being held.

I would like to be associated with today's comments, but I also would like to say that I was the keynote speaker at the ceremony yesterday. And it is

in my constituency. Also, I was a past student. So I would like a little leverage here or something.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael Weeks: Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Michael Weeks: So I was proud to know that many of our sons and daughters, Mr. Speaker, who helped to shape this country, were former students of Central.

Across the floor, the Honourable Mrs. Patricia Pamplin-Gordon, Bob Richards, and L. Frederick Wade, Paulu KamarakaSego, Dame Lois, Honourable John Swan, and, like I said earlier, myself.

An Hon. Member: Dr. Brown.

Hon. Michael Weeks: And Dr. Brown, but I can go on and on. Yes, yes, yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael Weeks: And those who wish to hold the names at the school, I have got a list for you.

[Laughter]

Hon. Michael Weeks: It is 80 years old.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like a letter sent to the organisers of the newly established People's Flea Market. They had a successful opening on Saturday last, November 12th, at the CedarBridge campus. I was also on hand to cut the ribbon, myself and the Honourable Premier. I was gratified to see that and to be a part of the beginning of this unique event, which will be occurring weekly and which involves allowing entrepreneurs to sell food, clothing, baked goods, furniture, and much, much more. There were also health screenings, legal consultations, and a free seniors café. Again, this will be on every Saturday at CedarBridge Academy from 9:00 [am] to 4:00 pm.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like a letter of congratulations to be sent to the Bermuda Arts Council, and also my team at the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs for a fantastic Lifetime Achievement Award ceremony that was put on last night at the Bermuda National Gallery. I would like to acknowledge the Lifetime Achievement awardees, who were Mr. Ronald Percy Paynter, posthumously, for entertainment. I would like to associate Mr. Cole Simons with this event, who was also there last night, and the Honourable Glenn Blakeney with this event.

Arthur John Motyer, posthumously, for English, drama, and creative writing; Barbara Jones for theatre and costumes; and Ed Hallard for theatre;

Bruce Hallard for theatre; Elizabeth Campbell for costumes; and Laura Gorham for visual arts and who was also a patron awardee.

Thank you for your time, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Weeks.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Ms. D. Butterfield, from Pembroke West Central. Ms. D. Butterfield has the floor.

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like for condolences to be sent to the late Mrs. Nina-Mae Joell of Princess Estate, Pembroke, and I would like to associate Minister Michael Weeks, Dame Jennifer Smith, and also the Honourable Wayne Perinchief, who would like to be associated with these condolences to her son and daughter, Albert and Debra-Lea.

I also would like condolences to be sent to David Charles Henry Burgess, a long-time serving employee of the Bermuda Electric Light Company, also from the constituency of Pembroke West Central. And I would like for condolences to be sent to his family.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to be associated with Troika, a very outstanding young group of individuals in the arts, and quite pleased with what they are doing as well. You would like to be associated with that, the Honourable Derrick Burgess. And also, I would like for congratulations to be sent to Nadanja and Ashanti's performance, "Don't Talk to Me Like That." And you know how things can be, especially with our young people, when we raise our voices or they do the opposite to us. So it was a very exciting evening out to see this play, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate them.

Also, I would like for congratulations to go to the St. Paul's AME Church Annual Women's Day. I do this because the speaker from overseas was unable to make it due to illness, and that was at the eleventh hour. You know, sometimes we serve an eleventh hour God. So the Women's Day Chairperson, Reverend Judith Gardner, was fitting right in. And then our Pastor Deborah Evans, from up in First Church of God—and I believe my colleague not only here, but also at St. Paul's AME Church, would like to be associated with that, and that is the Honourable Patricia Gordon-Pamplin. It was a wonderful service, Mr. Speaker. It shows what we can do as *Onions* serving the Lord in this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Butterfield.

I am now going to recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban, from Pembroke East.

Mr. Roban?

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some of these may have already been done before, but I am sure it will be noted to me if they were already recognised.

There are two young men who were called to the bar over the recent month, Mr. Lee DeRosa-Holder and Mr. Kamal Worrell, two young Bermudian men. And we must recognise the achievements of our young men. A number of Members—Minister Weeks, Minister Blakeney, Minister Bean—have asked to be associated with the remarks for those two fine Bermudian gentlemen, who have been long hard studying and have had coloured, I think, careers in their lives.

I think that Mr. Worrell, even as a young Bermudian, spent some time in Ethiopia studying agriculture. So he is a passionate Bermudian who has had a very varied career, a "roots man," as one Member has said. I recall attending the UN with him under the stewardship of Dr. Paulu KamarakaSego one year many years ago. So his interest in the world is wide and broad, and Mr. DeRosa-Holder as well has had a long career, some time associated with Government. But I think we should be proud that he has seen fit to take up the legal trade, both these gentlemen.

I would like to be associated with the remarks for the late Olive Trott, who was a stellar symbol in the North Village community. I would also like to be associated (I do not know if it was done) with the congratulations to the Whip for her educational achievements earlier. I must say as to getting her Master's in Public Policy, I raise it, Mr. Speaker, because we are now alumni of the same university. I also attended the University of Birmingham and did my master's some years ago. So I am proud to share the table of scholarship with the Whip, and we can hold hands and go forth together in scholarship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, on that one.

Also, I would like to be associated with the congratulations to Victor Scott School and the celebration that is going on now for their anniversary. That has already been given by others, as I did here. And I would like to also pass on congratulations to the Grace Methodist Church on North Shore, if it has not already been done, for their Women in White service, their eighth annual service. Dame Minister was there; also, the Honourable Premier was there with myself; and also the Minister Patrice Minors was also in attendance at this service.

I had the honour and privilege of being an honorary woman for the service, and they allowed me to speak from the podium, Mr. Speaker, as an honorary Woman in White, even though I did not even have on white. So I felt quite honoured to be given that privilege when I was there. But this was a service of great recognition. Minister Weeks, I believe, would also like to be associated. Although he was not there, we share the area and a common border and common interests in the Pembroke community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Lister, from Sandys South Central.

Mr. Lister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you, and good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to take a few minutes just to ask that condolences . . .

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Is your microphone on?

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Yes, it is on.

The Speaker: Try to talk into the microphone.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: It is on.

The Speaker: Ah, that is better.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to ask the House to join me in sending condolences to two persons in my community who have passed over the summer holiday. One is that of Ms. Islowe Wade, who was a long-time resident of Sandys Parish, and also a person who was an ardent worker in the Bermuda Industrial Union and also worked very much in the Progressive Labour Party's branch there in the West End.

She was a committed lady to social events. She could always be seen helping in the community. She was also very active in the St. James Church and their events. In any situation where a person could be active in helping and progressing and assisting the community, you would always see Ms. Wade there. We [mourn] her passing, and I would ask this House to join me in sending condolences to their family. Yes, Mr. Simons has also asked to be associated with me, and also Mr. Kim Swan has also asked to be associated with those remarks, and Charlie Swan as well.

Also, while I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I want to say Mrs. Anita Smith—she is the mother of Mrs. Maxine Burns—also passed, a very dear constituent of mine. She, too, was a very active person in the community, a member of the St. James Church—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Yes, yes. The answer is yes. We know that.

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: And a person who has contributed much to the community. It is those people, Mr.

Speaker, who we stood on their shoulders, who have made us what we are today. And it is our responsibility to take what they have given us and try to preserve it for future generations that are to come.

While I am on my feet, I want to do one final thing. And that is to say thank you to Mrs. Hope Bascome. Mrs. Bascome was one of my very early schoolteachers. She celebrated her 100th birthday about a week ago. Unfortunately, I was off the Island, and I did not have an opportunity to attend. But Mrs. Bascome, I can remember her very clearly. In those days we used to sing. In the mornings we would . . .

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you. We will all have an opportunity to say, I am sure.

But I can remember being in Standard One with Mrs. Bascome, and in the mornings you would have assembly. And we would also get up there, and one of the things . . . When it was done, we would always sing "God Save the King." Of course, that was many years ago.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Yes, yes, yes. I have been around some time!

However, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to say this. Last year when Her Majesty the Queen came to Bermuda, and I had the opportunity to host her in Dockyard, Mrs. Bascome was one of those persons who was there. And my memory went right back to those very, very early days of her teaching me in Standard One. And I appreciate her and the contribution she has made, not only to my life, but to our community.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lister, the Honourable Member from Sandys South Central.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. M. Bean. Minister Bean, from Warwick South Central, has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to being associated with the congratulatory remarks for Mr. Lee DeRosa-Holder and Mr. Kamal Worrell, who were recently called to the bar, I also ask for congratulations to be sent to a young lady of the highest order who was called to the bar, by the name of Ms. Kimberley Caines. And I think many in the House would like to be associated with those remarks, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, I would ask for condolences to be sent to the family of Ms. Audrey Lightbourne of Coral Acres Drive. I am sure MP Swan would like to be—both Swans—would like to be associated with that. Ms. Lightbourne, Mr. Speaker, was a very close friend

of my mother and family. And I ask for condolences to be sent to her family.

In addition to being associated with the condolences sent to the young man Mr. Landro Minors, Mr. Speaker, I would like condolences to be sent out to the family of a young man who lost his life in my constituency recently, Mr. Malcolm Outerbridge, who was also, as Members will know, the nephew of the great Debby Jones Hunter. I think the entire House would like to be associated with that.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I ask for condolences to be sent to a woman of my community, Spring Benny and the White Hill area, by the name of Ms. Patricia Burrows, who recently passed away after a long-term illness.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bean.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. D. P. Lister. Mr. D. P. Lister, from Sandys North Central, has the floor.

Hon. Dennis P. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise first to be associated with some of the earlier comments. I think specifically of the comments that the Honourable Walter Lister just gave in reference to Mrs. Wade, Mrs. Anita [Smith], and also to the comments that were passed by Minister Bean just now in reference to Mr. Malcolm Outerbridge. I would also like to be associated with those remarks as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, though, to ask the Honourable House to join me in sending congratulations to the Methodist Church in Somerset, the Church on the Lane, they call it, Mr. Speaker. They recently celebrated their 150th anniversary, and I know that the Premier would like to be associated with these remarks, as she was present that day, and Mr. Swan and Minister Scott as well.

Mr. Speaker, it was a service that was very moving in that it took you back to yesterday in some of the songs that were sung. The old Sunday school members, Mr. Speaker, came together and formed an old Sunday school choir and took us down Memory Lane in some of the songs that they sang. And the Word of the Day was delivered by a son of the soil Mr. Charles Swan—not Charles Swan sitting here. I am sure he would like to be able to stand up and give such words as were delivered that day, Mr. Speaker. But Charles Swan, who was son of the soil who had attended church there many years ago and is pastoring overseas in Canada. He came back to deliver the word. We would like to have this House join me in those congratulations that are sent to him.

Mr. Speaker, I would also at this time like to be associated with other remarks given by Mr. Lister in regard to Ms. Hope Bascome. I actually was at the presentation that was done for her on her birthday, Mr. Speaker. And it was done in conjunction with the Founders Day of Sandys Secondary School. And I

combine the two congratulations sent to both in that the annual Founders Day of Sandys Secondary was celebrated on Ms. Bascome's birthday this year, rather than on their Founders Day, which would have been the week before.

They celebrated it on her birthday to mark her 100th birthday, because Ms. Bascome was one of the original class of 17 students on the opening day of Sandys Secondary School 84 years ago. She is the oldest living student, and the school took time out honouring her for that, Mr. Speaker, honouring her as the surviving member of that original class, but also honouring her for the fine service that she has given to the West End community.

Mr. Speaker, in the role that I played that day in giving some remarks, I had to read part of what I had to do that day. And traditionally, I pulled out my glasses and did what I had to do and gave the delivery. And when I finished, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: What did you do?

Hon. Dennis P. Lister: Well, that is where I am going, Mr. Speaker.

When I finished, I had to give to her the words that were sent over from the Queen, recognising her on her 100th birthday. I presented her the envelope, and I was expecting someone to come and assist her with it, but she steadily stood up and took the envelope, opened the envelope. And now I was really expecting somebody to give some further assistance to provide some spectacles, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at [100] years old, she was able to read the letter without any spectacles. And it made me feel very old having to use my spectacles, Mr. Speaker.

But at 100, Mr. Speaker, she was very much about her wits. She was very much into the service. She encouraged the young people in the performances that were taking place. And if we can be, Mr. Speaker, with that type of energy at that age, I look forward to being here at that age.

But send congratulations to both the school and to Mrs. Bascome. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. D. P. Lister, the Honourable Member from Sandys North Central.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. DeVent. The Honourable Member Mr. DeVent has the floor.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, colleagues.

I would ask the House to send a letter of condolences to the [family of the] late Ms. Vera Scott, who passed away recently in her 90th year, a long-time resident. I would like to associate Minister Weeks. A long-time resident of Friswell's Hill, and she will be sadly missed by both her family and the residents of Friswell's Hill.

A number of people wish to be associated, Mr. Speaker—Dame Lois and the Honourable Member—

The Speaker: What?

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: Dame Jennifer; sorry.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Who? You really got me.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: And the Honourable Member Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin.

The Speaker: Carry on, Mr. DeVent.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: On a happier note, Mr. Speaker, I attended a function last night where two young ladies were recognised for their work on what I consider the front line of some of the issues that this country faces. It was an event held by the Bermuda Addiction Certification Board, where they recognised two of those people on that front line who fight addiction in this country. I think it is important that we recognise those people who carry out a job that many might seem to feel is a thankless job.

And Ms. Lauren Trott was recognised as their Substance Abuse Counsellor of the Year; and Ms. Shavana Wilson was recognised for the second year in a row as the Substance Abuse Prevention Professional of the Year, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. DeVent, the Honourable Member from Pembroke South East, I believe it is. Yes.

I now recognise Madam Premier, the Honourable and Learned Member from Devonshire North West.

Madam Premier?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with a number of the condolences that have been extended; specifically to the family of the late Ms. Islowe Wade and also the family of the late Ms. Nina-Mae Joell. I particularly think of Debby Joell and Albert at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to stand and commend the Youth Parliament, because yesterday, Mr. Speaker, you and I and a few of our Honourable Members were certainly regaled with, I think, the spectacle of young people who have shown that they are prepared to grasp the metal and lead and be role models.

I certainly would like to acknowledge the role played by the Honourable Youth Premier, Mr. Ryan Robinson the son of our own Honourable Member Mr.

Wayne Perinchief. I would like to also acknowledge the former Opposition Leader's (Mr. Kim Swan) daughter, Ms. Zinsy Swan, who was certainly here and showed that she has a tremendous appetite for politics. The Honourable Youth Parliament, Madam President and Speaker, the young people who were sitting in the seats that we are sitting in right now, who showed that they have both a keen passion and a desire to contribute and for public service. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you and all Honourable Members would join with me in acknowledging and commending them, as well as their senior advisor, a teacher, young Mr. Owen Darrell.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to commend those who organised today's Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast. They had, I think, a local minister from South Africa, who spoke and who certainly challenged us to remember to have pride in ourselves and to also realise that we can accomplish all things through Christ as a strengthener.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, I think that there have been a number of comments that have already been made by the Education Minister, and I would like to certainly be associated with that. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to commend the new Opposition Leader, as this is really going to be a day for him as he delivers later on his Reply on behalf of his party. This is the first opportunity in some ways to acknowledge him in that role.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I would like to now take my seat. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

We will move on.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban, from Pembroke East. He wishes to make a personal explanation.

Mr. Roban.

RESIGNATION AS MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to exercise my right under Standing Order 14(1)(p) to provide a statement to my honourable colleagues in this Honourable House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the events of recent days have resulted in a change in my role and responsibilities, and I felt it important to address these matters in this place. Yesterday, on Thursday, November 17, 2011, I tendered my resignation as Minister of Public Works, to the Honourable Premier, Paula A. Cox, JP MP, effectively immediately.

In recent days there has been heightened public criticism of my decisions prior to the recent Cabinet shuffle. This has brought into question the

Government's integrity and resulted in accusations of corruption, the perception of which I do deeply regret.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my letter to the Honourable Premier, it was [not], and is not, my intention to see accusations of this nature impact on the PLP Government with my presence in her Cabinet. It was, after careful consideration of the events that have transpired that I honestly felt this is the best for both me and the Government.

The Honourable Premier reluctantly accepted.

I want it to be abundantly clear that I remain a steadfast—I repeat, steadfast—supporter of the Honourable Paula A. Cox, her Premiership, and the work of this Government, her team—our team—as they endeavour to achieve.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: My work in the back bench will be to support the mandate given to the PLP by the people of Bermuda.

I thank Premier Cox for the opportunity to serve our country as a Member of the Cabinet. I had the honour of being a Member of the Cabinet since June of 2009. I am proud of my service, the accomplishments and the value I have added to the Government over that period, and take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Secretary and other civil servants with whom I have worked.

Mr. Speaker, to my constituents: I assure you that I will continue to be your steadfast representative. It is an honour and a privilege, Mr. Speaker, to serve in this House as a Member of the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party.

To the noble, strong, and kind constituents of Pembroke East, constituency 15, and to all the people of Bermuda: Thank you.

I would also like to thank my colleagues and those members of the public who have reached out over the last 24 hours to express their support. I remain your servant. Let the work continue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: There are none.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The Speaker: There are none.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: I am going to call it. The Minister keeps bobbing up.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Speaker: Minister, you had a Bill?

The Clerk: No. He has a motion.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: I have a Bill.

The Speaker: I now recognise Madam Premier. Madam Premier has the floor.

INCENTIVES FOR JOB MAKERS ACT 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the Bill, the Incentives for Job Makers Act 2011. I am introducing this Bill for consideration of the Honourable House. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

No leave of the House is required for Government Bills.

Minister Burgess from Hamilton East.
Minister?

TRAFFIC OFFENCES (PENALTIES) AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing this Bill, the Traffic Offences (Penalties) Amendment Act 2011, for consideration of this Honourable House.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now recognise Minister Minors.

NATIONAL TRAINING BOARD AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the Bill entitled the National Training Board Amendment Act 2011, for consideration of this Honourable House.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Minors.

Under Standing Order 28, no leave of the House is required for Government Bills.

We will move on.

Are there any further introduction of Bills?

All right. We will move on.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The Speaker: Now, Minister Bean. Minister Bean, you can jump in.

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE SUPPORT GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES REGARDING ENERGY AS ARTICULATED IN THE 2011 BERMUDA ENERGY WHITE PAPER

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that this Honourable House supports the Government's policies regarding energy as articulated in the 2011 Bermuda Energy White Paper.

The Speaker: Thank you.

No leave of the House is required.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. H. K. Swan, from St. George's West.
Mr. Swan, you have the floor.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move the following motion.

The Speaker: Yes?

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE TAKE NOTE OF DIMINISHED OPEN SPACES IN BERMUDA AND RESOLVE TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES THAT WILL REVERSE THE CURRENT TREND

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. That this Honourable House take note of the diminished open spaces in Bermuda and resolve to develop strategies that will reverse the current trend to ensure that future generations enjoy a greener Bermuda that is far more environmentally healthy.

That is my first motion, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Any objection?
Agreed to.

The Speaker: Carry on.

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE TAKE NOTE OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES OF THE CARIBBEAN, AMERICAS, AND ATLANTIC REGION

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: My second motion, Mr. Speaker, is that this Honourable House take note of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures of the Caribbean, Americas, and Atlantic Region and consider

modernising Parliament's functions and organisational effectiveness.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I thank you, Mr. Swan.

That brings us to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: The first Order is consideration of the Speech for which His Excellency the Governor was pleased to open the present session of Parliament.

I now recognise Madam Premier. Madam Premier has the floor.

MESSAGE TO GOVERNOR

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the following message be sent to His Excellency the Governor: "May it please Your Excellency, We the Members of the House of Assembly of Bermuda thank Your Excellency for the gracious speech with which Your Excellency was pleased to open the present session of Parliament."

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

We do not put the motion. We just carry on. And at the end of the day, we will put the motion.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member Mr. C. Cannonier.

And just before he starts, under Standing Order 11[(2)(iii)], "While a Member is speaking, all other Members shall remain silent or shall confer only in undertones, and shall not make unseemly interruptions."

There has been a longstanding parliamentary convention that when an Honourable Member makes his first speech in Parliament, he is heard in silence.

Mr. Cannonier?

I have no indication from Madam Premier that she wants to defer or . . . Mr. Leader, would you like to carry on?

Mr. L. Craig Cannonier: Let us proceed. Carry on.

The Speaker: Okay. Fine.

The Leader wishes to carry on.

[Gavel]

REPLY TO THE THRONE SPEECH ONE BERMUDA ALLIANCE

The Speaker: Mr. Cannonier is going to start.

Mr. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of the House of Assembly, it is a privilege to stand before you this morning in this Honourable House as the representative this afternoon, yes, of the people of Devonshire South Central, and as the Leader of the One Bermuda Alliance.

It is an exciting moment. This is my maiden speech as a Member of Parliament; it is also my first as Leader of the Opposition. That it should also be in reply to the Speech from the Throne adds even more meaning to the task, one I commit to with the deepest sense of respect for this legislature and the deepest sense of responsibility to the people of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the party I lead wants to bring change to Bermuda, change that gives people a greater say in the work of this country, change in our political culture from one of confrontation to one of collaboration; change in the way we go about our business as a country, and change to a Government that works for the people.

We believe change is necessary, because the problems of Bermuda are too serious, too deep for more of the same. We have to free ourselves to be better. That means freeing ourselves from habits and norms that have failed our potential to be one Bermuda united and at peace.

My colleagues and I believe the need for change begins with our politics. I have been a businessman all my life. And, like many Bermudians, I have followed politics. It always seemed a world apart—harsh, confrontational, and not much about bringing people together. It appeared to be more about power than people, more about who was winning the fight than who was finding the solution to our problems. As these problems worsened over the last few years, the squabbling that characterises party politics has seemed to drift farther and farther from the point.

Mr. Speaker, it is my humble opinion that the point of our presence here in this Chamber today is to do our best for the people of Bermuda. Our job is to serve the public, to solve their problems, to run the country on their behalf efficiently and well. Our job is to do so with integrity and selflessness. Our job is to put Bermuda first.

This may seem obvious to say, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And more often than not, the work of our Government, no matter the promises, no matter how busy, no matter how well-intentioned, has not solved the challenges and issues that bedevil our society.

Look around you. Bermuda is in a crisis. Our economy is failing, our education system is failing children, and there is a massive breakdown in public

safety that has many of our young men in the grip of gangs and guns. People everywhere are hurting. Every day I am sure all of us in this Chamber hear from people living hard times. A few days ago I was approached by a young woman in her mid-20s, a single mother with a small child. She has been jobless since September. She will not be eligible for financial assistance until the middle of December. When I met her she had \$300 to her name. The bills were piling up. She had no prospect for any improvement in her situation. She is trying to be brave. She is trying to be positive. But she is at her wit's end.

Mr. Speaker, the details are different, but this young woman's troubles are being played out in homes all around Bermuda—jobless fathers with bills to pay and mouths to feed; mothers who send their children to school hungry; elderly people forced to choose between medicine and food; businesspeople struggling to meet their payrolls. Bermudians of all kinds are suffering, many of them suffering as never before. The people of Bermuda need our best efforts. They need our help. We must, more than ever, be about the business of the people. It is our duty.

With so many serious problems facing Bermuda, we ask the following question: Is there relief on the horizon as a result of what is contained in the Throne Speech?

We commend its theme: "Let us build one another, together." It is the right sentiment, a worthy goal, which we hope will prevail over the Government's practise of dividing the people of this country for political gain. The Speech itself puts forward ideas and plans to help Bermudians get through these very tough times. We see much we could support, including many ideas borrowed from us. We agree on the need to retrain people, and pray the programmes being assembled will open new doors for them. We agree with career and job training, support for young Bermudians. Hotel concessions tied to the hiring of Bermudian entertainers are good. We agree with health insurance reform that minimises up-front payments for medical care, and we agree with homeowner eligibility for financial assistance, as well as tougher drunk driving penalties.

We support the review proposed for the 60/40 business ownership rule for its potential to finance important projects such as the redevelopment of Hamilton's waterfront. We welcome a referendum on gambling. It is important to let people decide important issues by way of referendum. We support measures that protect qualified Bermudians from unfair hiring practises, and we are intrigued by the idea of a Cisco Academy that could train Bermudians to fully participate in our high-tech economy.

The question for Bermuda is whether this Government can be trusted to follow through on all they promise. It is a relevant question, Mr. Speaker, because this Government has disappointed many. The gap between its initial promise and its record is

significant and telling. This is a Government that became too comfortable—too comfortable in power. Glaring mistakes were made, and things went wrong, as the Premier herself has acknowledged. Accountability, the foundation of any successful democracy, was never applied. This disconnection, the complacency, the arrogance and excesses, are all signs of a Government that does not think it will ever lose power, never be sent packing by the voters. It is a recipe for poor and ineffective Government.

The Government became a facilitator of hard times, alienating job creators, spending us into debtors' status. What ensued was the largest decline in jobs and opportunity in Bermuda's modern history.

The Government likes to blame our hard times on the global economy. Its Ministers say that as often as they can, because it gets them off the hook. But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. This is a Bermuda recession caused by the Government's financial and economic mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda needs an approach where it is smart about the world, smart about growing opportunity, and smart about protecting our national interests. We need to get this Island back to work.

The One Bermuda Alliance has been consistent in calling for a new and better way to conduct the people's business. We believe our future depends on developing a new approach to politics and problem solving. Our programme is anchored to one of the OBA's founding principles: inclusiveness. We do not believe Bermudians want to be divided on the basis of race or class, and we reject that. Bermuda is too small for any other way.

An OBA Government will embrace all Bermuda for the sake of Bermuda. We will take advantage of our collective strength. We will not leave anyone behind. We will eliminate all forms of discrimination. We will end the politics of division and show Bermuda there is a better way. That is where our future lies.

We will bring people together with opportunities to work together and give them greater say in the business of Bermuda—their business. We will immediately overhaul the Parliamentary Elections Act to involve as many citizens as possible in decisions about the future of the Island. We will extend the advanced poll for those who are travelling, and absentee ballots to students living abroad. We will introduce measures to bring a greater level of accountability to the political process than we have today.

We will give people the opportunity to initiate referenda on major issues of the day, giving them the right to have their say in our elective future. We will arm constituents with the right to recall their Member of Parliament. We will introduce fixed-term elections. No longer will a Government's political agenda take precedence over the public agenda. Think of fixed-term elections as the people's deadline.

Mr. Speaker, the OBA will change the political culture of this Island to one that is more collaborative, less confrontational. The key is to lead by example; not just by words, but by practise. To change the culture, we will put in place mechanisms that not only invite, but encourage people to work together. We want people to get beyond petty partisan politics. "Bermuda First" will be our mantra. We will strengthen parliamentary committees, giving back bench MPs real power to investigate, call witnesses, and report back. Hearings will be open to the public and the press. That is key.

We will make better use of our MPs and Senators by putting them together to work on solutions for Bermuda. We will encourage bipartisan cooperation through the bipartisan potential of the committee system. The Joint Select Committee on Crime is an excellent example of how this can work. We will make bipartisan arrangements a regular feature of our Parliament. We will invite a Member of the Opposition to sit in Cabinet.

We will create a Contractor General, independent of Government, to oversee Government projects from tendering to completion to ensure rules and guidelines are strictly enforced and to identify unfair practises or offensive conduct.

A strong Public Accounts Committee, working with the Auditor General and Contractor General, will prevent and deter the kinds of abuses and excesses that have so damaged the public purse and the Island's reputation.

Our objective is to develop a strong active committee system to act as a check on the exercise of executive power. Bermuda does not need new legislation to follow the money. We need people to follow the money, using rules and procedures already in place.

Mr. Speaker, our aim is to break the confrontational cycle of politics and move Bermuda into an era of collaboration. Collaboration does not mean setting aside our, or any other, party's chief responsibility as the official Opposition. Constructive criticism lies at the core of democracy. It is only through criticism that we can understand and repair our failings. If our observations, advice, and criticism help the Government perform better, then we are fine with that.

Mr. Speaker, the need for positive sure-handed leadership of the economy has never been more urgent. It is imperative we show people there is a way out of our troubles. Too many have become deeply pessimistic. Too many feel there is nothing to be done to reverse our decline. We understand the sense of helplessness, particularly when the Government says it has no power to do anything; that we just have to ride out the storm.

We do not see it that way at all. Bermuda has the means to shape its destiny. We have the means to make a difference. We reject the Government's passivity. The OBA's goal for the economy is to come out of this recession with all the ingredients in place for an

economic boom that generates jobs and opportunity, grows paycheques, and creates a more secure future for our people.

To achieve this, we must create a new foundation for growth, one that encourages international and local business to flourish, one that makes our customers feel welcome, and one that puts forward a regulatory system that is more efficient and user friendly.

This means change, Mr. Speaker—change in the way we conduct business as a Government, and change in the way we work with the outside world. We do not see those changes happening without a change in Government. To continue with a Government that antagonises international business, leaves tourists stranded at Dockyard, and shows such little respect for taxpayer dollars, is to follow a recipe for more of the same, Mr. Speaker.

Our first concern must be to help people who are struggling. We would eliminate the employee portion of payroll taxes for employees earning less than \$50,000 a year. This would put more money in the hands of the people who are trying hard to make ends meet in this expensive economy. We would require Government to pay its bills in no more than 30 days. It pays its bills too slowly. This would put cash in the hands of struggling local businesses.

To encourage the formation of new jobs in Bermuda, we would grant employers a two-year payroll tax exemption for new hiring. So, if a company employs 10 people and they add three more staff, for the next two years the company will not have to pay payroll tax on those additional three employees.

We would reform and fast-track the Planning process. The current process is clogged by red tape, preventing blueprints from becoming real projects that create jobs.

We would eliminate the licensing requirement for non-Bermudian spouses for the purchase of property. This policy is not only blatantly discriminatory but, like Planning, inhibits the ability of people to buy, build, and renovate homes. These are projects that can create jobs in the hard-pressed construction industry.

Mr. Speaker, the OBA will reform policies, practises and systems that hamper economic growth. We need to grow the economy. Only through growth can we generate the income to support our social programmes and pay down our debt. We would suspend the current term-limit policy for a period of two years, pending a search for a new policy that works better for Bermuda. The term-limit policy has been a job killer for Bermudians and contributed to the exporting of Bermuda-based jobs to competing jurisdictions such as Ireland, Switzerland, and Canada. Suspending the policy will stop the job losses.

There is more we can do. We believe there is an urgent need to cut red tape across the board to facilitate economic growth. Red tape inhibits the inflow

of foreign exchange, the lifeblood of our economy, and irritates our customers. The time is long past due to get rid of it. Government can start the process by setting up a Spending and Government Efficiency Commission to streamline Government processes, improve delivery of services, and make Government more efficient, more cost-effective, more transparent, and more user friendly. Cutting red tape will reduce the cost of doing business, helping us become more competitive.

Mr. Speaker, we believe there can be no meaningful, sustainable economic recovery without Bermudians understanding that we are in the service business. To be better at it, we need to change attitudes toward the people who come here to work and live—our customers. They bring wealth to our Island, they spend in our stores, they create jobs. Government must lead this change in attitude. We must change to a culture that is service oriented. We must commit totally to providing better service to our customers.

One of the biggest factors in our halting economic performance is Immigration. Complaints about the Immigration Department's intimidating manner, and bureaucratic hassles cannot be ignored. These are not our words, Mr. Speaker; they are the words of our customers. Immigration is a major source of frustration about doing business in Bermuda. It must radically remake itself into part of Bermuda's welcome wagon for our customers.

It is essential we change the way we greet people. We have to encourage them, not alienate them. The whole idea of guest workers as customers, as long-stay visitors, is crucial in getting the economy back on track.

Mr. Speaker, the high cost of this Government is borne each day by Bermudians and our customers. It has made us less competitive. To reduce the cost of Government overtime, we would freeze the size of the civil service and reduce it through attrition. We would cut consultants and frequent travel. We would cut Ministers' pay. It is essential that Ministers of the Government lead by example. We cannot expect Bermudians to tighten their belts without their leaders doing the exact same. Sacrifice must be shared! We are at a loss to understand the Premier's decision not to cut Ministerial pay as the way to show the public we are all in this together. It is a failure of leadership revealing how far off the path the Government has strayed.

Mr. Speaker, we find it odd the Government made no mention of its \$1.2 billion debt and how it was going to be paid down. The debt, after all, is one of the most significant facts of life in Bermuda today. The \$190,000 spent every day to pay the interest on the debt is the reason teachers are laid off, roads are not fixed, charities are struggling, and the Mirrors Residential Programme has been postponed.

It is the tragedy of this Government under this Finance Minister that its careful spending spree of recent years has crippled its ability to help Bermudians just when they need it the most. The Government should play it straight with the people, speak to them about the issue. It is, after all, their money. They have the right to know.

The Government's billion-dollar debt is a large, ugly fact of life that will weigh on Bermuda for generations to come. The OBA is committed to reducing it, but that can happen only by growing the economy and channelling our earnings toward debt reduction.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda's reputation in the international business world has been injured by this Government. Whatever its intentions, whatever its thinking, Bermuda's Government has fumbled the ball badly with this extremely important sector of our economy—responsible for more than 60 per cent of all economic activity on the Island. That is jobs. It is incomes, careers, and business opportunities for thousands of Bermudians. Despite the stakes, Government's tone, words, and actions have needlessly alienated and endangered our relationship with this vitally important sector. We should not be losing reinsurance business to competing jurisdictions. Reinsurance is one of the very few factors in the international economy that has actually grown during the worldwide recession. Yet, this Government's short-sighted, ill-tempered, alienating stance toward international business has damaged our preferred position in the industry and helped create our own home-grown recession.

Mr. Speaker, it is easier to maintain relationships than it is to build new ones. And it is even harder to rebuild old ones. We do not believe the current Government has the credibility or goodwill to restore Bermuda's reputation in the marketplace. We believe only an OBA Government can send the signals that will help stop the drain of business to other jurisdictions and return growth to the economy.

As the Government, the OBA will divert more resources and energy to the selling of Bermuda in conjunction with Bermuda business. It is not good enough to tell the business world we are open for business; we should be telling them, *We want your business*.

One initiative we believe will pay dividends is a concierge-type service, similar to that used in the Isle of Mann and Malta, to actively shepherd our international customers through the labyrinth of Government approvals and help them settle in. Mr. Speaker, Members of the OBA economic team have been speaking to these issues for many months. And our ideas have played a central role in creating a new economic policy for Bermuda, one that will provide a safe and secure future for our people.

The question for the people of Bermuda is whether to continue supporting a Government that presided over the largest decline in jobs and opportu-

nity in our modern history, or to support a party that represents change and a way out of our troubles.

Mr. Speaker, last year I attended the funeral of a young man who was a victim of gang violence. It was another tragedy, another lost life, another family shattered, a son left without a father. We cannot allow it to continue.

The Police Service agrees that violence has "severely affected the quality of life in communities across Bermuda." Statistics heavily underline that statement. The number of firearm incidents has doubled every year since 2007. One person was shot in 2008; seventeen in 2009; and thirty-seven in 2010. Of the total shot, 16 died. So far in 2011, eight people have been murdered, five by gunshot wounds. There are more than 20 unsolved murders on the books; 14 of them involve the use of firearms. The violence must be stopped.

We are encouraged. The police have made inroads in recent months with more arrests, more gun seizures, and even some convictions. We are also encouraged the public has begun to come forward, knowing that the only way to free themselves from the grip of gangs is to help police catch them. As a result, several gunmen have been sentenced to long periods of incarceration. But more needs to be done, particularly at the community level. That is why we will bring Operation Ceasefire to Bermuda. It is an approach to violent crime that has achieved dramatic results in US cities by using the strong arm of the law in conjunction with community-based action teams to intervene on the streets and wean gang members away from gang life. Operation Ceasefire is not a cure-all, but a vital step we feel Bermuda must take.

We appreciate the National Security Minister, who recently said he would bring Ceasefire to Bermuda after watching a movie on the subject. We nevertheless will continue to push the programme until we are convinced the Government's commitment is genuine.

Mr. Speaker, fear of crime has worked its way deep into the daily lives of Bermudians. Seniors are locked in their homes. Parents are concerned for the safety of their children. People at public events wonder if gang violence will erupt in their midst. Our quality of life is under siege. Against this backdrop, the Government cut back the police budget this year. While we recognise the need for greater spending control within Government, there are aspects of policing that simply cannot be cut.

The service spends roughly 80 per cent of its budget on personnel, and this year's cutbacks make the fight against crime more difficult. An OBA Government will provide Bermuda with security and peace of mind that allow us to once again live without fear of being robbed, shot, or burgled.

We will equip police with the resources and support they need to get the job done, including the full-time presence of parish constables in our

neighbourhoods. We must build trust between police and the people. We will equip police with advanced technology, such as shot spotters that can triangulate the position of gunfire and help them cordon off an area. We will make sure an expanded CCTV camera system is backed by an effective monitoring control room staffed 24 hours a day seven days a week. We will make sure the police have an effective electronic tagging programme.

Mr. Speaker, the OBA Government will bring order to Bermuda's roads. Bad driving habits, speeding, and drunk driving are commonplace. We would strengthen the police presence on the roads and activate more speed cameras. We also support Government measures to expand the use of breathalyzers, increase penalties for drunk driving, and impose DUI education for all disqualified drivers. Our roads have become highways for the disrespectful and the reckless. They do not have to be that way. We can fix it.

Mr. Speaker, the public is desperate for dramatic change in education. Despite the Government's best intentions over 13 years, they have not made it happen. The One Bermuda Alliance will provide the consistent leadership and political will to reform the public education system so that it works now for students, educators, parents, and our community.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard the PLP Government use the term "bias to action" in reference to their economic plans. Unfortunately, when it comes to public education, a bias to action has been largely absent in their efforts to reform. Four and a half years ago, the Hopkins Report revealed that the education system was "on the brink of meltdown." Two years ago, the Bermuda First Report issued "a call to action," stating that "education is justifiably one of the top priorities of Bermuda's Government." It connected educational opportunity for individual Bermudians with economic growth, fewer drains on Government resources, and improved social outcomes such as lower crime rates.

Professor Mincy's 2009 report on young black males highlighted the fundamental importance of keeping young black Bermudian men in school. The report identified a clear correlation between "education-obtaining gaps and lower income levels and unemployment." The message could not be clearer. It is repeated in report after report. But the Government has not reformed our public education system. With few exceptions, the Hopkins recommendations have not been implemented. Yet, the individual success of our students, the stability of our communities, and the secure future of our country all depend on getting this done.

There is very little in this Throne Speech that could be regarded as actionable. The Government does propose amendments to the Bermuda Educators Council Act 2002. On the one hand, this legislation may help ensure teachers are properly qualified; on the other hand, it begs the question of why the Minis-

ter has allowed unqualified educators to teach in areas and at levels for which they are not properly certified. Both the One Bermuda Alliance and the public look forward to receiving additional information that clarifies the rationale for the amendments.

The One Bermuda Alliance believes you cannot legislate teaching quality; it comes from hiring the best teachers and getting the best out of those teachers. And this requires a significant investment in continuous professional development, an area that was inadequately funded at the time of the Hopkins review and has been further reduced over the last two years through education budget cuts. In fact, many in the community feel that the budget cuts have fallen disproportionately on education, given its importance to our young people and Bermuda's future.

Mr. Speaker, the effective education reform Bermuda and our children so desperately need requires action, not just a "bias to action." But in the midst of severe challenges in education, it seems to be business as usual for the Government. The Minister says that the Government's plan for education reform is simple, as simple as a return to basics. The One Bermuda Alliance wishes it were that simple; but we know—and the public knows—that it is not so. Despite the many challenges to education reform, the One Bermuda Alliance believes it can be done and that it can provide our children with the tools and skills necessary to compete for good jobs in our economy. But it will not happen without a detailed plan, consistent leadership, and the political will to follow through on the Hopkins recommendations.

The One Bermuda Alliance has a plan for education reform that begins at the preschool level and continues through to the Bermuda College. Among other things, we will implement a fully integrated technical curriculum, expanded preschools, a serious commitment to professional development for teachers and principals, an independent standards board to restore trust in educational testing results, a longer school day to provide more time for sports, music, and remedial support, and more effective discipline methods pioneered in chartered schools.

We also plan to consider other initiatives such as single-sex school for boys to help address the significant dropout rate for young black males. We will continue to praise the Government for undertaking positive initiatives such as the Cambridge Curriculum. But one programme here and another programme there do not add up to comprehensive education reform.

Mr. Speaker, we were disappointed health care received little attention in the Throne Speech. The health of Bermuda is a big issue that cannot be sidelined. We face stern challenges in both health care costs and health care. Recent reports confirm that health care costs are rising at an unsustainable rate and that many families are finding themselves priced out of health care insurance. Costs have risen

to 11 per cent of our GDP for 2011. And the projections for costs, soaring to \$1.5 billion in 2020, are staggering and should galvanise action now.

In addition, we have an ageing population with spiralling health care costs, an obese population with an excessive rate of diabetes, and an increasing number of uninsured Bermudians. There are continuing medical advances and technologies followed by cost inflation and greater expectation for health care.

Mr. Speaker, health care improvement must start with a concerted effort to improve the basic level of fitness and health in our community. The Government has made progress in promoting fitness and health, but we need to do more. We need to change the way people live. Significant investment in health promotion is essential to reverse trends in obesity and diabetes. We believe this investment will reap benefits in the long run. It must start with the young, with increased mandatory time in physical education at all schools, and expanded mandatory nutritional education.

The National Health Plan released last year by Government highlighted the belief that health contributions in Bermuda should be linked to ability to pay. How this concept will work financially has not been explained, nor has it been explained how the health care system would cover no-income individuals who are unemployed, retired, or indigent.

Mr. Speaker, four years ago, Government controversially closed the Medical Clinic, which served people who did not have health insurance. The closure caused hardships for many seniors. This year's Throne Speech alluded to the problem of people needing greater access to basic health care and promised to assess the situation. Mr. Speaker, seniors needing basic health care do not need an assessment. They need health care. An OBA Government will reopen the Medical Clinic. Seniors and others who cannot afford FutureCare or HIP need a medical clinic that is accessible, central, and part of the Bermuda hospitals complex at Point Finger Road.

The OBA will introduce legislation to amend the human rights immediately to eliminate age discrimination. This was a promise made in last year's Throne Speech and again this year. There is no reason for further delay. We will not waste time and money on a National Strategy on Ageing. The problems facing seniors have been known for years. Seniors have suffered long enough under Government's refusal to act on seniors' problems. The OBA will legislate changes to FutureCare and HIP to make them fair, affordable, and sustainable. Fees for FutureCare will be the same for all clients, and all will receive the same benefits. The health insurance plan will be created that will not bankrupt the country.

Up-front payments for medical treatment will be addressed for doctors, dentists, and specialists. We will ensure they are reimbursed in a timely fashion so that up-front fees are not necessary. Health insur-

ance providers such as FutureCare and GEHI are notoriously slow in their reimbursements. We will correct this. Government is saying it will review the eligibility criteria for financial assistance for seniors owning their own home. We will legislate this immediately.

Mr. Speaker, the OBA would create more affordable beds for seniors in nursing homes. There are over 100 people on the wait list for long-term beds as of 2011. We will address the neglect and abuse of seniors in senior homes and have legislation to bring residential care homes in line with best practises.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda's tourism industry has been in crisis of decline for many years. Strong, decisive action is needed to rebuild, reposition, and reintroduce the product. We were encouraged last year when the Government brought together a good selection of people to take a bold, fresh look at what is needed to resurrect this once great industry. But the board failed to move with urgency. Just last month, Tourism issued a Request for Proposal asking eligible professionals to produce a strategic plan for the Island. No one can say when this plan will be completed, let alone implemented.

In the meantime, the Government has introduced stopgap measures to address what it says are the industry's immediate needs. Some have merit, such as incentives to showcase Bermudian entertainers, while others, such as the proposed scheme to convert cruise visitors to air visitors, leaves us wondering what is meant.

Mr. Speaker, the long and short of the situation is that 2011 has been a lost year for the tourism industry. There has been no direction and no meaningful marketing presence. Two items in recent months underscored our concern that the Government has been asleep at the wheel. The first was the outgoing head of the Southampton Princess Hotel urging Bermudians to tell people where Bermuda is—which we took to be a backhanded comment on Bermuda's weak presence in the marketplace. The second was Carnival Cruise Lines' decision just a few weeks ago to all but quit Bermuda. That Carnival did not even have a contract with Bermuda is mindboggling.

This week's news that Holland America's *Veendam* will cancel regular visits (Mr. Speaker, let me just say, there is a typo here. It should read "in 2013." It says "next year"), however, has plunged our cruise line businesses into shocking sudden crisis, one that without quick corrective action will severely damage local business and Government earnings.

Mr. Speaker, the situation underlines once again the need for a Tourism Authority. Surely, after more than a decade of continuous decline and drift, the time has finally come to put Bermuda tourism in professional hands. Amateur leadership has simply failed to have any positive impact on the industry, failing the many Bermudians who rely on it for jobs and business. Bermuda needs professional leadership that is responsible for setting clear strategic directives,

targeting proven markets, and mobilising the resources to drive up air visitor numbers. Above all, we need to be able to hold people to account for their performance.

That is what a Tourism Authority is all about—professional, results oriented, accountable leadership. It is about finally putting Bermuda first, ahead of egos, ahead of party, ahead of political pride. Mr. Speaker, a One Bermuda Alliance Government will move with urgency to set up a Tourism Authority with the goal of turning our tourism industry into a growing industry.

On a final note, the new tourism brand the Government says it intends to launch must reflect the Island's unique character and qualities. It is our view that Bermuda's special attributes, from St. George's World Heritage site to our architecture and terrain to our people, have not been adequately reflected in the image we project to the world. We must sell what makes us different. We have significant competitive advantages, and we have not capitalised on them.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has a full record protecting Bermuda's environment. Indeed, just this week we learned of two instances where a Minister overrode zoning protections to allow two colleagues to develop land. As we have said before, it is very important that Government lead by example. But the example set this week in abuse of ministerial power, disregards for Bermuda's development plan, and favouritism. This is precisely the kind of business as usual behaviour that must come to an end.

Mr. Speaker, few environmental initiatives have ever made it off the pages of the Government's Throne Speech. Year after year its Ministers have promised new and dramatic action to protect Bermuda's fragile environment. They promised, for example, to introduce bottle deposits, to reinvigorate the culture of citrus in Bermuda, to support the farming and fishing industries, and to establish more mangrove protection areas. They promised action on a water supply master plan, bans on balloons, plastic bags, plastic bottles, and illegal dumping. Whatever the reason none of these Throne Speech promises have ever seen the light of day.

All over the world, people have a new and urgent focus on environmental matters. Bermuda's ecology is more sensitive to damage than the ecologies of almost all other nations in the world. And a Government that fails to take its responsibility in this area seriously is playing with fire.

We, in the One Bermuda Alliance, have thought carefully about what must be done in the area of Bermuda's environment and have developed a large number of ideas, some of them old, some of them new, which go towards our goal of creating an eco-friendly Government and, ultimately, an eco-friendly Island.

We have a goal to produce 20 per cent of our required energy from renewable sources by 2026. We have plans to expand and upgrade our parks, provide

concessions to businesses and individuals committing to green solutions to our problems, and develop and support the agriculture and fishing industries.

Mr. Speaker, an OBA Government would replace the sheds at Marsh Folly, that currently serve as our shelter for the homeless, with a facility to properly serve those in need. It is time we treated the needy with decency and respect.

Mr. Speaker, growing up I was taught that my success was based upon hard work and good character. At the same time I was taunted with the fact that life was not an even playing field for black boys and black girls. I was told to keep quiet, do not rock the boat, and everything will be all right. Despite what many people want to believe, history shows that racism has been responsible for more sickness, death, poverty, and crime than any other single injustice. It is responsible for polarising people in defensive positions and blind loyalties.

Black people have worked hard and developed good character. Yet, there remains a disparity in the quality of life between white people and non-white people. After much talk and some walk, we still have a long way to go. While growing up, I was disturbed by the glaring economic disparity between blacks and whites. Looking at the Bermuda skyline, you could not name a handful of great buildings owned by black men in a country with a majority black population. I felt uneasy walking in certain neighbourhoods that were known to be for whites only and was fearful I would be told to leave.

I was apprehensive entering banks for loans, fearing white men would deny me because of my skin colour. I knew many others felt this way, but were smiling through this storm. Stories of strong black men who had their mortgages pulled were not uncommon. There were black and white people of goodwill who were threatened because they spoke out about racism. There are many unsung heroes who are still alive, and others who went to their graves through battle scars because they spoke out about the injustices that were blatant in Bermuda.

The legacy of racism is the root cause of many of the social ills and the dysfunction we are grappling with today. Unless this is understood, we cannot move forward together. There have been many who have tiptoed around the issue of race in the political arena. It has hurt their public credibility and, I am sure, the integrity of their souls. I cannot follow that route. I have my dignity to maintain and my ancestors to respect. Others seeking a platform in our country have been genuinely ignorant about the way white supremacy has imposed injustice and how it still works to maintain the status quo.

I am not such a one; for he who feels it knows it. Yet I refuse to use race as a tool to manipulate black people and exploit their fears. It is not enough to simply use race for talk without delivering justice. Hatred of any person serves no constructive purpose.

Yet it is completely constructive to oppose injustice in all areas of our society, black and white.

Success is still built on hard work and character. Denial, defensiveness, and deception will never substitute for these. The truth is we have not done the hard work when it comes to race because walking is always harder than talking. We need to be honest about the loss of morale and social values that are the basis of true development. We cannot ignore the state of the black family, and we must take personal responsibility for stopping the madness with our youth. We cannot turn a blind eye to the plight of the poor or ignore the ploys of the powerful.

There are many institutions and businesses that make life difficult for black Bermudians who want to come home and participate. There are many stories of construction workers who can do a good job and want to work, but they are the last hired and the first fired. We must address racism and the dysfunction from racism on both sides. We need to genuinely champion justice. We need a transparent commitment for equality, and we need to tell the truth.

Mr. Speaker, there are black people and white people of goodwill who see racism as the evil that it is, and who seek to dismantle it wherever they find it. This should be the work of all citizens of our country, especially those to whom much has been given. Those who need the most help should get it. It is unfair that the elderly black woman, who was denied education and economic opportunity, should be refused quality health care. She is a victim of a system that set her up and let her down.

At the same time, it is morally wrong to deny equal access to those who are competitive and have something to offer simply because they are white people. We should all have the chance to make the most of our God-given gifts, no matter what colour we are. The vulnerable and the damaged should be protected. This is true justice. This is the work of a good government. And this will be the approach of a One Bermuda Alliance Government.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Bermuda are looking, quite simply, for a break. They are looking for better Government than the one they have had for the last few years. Today I have spoken at length about the challenges we face as a people in our schools, in the workplace, and in communities gripped by violence. They are generally viewed separately, but we believe they are connected and that solutions in one area can contribute to solutions in another.

It begins, for us, with education. The better we teach our children, the better we prepare them to participate as law-abiding citizens embarked on productive, fulfilling lives. The more we support their lives, the less they will give in to crime. The less we lose to incarceration, the more we gain in safe and nurturing communities. The more we build and maintain a strong economy, the better we will equip the fathers and mothers to raise healthy families. The more we

work together, the stronger we will be. The more we build a just and fair society, the freer we will be to realise the boundless potential this Island professes.

The OBA can unlock this potential. It will not happen overnight, but it can happen. We believe Bermuda is ready to respond to new leadership; leadership that is free of the political past, confident in the people, committed to justice, empowerment, and responsible Government, and ready to take on the future.

What people need, as much as anything else, is hope. They need to know that together we can fix the problems that Bermuda faces. That will be our challenge going forward—giving the people of Bermuda reason to believe a better future awaits them. But to get there, they will need to embrace change, change in the way we work with each other, change in the way we go about our business as a country, and change to a Government that is more about the future than the past. Together we can do it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and God bless Bermuda.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Cannonier, Leader of the Opposition, from Devonshire South Central.

Can we agree, Madam Premier, on resuming again at, say, three? We can knock 15 minutes off that.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: We can agree, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay, fine. Thank you, Madam Premier.

Just before we adjourn for the luncheon break, Mr. Jean Pierre Rouja of *LookBermuda* wants to make a presentation to Madam Premier.

Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you bring him into the Chamber?

Mr. Jean Pierre Rouja: This is the first edition of the panoramas that I dropped last week that will be . . . This one is for everybody. And we hope you enjoy it. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The others will follow.

Thank you, Mr. Rouja.

I have caught the eye of Madam Premier. I know she wants to look at the photo, but . . .

[Laughter]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I was looking at you.

[Laughter]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that we adjourn for lunch.

The Speaker: Is there any objection?

Agreed to.

The Speaker hasn't left the Chamber, so we should not have all this moving about.

Proceedings suspended at 1:30 pm

Proceedings resumed at 3:04 pm

[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]

The Speaker: We are going to resume debate on the consideration of the speech with which His Excellency the Governor was pleased to open the present session of Parliament.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. H. K. Swan, from St. George's West.

Mr. Swan you have the floor.

REPLY TO THRONE SPEECH UNITED BERMUDA PARTY

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognising me here today and giving me an opportunity to reply to the Throne Speech once again.

This is my 14th Reply to the Throne Speech since 1998 and my fifth in this Honourable House since February 9, 2008. Mr. Speaker, this year's Throne Speech drew applause with mention of various initiatives by the Government. We note with interest the title theme for the Throne Speech: "Let us build one another, together."

Mr. Speaker, we stand before you today—I, as the Interim Leader, and my colleague the Honourable Member from Southampton West Central both of the United Bermuda Party—representing a party that is truly in reformation mode and undergoing a transformation.

We are living this theme "Let us build one another together" and so we can also relate to the great difficulties that the people of our beloved Bermuda are facing today. Mr. Speaker, the people of Bermuda are praying for this country to do better. Today, people from all walks of life agree that Bermuda must be put on the good foot economically and socially.

It is our contention that there is less room for the usual blame game. Mr. Speaker, we have noticed that there appears to be a willingness by the Government to embrace suggested solutions, and we are

pleased that some of our long-standing solutions, and those offered by the Bermuda First initiative, [in] which we participated, are finding favour with the Government.

Mr. Speaker, we consider it logical, given all the anticipation of an election on the near horizon, that the Government would deliver a Throne Speech with a list of promises in the form of initiatives and legislation for consideration to augment its Throne Speech. Most governments would do the same. However, Mr. Speaker, it is because of that very reason why we support fixed-term elections, reform to the electoral process, and reform to the political system.

Mr. Speaker, this year's Throne Speech is against the backdrop of a Bermuda that has been saddled with trying times both economically and socially. A country with no natural resources—other than the good-natured friendliness of its people and our exceptional reputation internationally—but a country that now has national debt which has grown fivefold in five years. For the first time, Mr. Speaker, thousands of Bermudians are unemployed or critically underemployed in Bermuda, and it is incumbent on those of us who are elected officials to work tirelessly to turn matters around.

Whilst these election promises to address neglected areas can be like water to a thirsty man in the desert, we are duty bound to point out that many of these and other solutions and recommendations have been put forward before. The bottom line is that we need to get our people and our economy working again!

Mr. Speaker, public safety is public enemy number one, and at no time in our modern history has loss of life been such a threat. We are pleased that the Government is prepared to take on board recommendations that in the past have been put forward by the United Bermuda Party and the Bermuda First Initiative. With regard to the latter, we collectively worked with them and it makes imminent good sense for Government to embrace them.

Our concern is for the restoration of good law and order to Bermuda. Mr. Speaker, community policing is at the heart of regaining our vulnerable neighbourhoods. And at long last in the Throne Speech the Government is latching on to Operation Ceasefire that one of our former Shadow Ministers put forward, and we mentioned in the reply in 2010.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, we in the United Bermuda Party have reached out and offered our helping hand to the Minister of National Security and now we encourage the private sector to do likewise. An important component of an initiative such as Operation Ceasefire is community participation, buy-in and funding. We encourage the Minister to enlist assistance from private individuals and companies.

Mr. Speaker, the state of the economy is causing many a sleepless night up and down the country. The Throne Speech mentioned that Govern-

ment will table legislation on work permits and permanent residence for eligible job creators. We reiterate that Government needs to increase the amount of foreign currency spent in Bermuda. The Government needs to convincingly communicate, with all deliberate speed, the importance of international business to Bermudians and our economic importance to the United States through reinsurance.

Mr. Speaker, our people are our only resource next to the natural beauty of our land. We must have Bermudians across the board favourable about International Business and Tourism to immediately safeguard against further erosion of our economic base.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is caught between a rock and a hard place, because a greater number of unemployed Bermudians illuminate the remaining foreign workforce, and decreased foreign workers mean a shrinking economy. This has meant less money circulating in Bermuda, whilst at the same time creating a difficult political situation.

Our position is to encourage the Government to do what is best for the Bermuda's people and in the best interest our country. It is a given that we must grow our economy and strike the right balance that protects our Island for future generations. Today with the exodus of guest workers the affects are felt in many sectors of our economy—rents, purchases of goods and services—and, certainly, that will impact on us all in the long run.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda national debt has ballooned to over \$1 billion. And in the past year we have seen shrinkage of the economy, and unemployment amongst Bermudians at levels never witnessed before on these Islands. Businesses are feeling the effects of a severely decreased income base and Bermudians are experiencing unprecedented financial hardship.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech touches on Tourism. The thrust of the United Bermuda Party is concentrated on encouraging Government to focus on growing hotel bound leisure visitors, whose earning capacity far exceeds that of cruise passengers.

For example, we drew Government's attention to the innovation of the Corporation of St. George's and their partnership with a private developer to bring a boutique hotel and marina to the historic town. This is an example of an exciting initiative driven by Bermudians that meets the current and future needs for our town and seaport.

Mr. Speaker, we reiterate our call for a Tourism Authority led by the private sector that will be charged with the deployment of the people's taxes in this vital industry. We see this as an immediate undertaking to empower the industry stakeholders to rebuild a key economic engine. Mr. Speaker, the time has come to empower and trust our people in tourism.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come to empower and trust our people in tourism. Mr. Speaker, the time has come to empower and trust our people in tourism.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Bermuda are the ones—in their hearts and in their minds—that can really put the spirit and the love into tourism needed to romance visitors, to give them more of a reason to come back to our country. And I am passionate about this Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, because I know in my heart of hearts that if we empower Bermudians to drive the industry back to a level where it can help to feed us again, we will not be served wrong. But we have got to trust Bermudians in order to do that, Mr. Speaker.

An Independent Tourism Authority would do just that. And it will also work with Government. But it will be empowered to do what is necessary to rebuild this vital economic engine without delay. And I say, Mr. Speaker, “without delay” because we have been delayed, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to a Tourism Authority. It was a good idea put forward by a Tourism Minister back in 1998—Mr. David Dodwell, the former Government Minister and a former Shadow Minister under the United Bermuda Party Government; one of the most successful hoteliers in the entire Caribbean. With his wisdom and experience [he] reached a conclusion, convinced his Cabinet colleagues—one who sits for Government today, one who is now charged with tourism who I know in his heart of hearts knows the right thing to do is to convince his colleagues that a Tourism Authority is needed for this country.

It transcends party politics. This country is reeling, Mr. Speaker. We feel it. Mr. Speaker, I am just a country plumber now, but I can tell you when I am going door to door, house to house . . . let me share this with you, Mr. Speaker. On November 1st—for some it was a glorious day for shaking hands, for me it was another day of work, knocking on doors, seeing if my clients were home to fix their plumbing. Much of the same issues that we are facing here in the House of Assembly today! But on that day, Mr. Speaker—November 1st—there were as many as five homes that I went to of working class people who were not home. Do you know where they were, Mr. Speaker? Does anybody in this Honourable House who may have been at the polling station know where those people were? They were at a job fair that day, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You are digressing from your prepared text.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker. And I do have that luxury.

Mr. Speaker, they were at the job fair because they need jobs.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: The Tourism Authority—and not politics—would drive other considerations, such as gaming for visitors, the Hamilton waterfront,

airline concessions and other proposals critical to the rejuvenation of tourism in these Islands.

The Speaker: All of which is in the Throne Speech.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Indeed, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: That is what you should be saying.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your assistance and guidance.

Mr. Speaker, the Tourism Authority would empower our people, like Captain Dendrick Taylor from St. George's, who for twenty years has had a vision for a fleet of super yachts servicing Bermuda from the eastern seaboard whilst also developing Bermudians to develop in the tourism trade with a view to their becoming future entrepreneurs. We know the success stories of many who have come from afar, made Bermuda their home, started off in the industry and today own huge businesses. Why cannot that be the vision for Bermudians?

That is where we need to take tourism. We need to empower Bermudians by showing them how to fish—showing them how to fish. And this Tourism Authority can be charged with those types of initiatives and agenda.

Mr. Speaker, social cohesion must become a National imperative. The Throne Speech mentions its track record of dealing with controversial social issues and tackling discrimination. Our aim is to work to help foster better relationships that will help us unite Bermuda's people!

Bermuda sadly remains a socially fragmented country. We, in the United Bermuda Party, recognise the progress Bermuda has made; however, that progress is of no consolation to those living in modern day Bermuda with:

- gang infested communities;
- experiencing a death in the family caused by a senseless murder;
- persons unable to contribute to the family because they have been laid off; and other examples.

Mr. Speaker, one only needs to read the vile comments made on the blogs, on facebook and other social media to know that there remains an ugly undercurrent in Bermuda that must be stopped.

This country—our country—is experiencing as much of the worst as it can ask for all at once, yet I can think of nowhere else as blessed as our beloved Bermuda. Mr. Speaker, we in the United Bermuda Party—with two committed Members of Parliament—are here to make a positive difference in the lives of Bermuda's people by being advocates to make Bermuda the best place it can be.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech emphasised the importance of creating job opportunities. We are

prepared to act selflessly and fight for the issues that will improve Bermuda socially and economically. But the provision of jobs must occur with creating greater volumes of foreign currency through international business and growing hotel bound leisure visitors to Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, whilst the Government promises to introduce an Equality Act, we will allow our good actions to lead by example, to be advocates for the people and endeavour to bring to an end to favouritism, cronyism, and all the other dreaded 'isms' that have harmed our people and called into question fairness and social harmony in Bermuda.

We are prepared to represent all of Bermuda's people fairly, in an honest manner and to ensure discrimination is a thing of the past and that fairness dwells abundantly. We will immediately get to the bottom of questionable decisions in Government where the involvement of government officials is considered unethical or unprofessional. This will ensure that all parliamentarians and the government officials are always, always held accountable.

Mr. Speaker, the Government also mentioned that it will be tackling discrimination. We respectfully recommend and encourage Government to make the Human Rights Department independent of Government. This move alone would provide protection for persons or groups legitimately aggrieved by the Government who do not have the resources to fight for their rights against the institution of Government itself.

Mr. Speaker, we support the Government's call to expand the whistle-blower's legislation. However, we see the need for us to speak out against ministerial micromanagement and we pledge to stand in the breach of partisan politics. Hence, we promise to recognise and do what is best for our country and its people.

Mr. Speaker, like the Government said in the Throne Speech, we, too, will encourage the Auditor General and Internal Audit to follow the money. But we also know that Financial Instructions allow and demand of us to handle the people's money properly at all times. We will ensure that the necessary procedures are in place to ensure that the custodians of the public funds act responsibly, ethically and, above all, honestly as well.

We will remain open to constructive criticism and advice from all who care enough to offer it to us, and above all—and above all—to act towards Government in the same fashion. Mr. Speaker, we will work to ensure that all decisions and deliberations meet the litmus test of integrity and are of benefit to Bermuda and all—I say *all*—of its people. And we will lead by example so that the principle-based leadership we stand for today will positively influence our Government to work tirelessly in the best interests the people.

Mr. Speaker, truth be told, the people of Bermuda are sick and tired of being sick and tired. Espe-

cially those who have witnessed a spend-happy Government which wasted millions during the time of plenty only to short change the needy in their time of need. Very sad Mr. Speaker, but it is what it is!

Mr. Speaker, our aim in the United Bermuda Party is to become your Government one day by continuing to act responsibly and representing the issues of the people of Bermuda by offering this Government solutions and holding them accountable for their actions. And, ultimately, Bermuda, and ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the aim is to unite Bermuda's people.

Thank you for your time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for this opportunity. I pray that we have blessings on our lovely Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from St. George's West.

Are there any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. M. Scott.

Minister Scott, from Sandys North, has the floor.

Minister?

DEBATE ON THE THRONE SPEECH

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure and an honour for me to stand on behalf of the Government to respond in defence of the Throne Speech that was read just under two weeks ago by His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. Speaker, the dynamics of the House thus far have been interesting. We have had two replies now made and presented to this Throne Speech.

Of interest, in listening to these replies by the new Opposition Leader, the Honourable Member, Mr. Cannonier, and the Honourable Member, Mr. Swan, who has just taken his seat, we have heard reinforcement, Mr. Speaker. Anyone listening in the House and anyone in the listening audience will have heard reinforcement of the agenda of the Government; will have heard wholesale repetition of the Government's 2011 plans and agenda for this Session and for this year going forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech, crafted by Madam Premier and the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Paula A. Cox, was crafted in a crucible of a very punishing set of world conditions. And yet, in a world that is piled high with difficulty, I listened carefully to the Throne Speech two Fridays ago and was fully engaged with the list of initiatives and plans that came out of the Throne Speech and that were presented and crafted by Ministers of this Government who had been galvanised by the vision of the Premier to have this Government, in this time, focus its attention on being responsive to the people of this country, to the vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech and the agenda of the Government is a sacred task. People want to hear the right tone struck. People want to hear practical solutions provided and given. People want to hear actions, action plans and policies to which they can relate, and in this particular context of the time in which we find ourselves, they want to hear that the Government is being responsive.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have listened to . . . this must be the PLP Government's 12th to 13th Throne Speech—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Whatever the number is. And each one of those Throne Speeches I have borne witness to as a parliamentarian and I, therefore, participated in them. I have had a vested interest in them.

It is not so much that today we undertake further promises. It is a question, really, of the number of promises delivered on by this Government in 14 Throne Speeches over the years. And when any member of the listening audience or Members of this House—including the Honourable Member who speaks for the OBA—posits the question, *Will the promises of the Government in the 2011 Throne Speech be ones on which the people can place trust for us to deliver?* It is not a question of us having to be judged upon promises made on the 4th of November. Rather, your promises or your assessment must stack up against promises delivered on by this Government in 14 Throne Speeches and Statements of Budgets.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can recall happily this Government has been responsive throughout all of its Throne Speeches. I can say without fear of contradiction that ever since the Honourable C. Eugene Cox in early first Progressive Labour Party Budget Statements stood on the floor of this House and stated that "We are listening." I remember his speech in this regard very well. It was the best example I know of in PLP politics of the gentleman holding the position of Minister of Finance laying out the waterfront of being a responsive Government.

When scoring today's Throne Speech delivered on the 4th, I am obliged to take into account a history of responsiveness by this Government—the PLP Government. And so, Madam Premier, your Ministers have aligned and have caught your vision. I began by saying that the Throne Speech of the Government—of any Government—is a sacred task. It is serious; made more serious because of the conditions in which we find ourselves in Bermuda.

I do not take on board in any sense of the word a critique that this Government seeks to reflect upon world conditions when explaining or describing the challenges the country currently faces.

It was said that we retreat to this position on every occasion possible. Not so, Mr. Speaker. As recently as today, Fitch, Mr. Speaker, very pointedly

(with your permission, Mr. Speaker) points out that “Bermuda’s sophisticated legal system, strong regulatory framework, simple tax regime, proximity to the United States market, and presence of a highly skilled human capital continue to support its reputation as a domicile of choice for (re)insurance and financial services companies.”

And then they added the context. Fitch then characterised our economy as a “small, open, narrow economy” with “limited financing flexibility.”

Mr. Speaker, when conditions in the world on which we depend for our business are impacted by a global downturn, it affects this country’s capacity to produce revenues and to earn revenue. And this is not a Member of the Government, Mr. Speaker, retreating to an obvious reality that external factors have impacted on our Island—

An Hon. Member: You did not handle them well.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: —because of the global economic downturn.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we have not said it. An independent, respected rating agency has said it.

Mr. Speaker, it is in this context that the Leader of the Government, the Honourable Paula A. Cox, configured the offerings of a galvanised Cabinet and backbench, all Members of the Government, to focus on . . . unsurprisingly this Throne Speech of 2011 has had as its main frame of reference jobs—job creation, job training, re-skilling, retooling. Unsurprisingly, this has been the focus. And there was initiative after initiative presented in the Throne Speech that backed up this theme and this agenda plan.

Ministers and my colleagues and all Members of the Government, if I were to give the rallying call on your behalf, I would say *a job well done*. People want to know that the Government continues to be responsive. If I had to choose a theme for my remarks this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, it would be ‘Continued Responsiveness on the Part of the Progressive Labour Party.’

Mr. Speaker, it was noted in some of the proceeding speeches that when His Excellency made the speech and declared it on the grounds of the Cabinet, there was applause at some of the green moments (I like to call them) in the Throne Speech. And I think a point must since be lost. And I know that the Premier, who is serious and steely in her determination, has infected her Ministers with this—to be serious about this undertaking at this time. We are not here to just make more promises. This Throne Speech was bristling with good ideas. This Throne Speech has practical ideas. And they are all doable, even within the context of stringent economic restraints on our budget. And may I say that I say this with some confidence because of our track record in any event.

I hope that the listening audience will size up a litany of promises from the Opposition which we

have now heard in two replies. Promises are easy to make. We have a track record of having delivered on 14 packages of promises. And to do so in this Throne Speech in these conditions is no mean achievement. And I think that that is another, Mr. Speaker, positive element, positive aspect of the 2011 Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated that jobs were and remain the focus to get us through this journey that involves a few more steps. Now, when the Minister of Finance in the Budget Statement stood on her feet, the conditions globally were actually worse than they are today.

I think it is fair to say, and that I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen the beginning of improvements in the world economy. We depend upon this. I always have been an optimistic person and have always believed that this would happen. But the difficulties are still with us. I do not wish to be overly . . . to have a . . . to be either overly optimistic or to make grandiose predictions about the current conditions. They remain challenging, but they have improved, these are the signs.

The initiatives announced in the 2011 Throne Speech have as their primary function to provide vehicles for the country of workers, ordinary workers, to continue to be employed, to be trained, and to be ready, to be positioned. This is a Throne Speech about *positioning* of the country, for the improved position in the global community which will spell *improved* economic conditions here on our Island.

Mr. Speaker, Government Estates and Information Services’ contributing role to the Throne Speech is good. It is important; it is on the cutting edge. It is about partnering strategically with Cisco Systems to establish the training element to which I referred.

My colleague, the Minister, recently having had a change of responsibilities, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industries, Minister Minors, has outlined as recently as this morning further policy strategies to, again, complement training and positioning of our people. I was very pleased to find, as I took the seat over from my colleague Minister Butterfield, that this initiative was being pursued. It is relevant, it involves partnering with Jamaica (who has already set up an academy); it involves being involved with the very stuff that makes countries’ economies supported and that is information technology. And to get our young boys and girls and our adults involved in such an initiative, as I say, is good.

I met, as I indicated in my Ministerial Statement earlier today, with the regional director, the regional manager of Cisco Systems for the Caribbean. And, Mr. Speaker, he said something very interesting. He said within his recent experience of visiting our Island he was amazed at the level and volume of compute business that flows out of this country down to the Caribbean, to South America, I would imagine to North America and to Europe. He was amazed

about the volume of it. Mr. Ghandeharioun is the Regional Director of Cisco Systems, Ltd.

And for good reason did he discover this kind of statistic—because of the presence of major companies in our Island. And here is the more important point, Mr. Speaker, imagine a Bermuda where young boys, men and women, boys and girls at the entry level becoming certified under Cisco Systems, being able to not only service Pitts Bay Road and Front Streets' needs for compute business but through the right strategic position to service the world. We do it well now by populating the country with young men and women adopting an interesting career—and it is a well-paying career. And I will use all of my energies in the preparation for this academy to line up and attract as many of our citizens to take up this very, very interesting option in information technology. It can be a third economy and economic activity to actually service the world.

I have had enough conversations, too, because we provide financial services to the world, to have this kind of suggestion in another context, that we should train our human capital along the lines and in the area of accountancy, the Honourable Member Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, because accountants provide a vital service to the financial services industry here. We should be encouraging and ensuring that our education system educates to the economic activities in our island. But Mr. Ghandeharioun, of course, was focused upon the IT.

But who is Cisco? Well we know that they are a worldwide leader in networking products and services. And we know that they perform this important support to businesses. The other obvious opportunities, Mr. Speaker, to our young people just under this particular initiative, are that they will find a community of peers of some 1.6 million other IT aspirants. They will make friendships, they will exchange knowledge, they will share knowledge, they will travel to their destinations, and they will compete against them. But Bermuda will be the beneficiary of this kind of dynamic, strategic peer mentoring going on. So I am excited about that contribution to the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, we do not lose sight . . . and, indeed, what has galvanised Madam Premier, the Minister of Finance, in crafting such an excellent Throne Speech, is our contact with our voters. Each of us can tell stories of persons who are impacted by this economic slowdown in Bermuda. And the response of the Premier has been focused and targeted so that people do hear us and see us as being responsive.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member, Mr. Cannonier, speak of one homespun example earlier when he took to his feet. But we all have them, Mr. Speaker. They all form an imperative for us to respond.

Just three nights ago I had the opportunity to do just that. Unemployment [was] having an impact on a young family with three children in the capacity of

this family to meet just the basics for that family. I was happy to visit with them, provide tangible assistance to them. And my branch treasurer, Mr. Speaker, touched by their circumstances, did a rally around and raised a substantive amount of cash and it will be made and deployed to assist. This is what we are called on to do, of course.

Happily a Government—with the larger muscle of the Government—has the capacity to respond with greater policies, with greater initiatives. I want to celebrate the Throne Speech of 2011 crafted by the Honourable Paula A. Cox because it was crafted in some of the most trying of conditions. A senior politician—former politician of our Island—in a reflective moment to me the other day said that he would hate to be sitting where he then sat governing with no money (I believe that is what he said, or less money). But the proof of the leadership, the steely determination of the Honourable Paula A. Cox to craft the Budget Policy and to craft this Throne Speech in these conditions with the outcome and output contained in it is the distinction and difference, is the contrast between that particular politician's experience and Madam Premier's. And it shows the metal of the woman.

There are jobs going on in the country that the Government has facilitated through Planning permissions where people are being kept employed in the construction industry. The hospital is one example. Employment of our people will increase there as that building comes out of the ground and there is the requirement for carpenters and more masons, interior workers, and air conditioning people. This is the current context.

There at Pitts Bay, an \$18 million structure is going up at Waterloo House under the auspices of BERCO. It is employing carpenters. And the same scenario will apply there.

I was happy to see the trenching resumed along the Somerset Road above Hog Bay Level. Shovels in the ground will go on there.

In Pender Road a small project where there is the conversion, Mr. Speaker, of the cottage, the Governor's former cottage. It can take on a number of construction workers when that job resumes. And that will form employment and that is a Government sponsored and paid for project.

The sewage line out of Boaz Island, Mr. Speaker, is in need of replacement. And within a short period of time more trenching will take place on an improved project to trench a sewage line through to the water treatment facility in Dockyard.

These are examples of the Government at work—the Government facilitating, the Government marrying its agenda for 2011 to lead us into 2012 with ongoing, existing, ready work programmes and projects.

Mr. Speaker, there continues to be a refrain from the Opposition that is in the context of the bor-

rowing that has been done by the Government just prior to the condition of the global economy downturn. And it occurred to me as I listened to the cacophony of ideas coming out of the replies—because that is what I heard, a celebration of ideas, and I repeat, the idea is to deliver on ideas and to deliver on promises—it occurred to me that in this analysis that you see on the blogs ad nauseam had we had \$1 billion of reserves unspent in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, if we had that today in these conditions what indeed would the United Bermuda Party or the OBA be doing with it? What would they be doing with it?

I listen with interest so as to hear what some of those answers will be. I expect that they will have made a policy in November of 2011 that would have involved spending that money now. But that is what we hear. We would have had it as a breadbasket now.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, we spent at the front end and positioned ourselves with the spending that we did so that now cruise line passengers bring increased revenues through the Dockyard, Heritage Wharf and King's Wharf. We spent on FutureCare to support the vulnerable seniors. We spent on rest homes at Sylvia Richardson. It was positioning spending. I do not think anyone could make a credible argument that spending in 2011, rather than spending in 2007, amounts to much of a distinction. But I would be interested to hear the analysis of what you would have done with the \$1 billion—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: —what would you have done with the \$1 billion today? I await with interest.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Too much heckling now. Carry on Minister.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, no country, or no government, can progress without a robust staffing up of employment through its government. Of course, through the Government Estates and Information Services we contribute to employing a large number of employees within that Ministry. That, too, Mr. Speaker, is providing the buffer whilst we continue this journey from and through these difficult times to the point when the economy recovers.

In my early moments of taking over the desk across the way having first met with the staff of headquarters, I took the opportunity to meet with a rather large staffing contingent of the men and women (mostly men) of the buildings depot, and we filled the room at the Bermuda Industrial Union. After a little prayer for a deceased member and some presentations by the Permanent Secretary, I took the time to find out what they do.

And, of course, they do an excellent job at maintaining the government's estates comprised of our schools—their repairs; the air conditioning issues that we have with this vast number of government buildings that comprise the government's estates. They are the carpenters, the masons—all men and women with families who are reliant upon the government—and they do an excellent job for you in maintaining the estate.

No country, of course, or its economy can progress or be prosperous in a community where law and order is not evenly and firmly applied. And whilst I will leave to Madam Attorney General and Minister of Justice, the Honourable Senator Kim Wilson, to cover the waterfront in another place, justice initiatives and legislative initiatives that will be brought to this House are of some significance. They match, combine and complement the initiatives of the Minister of National Security in bringing an element of safety to an economy in the state of recovery.

But the specific legislation, that I would like to remind myself and Members of this Honourable House, under the responsibility of justice, will include amendments to the Prisons Act, and amendments to the Electronic Monitoring legislation to extend electronic monitoring to parolees and for a wider range of offenders. The Sexual Offenders Act will be presented to the House, and there will be the Criminal Code Amendment Act. On the Order Paper also is the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

These are all pieces of legislation that complement and support law and order and justice issues. In particular, on the issue of corrections, the legislation there will be focused upon greater security for the plant there, Mr. Speaker, and therefore for the safety of inmates and of officers.

Mr. Speaker, to stand and defend the Government's agenda for the year is easy. I said it is a sacred task, but it is easy when you have good material with which to work. And we have in this Throne Speech good material, Mr. Speaker. We have had in successive Throne Speeches of this Government consistently good material. The only difference today is that Madam Premier crafts it in conditions fairly unprecedented. And yet, the outcome is brilliant.

I end with the theme struck earlier in my presentation. I have listened to every Throne Speech of the Progressive Labour Party Government since 1998 from the position of a parliamentarian, Mr. Speaker, which brings a special interest and perspective to the art of the listening that I have engaged in. It always involves direct participation in the process.

This Government's agenda, Mr. Speaker, does not disappoint, shaped, as I indicated, in the crucible of a tough set of economic conditions. Mr. Speaker, the blueprint for Government's action and response is fit for purpose and should meet the citizen at his or her point of need. We do not need to seek out to do all of the heavy lifting, Mr. Speaker, our-

selves as the Government. And in these conditions we should not seek to do all of the heavy lifting in the delivery of these most recent set of relevant, targeted, responsive promises. But we seek to do so first with the people of Bermuda partnering with us.

The business sector, Mr. Speaker, will partner with us as indicated in the Cisco Systems Academy initiative. Young persons of Bermuda will partner with us. This is a tried and true approach to government for the people by the people and of the people because it is this route that shall let us build one another together.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the Honourable Cyril Eugene Cox, CBE, first and former Minister of Finance for this Government. I said that he was a responsive Minister of Finance. I said, too, Mr. Speaker, his focus in 1998 was, interestingly, on seniors and the vulnerable. Those were the budget allocations that he supported as Minister of Finance. Today his progeny, his firstborn, Paula A. Cox, has had it fall to her as the Minister of Finance and now the Premier to have her focus on youth.

Mr. Speaker, it is with youth that we must partner. And in partnering with youth, the business sector, and the people of this country we shall do it together and we shall, as our Throne Speech so aptly put it, “build one another, together.”

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you Minister Scott, the Honourable and Learned Member from Sandys North.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. E. Richards, from Devonshire East.

Mr. Richards, you have the floor sir.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It is my privilege to speak on yet another Throne Speech. As I heard it last week I reflected that a few days prior to that I had the privilege of hearing remarks given by a former Prime Minister of a G7 country in a private meeting. He was commenting on the European situation that we all hear about in the news and all its debt woes. And he concluded that the root cause of all of Europe’s problems was the failure of leadership in those key countries. He said that it was the failure to do what was right, instead of doing what was popular or expedient, that had brought them to this situation. Irresponsible spending spanning many years had come home to roost.

Mr. Speaker, that former leader’s words were hauntingly resonant with me reminding me of my own small island home and its economic problems today. Our economic problems are similarly the result of irresponsible government policies. Instead of exercising the leadership to do what was right and responsible we have had years of policies of doing, what I call, “feel-good factors,” and things that were politically ex-

pedient and things that resulted in the feel-good factor.

Unfortunately today we have this constant reminder of the cost of that feel-good factor and that reminder is the approximately \$100 million of debt service that we have to pay each year to pay interest and to pay mandated sinking fund payments on the existing debt.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting, and my Leader mentioned it in his former remarks, that nowhere in the Throne Speech was there mention of the public debt, and neither was there a mention of how the Government was going to pay for some of these proposals it made.

Public debt, in spite of the fact—

The Speaker: The Throne Speech is a legislated sort of thing—

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: I understand that.

The Speaker: —what Government intends to bring to Parliament.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Right. But it would also be nice—particularly in today’s environment—it would be nice to know, to at least get some idea of how this was going to be paid for. Otherwise it is just pie in the sky.

The Speaker: Well, I guess we are going to be here by March, sir.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: I hear that, Mr. Speaker, but you know unfortunately these things just do not happen once a year. Paying for things happens every day—*every day*. So you just cannot sort of defer it until March or something like that. No, no, no, it happens every day.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the public debt is something that is one of the top worries of Bermudians—it is one of our top worries. One of the reasons it is a top worry (and somebody made reference to it today about the credit rating by Fitch) is that Bermuda, we think anyway (we don’t know, but we think), and most observers think, that the Government still is not taking in as much as it is paying out. In other words, we are running a current account deficit virtually as we speak. And that means that we have to borrow money to pay the interest. We have to borrow money to make sinking fund payments. This is like a person having to borrow money to make mortgage payments, right?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: So, you know . . . *It’s not our budget debate*, I hear someone chirping—everything costs money, Honourable Member. Everything!

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Oh, you do? I would not have thought so by the policies that have been practised by this Government.

So I would say, Mr. Speaker, having seen that recent credit report by Fitch, that I really wondered how looking forward we are going to do particularly in view of our current situation. And I just sort of . . . I know it is not our budget debate; but just at the outset I want to put down a marker here that the risk of a downgrade to Bermuda's credit is increasing. The risk is increasing. So we will see what happens as we go forward. But the risk of that being downgraded is certainly increasing, I believe, every day.

Mr. Speaker, these are the bitter fruits of failures in leadership, failure to do the right thing instead of the popular or expedient thing.

Some of the Honourable Members will be pleased to know that I am going to make specific reference to the Throne Speech now. Last year's Throne Speech—last year's not this year's—the Government talked about a post-recessionary environment. Of course, that was false optimism, the pie in the sky. This year the tone is quite different, it strikes a much more sombre tone . . . almost a hopeless tone, quite frankly.

Now the Government says (and I refer to page 1. I think it is three-quarters of the way down the page, and if you do not mind, I will quote it). "The simple truth is that there is no escape from the contagious and harmful effects of the economic downturn in those countries with which Bermuda does business."

No escape, Mr. Speaker? Well let us examine that assertion. It is well known to those who observe business around the world that even during recessions the overall decline is not reflected on all companies. Recessions do not affect all companies or all industries the same way. Some companies or industries are very sensitive to the overall decline and some are not. Indeed, some companies can actually prosper during a recession. For example, Apple (of the ipod Apple) recently reported record earnings and revenues—an 83 per cent year over year increase. Another company everybody is familiar with, Caterpillar Tractor, reported a 43 per cent rise in earnings and record revenues. These are not small companies. And the total sales of these companies—each of these companies—is bigger than the GDP of Bermuda. So this is not just a one-off deal.

The facts show that the Government's assertion that there can be no escape from the global downturn is clearly false—clearly.

But, Mr. Speaker, this assertion is Government's standard excuse for why there has been such devastation in jobs, income and opportunity here in Bermuda for the past three years. It is an attempt to absolve themselves of all responsibility for Bermuda's

problems. You know, just blame it on the global downturn—that is standard operating procedure.

In Bermuda we have two principal sectors—international business and tourism. Clearly tourism *is* sensitive to the global downturn and recession. A poor US consumer sentiment will result in fewer people travelling. That it is pretty straightforward, pretty simple. But tourism only contributes about 5 per cent of Bermuda's GDP. So weakness in tourism could not be the principal cause of Bermuda's economic weakness.

The principal cause—by reason, by logic—should be in our major industry, international business. It stands to reason that if there is a reason we should be looking there for the weakness of our economy. Let us look at that sector.

Now, I will ask just two questions. The first one is just so easy it is ridiculous, but just humour me for a second, Mr. Speaker. The first question is, What is the main component of Bermuda's international business? The answer is obviously insurance and reinsurance. That is easy.

The second question is, Is insurance or reinsurance sensitive to the global downturn? The answer to that question is not so obvious.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have a definitive answer to that question in the form of a recently released report by Dr. Charles M. Ludolph who is Senior Vice President of the [Albright] Stonebridge Group, which is a company that was hired by Business Bermuda to analyse Bermuda's international business sectors and their impact on the US economy.

The report is the third report that they have done. This current report is called "[An Economic Impact Study 2011](#)." An observation that Dr. Ludolph made about Bermuda's insurance sector resonated with me. He noted, that the insurance and reinsurance sectors' ". . . growth during the recession and financial crisis shows that Bermuda's economic independence from larger global financial centers and concentration in niche risk insurance sectors that were not correlated with the global financial downturn, bestowed a competitive capacity that made it the U.S.'s most important insurance service trading partner."

The good doctor went on to say, "In spite of the global economic crisis and difficulties in U.S. financial markets, Bermuda-U.S. economic ties remained surprisingly strong."

Now you know, Mr. Speaker, that is all economist-speak, and not many people understand it. But let me just zoom in on the pertinent words in that transcript that I just quoted. Dr. Ludolph talks about Bermuda's economic "independence" from larger global financial centres. He used that word that our sector is independent from global financial centres. He also said that our insurance sectors are not correlated with the global downturn—*not* correlated with the global downturn.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, he said that our insurance business with the US actually grew in 2009/10. Not declined, but grew.

This is irrefutable, independent proof that the assertion that Bermuda's recession and job losses are caused by the global recession is false, pure and simple. And that is the main excuse from this Government—it is false.

The problem is . . . we have a problem here though, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Well, let us hear something about the Throne Speech.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Well that . . . I am refuting a paragraph on page 1 of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. I am not off topic at all. I am not off topic at all here, all right?

But there is a problem with what I just said, and the problem is that in spite of this evidence of strong growth in our number one sector with our number one customer (i.e. the US), in spite of all this good news, Bermuda has witnessed the loss of thousands of jobs in those very sectors, and other jobs that depended on spending of personnel in that sector. We have lost thousands of jobs in those sectors and in other sectors that depend on insurance in Bermuda.

So how could the industry that Dr. Ludolph observed growing result in an 8 per cent fall in GDP in Bermuda? How could this be? It is counterintuitive, it is illogical. Economic growth is supposed to create jobs, not destroy them. What happened here?

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that the growth experienced by Bermuda domiciled insurance and reinsurance companies did indeed create jobs. It did create jobs. But those jobs were created *outside* of Bermuda instead of *in* Bermuda. Bermuda jobs moved from here to over there. That is what happened, and that is still happening.

The question is why? Why? I do not think anybody here thinks that this is an accident. There is a reason for this. Instead of trying to shift the blame to persons unknown somewhere else on planet Earth, the blame for massive job losses in Bermuda has to be located *here* on the rock, here in Bermuda, not somewhere else. So our problem, our economic problem, Mr. Speaker, has a made-in-Bermuda stamp marked all over it!

I refer again to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. On page 2 the Throne Speech says (I will, quote this paragraph) that "employment . . . is . . . a central and enduring element of the social contract implicit in the Progressive Labour Party's . . . victory of 1998."

Bermudians now know that that social contract has clearly been broken, because never in Bermuda's modern history has any Government—*any* Government—presided over a greater destruction of

jobs than this PLP Government. And it is their policies and their practices that are the problem.

For example, their policies related to term limits fly in the face of documented facts. The PLP have a theory, Mr. Speaker, that term limits will free job opportunities for Bermudians. But the evidence, the facts on the ground of thousands of lost Bermudian jobs, clearly proves this theory to be false.

Now history tells us that people have often held fast to false theories. This is nothing new. Now once upon a time conventional wisdom had it that the world was flat. But after Captain Magellan's flagship arrived back in Spain after having sailed west, that particular theory was demolished.

Today we have evidence of a similarly irresistible nature right here in Bermuda about the effect of term limits on employment. But the PLP still insist it is not so. So, Mr. Speaker, for the PLP the world is still flat.

Now part of this denial is to continually blur the work permit issue with the term limit issue, so as to confuse voters into agreeing with their point of view. Now the OBA does not oppose the requirement of work permits. The advertising of jobs so that qualified Bermudians can have first crack at them is something that we fully support—always have. But we do oppose the bureaucratic process that is typical of the Department of Immigration and the intimidation and hassle factor that it creates. A proper and efficient work permit process will open opportunities for Bermudians, not term limits which ultimately replace one foreigner with another.

The term limit policy may have—and I stress *may have*—had a credible objective when it was first implemented. But from the outset the policy was based on false assumptions. I can name three.

The first false assumption is that the strong demand for Bermuda domiciled private sector jobs was permanently bullet-proof and therefore indestructible.

False assumption two: that there was no alternative for the private sector other than just going along with whatever whim the Bermuda Government might have had.

And false assumption three—perhaps the most important false assumption: that business executives would not make adjustments to their job creating activities if the local policy created problems for them.

They say that assumptions are the mother of all man-made disasters. And this is a prime example of that. But the PLP Government stubbornly refuses to admit they were and are wrong despite overwhelming contrary evidence.

But it is not just the term limit issue that has caused international businesses to move jobs overseas. It is the whole torturous bureaucratic immigration process that has chased these jobs away. When international businesses say that Bermuda needs to

be more welcoming . . . whenever you get into a conversation about this welcoming issue, immigration is *always* part of the conversation, *always* part of the conversation.

Now as was heard this morning, we have the advent of the ten-year work permit. A ten-year work permit reminds me of a story of a man who managed a farm with 12 golden geese on it. For some reason the man opened a hole in the fence, he took a stick and he chased five of these golden geese through the hole and they flew away. He also upset the remaining golden geese that were still inside. When the owner of the farm found out and demanded to know what happened to his five golden geese, the man said it was no problem, *Look, I've mended the hole*. Of course, the owner is not impressed because he only has seven golden geese left and they are upset. And the irresponsible farm manager is still on the job. He wonders what this manager might do next.

So, do Bermudians think that this ten-year work permit is going to settle down the remaining golden geese? The criteria that I heard this morning laid down by Government ensures that very few, if any, people will actually qualify for this ten-year permit. And how in the world are we going to get the ones that flew away back into the coop? And who will be held accountable for driving them out?

So, Mr. Speaker, let us move on to another subject. I cannot believe what I heard when I heard this part of the Throne Speech. And this part is, "more red carpet and less red tape." My goodness, I could not believe when I heard that. I could not believe the temerity of the Government to use that phrase.

Their promise to root out red tape is diametrically opposed to their instincts—diametrically opposed. Just a few months ago, Mr. Speaker, just a few short months ago Government warned the public that immigration procedures would intentionally take longer! That episode ratcheted up immigration bureaucracy to try to force business people to hire Bermudians, even if that meant [when] Bermudian employees could not be found businesses would be unable to provide the services they promised customers. Now is that less red tape and more red carpet?

Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. And these actions are the actions of a doctor prescribing arsenic to a patient who is already sick from arsenic poisoning. So forgive me if I am sceptical when I hear Government saying they are going to take steps to make their procedures more efficient. It is out of character for them. The only thing they really know is *more* red tape and *less* red carpet.

What they need is a SAGE commission—an idea we will implement when we become Government. SAGE stands for Spending and Government Efficiency—that is what it stands for—Spending and Government Efficiency—SAGE.

The reason a SAGE commission is far superior to the promises in the Throne Speech is that a

SAGE commission will not be run by Government. It is intended to comprise prominent private sector members along with public officials, with the Chair coming from the private sector. Mr. Speaker, private sector members bring experience in running enterprises which are forced by competition and changing market forces to be efficient, flexible and effective. Failure to do so in the private sector translates into financial loss and ruin. Failure to do so in the public sector translates into bigger government, higher taxes, more deficits, and heavier debt.

So for private sector executives in business, their personal economic futures are at risk. But for public sector executives, there is virtually nothing at risk—and that is the difference. That is why without a SAGE commission the Government's internally driven intentions will fail. Bureaucracies ultimately exist to perpetuate themselves. Therefore, a SAGE commission is needed to break that log jam.

There is much lip service to job creation in the Throne Speech, but very few concrete ideas as to how those jobs will be created. After long deliberation, the Government has decided to study, review, consider what the next step will be.

The OBA directly addresses this issue by proposing a two-year employment tax holiday for any company that creates a new job in Bermuda.

Now this Government's favourite gambit used to be to initiate Government financed infrastructure projects like schools, docks, et cetera. But new projects, certainly big new projects, are off the table now because there is virtually no money for such projects. In any case, the public tolerance for the kind of waste, overspending and pork barrel practices has now been eroded to zero. There certainly is no commitment to get rid of the primary impediment to job growth—term limits and immigration. Those are the primary culprits. How do we know this? Because business executives have told us so—that is how.

Clearly Government has to embark on programmes that not only help the private sector and private sector companies expand, but they have to help them expand *within* Bermuda, as opposed to outside of Bermuda, which is what they have been doing. Government has to make doing business in Bermuda cheaper, easier, quicker, more efficient, and more user friendly. That has been the focus of strategic OBA proposals for turning this economy around.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough just to merely make Government departments more efficient. That will not do it; it will help, but it will not do it. We talked about red carpet. A red carpet is something that is not passive; it is something that is proactive. Red carpet is when people go out of their way to make things easier and more pleasant.

I had an experience several years ago, Mr. Speaker. My wife and I travelled to Hong Kong. The late Mr. Harry Wilken (I am sure you knew him) kindly

arranged our accommodation at the Mandarin Oriental in Hong Kong.

When we arrived at the airport, we were met by a uniformed man who took our bags to a large black Mercedes and whisked us into town. We were met at the curb by a young lady who greeted us by name and escorted us directly to our room. We did not have to wait in line, no registration desk, none of that—straight to our room.

In the privacy of our room, she assisted us in completing the registration paperwork. Then she explained all the amenities that the hotel had to offer and she asked if there was anything else she could do for us, and then she departed. I opened my bag, I found my suit had been crushed; I called out to the front desk for it to be pressed. Within one minute someone was knocking on my door.

Needless to say, we very much enjoyed our time at that establishment. But that was truly red carpet treatment, Mr. Speaker, and we were just spending a small amount of money in Hong Kong. I wonder what kind of treatment we would have received if we were spending millions, like international businesses do here!

That is why these companies are so upset, because they know they are spending millions. They know what red carpet treatment is, and they know that in Bermuda they are not getting it. They are getting something between indifferent and hostile treatment from government departments. No wonder jobs are being moved out of Bermuda!

I know, and other people know, that in other places that compete with us they are actually giving red carpet service. In the Isle of Man, for instance (a place that I have to go to on business), business people setting up there are met by a phalanx of representatives from the government whose mission it is to assist in settling in, with government formalities, school, accommodation—the whole nine yards.

We need to meet our competition head on. We need to change our attitude. We need to up our game. We need to have a unit in government that actively shepherds or fast tracks new entrants through the legal approvals required by legislation (like immigration), but also assists in settling in—things like housing, schools, driver's licences, transport, and general info about Bermuda. That is rolling out the red carpet in a corporate context. It will give our customers what they want and help grow the economy, thus creating jobs for Bermudians.

I noted from the Throne Speech that the Premier has placed a great deal of emphasis on something she calls "Job Corps." Training Bermudians for the workplace is a requirement. It clearly is. And as I understand it Job Corps fulfils that function, and it is an important function. There is, indeed, a mismatch between job requirements and the skill sets of Bermudians.

However, the marketplace for jobs, and it is a marketplace, is like any other market, whether it be for rice, steel, microchips, what have you. A market is a place where supply of an item confronts the demand for that item. If there is more supply than demand, then the price will fall, or supply will just go unsold. And that is what you have with unemployed people. The supply of labour goes unsold.

The Government's focus on Job Corps attempts to deal with the quality and skill sets of the supply of labour. That is fine. But the Government has surrendered the question of demand for Bermudian labour by saying "there is no escape from the global downturn." This viewpoint is not only wrong, Mr. Speaker, it is tragic. It is tragic for Bermudians, especially unemployed Bermudians.

Now we have already shown that the principal economic driver of our economy—insurance and reinsurance—is growing. But due to Government policy, practice and attitudes, companies have chosen to direct their demand for personnel outside Bermuda. By doing so, Bermudians do not get much benefit from that growth.

There are fewer people renting houses, which support mortgages and construction. There are fewer people dining in restaurants, which support employment for food wholesalers. There are fewer people shopping in supermarkets or stores, which support the entire retail industry. There are fewer people buying and driving cars, which support retail, taxes on gasoline, mechanics and auto insurers. There are fewer people paying payroll and consumption taxes, which support the Government. This is the epicentre of the great Bermuda recession. Government's centrepiece proposal—the Job Corps—does not address this core problem.

We have heard international business executives say repeatedly that they are global businesses that have offices in Bermuda. And many of us have not got the message. The message is that they do not have to hire in Bermuda if it is too much trouble, too expensive, or too disruptive. They have alternatives, and they have exercised those alternatives. That is what globalisation is.

So a job corps is a fine idea. But if we do not make Bermuda an easier, more welcoming, hassle free place in which to do business and grow the economy, then we will have the best trained unemployed people in the world.

Mr. Speaker, the economy is the nucleus around which all other components of our way of life orbit. Government cannot solve our economic problems if it refuses to acknowledge key problem areas. The OBA has a substantial list of plans to regenerate demand for Bermuda-based jobs which will grow the economy and increase the demand for employment for Bermudians—both directly and indirectly. You have heard a number of them this morning. The public heard a number of them before the Throne Speech.

We outlined several of them in news reports. We will reiterate many of them later and add new ones as time goes on.

It is time for us to seriously address the core problems that we have in Bermuda, not foist it off on the global economy, admit that this problem is ours and put solutions in place to fix it.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you Mr. Richards, the Honourable Member from Devonshire East.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. G. Blakeney.

Minister Blakeney from Devonshire North Central has the floor.

Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What a denigrating exaggeration of lyrical vexing that I suppose we will hear today, that it went all around the mulberry bush, and forgot that we were here to address the Throne Speech.

With theses and hypotheses and predictions, I would have thought I would have seen a fire of blue in a ball of future prediction that somehow he was able to interpret in predicting, predicting, predicting, while at the same time criticising, criticising, criticising, and, at the same time, trying to convince the country that he wants to work together with the Government of the day that the majority of people in this country has elected for three consecutive years. And who, notwithstanding the challenges in the real world, continues its commitment to doing its best in the interest of the people, even at times when we might not get it all right.

But we do have the integrity, the fortitude, and the conviction, when we do recognise that, to stand up as individuals in our collective responsibility, apologise and make amends by resigning if we *have* to for whatever reason. Which is what we heard today in a very profound, enlightening—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: *[Addressing the interjection]* No, he did not. That is a matter of opinion for those that would not understand the dynamics of the prerogative of a Minister who has some discretionary power.

But when it might look to be skewed for whatever reasons, because of the players it is very easy to mislead that there is a reality to a perception that does not happen to be the reality. But that is okay, because this Government will take hits and this Government will recover, and this Government will go on and do what it needs to [in order] to maintain the confidence of this country. Because notwithstanding all of the hypotheses that we hear—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Minister, do not get distracted because we are debating the Throne Speech.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech addresses what we have committed to do and will continue to do as we move forward with our commitment to the interests of the people of this country.

I will start with my Ministry and the responsibility that I have under my remit and I will touch on other areas of the Throne Speech as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Member talked about the Job Corps not being significant, as far as he was concerned. Well he might suggest that the YES programme (which is the acronym for the Youth Empowerment Scheme) is equally insignificant. Programmes that are designed to motivate, encourage, and equip our young people who aspire to do the right thing for the right reasons in this country that they have a stake hold in.

As a responsible and responsive Government, we have identified such programmes as the YES programme and the Job Corps programme so that we can enable our people, at the youngest of ages as they grow into adulthood, with the kind of tools and skill sets that will bode well, not just for their future, but for the here and now relative to us allocating funding that would facilitate the training of those people to earn while they learn. To earn while they learn.

So we identified a National Trust property of historical significance in the West End of the Island known as Springfield, which was in (and is in) some state of disrepair and does pose a potential hazard to those that would occupy the building and utilise the building. And so we, as a Ministry in conjunction with our Department of Youth and Sports, conducted a site visit to identify what some of the concerns were and how they might be appropriately addressed.

My people were charged with coming back with ideas, concepts, strategic, solution-based initiatives. And one identified was Springfield, where we could utilise the master tradesmen in this country who have stepped up to the plate and said they will offer and share their expertise and experience to upgrade the skill sets of those who would meet a criteria to qualify for being included among the 17- to 24-year old men and women in this country, in an effort to repair and restore areas on that property, which is inclusive of some considerable acreage.

So there will be those that will be interested in plumbing, painting, carpentry, masonry and other repair work, electrical, et cetera. And they will earn as they learn. [It is] a commitment to our young people, a tangible manifestation of the commitment of this Government to our young people. It is our people.

You act and you speak as if we do not care. How could you? You have seen incredible accomplishments with a substantiated rationale. When you

look at the court building and people say, *you went over budget, you went over budget, you went over budget*, we may have made some mistakes in assessing along the way that we corrected at a cost. But I dare say in hindsight, 50, 100 years down the road when you take the 100 and divide it into whatever the eventual cost was, some folks can say, *what visionary people they were*, because that was great bang for the buck in hindsight—which sometimes provides 20/20 vision.

And along the way, on the other side of the coin, what substantiates the rationale even more is that there is a cost saving for housing ourselves where we have not—and possibly to the chagrin of the private sector—continued to fuel through a rent and income revenue stream that they have been beneficiaries of for aeons. But now as a responsible Government we believe that it is time for us to put our money where our mouths are. And that is exactly what we do.

And not all times do we always get it right. But you can look around the country far and wide, east to west, north to south, and see the manifestations of accomplishments based on platform promises and Throne Speech promises that have become deliverables—Geared to Income Housing, emergency care centres, senior citizen homes, low income units for those that qualify to own. And we can go on. There is a plethora of accomplishments that cannot be denied as much as some might want to dis-acknowledge.

They cannot! And so they play with rhetorical words to convolute the truth and suggest that this Government is not a caring Government—to suggest that we are not a caring Government—in the face of the people who by their democratic consent have not suggested otherwise but voted otherwise. And, as long as they continue to denigrate the individuals in this Government, they are denigrating our families, our supporters, our friends, and asking those people to now shift their vote of confidence to those guys that would be the pot calling the kettle black.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Well stop insulting the intelligence of our people! They are not that naïve politically anymore.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Nor are they that vulnerable.

That is a far fleeting dream and when you wake up to the reality you will still be sitting where you are, Honourable Member. Okay? Because we are not taking our people for granted, and we are not taking the country for granted. Okay? And we do not live in a perfect world. This is not utopia and we do not have panacea as answers or solutions.

And if you are going to work together then put your mouth where your mouth should be and speak with one tongue and not out of both sides. Okay? All right?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I will tell you.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech—and I commend our Premier for not just having the intestinal fortitude—

An Hon. Member: What? Intestinal?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes. Because if you will look further in the speech toward the end of the speech you will see where the Premier admitted genuinely we have got it wrong at times and made mistakes. And so we will introduce good governance legislation to ensure that some holes that need to be plugged are plugged.

An Hon. Member: Resign.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Even the whistle-blower legislation that will be introduced will help in that area, where people feel a level of security through the installation of being able to disclose things that may not be altogether right, understanding what this Government is about.

I am not a perfect person in this community. And I dare say, let any one of you over on the other side cast the first stone, as if you have all the answers to everything that we have as a challenge in this country. I have not heard anything profoundly earth-shattering to my ears—none.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes. And that is what you will continue to say because you will continue to occupy those seats, Honourable Member. So get used to it. It is not a hard position to get used to. You should be comfortable now. We have provided brand new chairs in this Honourable Chamber so that your rear ends can be as comfortable as they need to be so that you can shoot off with your diatribe when you feel it is expedient politically!

[Gavel]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: But the people are listening.

An Hon. Member: They are.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And the people are looking and they are seeing and understanding. He who feels it knows it.

This Government feels it as much as anybody else. We all have our personal experiences, Mr. Speaker. We all have to meet the challenges of the day to day challenge of life.

An Hon. Member: I am not buying what you are selling anymore.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And do you know what the interesting thing is, Mr. Speaker?

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Interpolations can be good—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: You have to live to learn, to learn to live. And that's what they don't get!

The Speaker: Just one minute, Minister.

Interpolations can be good, but it is getting . . . it is being a little bit disruptive.

Carry on Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: So, Mr. Speaker, I will move on. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate your indulgence because some people tend to be bright, intelligent, but want to contribute their interpolations that would suggest they are as capable as anyone else of being feeble minded. So that is okay.

So Mr. Speaker, in addition to the YES programme, we have introduced a one-stop career centre that merges the National Training Board and the Department of Labour and Training. Why, Honourable Opposition? Because there is synergy; and as a measure of convenience the collective expertise, experience and commitment can be offered without there being much stress associated with the process.

So this Government is understanding. Do you know why? Because we are listening to our people, as the Honourable Premier clearly states in the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, now one of the hot topics as a result of the economic downturn is financial assistance. And you know what? We came to this Honourable House and we made some amendments in the last session, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the financial assistance criteria relative to clients or potential clients that would apply due to their particular circumstance of hardship, which for the most part, we hope when it comes to the able-bodied population, to be temporary.

But at the same time we discovered through our experiences, listening to our case workers in the department, that we did have some potential for abuse. And we had to find a balance. We looked at how we could find that balance and make it a more cost effective operation because our people being in need of over some \$25 million a year, we found to be

very, very challenging, particularly in the current economic climate.

So we said there would be caveats introduced in addition to the criteria such as a stop-gap measure relative to assets. And we said for those able-bodied persons who would qualify for financial assistance, one of the criteria must be that they not have more than \$500 in assets; and for senior citizens not more than \$5,000 in assets.

But what happens, Mr. Speaker, when there is a parent with a physically challenged child or dependants who have a car that is worth \$502 and they need to get here and there for the care and other necessities that that particular dependant might need and they come to financial assistance because they may have been made redundant, they are the only earner, responsible for the care of that particular individual in need, and they are disqualified right up front? Not good.

What happens to the senior citizen who is, as we have all heard, asset rich but cash poor? They own their own home but they do not have any apartments in the home, no income/revenue stream. And they find themselves not being able to live off of their pension because they may have been a non-contributor but have inherited the home, and they are in need of some cash. What happens? Serious anomalies that we did not necessarily think about at the time. But as soon as we realised from the real experiences of our people and we heard them, we addressed it. So going forward now there will be a process of appeal, notwithstanding the criteria that is very strict that must be met to qualify for the—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: A tribunal. A tribunal will grant the appeal.

An Hon. Member: Not the Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Not the Minister. Okay?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, of course it is. And that is what I am trying to impart, and I do not know why you are not being able to absorb all of this, Honourable Member.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is good.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, thank you, I thank you on behalf of the Government.

You can take to your feet and turn your microphone on and say "thank you" officially so the people can hear you.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you for that. Not the Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you very much. But it is a collective ministerial decision, a collective ministerial process, a collective Government process because it involves our executive of the Progressive Labour Party, our caucus, our central committee, our delegates, our elected MPs, our appointed Senators, under the stewardship of our leader and Honourable Premier who has the prerogative to choose those who she feels are best suited for the job as Ministers in responsibilities that they have under the remit of the various ministries.

So, yes, we are grateful for the acknowledgement, Honourable Member Pettingill.

Those are the kinds of things that we have to look at because life is an evolving circumstance and we sometimes have to shift, we sometimes have to wiggle, we sometimes have to just be straight up firm and just force our way forward because the wind might be blowing in the other direction. And these are all relative terms based on our understanding of what we are dealing with in this early era of the 21st century where nobody—I do not care if the Honourable Member, Mr. Richards, has that crystal ball. Thirty years ago he did not see that there would be an information age that had instantaneous access to the world with the click of a mouse (and not one that runs around that you try to catch in your traps, the new mouse trap). So how do we deal with that now, Mr. Speaker?

And when we get to the law enforcement part of what we are dealing with in this country, as indeed the world is dealing with, that provides a great challenge starting at the youngest age because all of our young children now are technologically savvy. So they have got their Blackberries, they are on the Internet. And guess what they are using it for outside of educating themselves, informing themselves, et cetera? They are using it to intimidate others. It is now being coined as “cyber bullying.” It is a challenge. And I am pleased to say that we have that on the radar screen as well and have strategies in conjunction with law enforcement to help remediate that challenge.

Mr. Speaker, on the point of financial assistance, I just want to elaborate a bit more because you know we have had a challenge with some of our people not being satisfied because they have not met the criteria and so they have been denied. And they come to speak with me. And this is another reason why, as a caring Minister and a caring Government, it gives me the opportunity to get a firm understanding so that I can be sensitive and compassionate when warranted.

And then, out of that, develop strategic approaches to addressing legitimate situations that exacerbate hardships. And that is what we have done at financial assistance. That is what we have done.

But on the other [side] of being compassionate and sensitive, there is a responsibility that people who are in need and deserve to benefit from the benefits provided through the financial assistance initiative and programme understand they have to be accountable and responsible.

So my director, Mrs. Dianna Taylor of Financial Assistance, came up with a wonderful idea and engaged the corporate community. One financial institution looked like they were going to consummate the arrangement in agreeing with us the way forward to assist in improving the stigma associated with being on financial assistance and having a voucher, and came up with a brilliant idea, but then they, for whatever reason, decided they could not engage.

But thank God for a corporate citizen that, in this instance, did step up to the plate and do a wonderful thing, which was the marketplace. They did their part in what was required to establish a non-cash card. A non-cash card does not plug a loophole, per se, of anybody that would be a breacher of the terms and conditions of receiving financial assistance benefits. But it does give a level of dignity—a level of dignity. So now they go to the cash register with their items (and they must be items of necessity, they cannot be cigarettes or alcohol)—

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: —and they present their non-cash card. It could be like any other credit card.

So someone standing behind them does not look at them and say *Oh wow, that is where my tax-paying dollars is going—to that individual*. Because you know you have people with that kind of mentality.

[Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan, in the Chair]

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And so, Mr. Acting Speaker, we said that this would be a great thing. It gives a sense of dignity to that client and it also gave a sense of convenience because all of the stores in the chain became accessible where at one time they could only shop at one location in Hamilton. So if they came from the outer extremities and needed assistance financially, then obviously they would need to have some kind of stipend for transportation just to get to the point to access the food stuffs that they required.

So we killed about two or three birds with one stone, with the private sector and the Government joining on an initiative with a view to doing the right thing.

The Acting Speaker: Public/private partnership.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Public/Private Partnership, you have got it—a PPP.

I will move on to another area with regard to our Throne Speech, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And this is an area where I think people have been concerned and it regards the Land Policy Review that the Government has decided is a necessary consideration. And there has, as a result, been embodied a Land Policy Review Group—a panel to review various policies on landholding in Bermuda, because there were some anomalies that concerned people who might otherwise deserve to possess land, and particularly those who were stakeholders in this country as permanent resident certificate holders.

And, of course, the real estate market now being to a degree depressed due to the recession, we felt now is a good time to just look and to consider on merit, how do we go forward in addressing some of the anomalies or some of those concerns that those stakeholders might have.

The Acting Speaker: So you are making some adjustments to the policy.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: So we are going to look to make some adjustments.

The Acting Speaker: I see.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, sir. A responsive, responsible, caring Government—that is who we are.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: We have not got it right at all times—

An Hon. Member: No you have not.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: —and, you know what, that is one of the reasons why we are in the position that we are, because a Government that preceded us did not get it right for 30-plus years.

The Acting Speaker: Well, Mr. Minister, you and I would certainly have to differ on that. I do not want to have to correct you, but—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: There were some successes—

The Acting Speaker: I will guide you, I will guide you—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: —but there were some significant failures.

The Acting Speaker: Work with me, work with me.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And significant failures caused our people to say their stake-hold interest was going to be expressed through a democratic process behind the ballot box at which time we will make a decision voting for those that we believe are much better suited. And for the last consecutive three elections, there has been a consensus through a democratic process that puts us here doing what we do in the interest of our beloved country.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, Minister, I do believe you did win about 53 per cent of the vote, and you did very well.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Well, you know what? You are a soccer player . . . you are a soccer player . . . let's use this analogy all right?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: He is a soccer player, too, for your—

The Acting Speaker: But I am the Acting Speaker today, Mr. Minister. Please address the Chair.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: If you were a World Cup finalist and you win by one goal to nil in the World Cup finals, that victory sends the whole continent, country, whatever into euphoria!

The Acting Speaker: Yes, Minister. But with all due respect, Minister—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And at the next—

The Acting Speaker: —If you are playing home away you can win one/nothing.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Mr. Acting Speaker, I would invite you to come out to Court Street so you can see the thousands that will be there. Okay?

The Acting Speaker: Stay focused, Minister. Address the Chair.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I will move on from that to the issue of marriages of convenience where we are going to look to address that in a practical and pragmatic way so that folks that look to vest themselves in the country are legitimately here, and not as a measure of convenience to achieve a goal that they might not otherwise achieve in being accepted and being legally here on these shores. So we are going to add some legislation to deal with that particularly as outlined in the Throne Speech.

Another area in the Throne Speech which is very exciting to me and to the Government, and hopefully to the people of Bermuda, is the commitment to a key component of our infrastructure strategy in the effort to develop the waterfront in the city of Hamilton. And, in fact, the Corporation of Hamilton as recently as yesterday, I believe, or the day before, had very constructive meetings, or a meeting with a Chinese delegate here as a forerunner to an even greater process that we hope will manifest into real business and real opportunity of mutual benefit.

As you would know Mr. Speaker, the Chinese have committed \$7 billion to our neighbours to the south, and \$1 billion alone on one project. And as a result of a Bermudian meeting a very influential Chinese emissary (for lack of a better term), there was an outreach to the public and the private sector. And as a result, I had an opportunity with my Permanent Secretary and others to engage in exploratory discussion.

The Acting Speaker: Well done, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, sir . . . on mutual cooperation to see what could be considered, what a way forward would be to access opportunities between both countries.

And, of course, this relates to the TIEAs that have been signed—the Tax Information Exchange Agreements. We did not just sign the TIEA with China and Bermuda for a photo op; we signed it to consummate a relationship so that as a result of diplomacy and the effort to engage best practices we could cross-border engage opportunities based on mutual need, synergy, et cetera. There were several meetings over a 48-hour period. And, I might add, that those meetings went extremely well and we will be able to elaborate as the relationship evolves.

The Acting Speaker: Do keep us informed, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: We most certainly will, sir, as the initiatives hopefully develop in ways that we would hope, not just in the public sector, but indeed equally in the private sector.

The Acting Speaker: Can we expect a Ministerial Statement on that maybe?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: There is a possibility when there is something to share—absolutely.

Mr. Acting Speaker another area of commitment is the area of energy and alternative energy. There is an Energy White Paper that was just re-tabled that will address the vision and the areas of commitment that the Government is looking to engage so that we can have a sustainable energy platform in this 21st century. We will be debating that in the coming weeks. Another area where the Government has not only shown vision but, indeed, commitment, and

we will be sharing that White Paper with the people of the country who have not only been consulted and [have] proposed various initiatives but are indeed engaged as stakeholders, having already embarked upon alternative energy introductions to the Island of Bermuda.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I will now move to the international business fronts regarding the concept of Bermuda being open for business and our ability to attract and provide the kind of environment that would be conducive to successful business operations.

We are looking, as was alluded to in kind of a farcical aspersion, the idea of providing more red carpet and less red tape by the Member opposite that took his seat just before I took my feet.

The Acting Speaker: I think the Government made reference to providing more red carpet and less red tape as well.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I know. But I am saying that he made light of the idea, for whatever reasons. And that is a serious commitment, especially on the international business front as we are looking to develop very actively Bermuda as a market and jurisdiction for Islamic financing. It is very, very significant because as much as we hear of the catastrophic recessionary challenges in the Western world, over there in the East they have done a little bit better. They have seemingly the kind of resources that the world needs and there is high demand for. As a result, they do not have the kind of challenges we have with the foreign exchange.

The Acting Speaker: But they do have challenges as well.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: They do have challenges. Well, everywhere has challenges.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I mean it is the real world.

The Acting Speaker: Indeed.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: It is the real world.

So that is another area that we are committed to. And, coincidentally, one of the exciting developments is that there is a possibility of links with Air Emirates—a very successful airline—which provides an opportunity and a link to that part of the world potentially. So we are exploring that as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker, you look at the exploration of new frontiers. You cannot ignore the relevance of the satellite space that gives us a footprint and an opportunity to develop a significant revenue stream. That is another area and a few Ministers have continued the proactive commitment in making sure that our

interest in that area is protected so that it can be exploited for the purposes of delivering the kind of telecommunication access for those that would need it with a revenue benefit for us right here in Bermuda. Another wonderful opportunity that this Government is committed to developing and promoting.

Mr. Acting Speaker, Government will update and modernise the Hotel Concessions Act. And we have had hotel concessions as an initiative and a commitment since being elected in 1998.

The Acting Speaker: I do recall.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: But it has not gone as well as we would have anticipated. And there could be very legitimate reasons. But I am a bit suspicious, because on the one hand there were those that benefited from the concessions but in reciprocation there was not the commitment to do what was agreed to in meeting the criteria, which was to provide opportunity for the entertainment industry of the country.

So in 2011 the former Minister of Tourism decided it would be more practical and more beneficial to inject the industry with a level of opportunity that would help them earn as professional musicians and entertainers by supplementing the various establishments that had facilities to provide such entertainment. We did it. They performed at the establishments, we paid them. And the sacrifice was the Annual Music Festival. But a very, very pragmatic approach that went very successfully. And there is room for improvement.

I am sure the new Minister of Tourism, after having had that initiative launched, will be equally as committed going forward to continue that opportunity for our young talented and not-so-young talented Bermudian entertainers, because that is what the people that visit this country to relax and enjoy their leisure time and to spend their hard-earned dollars not only look to have, they deserve to have as an option. So there is a commitment there from this Government in addressing that concern.

In fact, under the remit of the former responsibility I had as the Minister that had under the Ministry Community Development, we engaged this last year entertainers under the guise of a taskforce to produce the entertainment for our Annual Bermuda Day Heritage Parade at Victoria Park.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Usually the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs pretty much takes on the production themselves. This time we ceded it off to the stakeholders themselves to produce and to perform. And it went exceptionally well at Victoria Park, adjacent to the people's avenue, that has now become known as the annual Heritage Day festivities, which starts of course with the marathon and goes

straight through to the parade, and then the subsequent entertainment that was enjoyed by one and all who took the opportunity to go and see some of Bermuda's best on the stage in celebrating our heritage and the proficiency of their talent, which also served to be a showcase for any proprietor who had a facility conducive to showcasing such talent.

But that is how we think in our Ministry and in our Ministries—those Ministers who are responsive in looking at how to improve the Bermuda society that we all love and are privileged to enjoy, notwithstanding the challenges that we have. But it is going to take all of us on board pulling in the same direction, not tearing each other down; building one another up—building one another up.

Another area, Mr. [Acting] Speaker, is within the Tourism Ministry a commitment to launch a new tourism brand and also the commitment to facilitate as a host country the Corporate Games which will be a cross-Ministry initiative driven by the Department of Tourism because the facility that is most conducive to hosting those games is the National Stadium.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: The National Sports Centre. And as you would know, the Aquatic Centre is a work in progress. It is on time and on budget, to date.

The Acting Speaker: Well, that is music to my ears, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, sir. That is how we do it as the Government of Bermuda. That is how we do it.

The Acting Speaker: We look forward to a Ministerial Statement with a progress report.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: You can expect that as you anticipate it would be appropriate in sharing such good news with not just yourself, Honourable Member, but indeed our colleagues and the country at large. Absolutely.

I am very happy to say, you know, we do have need for guest workers and we have a commitment to Bermudian workers. But we have had some challenges. We have had some challenges. And that is why I implore and appeal to our Bermudians to continue to be all that they can be when the opportunities come. Take advantage of them. Notwithstanding, take advantage.

I know we have some people in our community that are not as responsible as we would like them to be. It touches every family. But it does not mean that we should shut the blinds and close the windows, quite the opposite. And these are the kinds of challenges that we have to work through with people who are vested stakeholders and citizens in this country

helping themselves to help us to help them. That is how it works.

We are only as strong as the shoulders that we stand on, which is our people who stand to keep us on a solid foundation with making their invaluable contributions, no matter how small. No matter how small, as long as it adds to the productivity of our society we will be a better society. But it does not go without challenge. It does not go without flaw. It is a real world, as I stated before, and that is the dynamic. That is the challenge, because the problems we have, Mr. Acting Speaker, are people problems. The successes we enjoy are due to people. And finding that delicate balance is the ever-evolving and sometimes fleeting challenge, but that is what the Government is charged with; not finding its way, but driving its way along the path through vision, commitment, integrity, and accountability.

But we are dealing with people, and we do not live in a perfect world. So I do take homage when there is success, but I take offence when there are these misleading aspersions that are cast that only serve to denigrate the country. As I often remind my colleagues opposite, the whole world listens—the whole world listens—

An Hon. Member: And watches.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes!

So it does not help you throwing your country under the bus for your political—for your *political*—motive.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: You are driving the bus.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: For your political motive. And that is the sad reality. That is the sad reality, you know? For political expediency and for gamesmanship and trying to win at all cost you do all kinds of things.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Well, we could start with your leadership—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: We could start with the principle of earning a rite of passage.

An Hon. Member: I'll talk facts. Right?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Address the Chair. Address the Chair, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: The facts of certain Honourable Members are always skewed.

An Hon. Member: No, I am going to take the facts from your Throne Speech.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Always skewed, yes.

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Members, Members.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Another area, Mr. Acting Speaker that I wanted to address was the cost of living in this country.

The Acting Speaker: Please talk to me about the cost of living.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: It needs to be a First World country. And because of our consumption-based need to not only provide services at affordable costs, we have a challenge because we do not manufacture, we do not have any real natural resources, except our people and the oceans—which we probably have not really exploited to its full potential yet. We have to depend upon the importation of just about everything that we need to survive in the country.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, Minister. We have done that for many centuries now.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Many centuries. And as a consumption-based economy, the Government, to provide the goods and services in serving its people, has to get its revenue on the front end.

That is how we have done it.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And so the landed cost is additional when it gets to the consumer because business people have to make money.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Now here is the challenge.

The Acting Speaker: Tell me about it.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: The challenge is with business people who might be a little greedier than they need to be. That is where the challenge is.

When we look at the corporate community—especially the local corporate community—we know that there has been an interesting demographic where there have not been many people of colour who have been encouraged, or successful, in business, due to a lack of opportunity, a lack of access to capital, and a lack of honest brokering. As a result, there was one segment of the community that was a little more privileged because we know what the history is. So, for over 400 years there has been a corporate community that has been out of balance with regard to the demographics.

And now initiatives that this Government is introducing and has introduced with regard to the Economic Empowerment Zone, primarily designed for young entrepreneurs and business people that aspire to be entrepreneurs . . . we have begun to try (and we still have a very long way to go) to level the playing field.

So you do not have a significant number of proprietors of municipal real estate in this country. And if you do not have that, and you need that, to access that you have got to afford to rent. And everybody knows a piece of real estate in this country is way out of whack.

The Acting Speaker: It is a little bit more reasonable now if you had the disposable income to be able to purchase it.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: As a result of circumstances which have not been driven from inside the country, but indeed from outside of the country.

The Acting Speaker: Well, Minister, stay focused. I do not want to disagree with you but—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: —I know that perspective differs from my perspective somewhat.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: That is okay. And one thing we can do in this Honourable Chamber is disagree without being disagreeable.

The Acting Speaker: You are on a good wicket there, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: That is a problem that the new Opposition has to understand, it seems as if you have now had a light switch turned on, so that is a good thing. I commend you for that.

The Acting Speaker: Well, do not patronise the Acting Speaker, but I will entertain you.

Continue on Minister, you are on a good wicket.

[Laughter]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: So, Mr. Acting Speaker, we look to address some of the challenges with regard to the high cost of living that is driven by certain sectors of our economy, and appealing to the sensitivities of those people may not work all the time. So it may take the force of legislation through the Price Control Commission to make some recommendations that, if palatable to the Government of the day, can be legislated and will be legislated. We will cross that bridge when we get there. But that is something that is front and centre that we are looking at.

We all know what the public outcry was when there was the increase in the BELCO surcharge that affected and impacted every person that depends upon electricity in the country. Though they had their rationale for the need to increase the surcharge, we want to look at it and we want to understand that. And we are doing that through an independent body to decide on what is the way forward to make sure that we keep it in balance. And the same goes for other areas of the economy that we may have to look at, because our people have to live. And everybody knows what the cost of living in this country is. It sometimes—more increasingly than not—outstrips the ability of those with limited incomes. And so where do they go? They come to me at Financial Assistance.

The Acting Speaker: And you are helpful.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Of course, to the degree that I can be; and even if I cannot be, I have a statutory obligation if the applicant qualifies as a beneficiary to provide them with the benefits that they are entitled to. It is not discretionary.

The Acting Speaker: In these times, Minister, there are many people who need you, but do not qualify. That is a difficult situation.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: That is a difficult challenge. And that is a challenge we are working through as well.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: And that is what it is about. It is about life. Like I say, you have got to live to learn, to learn to live. That is the way it goes. It cannot go any other way.

I would like now to continue on the social sensitivity path with regard to a very exciting initiative which is to give statutory footing to the Bermuda Family Council. It is not a statutory body as it exists today, but we will be introducing legislation to formalise their statutory footing. This will give them greater responsibility and more relevance in addressing some of the challenges that we have with regard to the fami-

ly unit in our country—where it all starts with parenting. And even though most people are able to become parents at an age of maturity, they may not be altogether suited to be good parents for whatever reasons. A lot of times it is as a result of people lacking parenting skills.

So, before we have even commenced the process of giving statutory footing to the Bermuda Family Council, the Family Council (as it stands already) engaged in a very exciting initiative which we launched this year, September 2011, by way of a parenting symposium. This was simultaneously held at three locations—East, West and Central—which afforded parents to fellowship, to come and access information, to come and ask questions, to come and provide their challenges, so that they could get the kind of information that would enable them to be a little better at caring for their families, and particularly their children. We had experts from various areas of society that lent their expertise and their experience in facilitating these three symposiums that were held Island wide.

I was pleased to be involved in attending all three symposiums. And at the final symposium in Sandys Parish, at the Sandys Middle School, was where I became enlightened about the concerns related to cyber bullying. I did not know it was such a significant concern here in Bermuda.

So, with that, I will move on to the amendments that we are looking to make to the Human Rights Act, which we intend to table, to eliminate age discrimination and certain areas of discrimination related to sexual orientation. It is still a consultative process going on far and wide with regard to the context upon which will be ideally suited for Bermuda, given the schools of thought relative to the—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: No, no. Age as well, because you do not only have senior people that you consider with regard to age. There are other age groups, all right?

And with regard to the sexual orientation piece, it is something we are looking at very, very seriously, because we believe in this Government that there should be no discrimination with regard to goods and services. As far as accommodation is concerned, there should be no discrimination. As far as employment is concerned, there should be no discrimination, hence, the Government's commitment to looking at the application of an Equalities Act.

In fact, my Permanent Secretary—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: We will, but we are going to do it in the context of Bermuda because as you know, one size does not fit all.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: One size does not fit all!

You know that; otherwise we could just lift the template of every country and every jurisdiction with regard to the legislation, the legislative processes and their enacted laws, and just rubber stamp it. But it has to be in the context of our country and in the interest of our citizens.

An Hon. Member: I do not know why he is shouting. Do you know why he's shouting?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: That is what a responsible Government does. That is what a responsive Government does.

An Hon. Member: You're shouting and shouting.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Well you have been over there yak, yak, yakking for the whole time I have been speaking—

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney:—making absolute nonsense.

The Acting Speaker: I am listening to you, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, sir.

The Acting Speaker: Just look in my direction, and I will guide you.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I shall, I appreciate it. I am nearsighted and I need a little stronger lens but I do see the form. It is a little in silhouette, but I do hear you. So, thank you, I appreciate your intervention Honourable Member, Acting Speaker.

You know the Opposition sometimes seems as if their conscience is a little pricked.

An Hon. Member: When it comes to human rights I know where I stand on human rights.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: We sat here during the speaker that preceded me and we did not heckle him, we did not heckle or say anything to his rookie leader opposite. We extended due respect

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: But look, they are yakking again—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: There he goes again.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: —there he goes again—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: There he goes again.

[Gavel]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: But it is okay, that is one of the reasons why you continue to sit over there—yak, yak, yakking away.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Minister, you were talking on human rights which is one of the more serious subjects in the country—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: —and there are persons who are very concerned about that. Address me on that issue, please, if you will.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I just made the reference. And that is what they would say in certain circles, *enough said*, because I am not going to elaborate any more. I just want people to know that there is the commitment that this Government is addressing concerns relative to human rights.

In fact, very soon there will a bill tabled regarding process and administration so that we can get our job descriptions and the CURE that was amalgamated into HRC (the Human Rights Commission), all of those things, sorted out so the processes and all of the administration considerations could be a seamless transition to a best practice standard. And then we move on from there to age and to sexual orientation.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you for that, Minister. We look forward to human rights being independent similar to the auditor and the internal audit one day. Thank you for that.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Well, I do not know what you are looking forward to, but I know what the Government will do. And we will share that with you at the appropriate time.

The Acting Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I think I am just about getting to the end. And I would just say in closing, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we are indeed living in serious times.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: We are indeed living in serious times.

The Acting Speaker: We agree there.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I see, and I do not want to go off on an aside, but I think it is appropriate at this time to bring it to your attention, Mr. Acting Speaker, that my business partner (wearing another hat) who is also an investor for this country, Mr. Scott Pearman, has formed a very tangible and productive relationship with I believe Dr. Adam Wu who is sitting in the public gallery. As I alluded to the exploratory discussions and what we hope to be a productive and evolving relationship of mutual benefit between China, Chinese investors, Chinese people, Bermudians in the public and private sector, is something that we are very, very excited about.

I formally welcome to this Chamber in the public gallery, Scott Pearman as well as Dr. Adam Wu, who has been on a whirlwind visit and has met with very significant, influential, and affluent citizens of this country looking at ways that we could develop business relationships, diplomatic relationships, et cetera. And there have been meetings with both the public and the private sector.

So, thank you for your interest in our country and for your visit and for the productive meeting that we had yesterday, Dr. Wu.

With that, Mr. Acting Speaker, I make these final remarks in appealing to the sensitivities of our people in this beloved country that we call Bermuda to engage each other, to ensure that they keep their representatives who are elected and appointed accountable, to ensure that they have our ear at times when some may not even want to listen.

They have a responsibility. You, the Bermudian public—Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda—have a responsibility to not just your country, but, indeed, yourselves, to ensure that as we move forward it is less contentious, it is more humane. We are a good people. We are a great country. We are a productive people. Look at what we have achieved without really having anything as a natural resource outside of ourselves and the oceans that surround us. Notwithstanding, look [at] what we have achieved in spite of it all.

Yes, we have challenges, and we shall have challenges. Yes, we have disagreement, and we shall have disagreement. But we are, at the end of the day,

one people. And if we continue to talk the talk and not walk the walk, pretty soon we are going to be out of step even more so than now with each other. That is why, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party implores the concept, the suggestion, the commitment from our people, our citizens, to build one another, together. Let us do just that. Let us build one another, together.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member from Warwick West, constituency 28, Mr. Mark Pettingill.

Mr. Pettingill has the floor.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. I hope you are enjoying your ascension to higher heights in the Speaker's Chair.

The Acting Speaker: It is a nice view from up here.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: It is a nice view, I am sure.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have been interpolating a bit, but I am always delighted to hear that Honourable Member speak. He has got one of those voices like Gregory Isaacs. It's like ice cream—you could melt it at 25 feet away, Mr. Speaker.

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Talk to me, Minister.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am toward you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: You cannot turn your back to the Speaker. You have to look in my direction, sir.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I will look this way.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much, Minister.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Your new ascension.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. I want to know what you have to say here. I always enjoy—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I want to acknowledge an item. I will cast a glance over.

The Acting Speaker: I always enjoy your speeches.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, hopefully you will enjoy this one because I am always delighted to hear him speak.

He really is the ice cream man—and I say that with all compliment, because he knows that I love him to death. But it is like he is the calming voice . . . he

has got that radio voice, Mr. Acting Speaker. That is why. That is his profession. When he speaks, it is like everything is beautiful, everybody is beautiful, everybody loves each other, and it is a beautiful day. And I love hearing him speak. And the truth of the matter is that . . . and he does it with great eloquence at times, and makes some very good points.

But he does remind me a little bit of the band on the *Titanic*, too. Because, Mr. Acting Speaker, if you know that story, the band played on to calm everybody's fears, but really what was happening [was] the ship was heading for eminent disaster. The ship was well on its way under—it was over, it was sinking, and there were more than real problems.

You know, they'd hit the iceberg and the band played on. And they could have had Minister Blakeney instead of the band and he would have told everybody, *But it's a wonderful ship. Haven't you enjoyed your stateroom? Look at how much work we put into making this ship sail nicely for you, and how beautiful everything is. Don't worry about that gurgling sound; it's the water leaking up through the promenade deck—it's all lovely on this ship.* That is the PLP Government! And he's the PLP band player. And that is a ship that the PLP Government built and sailed into disaster, and is still sitting on—with the same Captain, the same Ministers—moving the deck chairs around and trying to convince everybody, *Look what a wonderful ship we have got here! And, We are going to sail you to wonderful waters,* Mr. Acting Speaker. But the truth is impending disaster as a result of a ship that they [have] built, sailed on, right into the iceberg.

And all of the little spin about how wonderful it is simply is not going to fly any longer with the people of this country—including the people that put them on that side of the House. One thing is for sure: they are listening and they are watching. And there are certain things you cannot have the radio voice cover up forever. You cannot have the band play on.

So let us talk some facts. Let us talk some facts from your Throne Speech because here are some of the words . . . let me share them with you, Mr. Acting Speaker—extracted right from the Throne Speech. Here we go, right?

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: "Adaptation . . . will provide . . ." "development has been empanelled . . ." "consideration of . . ." "formed a steering group . . ." "a review has been undertaken . . ." "is being developed . . ." "there is now the possibility . . ." "will take a new approach . . ." "will explore incentives . . ." "will formulate new changes . . ." "has commenced work . . ." That is the band playing on the PLP "Titanic" Government ship.

With all of that music going on—that is what is listed in this Throne Speech—all of those words about this is what we are going to do that is new.

You know what? I like things about the Throne Speech because it sounded like a new Government speech. It sounded like a Government that had just taken over the helm, and it is not the *Titanic* anymore; it is a new ship and it is a new day.

But here is the difficulty, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is not. It is the same crew; it is the same crew sailing the same ship into the same disaster, making the same excuses and promising that everything is fine. And when they run into real problems do you know what they will do? They will blame it on the ice field. *We can't help the world ice field. We can't help what's come along; it's not our problem.*

But that is not true either, Mr. Acting Speaker, because just like the *Titanic* they should have had the lookouts paying attention to the disaster that was coming, but they did not pay any attention. They wanted to go full steam ahead right into the danger, right into the danger, Mr. Acting Speaker! Full steam ahead is what they did, not paying any attention to any of the warnings that were going on.

So, let us talk about the Throne Speech, right? So, when you see these lines in paragraph one like: "Many of the difficulties that confront Bermuda and its people are due to the fact that the global economy is more interconnected than ever. The simple truth is that there is no escape from the contagious and harmful effects of the economic downturn in those countries with which Bermuda does business."

Nonsense! Do you know why it is nonsense? Because, like the guys on the watch bridge of the *Titanic*, they were warned about it; and anybody with any professionalism, anybody with any sensibility, would have been able to look out of that ship and say *Hey, problems might come. Problems might come after 1998. Let's not spend like drunken sailors on the "Titanic." Let's be reserved. Let's listen to the experts. Let's watch what is going on. Let's see what we need to do.* They were warned.

And what do we hear now? Debt ceiling—raise the debt ceiling. We did not have a debt ceiling before, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: No.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: We do now.

I am not an economist, I am a lawyer; I will come to the legal aspects. But let me say this much from a humble country island boy looking at it when you talk about debt ceiling. To me that is like coming home and finding there has been a sewage leak and your house is full of sewage right up to the ceiling. Now, you have got two options. This Government's option is, *let's raise the ceiling up.*

My option would be let us pump out all the sewage. Let us pump all the sewage out. But that is not the way they look at it.

So when you talk about debt ceiling, to me as a non-economist (and I think the economists would

agree), that is the type of situation. But they are the ones that are pumping the sewage in, in my view.

So, debt ceiling: \$190,000 a day that you are using—of this country's money—to pay down on the interest of the debt that you created. And then you want to talk fluffy and nice about, *Let's all join hands. Let's quote Nelson Mandela; Let's all sing "Kumbaya." Let's all get together.* Well, you know what? I have been all for that and I have told people on that side—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of Order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: He has a Point of Order, Mr. Pettingill.

What is your Point of Order Minister?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: He is misleading the House. His rookie leader is the one who suggested we should all be singing Kumbaya. Everything about his speech was telling us that he wanted to put one of the Opposition in the Cabinet.

The Acting Speaker: Minister, that is not a Point of Order. But I will ask you to be somewhat respectful when referring to other Members. I will ask that of all Members. I think it is important that we do that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Yes, I would ask him to retract the "rookie leader" thing because our leader is there because of his integrity and of his intelligence and the vision he has for this country. And just because he happens to be new in this House, I would not disrespect him, because that is what the country has been begging for—that type of leader! Begging for it!

So he should retract that.

Begging for it! Rookie, or otherwise, the man to do the job.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, let me carry on with where I was. And let us talk facts. The Honourable Member wanted facts; let us talk the facts. You cannot come along now . . . and as I said I have honourable friends on that side of the House, and they know it, my dear friends that I am prepared to work with that I love to death. But collectively—collectively as a Government—they are wallowing in the abyss of mediocrity at best. And they know it! They are wallowing in the abyss of mediocrity at best, and they know it.

And do you know why they know it, Mr. Acting Speaker? That is why they have got to do a constant shuffle. That is why people have to resign. That is why they have got to move one Minister after the other.

The Acting Speaker: We have seen a lot of shuffles in the last five years—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: There have been a lot of shuffles.

The Acting Speaker: There have been a lot of shuffles.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: And they are going to keep shuffling. That is why they need to shuffle around—because of that. That is why.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: But they are the Government, you see? You hear them?

And they are shaking now, Mr. Acting Speaker, they are shaking.

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: I want to hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: They want to hear it, too.

They know full well that they are wallowing in the abyss of mediocrity. That is why they have to run around; that is why all the back-stabbing is going on, because they do not know what to do next. They do not really know how to do it because they have not the right group of people—love them as I do individually—to be the managers of this country any longer.

They are not the right group of people to be the managers of this country any longer. And they know it! They know they are not the people to be the managers of the country any longer.

Let us talk about their Throne Speech, Mr. Acting Speaker, bearing in mind now that everything after 13 years is “adaptation,” “what we are going to do,” “let’s explore,” “let’s think about this,” “let’s develop this,” “let’s assess this.” “let’s take this under consideration”—nonsense! Why do you not come out with some words like, *This is what we are doing—right now. This is what we are going to make happen. This is what we are going to implement?*

Not, *We are going to take it under advisement. Not, We are going to have a debate on it in the public forum. But, We are going to make some decisions, we are going to pass some sound legislation, we are going to implement some sound policies.*

Not, *We are going to go away after 13 years on a sinking ship and think about should we go on the lifeboats or not. Not, That we are going to try to build something that is a little bit better.* It is too late for that. You need to be about doing.

So, let’s look at the Throne Speech, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: When we see talk in the Throne Speech . . . and, by the way, I will give Honourable

Members this: There are a lot of good things, really good things, in the Throne Speech Reply, and there are a lot of the Opposition’s really good things in the Throne Speech.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, I recognise that. I certainly recognise that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: No question. But a lot of things—some of the best things—that were spoken about in that speech all came from Honourable Members on this side. And they know that, too.

Now, that is to be encouraged and nobody is going to expect that any credit is going to be given. But when you look at it, Mr. Acting Speaker, it is clear as a pipe staff that many, many, many of the significant things that you see in their Throne Speech came from this side. And if anything good comes out of tourism now, it will probably be because of the Honourable Member’s experience in the UBP Government.

The Acting Speaker: Well, that was the same Honourable Member when we were Government.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So that is why they put him in that place—

The Acting Speaker: When we were Government we certainly got some good ideas from the Progressive Labour Party as well.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: They are going to take the best of what they got there, because he is not going to stay on the PLP bench and come up with it. He spent the majority of his adult life in the UBP, so I am sure he is going to try and take the best of the management skill he got there and apply it to tourism—which is why he is probably there.

And I wish him all the best, too. I wish him all the best. And I am glad he did not resign today over all the scandal. I thought there might have been more resignations, but I am glad there was only one, I guess, because at least it gives it a shot to get to work and do something. But I will leave that.

One might have expected resignations over the years with regard to some things—

The Acting Speaker: Stay on—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —but that remains to be seen as well, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Stay on the Throne Speech; that is a Motion to Adjourn item.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: But when we see things like “the Job Corps scheme will provide students with classroom theory and practical learning experiences that will contribute to success in the workforce and in

life”—well, what is different from that to the NTB? Is not that what the National Training Board is about? How is that new?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: In what?

We are talking today about . . . the Minister makes a Statement on enhancing business and companies where you have got to employ, you are setting a tariff of 50 per cent Bermudian staff. So if you cannot do that and you are at 40 [per cent] well, bang, goes that business? Or they will go off to Switzerland because they can do it there?

I mean these types of things . . . that is not a practical work out. That is fluff. That is something that was already being done, Mr. Acting Speaker—already being done.

The Government talks about its position in the Throne Speech . . . I am on page 5. I want you to be aware of where I am going through.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: “[T]able a Bill in the first session of Parliament to provide work permit exemptions and permanent residence to eligible job creators in businesses . . .” Well, you know, this is 13 years in, Mr. Acting Speaker.

That is a good idea. But there the Government will upturn the apple cart with regard to our foreign businesses in any event.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: They are the ones that . . . it was during their tenure that those businesses left. And they cannot blame a downturn in the world economy for that, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I think you made that point.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: It was during their tenure.

So now to make it sound like we are going to create this wonderful thing to be more warm and cuddly and make it all better, when they are the ones that drove it away in the first place, that is like getting drunk and screaming and ranting and telling somebody to get out of your house and then say, *Oh well, come over for Sunday brunch, everything is happy now.* Guess what, Mr. Acting Speaker? Nobody wants to come because they are afraid that you are going to act up again.

The Acting Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Those are the facts. And that is just life Honourable Members.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: You act like that when you are supposed to be being sociable, and throw everybody out in a drunk tangent and a rave and a rant, and they get a, *Get out of my house and don't come back!* And, *We don't need you here; we don't want you in this house!*

And then call up and say *Oh, why don't you come over for Sunday brunch because we changed our attitude now—why don't you come over now?*

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: And here is the position, Mr. Acting Speaker. They are the ones that are in the house in charge right now and not anybody else, and they are the ones that have not been there as the new Government. They have been doing that for the last 12 years.

So it is one thing to say if you were new—

The Acting Speaker: Thirteen.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thirteen!

If you were new, and you were saying—like the Honourable Member with the ice cream voice, with great respect, is saying—*Yes, we made mistakes. We know we made mistakes, and we are going to fix those things and we will look at this.* That is okay if you did it last year. That is okay if it was your first term. But it is not, Mr. Acting Speaker. You made the same promises in the same fluff kind of Throne Speech for the last 13 years.

All of these words, all of these words about “under advisement” and “looking at this” and “explore this incentive” and “take this under consideration,” those are words that have transcended, Mr. Acting Speaker, through every single Throne Speech that this Government has made for the last 13 years. They have been taking advice, considering things, thinking about what to do next for the last 13 years.

An Hon. Member: And delivering.

The Acting Speaker: So they paid attention in their English class.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Here is the point. Here is the point. Of course, of course they delivered on some things. You know why? Because you have got a really good, solid Civil Service—

An Hon. Member: Oooh.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —that is really is going to help you deliberate on things. It is not like all of the ideas were bad. But let's get real.

You know, what I am trying to do here is . . . I am not making spin. What you have to do is—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: It is like the scales of justice. Right? It is like the scales of justice.

The Acting Speaker: Yes. You know a lot about that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I do.

The Acting Speaker: That is your profession.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Now you hold them up and what people have to look for is the balance. Of course, there are good things, and, of course, there are bad things. But on the balance of those scales of Government, guess what! It is tipped. And it has not tipped favourably. It is tipped negatively.

So you might want to say, *Look at our glass; it's half full*, and, *How wonderful we are doing*. But the truth of the matter is while you have been looking at that half-full glass for the last 13 years, the other half of it has evaporated! So you have a quarter of a glass now, and you are trying to call it a half glass and be optimistic. And those are the facts.

People are not going to be fooled anymore by this, Mr. Acting Speaker. And we cannot sit here . . . I mean, we have to join hands on something. Heaven forbid. We have got to do that because some things have got to get done. We have to get some work done. We have got to make a contribution. But we cannot sit here and just try and pretend like it is all okay. Like, you know, the house is on fire and somebody with a smooth-talking voice—which is a reflection of the whole Government—tells us, *Don't worry; we need a little more heat because it's cold*. That is the type of thing, you know, that does not work. It is a ploy. And people cannot be fooled by that any longer.

Let us press on with what is and is not in this Throne Speech.

The Acting Speaker: Proceed on, Honourable and Learned Member.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: “The Government will table legislation to encourage further foreign investment in Bermuda.” The Government will table legislation to encourage further foreign investment in Bermuda? Like what?

Do not tell me that you are going to table legislation to encourage foreign investment. You drove them out! If you want to say that in a Throne Speech, say what your Act is going to be, say where you are pulling it from—because other countries did that—and give us a little detail on what that is. Because that type of fluff of “the Government will table legislation to encourage further foreign investment” . . . come on!

People are not being fooled by that type of fluff anymore. Give some specifics. Give some specifics, please.

The Acting Speaker: Proceed.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Sorry. I need to focus on some specific things here. That is why I am trying . . . So we are talking facts.

The Acting Speaker: Take your time.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So we are talking facts and not pulling things out of the air, as the Honourable Member was saying. Let us stick with the facts, okay?

“The Department of Tourism in the short-term, will adopt a set of strategic initiatives.”

The Acting Speaker: What page are you on?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am on page nine.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: “The Department of Tourism, in the short-term, will adopt a set of strategic initiatives to address the industry’s immediate needs while Bermuda’s long-term National Tourism Plan is being developed.”

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Wow! I thought we were in a platinum stage of tourism.

The Acting Speaker: Well, we were.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: We were?

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So we are in the wood stage now?

The Acting Speaker: Well, we actually—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I do not know.

Nobody . . . I am not hearing from anybody . . . I do not know when we went through the platinum stage; because that was this Government’s position, *We are in the platinum stage*. But now, according to this, it seems that we are developing a “long-term National Plan”—a long-term one; not, *Let's fix it now*. They had 13 years.

When this Government came into power—and I remind all of you of this—the promise was a hundred day rescue mission.

The Acting Speaker: I do remember that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: A hundred day rescue mission.

The Acting Speaker: I counted the days.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That was in 1998.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: And the only thing . . . the only people that went on vacation was the Government. Nobody started coming here more. Now that was 13 years ago.

So here we are, nearly in 2012, [with a] new Minister. I wish all the luck to you.

I have to say this. If anybody grew up and put their shorts on to be the face of tourism, and who loves the country and says how wonderful it is to come here, it would probably be the Honourable Wayne Furbert.

The Acting Speaker: And sing his way around as well.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Absolutely.

Not a bad man to have on the frontline saying, *Come to Bermuda; it's lovely*, because he certainly can talk the talk with regard to the country. So I have to wish him all the best. Who would not wish him all the best?

I think of him even being in that position. I shook his hand on this astounding feat to go from where he came to get to that position in such short order. So I wish him all the best; but let's be realistic.

The Acting Speaker: Well, there has been a lot of shifting.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: There has been a lot of shift.

The Acting Speaker: There has been a lot of shifting, Honourable Member, you will appreciate that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Mr. Acting Speaker, I have sat in a few places in the House in my short career—

The Acting Speaker: You have. You have. You have.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —other than on that side and I am going to get to there—

The Acting Speaker: Yes. Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —in the next couple of years I would think, with this group over here, when there is a shift. But a few seats here and that is the way it has to go.

The Acting Speaker: Stay focused on the Throne Speech. You are on tourism.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Mr. Acting Speaker, if their plan is now to develop a long-term National Plan, what the heck have we been doing for the last 13 years if we are going to develop a long-term plan now?

And all that is, is an admission—an admission—that we have not got it right, that we have not managed it well, and what you are trying to sell to the public through your Throne Speech is, *Give us another chance. We have had problems and we will fix it this time. We will make it work. We will make it work now.*

Well, if you fail, Mr. Acting Speaker, in a job, if you have a failing position in a job, you get evaluated. And if your evaluations [show] a continuous series of failures you need to be fired. You need to be fired! The best thing that this Government could do in the next election is run for Opposition. That is what they should do—run for Opposition. Run to be the best Opposition that they could be. Because sometimes you have to resign—like the Minister did today—when you are able to look at it and it is as clear as a pipe stack that you just cannot get it right.

The Acting Speaker: Well, what should they do with tourism?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: You can't just get it right.

The Acting Speaker: What should they do with tourism?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So you have to address these issues with regard to . . . how are you going to do it?

Well, here is the key. We might need a long-term plan, Mr. Acting Speaker. We might need it because of the situation we are in now because of where they have put us. The point is that if we do need a long-term plan (and I am not disagreeing with it) they should not be the ones to manage it because they are the managers of failure.

So that is the point. They should not be the ones to be the managers of that. If you have got a pilot that crashes the plane three or four times, guess what? The airline does not keep hiring him back saying, *Okay, have another go*. He was lucky enough to survive the first time!

The Acting Speaker: I think I heard a few Members earlier talking about a tourism authority.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Well, you know what, Mr. Acting Speaker? Yes, so now they want to have a tourism authority. Maybe that is a good idea. Maybe we should. But coming back to it, these are all things that they canvassed over the last 13 years. *We are going to do this. We are going to do that*. Complete failures.

Let's pause for a second. Let's be realistic. Everybody knows it. We debated in this Honourable House. Those cruise ships left. They told us . . . they met with all of us. Let's be honest. They lobbied all of us. Let's come clean. The agents, the cruise ships representatives . . . and this is why there is no contract. Let us think about it. They were not going to sign on the dotted line until we could give them some guarantees about what we were prepared to offer.

So they came along and said, *Listen. We want, as part of the amenity, because we can do it anywhere else, we want to have the ability for our people to game on board our ships in our casinos.*

The Acting Speaker: I do remember that debate.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: And we told them, *No! We are not doing that.* And at the time that it was going on, they told us—and that is the collective “us”—

The Acting Speaker: I do not think it went quite like that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —they told us all when they were lobbying, *If we don't have this, we will leave and likely go somewhere else.* And Honourable Members know that that is the truth. That is why their Premier at the time, Mr. Acting Speaker, tried to address that with the Bill that he did. And it got rejected by Members in this House on both sides of the political divide.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Ah, now you think back, Honourable Member, about how I voted on certain things. You were the one that called “courage” as related to my name, as I recall. Right?

They recognised that that was going to be the issue. That if those cruise ships did not get what they wanted, they left. And that is the reason they left, pure and simple. Pure and simple! So we were not forward-thinking with that one. We were not forward-thinking with that one. And the truth of the matter is that we are being described internationally—and this is something for the Honourable Member sitting right opposite me as the Tourism Minister to address now—as dull. We are dull as a tourism destination.

People want to go somewhere else because they see us as being dull. And, Mr. Acting Speaker, people are not developing tourism sites. They are not developing those properties like Sonesta. They are not developing in the East End because they want to know that they have the ability to expand their entertainment capacity to a degree. And they told everybody, *This is what we want.* And it has not happened.

So we are going to sit around . . . what we need is prompt action; not a long-term plan. And to have prompt action you would expect the Throne Speech to say with some courage, *Look, we are going*

to do this—right out of the box! *We are not going to dilly-dally with it. We are going to do this.* A radical change. *We are going to do what they did in the Bahamas. We are going to do what they did in other directions that shook it up!* That is what we want to hear. That is what we want to hear, but it is not what we are getting.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I know the rules.
The Speaker is not in the Chair?

An Hon. Member: Not in the Chair.

[Hon. Dale D. Butler, Acting Speaker, in the Chair]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Now, there is a new Acting Speaker in the Chair, you see that?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Carry on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Now there is a new Acting Speaker. Thank you, Mr. new Acting Speaker. Here we go. New Acting Speakers all over the place.

[Laughter]

The Acting Speaker: Carry on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you so much, Mr. Acting Speaker. Now, here we go.

The Government is going to “fight to reduce gang membership” and strengthen the family unit. “The Government will provide the Bermuda Family Council with a statutory footing.” But there we have it again, Mr. Acting Speaker, Honourable Member Butler. It is language that sounds like something, but lacks substance, because all you do beside that is put a question mark. Like, *What are you talking about?*

Let us hear something about what this means. Give us an example of exactly what you are going to do with it. Not just language along the lines of . . . I do not know if you were in the vicinity, Mr. Acting Speaker, when I was talking about the language of “developing” and “review” and “we’re going to check this out and see if we can do this,” or, you know, “we are going to explore this and consider that.” It is the same type of thing. What is needed is serious action.

On page 12, “In keeping with its track record of dealing with sometimes controversial . . . issues, your Government will also be tackling discrimination. While the Government is aware of the sensitivities in the community surrounding sexual orientation, it does not condone discrimination in employment and accommodation based on a person’s lifestyle choices.”

That is not the first time that that paragraph has appeared in a Thorne Speech, or any other speech by this Government. Why doesn't the Government have the integrity to draw the lines and not worry about whether it is the church lobby or any other lobby and stand on the side of good and right and say, *We are for human rights. Whether we agree or disagree with lifestyles personally, we are for fundamental human rights and we will amend the Human Rights Act* (two words and a comma, as it has become known).

[Laughter]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Why can't you just stand up and say that? Ahead of what your own prejudices are, your own issues, what you are concerned about with your own support—

An Hon. Member: Is that what you were going to do?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —and just have the courage to say, We—

An Hon. Member: Are you saying that?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I certainly am. Just have the courage to say that we will amend the Human Rights Act.

An Hon. Member: We said that!

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is not—

The Acting Speaker: You have that in the OBA report as well.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is not what it says in the Throne Speech here. What it says—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I know what it says in there. I am talking about this. Right? What it says there, it is about courage. Just do it. It is a fundamental Human Right thing. Say you will do it.

This Government has talked about it long enough—to try and appease, and backwards and forwards. And then to add insult to injury to say, “Accordingly, Government will assess whether it is feasible to introduce an Equality Act.”

What? We have a Constitution that protects human rights. We have a Constitution that umbrellas all of that. And, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have a Human Rights Act that, by the way, is the same as Human Rights Acts all over the world, except it leaves out a couple of little words. It leaves them out.

Only . . . Bermuda is another world. It leaves them out. But this Government now tries to fluff over

that by saying, an Equality Act. What is the Equality Act going to be?

An Hon. Member: He wants same sex marriages.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: And how insulting is that?

An Hon. Member: What do you want?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: How insulting is that to say Equality Act? I hear somebody interpolate, with great respect, throwing out the line about same sex marriages.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Nobody is talking about same-sex marriages. Let me say this, Mr. Acting Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Equality would be that people have rights in partnerships whether they are married or not. And perhaps same-sex marriage is a consideration certainly for the church, and I see that. That is another debate, and I am not getting into that.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: The one does not segue, Mr. Acting Speaker, into the other. And it is wallowing in the abyss of ignorance—

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

The Acting Speaker: Members!

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —to suggest that it is. So I am not surprised to hear from the crew on the “Titanic” that that is their view.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am not surprised to hear that that is the position that they are going to take on that. Just have the courage to say that you are going to land on the side of human rights and do what is right.

Do what is right! That is what we would like to see. Do not gloss over it in a way that it really does not say much with regard to what you are going to do or how you are going to do it, and talk about an Equality Act which does not make any sense whatsoever.

You know, again, “Government will explore initiatives for artists to showcase their talent . . .” We had a wonderful local sculptor here, Mr. Michael Dowling *[sic]* who had a wonderful bust creation—

Some Hon. Members: Carlos.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Carlos Dowling, I am sorry.

[Laughter]

The Acting Speaker: Carlos Dowling.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Carlos, I am sorry. I knew them all, so I am thinking of Michael. Carlos Dowling, that created a wonderful example . . . I do not know if you call it a mock-up, but certainly of what could have been done with regard to the tribute and statue of Dame Lois Browne-Evans in the building there. Right? That is a Government decision because they are the ones paying for it.

So when it comes in here to say “explore initiatives for local artists” and your track record is that you have a foreigner come and do the statue of Dame Lois—lovely as it might be . . . you were all there at the opening . . . how wonderful it is—that flies in the face of what your track record is as well. Because the history of that flies in the face of what you did and what you did not do.

And for Honourable Members’ thought, those are just the facts. Just stick with the facts. I like talking facts, right, so let’s talk facts. Those are the facts. That is what happened there. So when you put things in your own Throne Speech about “Government will explore,” there is that line again, “incentives for artists,” you missed that boat too. You already missed that—and a big one, as well—in a tribute to your own leading light that you have named a courthouse for, you missed that boat on the sculpture, on the local sculptor that had something ready to go.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Had it prepared. And I do not want talk about it. I know what I am talking about.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is a fact. And Honourable Members know that that is a fact as well. He was passed over.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Acting Speaker, point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Hold on. Point of order.

Mr. Pettingill, can you take your seat a minute?

Minister Burgess.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. What he is talking about, he does not really know what he is talking about.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: That sculpture that was done was approved by the family. They saw the other sculpture that he referred to and wanted no part of that. They approved that sculpture. That sculpture cost us \$100,000 less than was quoted by the fellow he named.

Now, if he wants to talk about spending money like drunken sailors, let’s be consistent.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you for the facts, Minister.

Mr. Pettingill, you may continue.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I’ll agree to disagree that my facts seem to be different than what the Honourable Member’s facts are.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: But that is all right because my facts about the lights over in the building were different from what their facts were as well. But guess what? They had to go change the light bulbs.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Stick to the Throne Speech. Go on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Yes, absolutely. Right?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So here we go, Mr. Acting Speaker. Let us come back on with the other facts. Right?

“Accordingly, in the area of public safety and justice, the Government will amend the Proceeds of Crime Act 1997 and the Criminal Code Act 1907, to allow the seizure of cash and property that are reasonably suspected to be the proceeds of crime.”

Well, we already have that. We already have that! We have already debated that. We have already been through that. Some people already consider that to be draconian in certain instances anyway, so I do not what you are going to amend again. So that is all fluff. Those things are already in place. Are we going to have, you know, part two?

Mr. Acting Speaker, part of the problem with what we are doing in this country is the passing of too much legislation—I have said this before—creating too much confusion. Act upon Act, to try and look good. We are going to pass an Act to do this. We are going to pass an Act to do that. And then when we get them into court they get challenged. I have given this warning on many numerous occasions. We get into court, lawyers put their wigs on, challenge what Par-

liament has done, and the Acts are not worth the paper that they are written on and the debates that we have up here.

So this thing in regard to, “Accordingly, in the area of public safety and justice we are going to amend the Proceeds of Crime Act” in order that we can now reasonably seize the proceeds of crime . . . we have all of that, extensively. So I am interested to see what the new Act is going to say, if it is any different or any more draconian than the Acts that we have already passed. You know?

Give us some specifics as to what is needed. You know, reform is also pending for the Criminal Code. The Criminal Code . . . if you want to have some courage with it, the best thing to do is stop amending it. Just have a whole new Criminal Code, like we indicated before, lifted from a modern, working criminal code. Stop creating paper on paper.

But to just throw things out like, *We are going to . . .* “reforms are also pending for the Criminal Code . . .” We have got . . . it is a workable Act. It is full of stuff that we do not need. And you have got to read between this Act and this amendment Act and all the rhetoric to get to where you need to go. And it would be a smart idea to say, *What we are going to do is consolidate a Criminal Code Act 2012*—not reform it again. Because what you are ending up with, Mr. Acting Speaker, is just a bunch of paper all over the place. And this Government, just like what we get handed all the time, is very fond of generating tons of paper by Acts and then trying to say, *Look how much we are doing*.

But that is not what it is. I mean, you are all pleased . . . Oh, please! I am a lawyer; I have to work with stuff. But the Honourable Whip doesn't. So she does not know. I am telling you—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —too much paper. Too much paper! Too much paper! Right?

So it is not a good idea at all in putting that forth. But there again, typically, it is not saying what you are actually going to do; it is saying that something is pending. And what we can see is probably nothing is going to happen. Okay? “[Government is] considering further proposals based recommendations from the Parliamentary subcommittee on crime and violence, the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force and other outside agencies.” Considering. Wow!

You know, that area came into play because an Honourable Member on that side had the courage to say, *We need to do something collectively here and let's have the Joint Select Committee*. And had it not been for the Honourable Randy Horton pushing it, it probably would not have happened. But thank heaven it did because a number of us got together from both sides and had what was a very meaningful in-depth

study with regard to what we need to do to address some of these issues in crime.

So the things came out about community policing. I have advocated for years that we need to do that. We still have not got to the right stage where we need to be, but it is on the table. Shot stopper. Here is the problem with the technology though, because this is what seems to go on. You come up with all these great technological ideas, like tagging, and then you go through a farcical tendering process where the company that really is not the best qualified company to get the job, gets the massive contract. Same thing with CCTV; that is what has happened.

So all of these things that we have come up with, the great ideas, once they become a business spin . . . look at the people that get the contracts. Look at the people that got those contracts. Look at the process, Mr. Acting Speaker, that was involved in awarding the tagging contract, the electronic monitoring programme. I know, because I wrote that for a committee. So I know what that programme was supposed to do. I know what it was supposed to do and how it was supposed to work.

I knew who was the best company to get the job from overseas. I knew that that company was not available to be in partnerships with certain people here, so they were the number two choice—the choice that is being sued in Florida that cannot even get the equipment to work right. So here is a clairvoyant view for you, Mr. Acting Speaker, all that money that has been spent on handing over an expensive tagging contract to a local company—a local company, with question marks over and above the tendering processes about how they got it—that equipment is not going to work as well as it should, if it works properly at all.

Yes, I hear a lot of silence. So watch how that one goes because then we will probably be having somebody else who may be resigning when all of that darkness comes to light, as opposed to how that goes on. So even with something as fundamental and as important as dealing with the crime issue gets snatched away in controversy because there is money to be made off of the technological aspects of it. We could have—

The Acting Speaker: Be presenting some proof on that when we come to that item on the debate, right?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Absolutely!

The Acting Speaker: Because you seem to have a lot of inside knowledge.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I have a lot of insight.

The Acting Speaker: Well, okay.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: You know what? You know what, Mr. Acting Speaker, I tend not to speak when I do not have the facts to substantiate things.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So that is coming. And you know why it was so quiet when I spoke on that, Mr. Acting Speaker? Because nobody wanted to challenge me on that one.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So that is going to come. That is down the pipeline. Watch this space.

But here is the issue: We could really address those things that came out of that committee, but what has happened is that the Government has not managed its money very well, so it cannot address all of them as it needs to happen.

And then the other thing is that they are not really sure how to implement everything else that has gone on in a particular way, and the way that it has come to light. So all the good ideas that have come out of that, one has to worry about whether they are actually going to come to fruition or whether we are going to spend years on a long-term plan of actually trying to get something done when we really need to get it done now. It was a good idea—

The Acting Speaker: Well, let us see what happens when that particular item is debated.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Well, that and another one. So they are going to be debated.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, it is. It is on the Order Paper.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Well, let me just say this. But you know what? Here is another point, Mr. Acting Speaker—

The Acting Speaker: The report.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: About being debated, yes, it is on . . . with regard to being used in . . . I was talking about tagging, specifically. All right?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Well, I do not know what you are referring to.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: You were on page 16.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Yes, I am.

The Acting Speaker: The Inter-Agency Gang Task Force. That is where you started.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is not what I was talking about. What I was talking about was with regard to contracts being given out.

The Acting Speaker: Okay, go on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I do not think there was a contract on that one. If there is, we will see who gets it; but I do not think there is.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Yes, tie it in.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is why I am referring—

The Acting Speaker: Go ahead. Go ahead. Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is why I have gone through it specifically like that, to tie it in. Because there were concerns being raised that, you know, these are the things that are being followed now. That is why I am being specific about it.

Inter-Agency Task Force and so on—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Fine. We just have to see how it is going to work. The ideas have been out there, but it does not help support what it is that you are saying you want to do when, in a time of heightened crime, you substantially decrease the police budget. People sit back and go, *Huh? How could that be?* That you could substantially decrease it at a time—

Hon. Wayne N.M. Perinchief: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: We have a point of order from the Minister.

Minister Perinchief, your point of order is?

POINT OF ORDER

[Clarification]

Hon. Wayne N.M. Perinchief: Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the police budget, the operational budget of the police was not cut. The police were able to continue the operational responsibilities by deferring and exchanging training programmes with schedules and also by cutting back on overtime.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Wayne N.M. Perinchief: So the operational capability of the police service was not compromised. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you for that clarification, directly from the Minister responsible.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Directly from the Minister responsible. I have a lot of respect for what we discussed. But I noticed he had to use the word “deferring” as well, which is a favourite of the Government, right? “Deferring.”

The budget was still cut. The budget was still cut, so it might have deferred it. And you know what?

The Acting Speaker: He has already given the explanation that covered that area.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is why we use the word “deferred.”

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: But the police are doing the best that they can. You have to give them that. They are working with what they have got and they are doing the best that they can.

The Acting Speaker: Carry on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you so much.

You know what? It is a good thing to see because we called for it for some time, that we are going to address . . . and this is something we raised a long time ago. I certainly have stood in this House and raised it. That we are going to address the issue of tolerance with regard to impaired driving.

Now what I put forward when I was here before . . . and I was surprised that I did not see some detail on it in the Throne Speech, Mr. Acting Speaker, but this is what we would do and this is what we would like to see. How about zero tolerance for drunk driving? Zero tolerance like they do in other countries. If you get stopped you have a roadside test, which is a little roadside breath metre.

Now, it causes me concern because that means we are going to have to get some technology and then we are getting into the whole thing with regard to who gets the contract and has the devices again. But let's say we get them, okay, and they are effective. You have those; you get stopped; you blow; and if you are over at all, you get fined. And there is a graduating scale, Mr. Acting Speaker, like they do in Europe and all these other places that have been shown to reduce road fatalities. And you set that up and you save lives and you save young lives.

I said that in this place for the last four years, and set that plan out. So that is what an OBA Government will do, and that is how we will set it up. We

are not going to just say things like, *We are going to show less tolerance for impaired driving offences*. We are going to say how we are going to do it. And how we are going to do it is have a zero tolerance position as an idea going forward. And then we bring in a graduating scale, right up to imprisonment for the more serious offences, which is what we have now. But you start with zero tolerance where people have to be more vigilant and you have the roadside test which is an indicator as to whether a person is over the limit. You make all that law work.

It is right there to be done, Mr. Acting Speaker, right there to be done! We could do that in a month because we can lift it—like we do with a lot of provisions—from the place where it works. You know, right-thinking countries are always happy . . . you can share legislation from anywhere. Go on the Internet and pull it down. So you do not have to, with these types of things, get into all of this stuff about, *We are going to take it under advisement. We are going to have a long-term plan*. Those are the types of things where people are dying, where you have got a problem on your road that calls for action.

It is not the first time we heard from this Government that they were going to address drunk driving issues—12 years, 13 years in Government now, nothing has happened. So here you have got the latest, the 13th Throne Speech, and we are talking about this time our position is, *We are less tolerant*. Well, I thought you were less tolerant all along, but you have not done anything about it. You have not done anything about it, so why don't you make something happen and stop this position of, *We are just going to consider ideas backwards and forwards in regard to what we are going to do next*.

“Accountability is a high priority for the Government of Bermuda. It has sent a strong and unequivocal message that it has zero tolerance for behaviour and practices that do not accord with the highest standards of good governance.

“Accordingly, the Government will introduce legislation to enable public authorities including the Director of Internal Audit and the Auditor General to ‘follow the money’ . . .”

Wow! There is a good idea. But there is a good idea that people were jumping up and down and hollering for 13 years ago. That was part of the criticism before, and before, and before!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That's all right. I am not afraid to say that because you cannot sit there and say “and before.” But if you called for it when you came into power in 1998 . . . it was going on, you should have fixed it right then and there; not waited 13 years and said, *Now, we are going to*. If that was your allegation, then put the stamp on that. Put the stamp on it right there and then.

The Acting Speaker: So you are commending the Government for having it in the Throne Speech?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Commending? No. No. With respect, I am going to say that I am going to commend them for being there at last. It is like the song, *At last*. I am glad it is there—at last.

And with regard to certain things that probably brought this idea to light, because we had certain court cases where everybody had to sit back and go, *Oh, wow, we are missing some serious checks and balances*. That did not switch the light on for the Government because the one thing that was obvious was that they knew about that years ago—years ago. It is just that it was not public then, it was not public. But in time you were all aware of it. You knew about what the checks and balances weren't, with regard to how you dealt with the money. So do not make it sound like this is suddenly a brainwave because something came to light. In the court system—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Minister Burgess is raising a point of order on your last comments.

Minister Burgess, you have the floor.

POINT OF ORDER

[Clarification]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Acting Speaker, that Honourable Member would know that politicians, Ministers, do not sign cheques. They do not even see cheques of who has been paid and who has not been paid.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I did not say that!

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: You are insinuating that we knew what was going on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: No. No.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: We are not the prosecutors. That is why the then Premier brought in Scotland Yard to investigate. That is how far this Government went.

The Acting Speaker: Excellent clarification, sir. Thank you very much for that clarification.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: With respect, no it is not an excellent clarification. That is not what the position is, Mr. Acting Speaker, that is not an excellent clarification whatsoever.

The Acting Speaker: Go on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is not an excellent—

The Acting Speaker: Go on!

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —clarification.

The Acting Speaker: Go on! He gave a clarification on it, on what you were stating. Go on. Go on.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: It does not make it “excellent” just because he gave it, with respect.

The Acting Speaker: He gave the facts.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: As the Minister, yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: He gave the facts. I never said anything about anybody signing cheques. Heaven forbid. I am saying . . . and let me say this—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Let me say this! There are two things here, Mr. Acting Speaker: either you are not aware as to what is going on, which makes it dumb; or you are aware of what is going on, which would make it corrupt. Heaven forbid! I am not saying it is corrupt, but if it is dumb that is unacceptable as well. Both are unacceptable. And nobody cares why the pilot crashed the plane—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —because he was stupid.

The Acting Speaker: We have another point of order from the Deputy. Mr. Pettingill, thank you.

POINT OF ORDER

[Unparliamentary language]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Acting Speaker, I know that Honourable Member has been brought up better than that. He used that type of language in this House, unparliamentary language. Who does he think he is?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am talking about the pilot of the plane.

The Acting Speaker: Wait a minute; he has not finished his . . . go on.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: He must start to respect Members of this House, right? He is not down

below in that court. And when he is down there, he must conduct himself in the proper manner down there. And this is no different.

Come on, Mark, you know better than that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Yeah, yeah. Well, let me tell my Cousin Derrick something.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Pettingill, can we—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: The trouble is because of what is going on. Respect?

The Acting Speaker: We are going to stick to the Throne Speech. You were on page 19.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: If you do not show respect over a period of time it starts to wane no matter how you are brought up. You can only take so much. And the time to call it like it is, is now!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Now, Mr. Acting Speaker. Now is the time to call it like it is.

It has nothing to do with disrespect. I respect that Honourable Member and all the Honourable Members of this House. All of them, particularly, many of them are my friends. I love them individually.

My point has been that as a collective, they are a bad management team. A bad management team and it is time to go. And this Throne Speech reflects bad management of the past, and that you do not have a vision for good management of the future. And there is no disrespect in that. There is no disrespect in that; it is just an observation—an observation that I think is shared by many right-thinking people in this country. How could it not be!

How could it not be! That is all that it is. That is all it is and maybe it is a bit shocking because I sound, for once, like I am speaking harshly. And it is not a nice thing to sound like you are speaking harshly, but at some point you have got to talk the talk about the way that it is. It has got to reflect what people are seeing. It has got to reflect what you are doing.

It all flows from the fact that you cannot just gloss and sugar-coat over it all, and blame it on other things, like world economy, and this and that. You have got to take some responsibility for where the ship is at. And if you want to keep sailing it you have got to give some real plan and direction as to how you are going to do it. And the difficulty that arises is that people have lost trust and have lost faith in the ability of this Government to manage the ship.

An Hon. Member: So you think.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is all I am saying.

An Hon. Member: So you think.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: That is right. So I think. So I think, and I intend to stand on that. But I intend to do it, Mr. Acting Speaker, by highlighting the facts of what has not been done, what needs to be done and what this Government does not have a plan to do. That is what it is about.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So let's look at this. Here we go. So now we throw out things like . . . Here are the Bills that are coming: The Criminal Code Amendment Act 2011. Okay, to say what? A Sexual Offenders Act 2011, to say what? Prisons Amendment, Protected Species Amendment, Waste and Litter, Establishment of Taxi Authority, Public Nuisance Legislation and the Electronic Monitoring. Okay, all good stuff. You know . . . and let's actually see what comes from it.

You know what? It has not been a pleasure to make this speech, because I have stood up here and been caned for supporting this Government. Caned before, because I took the position where, *No, no, I think they are right on this. I think they are right on this, and I agree with that*, and all the rest of it. The one thing—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Not you.

The one thing that I, Mr. Acting Speaker . . . and the way I was raised, if the Honourable Member wants to talk about that, is standing on the integrity to call it as I see it and to try and endeavour to base that on the facts.

This Throne Speech demonstrates quite clearly what has not been done, and it does not set a clear path with regard to what needs to be done. There should be more resignations. Frankly, the whole Government should resign.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognises Minister Wayne Perinchief.

Members, please!

Minister Perinchief, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I welcome the opportunity to actually reply to the Throne Speech Reply by the [venerable] Opposition leader. However, I just want to deal with some of the issues that were raised by the [Member] that just took his seat.

He was very specific in dealing with what he considered to be inefficiencies in the police service. And I notice that on page 10 of the Reply to the Throne Speech—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Point of order, right away before we go anywhere. Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

The Acting Speaker: Point of order, Minister Perinchief, if you can take your seat.

Hold on. Wait a minute. I have not acknowledged you. Thank you.

Mr. Pettingill, now you may start. Thank you.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I have been pulled up a lot today. Let me say this. I never said anything about inefficiencies in the Bermuda Police Force. I have the highest regard for them.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I talked about inefficiencies in the Government not supporting the Bermuda Police Force. So let's get it right from the outset. Nobody mentioned inefficiencies with the Bermuda Police Force—certainly not me, because I hold them in the highest regard.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Minister Perinchief.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Nevertheless, his comments, the Member opposite, about the police service meant the same thing, yes?

And on page 10, I want to refer to the Reply to the Throne Speech made by the Member opposite, the Opposition Leader. On page 10, he says, Mr. Acting Speaker, "Fear of crime has worked its way deep into the daily lives of Bermudians" et cetera, et cetera. It says, "Seniors are locked in their homes" et cetera. "Our quality of life is under siege." And I say to this: Not true. Not true.

Earlier today I gave a Ministerial Statement which clearly showed that in June and July of this year a random telephone interview with the representative of some of Bermuda's residents age 18 years and older was conducted to determine the public's views on the activities of the Bermuda police service in the community. I read this. It was tabled this morning, Mr. Acting Speaker. And what it said was that with the increased contact with the police in the community, it has been positively received, and 42 per cent of those persons who had a positive experience with the police indicate that personal, helpful service from officers was the reason. And they described the Bermuda po-

lice service as professional, respectful, and courageous.

And furthermore, one of the most significant findings of this study is that 67 per cent of respondents expressed a level of interest in neighbourhood involvement as a means to address crime. And furthermore, 83 per cent of respondents in the study were either completely satisfied or were at a high level of satisfaction with the police. So it clearly shows that this Government and the police, and the support we give to the police, is highly satisfactory. And I just wanted to start off with that.

I also notice in the Reply to the Throne Speech on page 11, that the Honourable OBA says that they will equip police with the resources and support they need to get the job done, including full-time presence of parish constables in our neighbourhoods. Well, community action teams are—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne N.M. Perinchief: —yes, parish constables. So there seems to me to be a misunderstanding of the role of the police, certainly, if not the nomenclature. But, nevertheless, giving them the position that they are the Opposition and they are a new party, they will work out these wrinkles in time.

But I want to at this point go back to the very first page of the Reply to the Throne Speech 2011 and quote from that worthy document. I quote the Honourable Craig Cannonier. He said, "It is an exciting moment. This is my maiden speech as a Member of Parliament; it is also my first as Leader of the Opposition." And I might add this: It will not be his last as Leader of the Opposition.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: What I want to point out is that there are several parts of this response that I wish to bring to the notice of the public.

I see that on page two, the venerable Member on the other side, the Opposition Leader, says that he sees much in the Throne Speech by the Government that they could support. He says, "We see much we could support, including many ideas borrowed from us." They allege.

Well, I suppose . . . and they [say], "We agree on the need to re-train people, and pray the programmes being assembled will open new doors for them." They agree with the career and job training, et cetera, et cetera.

"Hotel concessions tied to the hiring of Bermudian entertainers are good. We agree with health insurance reform that minimises up-front payments . . ." And so on and so on.

"We support the review proposed for the 60/40 business ownership rule . . ." And it goes on and on.

"We welcome a referendum on gambling. It is important to let people decide important issues by way of referendum."

You know, I am reading this document and I agree with a lot of it—*big pause*. It supports this Government! And, you know, I can understand why. I can understand why because, you know, having been in governance for going on 14 years now, the Progressive Labour Party has consistently developed strategies and put in place corrections to the position we found in 1998.

And, you know, I cannot help but go back to 1998. And again, on page 3, a quotation by the loyal Opposition Leader triggers a response from me. And, you know, I looked at a passage, at a particular paragraph, and I read it and it sounds like something that was lifted from the pages of why the PLP won in 1990 against UBP. "The gap between its initial promise and its record is significant and telling." The UBP.

"This is a Government that became too comfortable in power." The UBP. It is speaking in the past now, you know. We are staying in power, it cannot be talking about us.

"Glaring mistakes were made and things went wrong," as were acknowledged. "Accountability, the foundation of any successful democracy, was never applied. The disconnection, the complacency, the arrogance and excesses are all signs of a Government that doesn't think it will ever lose power . . ." Now that was the UBP. That is why we won. That is why we are going to hold on to power. That is why we are not going to make those mistakes.

And, you know, as I go through this document, I recognise that there is a real struggle and a difficulty of the OBA to actually try to change the paradigm of politics in this country. And while I think that in some aspects there are some visions, I do not think that the whole vision has crystallised and been put into any practical plan.

And on page four it says, "Mr. Speaker, the OBA will change the political culture of this Island to one that is more collaborative, less confrontational." Well, what did we just hear from the Member who just took his seat? Was that collaborative?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Was that confrontational?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Of course it was!

Where is the new paradigm? Nothing has changed.

And he goes to say, "The key is to lead by example." That was not the example that we would want to follow. Same old, same old.

And, you know, I can only say that it must be very difficult for the Opposition to actually bring about a new paradigm. And I would feel sympathetic except that I do not believe that the OBA is much different from the party that it replaced in Opposition. And I do believe that they will remain in Opposition as long—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Well, this is . . . oh, oh. This is the Reply to the Throne Speech, sir. I am reading straight from the pages. Right from the page of the OBA's Reply to the Throne Speech.

I am going to go down to another quotation on page five, Mr. Acting Speaker. "Mr. Speaker, our aim is to break the confrontational cycle of politics and move Bermuda into an era of collaboration." They repeat it again. And they explain that, "Collaboration does not mean setting aside our, or any other party's chief responsibility as the Official Opposition."

Well, you know, I am glad they described themselves as the official Opposition—where they will and shall remain for many, many years—because I do not believe that any of us here on this side intend to either hand over power or do anything in governance that will cause the Opposition to gain power.

I must go through this document and highlight things that literally jumped off the page at me. On page eight, "Mr. Speaker, the high cost of this Government is borne each day by Bermudians and our customers." And I am reading it verbatim. "It has made us less competitive. To reduce the cost of Government over time, we would freeze the size of the civil service and reduce it through attrition."

You know, I want to say this about the civil service. Our civil service, as in every democratic government that is based on the Westminster system, that has a civil service . . . governments come, governments go. Politicians come, politicians go. But the civil service remains. That is the strength of this system. That is the strength of it, that the civil service maintains its stability and the consistency of delivery of all the promises and all the support systems that make your Government effective.

We may very well think of some other democracies, some other countries to the south of us, some particularly independent ones that have dispensed with or thrown out their civil services. And when the government changes, when the party of the day changes, the entire system is thrown on its head and it is flipped. Bus drivers, who have a job today, do not have a job tomorrow; garbage workers, who have a job today, do not have a job tomorrow. Everything changes so many of those countries do not have progress. They do not progress because of the constant flipping and changing of the entire government process. Without that stabilising force of a consistent and a constant civil service, they never progress above a certain level.

I would say that a strength of our democracy and our system is that we do maintain our civil service, and respect our civil service. And let me say this, any government that seeks to remove our civil service . . . most of them are our people. They are people who could not get employment in the private sector, [people who] had degrees when they came back from college. They could not get jobs in the private sector because of discrimination. Now that is a historical fact. And these people, who are extremely effective, who in actual fact, are actually weaned away from the civil service into the private sector because of their expertise, are a tremendous asset to this Government and to this country, and to the stability of this country.

So I would not like to hear anybody malign the civil service and say that they are going to either downsize them or get rid of them. Okay?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: I was anticipating that point of order. Hold on. I was anticipating that.

Have a seat, please, Minister.

Dr. Gibbons, you have the floor on a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Which is?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: The Honourable Member is taking extreme liberties with the text of the Reply. There is no maligning of the civil service there. There is no getting rid of the civil service. That is not what the document says. The Honourable Member is going to a bridge too far. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: You are quoting from page eight, where you say, "To reduce the cost of government over time, we would freeze the size of the civil service and reduce it through attrition."

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: I will leave it at that. That is the written word and I will leave it like that.

I will go through this document further, and I know my time is limited. I dealt with crime and I will—

The Acting Speaker: I think there is a time limit.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: There is no time limit on this. Not that we want you speak all night.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Well, if you want to state what this time limit is, I am going to get through my part.

The Acting Speaker: Make your points, Minister. Go on.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: I am going to make my points.

Now you know, Mr. Acting Speaker, I, like everybody in this House, especially of my vintage, have been . . . well, actually, warned or cautioned. You tread very lightly when you deal with race in this country.

In fact, my good friend, Dr. Eva Hodgson, who I love dearly, has often accused this Government of treading very lightly on the issue of race. And, you know, after being in Government for 14 years, I recognise that race is a touchy issue. Times have changed since we took over governance and race is not really a topic or a subject that could be used, I would say, for political gain.

And while many of us like to, sort of, I suppose, go down memory lane and we tell and recount some of our experiences, which have been not too good with our confrontations and our problems over race, and for a party and a group of people who claim to be, well, not so focused on race, I find it rather unusual on page 17 . . . and you know I missed the speech myself, verbatim. I had to read it. I missed the speech. I was actually not in the House at the time. [I was] making a speech of my own. Nevertheless, I would have liked to have heard how this was put over because, you know, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition did say, "Growing up I was taught that my success was based upon hard work and good character." That is right.

"At the same time, I was taunted with the fact that life was not an even playing field for black boys and black girls. I was told to keep quiet, do not rock the boat, and everything will be all right." That is the Preamble. That is the opening paragraph. And right through the entire discourse, two to three pages, actually, the main focus is the disparity between black and white.

So, you know, the fourth paragraph says, "While growing up, I was disturbed by the glaring economic disparity between blacks and whites. Looking at the Bermuda skyline you could not name a handful of great buildings owned by black men in a country with a majority black population. I felt uneasy walking in certain neighbourhoods that were known to be for whites only, and was fearful I would be told to leave."

It goes on and on. You know, I actually believe that this could be the basis of a very good book, and I am not going to malign it. I am not . . . no, no, no. I am not going to malign it because this is and was the experience of many of us. But I still have to question whether it has a place in 2011 in the first state-

ment made by a party that is dedicated to bringing about change.

Now I do not see where in any way that is going to be addressed. What I will expect now that race has been, not just touched upon, but made a centrepiece, a centrepiece of the very first Reply to the Throne Speech by the Opposition, that these disparities . . . I will be looking very closely and so will many others, that all of the things that have been pointed out . . . and you know, I do not disagree with the context or the intent of this particular . . . I cannot. I cannot make value judgment on this part of the Reply.

However, it is something that the leader of the Opposition is very well aware of, has honed in and focused on. And I expect . . . and I will hold him, and so will the Bermudian public hold him, to a standard. We will hold him to a promise to change many of the things that he has stated has been an anathema to his development in this country. He set the tone. We will now watch and see how he delivers.

And thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker, for your indulgence.

The Acting Speaker: That was a bit short. I was quite enjoying that. You were . . . I was expecting a little more.

Do we have any other speakers?

The Chair recognises Dr. the Honourable E. G. Gibbons, JP, MP, Shadow Minister of Education still?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Correct.

The Acting Speaker: Paget West, constituency 22, you have the floor.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Paget East, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Paget East.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you for that nonetheless.

The Acting Speaker: Sure.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I am going to spend quite a bit of my time speaking about education and as you did introduce me as the Shadow Minister for Education. But I would like to just begin by touching on a couple of comments that the last speaker began when he stood up about 15 minutes ago. And it is not to be necessarily critical, but I think he did raise some issues in terms of what he saw as a difference between the collaborative tone (if I can put it that way) that was struck in the Reply

and perhaps the tone (at least as he saw it) from the Honourable Member, Mr. Pettingill.

I would just like to go back to one of the comments that he did focus on in the Reply, which is (and I am quoting from the Reply), "Collaboration does not mean setting aside our, or any other party's chief responsibility as the Official Opposition. Constructive criticism lies at the core of democracy." And I think what my colleague, Mr. Pettingill, was trying to do was to say that you have to hold a government accountable. And, certainly, he did use the Throne Speech to work through some of those issues, such as, the lighting in Global House and some of the other projects that the Government has entered into where, clearly, Government has to be held accountable.

I do not need to prolong the discussion on this because I am going to, certainly in my own way, try and hold Government accountable for some of the progress—or lack of progress—in the field of public education.

I think it is important to recognise that there is certainly a balance here. It is an issue that I think the OBA is trying to get at, which is, that simply opposing for the sake of opposing is not terribly constructive. I think we all are rather sensitive to this issue, that all we do is argue and bicker up here. And I think the new Opposition Leader was trying to set out very clearly that, certainly as an observer of this process over the last couple of years, he would like to take it in a slightly different direction. That is not to say, at all, that we are going to roll over and simply accept everything that the Government does, or that we will agree with everything that Government does. But where there is agreement, and where we think a programme makes sense, or is appropriate, we will do our best to support it.

Now, there is also a distinction here between supporting a proposal, supporting an initiative and supporting good ideas, and being able to execute them. One of the challenges that this Government has certainly had over the last 13 years is that ability to execute. There has been a lack—and that is clearly true in education—of effective leadership to put a plan forward and more forward in it to be able to actually deliver on promises made. We all know that the Government is very sensitive to this issue of making promises and not delivering. And one of the jobs of Opposition, clearly, is to say, *Look, you promised that a number of years ago and you have not delivered so far.*

I would like to just use that as a bit of a starting off point in terms of the response to the Speech from the Throne itself. I am going to go to page two, initially, Mr. Acting Speaker, where the Government talks about job creation is "job one." I am right in the middle of page two. It talks about, "The plan makes clear that job creation is 'job one'. Your Government is committed not to job creation soon or job creation as soon as possible, but to job creation now."

Now certainly from, I guess a conceptual framework, we on this side support that. But I have to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is an extraordinary amount of irony in this particular comment that “job one” for Government is going to be job creation. Because as my Honourable colleague, Mr. Pettingill, quite rightly said, this Government has basically overseen a consistent loss of Bermudian jobs since the year 2000. We all understand that there has been a loss of Bermudian jobs in the last couple of years. Obviously with tourism, and some of the impact that we have seen, there has been an accelerated loss of Bermudian jobs.

But the simple fact of the matter is, if you look at the data—and this is not my data, Mr. Acting Speaker, but if you look at the data from Statistics—if you look at the year 2000, there were some 2,881 Bermudian jobs. This year we are looking at 2,665. That is basically . . . sorry, 26,265. That is basically a loss of over 2,500 jobs. And that last data point I gave you was for the year 2010.

Mr. Acting Speaker: What is the report that you are quoting from?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: I am quoting from the Economic Review and Labour Survey.

Mr. Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Every year they come out with statistics—

Mr. Acting Speaker: Yes.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: —on the number of jobs held by Bermudians. And if you actually graph it, what you will see is that there has been a consistent decline almost every year since the year 2000. It is not just the last couple of years.

So, when we say we are supportive of Government’s initiatives, the difficulty we have is Government makes promises and they are unable to deliver. They have basically, as I said, overseen the greatest loss of Bermudian jobs in recent history in basically the last 10 years now. So, when we hear that job creation is “job one,” I hate to say it, but I think we need to say, *Well, show us. Demonstrate it, because you have not up to this point.*

Now the Government has been pretty good at creating jobs for non-Bermudians. Since that year 2000 there have been a lot of jobs created for non-Bermudians. We have lost some of those jobs in the last couple of years, so there has been actually a net job loss for everybody. But the fact of the matter is, Bermudian jobs, by and large, have declined since the year 2000. Irrefutable facts that are simply there from the Statistics Department.

Now, one of the issues that this raises is that the Government suddenly finds itself, and I guess the word would be, in an “unholy” scramble to try and create jobs and to try and play catch-up. Because what we are seeing now, Mr. Acting Speaker, is a serious mismatch between the jobs that are available and the skills that Bermudians have. And that gets me directly into this issue of education.

This is not an issue that just arose in the last year or so. And some of these programmes the Government has been talking about, whether the Cisco Initiative, the one we were talking about with wait staff today, or Job Corps, or even career academies, this is a last-minute scramble to now try and react to what has clearly been an accelerated loss of Bermudian jobs in the last few years. Because I think when they talked about job creation as “job one,” we are not talking about non-Bermudian jobs here; we are talking about Bermudian jobs.

But the issue, Mr. Acting Speaker, as I think you will well be aware, this issue of a mismatch between the types of jobs that are available and the skills of Bermudians is not a new issue. In fact, you may recall a debate back in 2009 where we talked about the paper that was produced by the Employers’ Council. In fact, it was written by Larry Burchall. It talked about the shift in the types of jobs. So even back in 2009 we were already talking about the mismatch between what we were preparing young Bermudians for and the jobs that were increasingly available.

But it does not go back to 2009. There is even a report back in 2004/05. In one of the Statements earlier on today, I think it was the Honourable Member, Patrice Minors, who talked about the Arnold Group. There was a very clear indication in 2004/05 that there was a shift in the types of jobs in our economy from blue-collar retail (types of jobs that did not require, what I will call, a tremendous amount of training or education), to jobs that required college degrees, jobs that required a lot more training. And I am not talking about, necessarily, an underwriter or things of that sort.

When you start to look at some of the technical jobs in our community which we have been talking about for many years now, what you see is these technical jobs—whether they be a mason, a chef, whatever they may be—that require a lot more training and a lot more skills than they ever did before. And that is one of the issues that we are facing right now. The simple fact of the matter is, unfortunately, the Government did not react soon enough. Some of the programmes they are talking about now with the Cisco programme, the Job Corps, the waiter . . . had the Government actually started to move on those jobs, for example, when Professor Mincy mentioned Job Corps back in 2008/09, the Government would be in a lot better shape now and we would not be in this, really, this unholy scramble to try and do our best to

catch people up when they should have been trained way back when.

I think the issue is really telling when you start to look at some of the other statistics that are out there. For example . . . and this is fairly recent data, this is 2010. And I think some of these numbers, not the 2010 numbers, but 2004, 2005, 2006 numbers, have come to this House before. I know because I have read them out in House when we were talking about technical education.

But one of my favourite ones, for example . . . and this is basically a report that is available recently, it is the Employment Survey Tabulation Set, the Department of Statistics 2011. It refers to 2010 data. The number of chefs, sous chefs, chefs de partie, and executive chefs, if you add them all up, is about 900. You are nodding your head, Mr. Acting Speaker. You know exactly where I am going here. The fact of the matter is that in 2010 over 80 per cent of these jobs were filled by non-Bermudians.

So when we say we are supportive of these kinds of programmes, what we are really trying to say is, *Why didn't Government start years ago to look at this?* And it is not just sous chefs, it is nurses. I mean, you have butchers here, 87 per cent of butchers are non-Bermudian. You have bakers and mixers, 81 per cent. Masons, I mean, that is a job that a lot of Bermudians do really well. There are some very skilled Bermudian masons out there. But of the 610 masons that are listed in 2010, 67 per cent—over 400—are non-Bermudian.

These are the kinds of issues that I think you just throw up your hands and you say, *You know, it's all very nice to come to this House with these kinds of programmes, but it's too little too late.* We should have been doing what many on this side of the House have been talking about, and even some on that side have been talking about, which is taking a serious approach to an integrated technical education.

And we all know the story here. The Technical Institute demonstrated exactly that you cannot start this kind of programme in the senior school. You have got to start in middle school level. And that is why as part of our Throne Speech Reply once again we have said we need to have an integrated technical education programme. It needs to start in the middle school level, and needs to go all the way through to Bermuda College. It is absolutely crystal clear.

We have many young Bermudians out there coming through the school system and they are not getting exposed to technical education. Everybody should be exposed to technical education as they come through the school system. Some may wish to specialise in it, but you have got to get that grounding in early.

I will say it: The Government has had 13 years. We get all kinds of whining and moaning about the Technical Institute—which is more than 30 years old now—but the Government has had plenty of time

to move on a proper technical education programme and they have not. And you reap what you sow, Mr. Acting Speaker. And what we are finding now is that this scramble to train up waiters and to put Cisco in place, and Job Corps and all the rest of it, is a simple cause and effect relationship between what Government failed to do, going back with the technical education programme.

Let me talk a little bit about this Cisco programme as well. I think this is a good programme, certainly conceptually we support it. We kind of wish that we were not following Jamaica on this; they are not exactly leaders in the area of training and retraining. But the sad fact of the matter is, Mr. Acting Speaker, that when you talk about IT in Bermuda, once again we have missed the boat.

If you have been following this carefully (and I am sure you probably have to some degree, you are working for a larger employer) you will know that a large number of employers, because of the difficulty of getting trained people in the IT area, a number of years ago started to move out their back office, or IT programme, overseas. So what you have here is you have a training programme, there are IT jobs available, but a lot of them have been simply expatriated out of here to Canada, to Ireland, to other places because of the immigration and term-limit policies of this Government. And that was the comment; that was the point that my Honourable colleague, Mr. Bob Richards, was making.

So I think this is great. I think we should have been doing it a number of years ago. But what you are going to find is a lot of these young people (I hate to say it; I do not mean to be a pessimist coming through this) will be frustrated because they will find that the jobs that were here a couple of years ago are no longer here. They are in Dublin, they are in Nova Scotia, they are in other places. In fact, there are an awful lot of them now in India, if you talk to some of the reinsurers about where a lot of their back office IT systems are done.

So, again, too little too late. Too slow. Good idea, but, why didn't you do it a number of years ago? Again, I go back to the Throne Speech. I was on page two. I will move over to page three. They talk about a new one-stop career centre. I said to myself, *That sounds familiar.* And I went back and I looked and I found that basically in the 2008 Throne Speech they were talking about a one-stop career centre then. Again, you make a promise. You do certain things. You do not follow all the way through, and you are talking about it again three years later. This is the kind of thing that we are talking about. Good intentions, the ideas are good—some of them are ours, some of them are theirs—but the problem is if your leadership is ineffective and you are unable to actually deliver, then what good does it do anybody?

So again, I come back to a very basic point here that the job creation may be “job one” for the cur-

rent Government. But let's be honest here. This is the Government that has presided over the largest loss in Bermudian jobs in recent history. How do you expect a Government that has presided over such a loss to actually be able to deliver on a promise like this? I think it is a bad bet, Mr. Acting Speaker.

If you talk about those financial service disclaimers, you will see "past performance is no indicator of future performance." I think in many cases you know darn well that what that means is you are not going to invest in a fund which has been losing money for the last 10 years—and that is exactly what is going on here. I think the people of this country, the voters, are going to have to decide whether they want to continue with a group that has presided over a huge loss in Bermudian jobs and, as we can see, waited too long—too long—to actually go about (as one Member said a little bit earlier) the retooling and the re-skilling that needs to go on.

So those are some of the issues that I think I wanted us to talk about here on that score.

I think there are some other things that I would like to address as well. And the problem with too much paper is you are kind of looking for it when you want to find it. And I will find it. Here we go.

I am going to talk a little bit more about education now as well because it is not just the question of young Bermudians going through our school system and graduating. It is also a question, as we have talked about on a number of occasions, of what are the standards that they are meeting. And, Mr. Acting Speaker, you may remember a letter to the editor, going back a few weeks, which talked about the issue of young Bermudians who sat the Bermuda College placement exams, which I think are at least once a year. But, basically, these placement exams are given by Bermuda College to both CedarBridge and Berkeley students. It basically gives them a sense of where they should place at Bermuda College if they wish to matriculate there.

Now, the letter basically said that this particular individual . . . and I am not going to use the name because I think it does not matter, but it is a fairly well-known individual. But they said that a family member of theirs had graduated from CedarBridge without any issues or problems whatsoever, as had a number of their friends. And they took the Bermuda College Assessment and Placement Test. But what they found out was that when they actually took the test they placed very poorly.

There are three levels of Bermuda College. There are college level courses. There are college prep courses, which means you are not quite at a college level yet. And there are basic skills courses. And I do not know the precise number, but I am led to believe that a fairly large proportion of CedarBridge graduates that actually took the College Assessment and Placement Test were in the college prep courses, or worse, in the basic skills courses.

Now, this gets us to the issue of standards. Because if you have a more than 90 per cent graduation rate and you cannot even place at a college level from CedarBridge, and a major proportion are placing at a basic skills level, that calls into serious question the standard that we are operating at.

So one of the issues that we need to address in addition to getting the Cambridge Curriculum in place, is that we need a national standard here. We need to be able to say that when somebody graduates from the Berkeley Institute or the CedarBridge Academy, they have a standard which we can count on. And they should be able to place at least in the college level courses or at least college prep courses and not have to go through remedial basics skills courses if they have graduated.

Now I know the Berkeley student has two levels of graduation certificate, but I think this is something that needs to be looked at.

I am going to say it right now—we have said it before—we need a national standard here. And we need an international standard. It could be the British standard, which I think the high school and Warwick use. I think Mount Saint Agnes may use a Canadian national standard. But we need a national standard because it has got to mean something if you graduate. You can have a 98 per cent graduation rate, but it is meaningless if it does not really prepare these young people to either go into the workforce or even go to our own Bermuda College over here. So there are some very basic issues that need to be dealt with on that particular level.

Now, one of the other things that we have spoken about on this side, that you will be aware of, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the need for an independent standards board. Many countries have done this. The UK, New Zealand, Hong Kong have all got an independent standards board because we need to restore trust in educational testing results. We need to restore trust in what graduating really means. You cannot have the Ministry, the same one who sets the test, who sets the standards, and who runs the schools be the ones telling you whether people met the standards or not, because sometimes there is selected information which is released. Not all the information gets released. Sometimes people simply do not believe it. So what other countries have done, they have set up an independent standards board to effectively set out a group which is completely independent of Ministry of Education which looks—

Mr. Acting Speaker: Smaller countries as well?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Smaller countries.

Mr. Acting Speaker: Such as?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Well, Singapore, for example. But in Singapore, you lose your hand if you cook the books, so . . .

[Laughter]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: But New Zealand is an example.

But, again, it is one of those things that I believe, frankly, there is a lot of mistrust in the information that has been coming out. And I think we need to restore that trust because we need everybody to be on the same page, as we were saying earlier, to be able to collaborate and work with the Government to raise these standards.

Now, there are a couple of other things that I would like to talk about as well. And that is the . . . I will go right to the very beginning of things, because I think is a very interesting area and I think it is for me a very important area as well. And that is we have often talked on this side of the House about expanding the delivery for Government preschools. And people will say, *Well, you know, what does it matter at age three or four. Surely, that is not all that important.* Well, there has been quite a bit of, what I will call, anecdotal data coming out over the years and all of us know that young people at that age are absolute sponges. They learn a tremendous amount.

One of the studies that came out fairly recently was actually from the OECD. You will be familiar with this, Mr. Acting Speaker. They are called "PISA" exams—P-I-S-A. And that stands for Programmes for International Student Assessment. The interesting thing about these exams is that they are taken by 15-year-olds. They do it every couple of years and in some 60 different countries around the world, having their 15-year-olds take these exams. And the extraordinary thing . . . because we have often talked about the importance of that investment in preschool education, the extraordinary thing was . . . they looked very carefully at this last batch. These are 2009 results. It takes them a year or two to work through them.

What it found out was that, basically, 15-year-old students who had attended preschool education perform better on PISA than those who did not, even accounting for socioeconomic backgrounds. It is often the case that a student coming from a middle-class background will do better on some of these exams, whereas, a child coming from a disadvantaged family background, a family in crisis or jeopardy, will not do very well. Even after accounting for the socioeconomic issues, they still did a lot better. In fact, in some 60 countries with the possible exception of the United States, funnily enough where it was a little bit equivocal, most of the others showed a very clear correlation between performance as a 15-year-old and performance and going to preschool at age three and four.

There are some other very interesting data that came out of Harvard University, the Graduate School of Education, about a year ago, which showed the importance at kindergarten level, basically preschool level, of the quality of teacher. Now we all know, because we have all been talking about dramatically improving the quality of teaching here, but there was some rather dramatic study which followed children from kindergarten all the way through into their early 30s and showed that there was a demonstrable statistical difference between those that had a very good teacher at a kindergarten level and those who had not. And it came down to dollars and cents. They are making an average salary of I think about \$35,000. They are making a thousand dollars more a year, if they had a better teacher.

So the reason I come back to preschool frequently is because it is very important. And it is something that we believe is also important for other reasons. We believe that if preschool is done properly, we can get much more parental involvement, started at setting a good (what is the word for it?) model at a very early age by getting parents more involved at a preschool level, having a really strong preschool programme, the demonstrable evidence is there now.

Mr. Acting Speaker: Have you ever visited a preschool?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Sorry?

Mr. Acting Speaker: Have you ever visited a preschool when they have PTA meetings?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: No, not recently.

Mr. Acting Speaker: You are aware then that—maybe you are not aware—the attendance of parents at the early ages happens to be very high.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: It is.

Mr. Acting Speaker: I was in three schools last week.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Exactly.

Mr. Acting Speaker: Yes.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: And the reason for that is because . . . and that is why I think you have got to set, you have got to get parents in the right framework for supporting their children at that level.

You are off to a good start because most parents at that age group of children are very interested in their children. It is as we get farther along that it starts to wane. But you have got to keep that parental involvement going all the way through.

But you make a very good point, and I think that it reinforces the point that I am trying to make

which is you have got to start at that age and I think a preschool area is a good way to do that as well.

Mr. Acting Speaker: So where do you intend to expend these preschools, page 13 of your brief.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: You raise a very interesting question because one of the bits of information that actually came out in the brief of the Minister of Education going back to, I think, September, was that there is some 370 (maybe it was 371) children enrolled in Government preschools, but there are over 400 students that are actually on the waiting list. So, not only is there a demand for Government preschools, but there is a demand which is more than the number that are actually enrolled. And I think that we have an opportunity here to really do a much better job.

The reason that preschool is so significant, it gets to a very simple issue. And it is an issue that we have talked about before. It is called the issue of school readiness. Most of us have children. Some of them are older now than others. But what we all appreciate, I think, if we have had children, is that once the children get behind it is very, very difficult to catch up.

And one of the things, whether it is the Head Start programme in the United States or preschools here, Happy Valley is a good example of that as well in some respects, one of the things that a really good preschool does is that it gets children school ready. And we are not as concerned, although we probably should be, for those from good family backgrounds, good middle class family backgrounds.

Where it is really important is for those children coming from disadvantaged family backgrounds, broken families. Because oftentimes a child will get to Primary 1 and they do not have some of the very basic things they need. One is the ability to take direction because they simply have not had it up to that point. And that is something that a preschool teaches you to do. They have not been able to work with other children because they simply have not had that kind of exposure in their home. And also they have not been able to essentially sit still and focus for any length of time. And if you cannot do those three things and you are in Primary 1, you are in trouble right off the bat. So there is a reason for preschools and a reason that we continue to put so much emphasis at this point.

I will wind up with preschools on this one particular issue. There is a very well-known Nobel laureate in economics from the University of Chicago, James Heckman, who said that if you are going to spend any money on schooling whatsoever, you should do it at the very first stages because that is where you get your return on investment. You can spend a lot of money, as we have seen, later on trying to correct for problems that should have been ad-

dressed at a very early stage. So that is one of the reasons that expanded preschools is on our list.

Now, there were some encouraging noises again a couple of years ago, I think two or three Ministers back, about putting more focus on preschools. But, again, it is one of those things where it is talked about, but there has been no delivery. We have fewer places now in preschool, the 370 places, than we did back in the early '90s. And I think that is essentially unconscionable.

Now, before anybody in the private sector starts to get upset, I think we need, obviously, to figure out whether we want Government to expand those places or whether we want to make sure that those places are available. We have talked about a child care programme. Maybe some of that money needs to be better shunted in a different direction. But, again, Government knows the numbers and I think there is lot more benefit in a preschool education than there is simply in babysitting children. So I think that is not something that hasn't been raised before here either.

So those are some of the issues. I would say that we have talked again about extending the school day. We have talked in the Throne Speech Reply about a renewed interest on sports in schools. We have seen the data coming out in the last couple of years about the fact that some two-thirds of Bermudians are overweight or obese. Again, there is a very clear correlation between students being fit, whether they are five or whether they are 18, and performance on exams.

The US Army has shown it. There are a number of school systems that showed exercise and fitness in students results in better performance academically. I think we also know, certainly, you will as a former headmaster, that allowing young male students to work out some of that energy means they are a little quieter and a little better disciplined when they are in the classroom as well, and there is nothing wrong with that.

So those are some of the issues here and I think all of us understand the fact that there are many students that do well in areas, but they may not all be academically gifted. So you have got to have a range of different activities, a range of different things, whether it is sports, music, or arts to be able to challenge children and keep them interested.

We think there is a lot of potential in the public school system. We are just very, very disappointed that many of the reforms that were set out by Messrs Hopkins and Mincy, and others, were simply not been moved on with the speed that has been required because every day we are losing more children by not reforming the public school system here.

Frankly, we all know there have been lots of good words, lots of good intentions, but there has not been the consistent leadership, there has not been the consistent plan, and there has not been the kind of follow-through. All the way back to 2003 we have

heard from Government, they said they were on course to make a public education first-rate, first choice, and first class. Mr. Acting Speaker, we know it has not happened.

In 2007 we heard that the Hopkins Report . . . many of those issues would be implemented by September of 2007. It has not happened. In 2008 the Government pledged to restore pride in our public education system. Are we there yet, Mr. Acting Speaker? No, we are not. And simply trying to talk about students that are doing well is good, but it does not solve the underlying issue which [is that] we need reform in the public education system. We need to have follow-through on many of those issues that Professor Hopkins and others set out a number of years ago.

So those are some of the issues that I think are critical here. And, frankly, what we are seeing is a Government now that is reacting too little, too late for things that should have been dealt with, things that should have been addressed from an education perspective, many, many years ago.

I am not sure, Mr. Acting Speaker, where this consolidation of the National Training Board is going to be. That was quite an effective body, going back a number of years; but in the last five years or so it seems to have drifted terribly. When Michael Stowe was there things seemed to get done. There were a number of spats with the Bermuda College, which I think have been settled. I was actually very pleased to see at the College, when they had their Science Week a couple of weeks ago, that they had a very active technical programme up there as well.

The difficulty is, if we are not exposing younger students at an early enough age to technical education before they get to Bermuda College, we simply are going to get the underutilisation of the College that we are getting right now. There is an abysmally low number of students enrolled in technical programmes up there, and I fail to believe it is simply a lack of motivation by students. I think if we expose them at an early enough age, I think if we had an integrated technical education programme we would be in much better shape all around than we are at the present time.

I would like to wind up, Mr. Acting Speaker, on a slightly different topic. I am not going to spend a lot of time on it because I know my Honourable colleague, Louise Jackson, wishes to speak about it as well.

But there was an interesting piece a couple of days ago in the *Financial Times*. And I know the Minister is not here right now, but I am talking about health care. And this was Tuesday, November 15th, *Financial Times*, and the headline was, "End Seen for Public Finance Initiatives," by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK. Basically what the UK is doing is moving away from these public/private partnerships because there has been intense criticism from everybody at the National Office, the Treasury Select

Committee, because of the rising cost of debt finance under some of these PFI schemes.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am not saying . . . I am going to continue, if I may, here. I am not saying that—

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Point of order. Have some reverence for the Chair. You must wait until the speaker is in his seat.

[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair—7:35 PM]

The Speaker: Dr. Gibbons, carry on.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: The Honourable Member will have her turn. She can demonstrate reverence as we all do up here.

The point I was trying to make is that, basically, the British Government has obviously come to the conclusion that the PFIs and the PPPs may not, basically, represent value for money. I say that not because I am going to be critical of the hospital project here. The simple reason is that we do not know enough about the PPP programme at the hospital here. We still have no idea because it has not been disclosed what the payments are that have been promised. We have been put off periodically by the Minister who says they are still in negotiations for the design, build and maintain project over there. But, clearly, that project is going to be a significant portion of the expenses of this country going forward.

We know that the hospital represents some 40 per cent of our health care costs in this country right now. We need to have more information. It is timely to have more information on what that public/private partnership is going to cost us over there, what the obligations are not only of this Government, but of the taxpayer because we have 30 years to run on that. And again, I am not trying to be critical, but I have to say that when the British Government decides that there is not the kind of value for money in some of these programmes that was originally thought, I think, we ought to be paying attention here, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are the comments I have to make, and I thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dr. Gibbons, the Honourable Member from Paget East.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Dame Jennifer Smith, from St. George's North, Minister of Education.

Dame Jennifer, you have the floor.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that Member has my sympathy. I was expecting a much better presentation from him. He tried to help out his side's deplorable Reply to the Throne Speech which, going from pages 11 to 13, makes no mention of sports, makes no mention of music, makes no mention of the arts. He tried to say that it was in there—it is not in there!

Do not stand up for a point of order!

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: It is not in there!

The Speaker: What is your point of order, Dr. Gibbons?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: My point of order was I was actually working from the Throne Speech Reply, and it is very much in there. That is the whole issue of lengthening the school day—

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, —

The Speaker: All right. Well—

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: It is not in the Reply. It is not there. There is no point of order.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister should just take [her] seat. Yes. Yes.

It was in the Reply, yes; but we are debating the Throne Speech.

Dame Jennifer has the floor.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, it is not in the Reply. I ask him to point those exact words out. It does say lengthen the school day. It does not say why in particular.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: It does.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Point it out.

An Hon. Member: Where? Can't find it, because it's not there.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Paget West talked about the place-

ment exams that students take for the Bermuda College.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Do I have to yield again?

The Speaker: What is the point of order? Let us not get distracted. There was a reference made and I know it was.

What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: The Honourable Member persists. She is misleading the House. It says here quite clearly, "a longer school day to provide more time for sports, music, arts and remedial support . . ." It is here in black and white, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what the Honourable Member is reading.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you, Dr. Gibbons. Carry on, Dame Jennifer.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, I will get to that in another minute. I am going to continue on the point that I was on when the Member started off by talking about the placement exams and talking about some person who spoke to him about somebody that did something else and what it meant to them.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I have to wonder about the spurious comments being made about the public school system.

An Hon. Member: Oooh.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: I have to really wonder because that side, called the OBA, today talked about how they were going to set a different standard and not be confrontational. They present a Reply to the Throne Speech that is nothing else but confrontational, and rude, I might admit, as well. And then they stand up on the Floor of the House in a confrontational and rude [manner] about the public education system.

Mr. Speaker, no, everything is not perfect. But, certainly, one could make criticism without being denigrating. And that is what is wrong. The comments . . . I have to wonder. Are they designed to raise confidence in the public school system? No. Are they designed to raise the confidence of the students in the schools that they are attending? No.

Are they designed to inspire parents to feel confident to send their children to school? No. Are they designed to make people think that *private* edu-

cation in Bermuda is superior? Mr. Speaker, what empirical evidence is this that that is the truth, except the fact that those Members may send their children there?

Mr. Speaker, the reason I stand on the Floor of this House and talk about the successes of those students is because one day I expect somebody with some sense will say, *You know what? The public school system is producing some great students.* And they are doing it with all of their passion and all of the intent that goes into a system that believes in our children and knows that they can achieve.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the tests that he talked about that the students take for the Bermuda College is a placement exam that is taken by the S3 students, not the S4 students. And for someone to use results that are taken to give you advance placement while you are still in high school so that you can go and take college-level courses while you are in high school, and when you graduate from high school have earned some associate degree courses, to use that to say that students are not ready for Bermuda College, Mr. Speaker, is spurious.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, this Member surely knows that our high school students and our other students as well take international exams.

Let me just find the paper that I can read to you about the exams they put.

Mr. Speaker, during the 2010/11 school year a total of 577 students sat external examines in the subjects of English, mathematics, science, foreign language, technology, religious studies, physical education, business studies, and the arts. An overall pass grade of 90 per cent was achieved with 54 per cent of the students receiving a grade of “C” or better. And we cannot find anything good to say about our public schools?

An Hon. Member: Wow!

An Hon. Member: They cannot find anything good to say about anything.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me that I am going to have to repeat some of the things that I have said to you earlier because I guess the Members either do not hear or just disregard what is said in the Floor of the House about what is happening in education.

I believe that it was only this morning that I gave you an indication of how far Bermuda College had gone to train our young people and to involve them in training and to get them interested in what

was happening. And, in fact, let me just tell you how exceptional it was last night—

The Speaker: Repetition is—

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: —there were 45—

The Speaker: —repetition can be helpful.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Yes, sometimes. I realise that it is an educational means of imparting knowledge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, last evening 45 people attended that “Information Boutiques” that I told you about. And the business entities that were involved were so pleased at the response and the receptiveness of those who attended that they congratulated the Bermuda College and asked for some more of the same.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, let me say that we are on the record as saying that we believe in public education. And on our side we are on record as saying that we believe that it should start at the age of four.

We have said this way back when I was in the Opposition and was the Shadow Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, but does the Act require that education begin at age four? No, it begins at age five. Have we changed that number? No, we have not. Because one of the reasons that you cannot change it in advance of providing the facilities is that you would make a provision that you could not fulfil.

Mr. Speaker, the number of preschools that we have today are the number of preschools that we found when we came in. The previous government, the United Bermuda Party Government—some of those same Members who are sitting today as OBA Members were sitting on the other side then, Mr. Speaker, that government—did not foresee preschool education as being available for all 4-year-olds of this country. It was available for some.

An Hon. Member: Oooh.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: All right? And if you are going to make it available for all then you need many more facilities, and I welcome their support. When the Ministry of Education is able to find suitable locations around the country and will need to expand its preschool facilities, I welcome their support in that expenditure.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, they seem to place a lot of attention on the so-called Hopkins Report. And you know that the correct title is the Review of Public Education in Bermuda, which was done by Professor David Hopkins and his colleagues in 2007. Not right now, but 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I have given a press conference on this, but I will repeat it. I will go one by one. Recommendation one of the Hopkins Report is to "Dramatically improve the quality of teaching." Mr. Speaker, we are doing that and we have got the services of Dr. Avis Glaze. And, no, we are not paying her. The Board of Education has done that. She is here working with our Commissioner of Education and our principals and our teachers to raise the level of teaching at schools. She is going into the school site, into the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, recommendation two, "move quickly to improve the quality of leadership by principals." I reported already that principal appraisals which had been in arrears were completed in October of this year in keeping with the collective bargaining agreement with the Association of School Principals. This is obviously something that the Commissioner of Education will be using, not as something to whip anybody with, but as something to improve teaching, and to focus on giving strengths, lending strengths where they must be lent, and improving where there must be improvement.

Recommendation number four . . . where is three? Recommendation number four is what I have next. "Strengthen the strategic management of the education system." The interim Board of Education, which at the time was part of why he had given that recommendation, became the Board of Education in January 2009. That was one of the recommendations of the Hopkins Report and that Board of Education is still serving today, Mr. Speaker, and I must say that they are doing an excellent job and we welcome their support and their work on behalf of the public education system.

Recommendation number five, "Introduce delegation and transparent accountability at all levels." You recall that we talked about relocating student services and also the curriculum heads to the classroom. In doing that they are on-site and the help is provided to teachers, to students, to principals, right at the site of schools. In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are developing more comprehensive policy on the education rules that outline procedures for first enrolment at primary level.

And while I am at it, let me say, I do not know where this misconception arose. I do not know who spreads the misconception. But, Mr. Speaker, let me say clearly that everyone is welcome into the public school system whether you are a Bermudian or not.

Everyone is welcome into the public school system whether you are a Bermudian or not!

Recommendation number six, is to "Federate secondary and tertiary education, and, as soon as possible, raise the school leaving age." Well, the school leaving age was raised. It was raised to 18, and the post of Commissioner of Education was introduced and an amendment to the Act.

Recommendation number seven, "Respond to concerns about inclusion and behaviour." The closure of the Education Centre (which is called TEC) provided an opportunity for us to introduce a new structure of individual education plans (and I have already talked about this as well in the public) with the help and support of Dr. Llewellyn Matthews, the Director of Educational Standards and Accountability, supported by Dr. Judith Bartley. And they are leading this focus which is designed to eliminate the practice of students being suspended to their homes with no educational component.

Students under suspension when necessary are assessed and if deemed necessary receive the intervention specific to their concerns to ensure that they are returned to the school body and that they have the best means of successful reintroduction. And on that line, Mr. Speaker, the role and function of attendance office will be reviewed in conjunction with stakeholders to ensure that their role is consistent with the Education Act.

Mr. Speaker, recommendation eight, "Create self-governing Federations around clusters of primary schools and each middle school." I have to admit, and I have admitted it before, that did not happen. When it was examined by the body that was doing this in 2007, and from September to December of 2008, public consultations took place. The result was that it was deemed that Bermuda's population was too small to allow for elected boards for 18 primary schools and 5 middle schools. Instead, the Board of Education would consult with the PTAs. And we must note, Mr. Speaker, that a national PTA has since been formed.

Recommendation number nine, "Align the curriculum both vertically and horizontally." The introduction of the Cambridge Curriculum in 2010 was designed to address just this recommendation.

Mr. Speaker, further to the work that is being done that directly correlates to the recommendations of both the Hopkins Report and the Blueprint for Reform in Education, the Commissioner of Education continues to work on several initiatives on teaching and learning in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I find that the Shadow Minister needs to get some light into his shadow so that he can see what is actually being done. Complaining and criticising that, *This is being done now, but it should have been done before.* And, *Yes, they are making a move on this now, but it should have happened before.* And, *Three years ago they said this . . .* Mr. Speaker, where is the vision in that?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Where is the, *We are going to* in that?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Where . . . you know, just plain complaining. And just making nasty statements is not setting out a vision of what you would do that . . . That is not a call for a point of order.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: That is my statement.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

The Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Throne Speech Reply sets out clearly some of the initiatives that we would do. It is not a question of complaining, as the Honourable Member is saying.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Thank you. Carry on, Dame.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: The initiatives in their Reply are so small as to remind one of when you get a fish cake and it is actually a potato cake.

[Laughter]

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: That is what this is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Thank you, Dame Jennifer Smith from St. George's North, Minister of Education.

Are there any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mrs. Jackson, from Pembroke South West.

Mrs. Jackson from Pembroke South West has the floor.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Four years ago Government closed the medical clinic.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Here we go again.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Now this is a clinic which served people who did not have health insurance. And as you can see, this Government is now still laughing and joking about it . . . and "here we go again."

But I want you to know that the people out there listening to this are feeling the pain of not having this clinic. And I want to say that the OBA is going to establish a medical clinic and it will be based at the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital complex on Point Finger Road. The reason for that is because people who go there—the poor, the seniors who cannot afford medical attention and others—have a place to go which is like a one-stop-shop. In other words, they can get their test done there, they can get their medications there, doctors are there, and they usually have transportation to and from.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the Throne Speech they mention the fact that they are going to have Government clinics in the eastern, western, and central parts of Bermuda. Now they did that before.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: People who are sick need to be near facilities that can help them. The wellness clinics and the other clinics that they established, I believe failed.

Certainly, there are facilities out at the eastern end. They never did put anything at the western end. And I want the people of this country to know that if the OBA is successful—and we will be, becoming the next Government—we will establish a medical clinic for them.

First of all, seniors do not need any assessment. What they need is health care, and that is what we are going to see that they get. This also applies, Mr. Speaker, to people who cannot afford health insurance, which is something that really needs attention, or more, perhaps, than just attention. What we are going to do is legislate changes to FutureCare and HIP and make them fair, affordable, and sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, you know that even Government had to admit that FutureCare is not fair. There are two different rates of pay for the same benefits, over \$300 for some in FutureCare and over \$600 for others in FutureCare for the exact same benefits. Now, nobody can call that fair. I want this country to know that the OBA will make this a fair health insurance for all.

HIP is another situation. There are benefits there. There are benefits within FutureCare that are totally out of order. A poor person who has to take FutureCare, who cannot afford to go on to a private insurance, has to pay three-quarters of the cost of overseas treatment. Now, you all know, everybody knows, if you have to go overseas, let's say for a heart condition, or heart surgery, it is probably going to cost

\$100,000, between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Now, what person who is on FutureCare can afford \$25,000 up front? If they could afford that, they would be on private insurance.

The Speaker: And the Government speaks to that.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Well—

The Speaker: In the Throne Speech.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: They have had FutureCare, Mr. Speaker, for at least the last three years and nothing has been done. I cannot say that I am looking to see anything done any time in this . . . in any case, I do not care what they are doing right now. We will fix it when we become Government.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Now, let's go on to something that is really very interesting. I want you to turn to page 11 in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Page 11?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Page 11.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: And you are going to see that it says, the fifth paragraph down, "Government will introduce elder abuse legislation . . ." Do you see that?

An Hon. Member: Again?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Well, Mr. Speaker, you were here with me and everybody else in this room when we passed the Senior Abuse Register Act 2008. We passed it. They have legislation. I do not understand. Did they forget that they passed legislation? Or was it so insignificant that they did not bother to remember? We have the Senior Abuse Register Act. Why would they put this in their Throne Speech that they are going to do something they have already done?

[Pause]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Silence on the other side, Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: The thing is . . . the problem here is that this was not a particularly good Act.

No one has been prosecuted under this Act at all. And there are a lot of reasons for that. I want to say, first of all, I give a lot of credit to the Honourable Member, Dale Butler, who put this through. I do not think he got much help from his colleagues, but he did it. And, though it has loopholes, and things that are not quite good, at least he did it, and I congratulate him for that.

I have to say that the fact that we have had some of the most horrific elder abuse cases that have been publicised: Auntie Em, the Crawford case. All of these cases and not one person has been reprimanded or in any way—

An Hon. Member: That was two cases. How many more?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: There are many more; and I will not go into them. I am not going to spend a lot of time on this. I just want this country to know that the OBA will address the neglect and abuse of seniors in residences and also in some of the rest homes. And we are going to bring legislation forward to do this.

Now, I am holding up another piece of legislation. It is called the Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes Act 1999. Mind you, there were regulations that were done in 2001. This is all we have to protect our seniors in the rest homes and residential care homes. It is all we have got. It is 16 pages long. One page is the cover page. The last page has the signature of the Minister in charge. In between is just a lot of talk about inspection of the homes and definitions of what is in this particular Act. In other words, it has done nothing to really protect our seniors.

As some of you know, senior care in this country, particularly in the private, in some of the private residential homes is appalling. I have gone . . . I have asked the senior medical officer . . . I have gone to the National Office for Seniors . . . I have done everything. Would you please . . . and I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that on occasion they have gone to inspect some of these homes. And, I think, a couple of them have been closed. But this is how many years later? How many people have suffered in those homes while this Government just kind of looked the other way?

Well, of course, if they did not even know that they had a Senior Abuse Act, I would not expect them to do anything about the people who are in these homes suffering.

Going on, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the national strategy on ageing. That is on page 11, if you want to look at it. This Government is talking about doing a national strategy on ageing. They are going to focus on it. There is going to be a focus on it. Well, first of all, we are not going to be spending any money and time on a strategy for ageing. We have been doing our strategy for the last eight years. We have a Shadow Ministry on Ageing which works very hard. And as you know, we do our work when it

comes to seniors, although it is not always very easy with this Government because there are problems.

Now, first of all, this Government does not even have a Ministry that deals, or they do not say it in the words that we are dealing with *This is the Ministry of such and such and such and such and Ageing*, or, *Such and such and Seniors*. Every other developed country in this world has it: New Zealand, Australia, all of these countries. England, the United States of America. They all have a department or a ministry that deals with seniors, but not this country, not this Government. They just parcel out, they parcel it out. You have the Minister of Health, he might do the rest homes. You have got the Minister of Community Affairs that might do something. I cannot even keep up with whose doing what, and I am the person for seniors on this side. I cannot tell you now all of the different people sitting over there who have a piece of what the seniors have, their particular portfolio.

Now, I find that reprehensible. And then to stand up here—14 years after they have been in power—and talk about they are going focus on a national strategy for seniors. That is insulting! You mean you are just going to start out talking about these seniors. You know one thing. There are 8,000 seniors in this country—of which I am one. And it is like, *We are not going to put up with this anymore. Enough is enough.*

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, Mr. Roban. What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I wouldn't want the Honourable Member to mislead the House or the community.

The Speaker: She has let you . . . are you also a senior?

Mr. Walter H. Roban: No.

The Speaker: Oh, okay. All right.

[Laughter]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I do know a few things about seniors. The fact that I live with one provides me with some experience, for one. And two, I have some experience as a part of this Government that is dealing with their issues and there are at least two Ministries that have seniors as a priority in dealing with their needs. So to suggest that there is no focus on seniors from a Ministerial level is incorrect for the public.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Roban. Carry on, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Obviously, he was not listening. The Honourable Member was not listening to me. I said that there were several Ministers over there who deal with seniors' problems. I do not know who they are. Certainly, they do not have seniors in their Ministry title and that is the point I am making.

Now, going on. We also—the OBA—will definitely reform the contributory pension plan. And I am not going to get into the details of that, but I just want this country to know that you have had problems with that pension plan. Just lately, of course, there was “a glitch,” which meant that you were without your pension for several days. And there are also other “glitches,” but we want to make this fairer for our seniors and that will be done. The OBA will definitely be doing this.

The Human Rights Act, this is on page 11, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: The OBA wants this country to know that we will introduce legislation to amend the Human Rights Act immediately, immediately—not what this particular Government is saying. Everything in here is they are “going to focus,” or they are “going to introduce” . . . they are not saying, *and we will do, we will make legislation.* I am going to tell you right now—we will do the legislation.

It is not that difficult, Mr. Speaker, it only involves a phrase, a few words, probably no more than four words, to amend this legislation to make ageing . . . in other words, not to be able to discriminate against people because of their age.

And I know what this is like. I have been discriminated against because of my age. So I know it happens. But there are people who lose their jobs. There are people who are given menial jobs. There are people who suffer because they have the unfortunate condition of growing older. It is going to happen to all of you sitting on that other side, so those of you who are not paying attention and who could not care less about seniors . . . imagine being in Government for 14 years and you cannot add that to the Human Rights Act? And we have been asking for this, Mr. Speaker, for years—for 14 years. It is a disgrace.

Going on . . . and I am not going to spend too much time on this either, but we certainly need to make Bermuda more accessible for the physically disabled. I am not going to spend any time on that. But again, this country, this Government, has these buses, has spent all this money on these buses that are supposed to help the physically disabled, but where are they?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Where are they? What happened? I do not know what the glitch . . . there are a lot of glitches with this Government, by the way. What was the glitch with the buses?

So there are a couple of taxis who will take care of people, but they are expensive. We need a transportation system for our seniors. Those people who live in areas . . . in my particular constituency they do not have any buses at all. There are none. Not one bus going through my constituency. Since the boundaries have been changed, they do have maybe one.

The next thing I want to talk about . . . and, again, this is the disdain that this country, this Government, feels for its seniors, absolute disdain. They are building a new hospital, spending zillions of dollars on this hospital, but they are not including the extended care for seniors. They are saying, *This has nothing to do . . . we are an acute care hospital*. Well, listen, I as a senior, and every one of the 8,000 seniors in this country, feel as if our sickness, or illness, is as acute as anybody else's. And to say that, *Oh no, this is just for acute care*. So where are they going to put these seniors in the extended care? Where are they going to go?

They are saying, *No, wait for five years and we will think about where we are going to put you*. Meanwhile, where are these seniors going to go? It is disgraceful. And not one person on that side, sitting over there, has said anything about it. And their . . . hey, they must have mothers, fathers, grandmothers . . . and how do they deal with them? Which takes me on now to another very, very difficult situation.

There are over a hundred people waiting to get into the extended care unit at the hospital and also in the other rest homes and residential care homes. A hundred people waiting, over a hundred. Some of these people have dementia, or Alzheimer's. Some of these people are now being looked after [by] relatives at home who had to give up their jobs in order to stay home and take care of their mother or father. They cannot really take care of them because they do not know how. I mean, this is a very specialised thing to be able to take care of somebody with Alzheimer's or dementia. And this Government is so uncaring that guess how many places they have for the Alzheimer's, dementia, patient? Somebody give me a—

The Speaker: That is being a little unfair today.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Well—

The Speaker: We do have the Sylvia Richardson Rest Home which came along.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Excuse me, that is about only one, now that you have mentioned it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You won. You won the prize.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: There is only one with all of the people with the dementia, the Alzheimer's—

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker: There is a point of order.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Can I ask—

The Speaker: Dame Jennifer, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: My point of order is to ask the Member how many rest homes had to be closed because they were in such deplorable condition, for fire safety, health safety, and everything else when we became the Government in 1998? That is how they treated seniors.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dame Jennifer. Carry on, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will give an answer to that.

You have been in Government 14 years and this is what you have come up with?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Fourteen versus 35?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Well, you know, it seems to me that that is about the saddest—

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: —about the saddest . . . it is pathetic. It is pathetic.

This whole thing about, *That is what you did, so we can do it too*. I do not understand it. But anyway, let me go on.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: It is pathetic. Let me go on.

I want to talk . . . no, I have to finish. The Alzheimer's, the dementia patients, the worst part about that is this Government is also so caring about its seniors, guess how many doctor geriatricians they have?

Can you guess, Mr. Speaker? You have answered correctly so far.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I have given Mr. Speaker a little hint. There is one geriatrician. One for 8,000 seniors! And that one cannot practice publically. He can only practice within the extended care unit at King Edward VII Memorial Hospital. He cannot even go upstairs on the wards to treat the seniors.

He is a wonderful man though, I have to say. Dr. Harries, a wonderful man. And we have had him . . . but this country can get consultants to come over here, they can get all of these people and pay them hundreds of thousands of dollars, but they cannot pay for more than one geriatrician. And I am talking about a trained one now. There are people like Dr. McPhee and others who have done some studies in gerontology, but not a trained geriatrician.

Now, let me go on because there is something else that seems desperately needed. And that is an oncologist, a dedicated oncologist. I cannot tell you how many oncologists we have had here. It is like a revolving door. There are in and out, in and out, in and out. I know the reason why some of them have left and I am not going to embarrass the Government by saying why. But we have now another oncologist.

So this means that this person has got to get up to speed with all of these people who have cancer. It means that this oncologist cannot really deal on a timely basis with all of these patients, so sometimes you have to wait weeks—weeks—to get an appointment with the oncologist. Some people are fortunate enough the oncology nurses will help them out with blood tests and the rest of it. But it is horrible the way they have suffered. They call me about it. *Mrs. Jackson, I can't get in to see the oncologist. What can I do?* There is no one else to go to.

Again, this is this so-called caring Government. And I have been talking . . . Mr. Speaker, you know I have been talking about this for years. Nothing is ever done. They could not care less.

Upfront payments—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: No, it is not unfair. It is the truth. The truth is the light, and so shall ye be known.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: It is the truth. Upfront payments, upfront payments for medical treatment. They are saying that they will be addressed (this is on page 11, Mr. Speaker), for doctors, dentists, and specialists. That is what we are going to do. This is what we are going to do. This is not what Government has done.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: What is the point of order, Mr. Roban?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: The Honourable Member is misleading the House to suggest that the Government has done nothing about upfront payments. That is just outright fabrication for the very reason that for quite a bit of time there were guidelines drawn up by the Health Council for upfront payments that were outlined with the doctors of which they were supposed to follow. The Minister of Health has just recently, the Honourable Zane De Silva, announced that there will be a legislative measure. Because, frankly, the health care providers have failed to respond to the guidelines that were supposed to be voluntary.

So the Honourable Member misleads the House and the country with suggesting there has already been a regime for upfront payments in place of which now we are going to legislate.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban.
Carry on, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Mr. Speaker, I repeat: This Government has done nothing. In other words, whatever . . . there has been no legislation. As far as I know, there has been nothing publically—

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. We tabled a Bill to deal with this. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban.
Carry on, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: What is the name of the Bill? Because I have been here . . . my attendance is almost perfect.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: My apologies, Mr. Speaker, I am now informed . . . I forgot. It is soon to come. Oh, but the Minister has announced the Bill coming.

[Inaudible interjections, laughter and general uproar]

An Hon. Member: Soon to come!

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Mr. Speaker, they have done nothing!

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Point of order.

The Speaker: We cannot . . . we are not going to be having that every minute. I am sorry.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: There is—

The Speaker: What we should be saying, you are thankful that the Government is now going to—

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Going to do something.

The Speaker: —make it legislatively so, so that this sort of thing does not happen.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: It is in the Speech.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: It is in the Speech.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: All right. It is in the Speech.

The Speaker: If, you know, I mean, you can be a little more balanced.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Okay.

The Speaker: You can be a little more balanced in recognising that it is in there.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Mr. Speaker, it is in the Speech that they are going to do something, sometime, somewhere, somehow. But for the person who has to go and have—

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order, Madam Premier?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Point of order.

The Speaker: Madam Premier has a point of order.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: In fact, I'm sorry. Maybe it is not so much a point of order.

The Speaker: All right. Let's listen.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: A point of information.

The Speaker: I will make that decision.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, unless I am wrong the Throne Speech was read November the 4th. In the Throne Speech the Governor, on behalf of the Government,

read the Government's parliamentary and legislative agenda. In that legislative agenda it spoke to upfront payments. Now, I know we are seen by some as miracle workers, but I think this is only the first week that we have sat after the Throne Speech was read and that is setting our legislative agenda for the year.

Clearly, having indicated that we are going to do something about it, clearly, the Honourable Minister is also consulting. And, clearly, Mr. Speaker, have no doubt that the legislation will be tabled very soon. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier. It is coming right from the horse's mouth.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: You know, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: If you are going to make your speech balanced—

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: —that is the sort of thing you do.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: But the validity of the situation is that I had a call two nights ago from a lady who had an operation, a serious operation here in Bermuda. And she was told, *This is the amount that you will have to pay, and this is amount for the surgery.* And after the surgery she was given a bill for the entire sum which was many thousands of dollars.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: And she said—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: And she said, *I am surprised because I thought I was only to pay this amount, but you are now charging me for the total amount.*

The surgeon said, *I know that I will not be repaid by Government for many, many months. I cannot—*

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Wait a minute. *I cannot afford to do this. I have to pay my staff and pay my bills.*

So she, again, tried to get the money from Government—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Actually, it is GEHI and I understand that they are the worst offenders.

An Hon. Member: Oh, boy!

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: And she still has not heard from that doctor because, obviously, they are not going to pay. Or by the time they do pay, that poor woman will probably be dead and gone.

An Hon. Member: That's terrible! I hope she is not listening.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: She said it herself. She is the one who called and told me this.

So, there is no legislation, Mr. Speaker. I do not care what anybody says. There is no legislation about upfront payments. So as far as the people who have to pay up front, there is nothing out there to help them. Nothing! Now if they can tell me . . . you cannot stop any doctor, or dentist, or specialist from charging you upfront payments. If you go to a doctor tomorrow he is going to charge you and there is no law against it.

The Speaker: Well, you have to—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: The Government in the Throne Speech has indicated that it is going to be legislated. So you—

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: With all of the legislation that has gone through this House that has been tabled, they have not put anything there about upfront payments. They have not done anything about elder abuse. They have not done anything about the . . . they have not done anything as far as seniors are concerned.

The Speaker: It is coming.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: We are still waiting. I am going on.

The Speaker: It is coming now.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Financial assistance. It is not a priority, obviously, not a priority.

Financial assistance for homeowners. Now, you know, I have been talking about this. The OBA would legislate this immediately. This is, I will repeat it, it is financial assistance for homeowners. Everybody knows that there are people out there who own their own homes, but who are financially destitute. Many of them are living on that . . . what is it just a little, about \$500 a month contributory pension.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Yes, sorry, non-contributory pension. Some do not even have that. So these are desperately poor people, but they are required to ask if—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Oh! Hello, Bermuda. We have the Honourable Member Glenn Blakeney, over there saying, *We don't have any desperately poor people in Bermuda.*

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of order. Point of order. Point of order.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: They are not—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: See? That is the disingenuousness—

The Speaker: All right.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: You have to wait. I did not recognise you, Minister.

Now I recognise Minister Blakeney, what is your—

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you. She is misleading the House—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: The Honourable Member. With respect, Mrs. Jackson, please do not do that.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I said particularly a person that owns their home cannot be considered as desperately poor. They cannot.

And to correct you, again, through this very same voice we articulated very definitively that we come to the conclusion that there are special hardship circumstances that, based on the hardship, and notwithstanding, Mr. Speaker, we would be compassionate enough to—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: —listen and to react—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Why is he allowed to—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: —and to help as we continue to do.

The Speaker: Take your seat.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Thank you.

The Speaker: Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I will explain to the Honourable Member, Glenn Blakeney, what it is to be desperately poor and own your own house. I will explain it very simply to him.

You do not have any money for food. You do not have any money for medicine. You do not have any money for light bill. You do not have any money for anything. That is being poor sitting in a home that you own. Yes, you are poor.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of order. Point of order.

The Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: She is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. If a homeowner has an asset, regardless of them not having a cash flow or cash, they cannot be desperately poor. I can tell you what desperately poor people are because I meet with them every day. And they have no assets at all.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Take your seat.
Mrs. Jackson, carry on.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I'm glad he wasn't in any of my classes. Geeze!

[Laughter]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I want to go on now to caregivers and I want you to know, I want this country to know, that the OBA are committed to providing family caregivers with resources and support by establishing a caregiver's resource centre.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many people out there who have to spend many, many hours taking care of loved ones. There are people out there who give up their jobs to take care of loved ones and they are not trained caregivers. This can lead to all kinds of things, and a lot of that leads to elder abuse, by the

way. So we want to give support and also education and help for people who are caregivers.

I am going to end with just a few comments on health (If I can find my notes) and what the OBA will do. The very first thing we are going to do is to promote healthy lifestyles as a top priority. And that is one thing I have to say: I will give Government credit for that. I will give Government credit for that and I think it started with the Honourable Minister, Patrice Minors, who started that and it was carried on. And I have to say that they are doing an excellent job with it.

[Inaudible interjection]

An Hon. Member: What will you do?

An Hon. Member: There is nothing to be done. It is already being done.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: You can always try to improve. Another thing that we would do is to lower prices for prescription medications.

Now one of the things we want to do is promote increased use of quality-approved generic pharmaceuticals by establishing a Bermudian national formulary to assist doctors in cost-effective prescribing.

My voice is giving away. I will take a sip of water.

[Pause]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Another thing we wanted to do is to support mental health reform. And I am not going to spend any time. In fact, I will just give you the bullet points. I know that my colleague, who is the Shadow Minister of Health, Michael Dunkley, will do this in depth in the Senate.

We want to expand postnatal support and child care services. We want to improve standards of on-Island medical care provision. That is so important because the overseas care, of course, as you know, is very, very expensive. And that is something, Mr. Speaker, that really concerns us. Many people cannot afford to go overseas. Many people, as you know, do not have any insurance at all and those who do who are with FutureCare . . . I just mentioned the fact that you have to pay 25 per cent for overseas care, and most of those people cannot afford that. So if we can do anything toward helping with that situation . . . I also want to mention the fact that this Government cut . . . what? . . . a million dollars or more from the LCCA benefit. And as you know, the LCCA is the organisation that helps with overseas care, or to get you overseas. And, of course, they, I think, are probably out of money.

And, I think, that most of the Government health insurance is also running very low on money.

So you have people who are not able to get overseas care, and that is very, very sad.

The Governor, of course, mentioned this in the Throne Speech. He remarked that they hope that the country would help to support the LLCA, Salvation Army, and other charities.

I have to bring up this point, I know that certain people in Government see red when I bring it up, but I have to say that it is pathetic when a Government has to depend upon charities for something, particularly for health care for its own people.

I am going to end on this note.

[Inaudible interjections and crosstalk]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: And that is that we have, an ageing population. That is that we have, 11 per cent of people who are 65 or over in the 2001 census *[sic]* and this is anticipated to increase to at least 22 per cent by 2030, with ultimate increased demands on health care services. And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, we are not taking care of our people the way we are supposed to be taking care of them now. So somebody is going to have to understand the fact that there is going to be a tsunami of seniors in this country. If you cannot take care of these 8,000, what in the world are you going to do when it is up to a huge number?

I just want this country to know that OBA has your back, seniors.

Some Hon. Members: Oooh

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: And as far as health care is concerned, we will take care of you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Jackson, the Honourable Member from Pembroke South West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. M. Lister, from Sandys South Central.

Mr. Lister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is rather late in the evening since I spoke to you earlier this morning, but I am still here soldiering on.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I am one of the seniors in this House and over the last couple of months I have had the opportunity to talk to many of my colleagues who are seniors in the community on a number of issues. And one of the things I often say to them is that, *If I knew that being a senior was going to be so much fun, I would have been a senior a long time ago.*

Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the thing is that the Honourable Member who just took her seat has the ability to terrorise seniors.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Just having heard that speech, Mr. Speaker, if I did not know that it was not the facts, I would have been terrorised too. But, Mr. Speaker, I read the Throne Speech. I am not making up things as I go along. And people who do that to seniors should be whipped.

Some Hon. Members: Oooh!

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Seniors in this country have paid a big price and brought us to where we are today, Mr. Speaker, and we stand on their shoulders. And for us to stand up and make a statement, terrorising them and scaring them to death, is wrong.

An Hon. Member: Yes, it is.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Is that that stance of the Alliance? Well—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: It was; that is right. You are absolutely correct. The Honourable Member said to me it was the same stance of the UBP.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Well, while I sat there in the Chair this morning and I listened, I shut my eyes. I had to open them because I thought it was the United Bermuda Party's presentation.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: The "Tourist Alliance"? I mean, everything is lifted right from the United Bermuda Party to the Alliance. Now somebody told—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Well, we like Wayne Furbert. We like Wayne Furbert.

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: We do.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: The Honourable Member . . . we like . . . Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: We like anybody who sees the light in this country. That is the thing. There are some people who do not see the light and it confounds me.

You know, Mr. Speaker, being a senior is a blessing because everybody is not blessed with long life. But I do not think that seniors in this country should be terrorised by what we just heard today.

An Hon. Member: It is true.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: It is not true, Mr. Speaker, in actual fact because the Throne Speech speaks to what we do and what we hope to do. And, furthermore, when the Budget time comes we allot millions of dollars to take care of seniors in this country. Did the Alliance say anything about that?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: You know what it is? It is a grab for power. That is what it really is. You might as well tell it how it is. They want to distort [things], like that last statement [about] they have the backs of the seniors. Do you think so with a speech like that?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Having terrorised everybody, then you say, *I've got your back*.

An Hon. Member: Nonsense.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Nonsense! Not in this House and not in this time.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: People should stop that.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

An Hon. Member: That is wrong.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Well, listen. Seniors have lived a long time, so this is a new show.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: This is a new show. A new show, yes.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Minister Lister, look at the Speaker occasionally.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Do not leave me out of it.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Mr. Speaker, I may not be looking at you, but I am speaking directly to you.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: But I just want the terrorism of seniors to cease and desist. That is all I am asking. I am sure most of them cut their radios off. I am hoping they will cut them back on again.

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: But anyhow, I just wanted to speak to the facts that are there. And how the senior citizens in this country have borne a big price to get to where they are today, and have paid the price for me to be here. And if I went out and treated them like the last speaker, I should be flogged. It is a shame. I am not going to be a part of that at all. No way. But let me get to my speech.

[Inaudible interjections, laughter and general uproar]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: You know something? The Honourable Minister said I could have had a senior moment. You know something, Mr. Speaker? Senior moments are not reserved for only seniors.

An Hon. Member: I can attest to that.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: But anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that the—

An Hon. Member: You turned off your microphone. Actually, you did a good thing!

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, is going through a very severe economic time as we speak.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Bermuda have asked the Finance Minister to put her hand on the till with experience, because she has been at the till a long time, four, five, 13 years almost, and before that. Well, no, I am sorry. Well, a Cox has been there for 13 years, but the present Mrs. Cox is more recent. But anyhow, the Cox thing comes with experience.

What I am saying is that to ask someone, a party that has only been here in existence for about six months, or less, to do that job would be dangerous. It would be dangerous, Mr. Speaker, because they do not have the experience and they do not have the know-how. Because, Mr. Speaker, if they say they

have the know-how, what they are actually doing is taking the experience from the previous party, which they claim they have been divorced from. Now you cannot have it both ways. You are either new party or you are the same party.

I think that we feel in this way that our party has had experience and these are very treacherous waters. And the point, Mr. Speaker, is this: What they do not understand is that these problems, these economic problems are shared around the world. As difficult as it is for this Government to lead in these economic times . . . Greece, a failed country from an economic standpoint to do.

An Hon. Member: Italy.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Italy. Portugal, and we do not know who is next.

But Fitch, who is an independent rating agency, says Bermuda is still on good ground. And I believe so, but why are we on good ground? Because we have had a person at the till who has had experience and who knows the treacherous waters which are ahead. And to try to raise funds and meet these bills that we have every day, it is not easy.

I think the Honourable Member, I have to give credit, that she does cite, the Honourable Member, does cite some of the economic challenges that do face seniors. But let me assure you, this Government tries to address them, and that is the difference. We try to address them and it is by no means easy in these economic difficult times.

I know of such situations to which the Honourable Member refers. There are seniors out here in grave, difficult circumstances. And we have to try as best we can to assist. The first line of assistance should come from the family, if it is possible. They have a responsibility too. Let's face it. Family has a responsibility to try to help seniors because those seniors have helped those young people, families, to where they are today. Everybody doesn't have family support. Therefore, we have the responsibility to try to do what we can.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, some years ago there was a senior gentleman in my community who had no children and very little family. He had a home and he was beginning to wander a bit. I went to Health and Social Services Department of the Government and asked them to take a look in and see what they could do, and they rallied to the occasion. And I believe that that Social Service Department would do the same thing for any Member of this House. And I do not take great pleasure in coming up here and citing these cases which are not pleasant for . . . I am not sure. I am not going to accuse anybody of political advantage, but that is what it looks like.

I think that we have to go out and help people and stop trying to make mileage off of people's sickness. That is what it feels like to me. And I think that

all the times that we do these things for seniors, it helps them, as best we can.

Sometimes families do not have the economic resources, but there are some things you can do to help your seniors along the way. It is not easy, but you can get on with it. People say that we have not done anything in this country over the last 14 years. Let me say this. Don't you remember, Mr. Speaker, when we first came to power how we were vehemently criticised about no housing in this community? Do you remember very clearly?

Well, you know, some of the Budget money that they said, the money we spent went on housing, trying to house some of the people who . . . but, you know, they do not say it anymore because we addressed the situation. And we tried to ensure that there is adequate housing for our people.

At one time they said the project in St. George's homes for people would not come to fruition. That is now in effect. You see, we are a people who have been there and done that. So we know the pain that a lot of people experience and endure. I mean, when you look at the Sylvia Richardson home, that was a project that this Government did. And we had to do that as the Honourable Dame said earlier, because when we came to power the number of senior citizens homes were in such bad state of repair we had to close them for safety reasons.

We could not turn our hand, or turn our backs. We had to deal with it and that required money, so that is what some of our money has been spent on in the interest of our seniors. There are lots of people in the community who find themselves with families gone. Difficult economic times. They go to Health and Social Services and we try to address the situation. It is not easy, but we have to try to find the money.

There are many sites; there are many homes and many projects that we have done. And we say them, but it seems like the message does not get from this side of the House to that side of the House. And you have Internet here in this House, Mr. Speaker. And the message . . . that is a very important message. How we help people and put money in the Budget in the spring for the ensuing year.

People should be fair enough to say, *Yes Government, you put money in this programme, but it may not be enough.* And I accept that, but to say that we do not put any money at all is not true, Mr. Speaker. It is not true. And people should not come here and say untruths. I do not think it is healthy.

That is one: We have taken money out of the Budget and put aside for people who are indigent and all kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. I said earlier I know of cases. And if I go personally . . . I have been to the house and social services people . . . I have taken people and they granted and assisted them.

An Hon. Member: And financial assistance.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: And financial assistance. That is right. And I would do it again if necessary.

But you know, you cannot say that we have not done anything. There is no truth in that at all. The record of this Government I am very proud of, very proud of. So, you know, people must have their facts put before them and they can pick out what I say and pick out what anybody else says, and they can decide. And seniors have been around a long time.

And let me say this while I am talking about that in this economic downturn and we must conserve our funds and those sorts of things. I remember as a youngster going to school, Mr. Speaker, we did not have all the luxuries that children have today. Kids have a pair of shoes for school, a pair of sneakers, a pair of football boots and the like, the list goes on. I had a pair of shoes for school and I had one for Sunday. And I could not wear the Sunday school shoes through the week and when I came home at the end of the week with my school shoes I had to take them off and put on sneakers or something else.

So many of the seniors have experienced very difficult times, and oftentimes they went to the store and did not have enough money for the groceries they wanted. And they would have to let it go by, could not have it. Today we go to the store, if we see it and we want it, we swipe the card. The card is of great use, but it can be very dangerous if it is abused. And many people are thus swiping their card today not worrying about it being satisfied tomorrow or the next day.

That is where the real danger is, Mr. Speaker, abuse of these cards. I would like to say that the Reply spoke about things at Dockyard and I would like to say that we have taken great criticism about the dock in Dockyard. And the Minister made a statement today that it costs \$65 million. But if we hadn't that dock, we would have been \$75 million short. The Opposition did not say that, did not say anything about that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Has the Opposition, not this Opposition, but the Opposition before, ever done a project that has paid for itself within a short period of time, 18 months or less? I do not think so. That is a record. That is something that they should give credit where credit is due. That is how you speak to people and understand people, and people know that they are telling the truth because it is a fact.

In Dockyard . . . let me say this, Mr. Speaker, the past year has been a very great year for tourism. In the very early stages we did have a problem with people getting off the boat, getting into cars, getting ferries. And under investigation I found out that there was a miscommunication between onshore and the boat people, which was very quickly recognised the second time out and addressed by this Government.

Around Dockyard now, not only do we have many taxis out there on a regular basis, but a new business has developed of small buses servicing those people. A whole new industry has grown up.

An Hon. Member: Minibuses.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Minibuses, exactly.

They take tourists from the boat to Horseshoe Bay and around the community. This is a whole new industry that has grown up here in Dockyard.

Mr. Speaker, also most of the storekeepers out there have had a fairly successful year. And they will tell you they had a better year, economically, this year than they did last year. Nobody says that, but it is a fact. All I want to do is deal with the facts. I do not want fluff and distortion. I am not going there. I just want to deal with what is real.

Mr. Speaker, one other expense that the Government has is that we invested in a water treatment plant in Dockyard which cost \$15 million. You know, I want to show you where the money is. The money is not under a pillow or somewhere else where it should not be. That is where the money . . . it is an investment in the country and that investment is going to serve Dockyard and the rest of the country for many years to come. And we are well on the way to try and satisfy . . . that is what people do—infrastructure.

When you buy a house, Mr. Speaker, it is a substantial amount, but what do you do? You pay it off bit by bit by organised payment and addressing the problem. That is what we do. With all of the tourists that came through to Dockyard in the past year many of them used ferry facilities to go to Hamilton along with the other facilities to go to Hamilton on the ferry, on the fast ferry to St. George's. And this is the matter of trying to share all of the tourists so that not only people on the West End in Hamilton have an opportunity, but people on the East End also share in the economics of Bermuda. That is what is really done, you know, Mr. Speaker. That is fact. That is not fluff or distortion.

I would just like to say in closing, Mr. Speaker, that this could very well be the last time I will participate in one of these Throne Speeches, but I have enjoyed them.

Some Hon. Members: No!

An Hon. Member: Say it isn't so. Say it isn't so.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: You want me to come around for the . . . what is it? OBA—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: But, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: They do not want to see you go, Walter.

[Inaudible interjections and crosstalk]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: —I have enjoyed the process, this process, as much as I did the first one. But let me say this because the Alliance spoke about the colour and the racism in Bermuda indirectly, but let me say this.

When I first came to this House, there were a few black Members who sat in this corner here where the Opposition is sitting now and we were in a minority. And, of course, the Honourable Member already spoke about some of the injustices that had been done to him.

I just wanted to say this point, and I will close on this point. This past Sunday I was asked, and it is a usual thing, the Remembrance Sunday, the members on the West End are invited to St. James Church to lay a wreath at the Unknown Soldier's Tomb in the churchyard. And I went on Sunday and my granddaughter, Mia, went with me. When I got to the front door, I was taken and I was seated in the front seat. My granddaughter was just enjoying sitting there, but because I am an older person, and I can reflect back on the days when I as a black man had to sit in the back of that church . . . I could not go to the front of that church. The Finley's, and the Gilbert's, and all of those white families that had lots of money, had their names written on those seats. And if you ever went and sat in one, they would ask you out. So there has been some progress made in—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Yes, that is right. Olive's Church, yes, they would ask you out.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: They would ask you out. So there has been some progress made and I believe that I am a part of that progress.

Having sat in that seat, to me, it meant a lot. But to young people, unless you didn't explain it to them, it would have meant absolutely nothing. So we have a responsibility to share these injustices with our young people; not to create animosity, but just so that it will not be repeated again. And I thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lister, the Honourable Member from Sandys South Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban, from Pembroke East.

Mr. Roban has the floor.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Good night, Mr. Speaker.

I am happy to give a contribution to this Throne Speech Debate. It has been very interesting today. Obviously, there were some interesting, historical moments as it was the introductory maiden speech of the new Opposition Leader giving his somewhat sober, I guess, presentation. (To be kind.)

Certainly this was a Reply to the Throne Speech itself, very interesting I must say . . . the contents of the Opposition's Reply. Very interesting. In fact, at one point I thought perhaps we should just close up and shut down because they seemed to agree with quite a bit of what the Government was doing. As it relates to how it was structured, I am not sure if it sort of followed the . . . what I have known in my experience to be the appropriate Throne Speech format. But perhaps this is the change that they speak of. We shall see. It is all very early days, I must say.

But there were some very interesting things. I will not touch too much on what was said by the Honourable Opposition Leader, but there were some statements that I did find rather interesting, Mr. Speaker. Particularly, statements such as "we commend," they commended the theme of the Government of the Throne Speech, "Let Us Build One Another, Together." I think it is a pretty good theme myself, actually. It was well done on choosing that, and I commend the Honourable Premier for making that the theme of our Throne Speech, "Let us Build One [Another] Together, because that is what I think is timely for us as a country to . . . as a forefront of our mind as we shape ourselves going forward. Less *quo fata ferunt*, and more let us build each other moving forward together.

Certainly, much more appropriate, it suggests that we move forward in a unified purpose. We move forward in a unified vision. We move forward with a unified future rather than a future that is left up to the stars and the wind.

And, frankly, *quo fata ferunt* suggests not much control of anything other than letting fate carry you forward. I think it has been much decided, Mr. Speaker, that letting the fates carry us is not the order of the day. And this Government is committed to shaping a vision, a unified vision, of which we believe "Let Us Build One Another, Together."

But I go back to a few things that I noticed about the Honourable Opposition Leader's speech. A mention of years of "squabbling that characterises party politics has seemed to drift farther and farther from the point." Well, I am not sure what that means, Mr. Speaker, because certainly there was quite a bit of squabbling on the Opposition benches just trying to figure out who they were going to be, the UBP, OBA, BDA, I do not know. They seem to have sorted themselves out now to some degree and perhaps that is a good sign, but that seems to be where the squabbling

that I make reference to . . . because certainly this is one family on this side of the House—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Well, they would not know. They do not sit in our House. They do not know, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Yes. Right. And they will never understand what it is to be a family like we are.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: They will never, Mr. Speaker, understand the family, we are.

An Hon. Member: Do not mislead the House.

[Inaudible interjection and crosstalk]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: They will never, ever understand the family who we are on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. They have not gone on trails. They have not gone the roads that we have. They have not been where we have been. Right?

And I love my sisters and brothers on this side and we get along well. That is why we are still here. Isn't there a saying, "We are still here"? There a song like that, "We're still here." We are still here!

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: But they will learn; they are new.

And to some degree, Mr. Speaker, I think that they dance in and out of their old personas. They are a bit of UBP and some of them speak, but they come back to OBA because I have heard that, you know, some of the speech of their presentations seem to reminisce back to when they were the UBP instead of what I believe that they have been trying to tell the country for weeks now—because they are not that old—that they are something new.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I must say, I have in the short time that we have had Throne Speech Reply, and I am going to go forward now, I have a pretty good political memory. I remember stuff pretty good, and my Members around here know that. I have been around a little while. I am a young person, but I have been paying attention a long time. Right? And saw "oldness" all in this. I did not see many new ideas in this Throne Speech Reply. In fact, I just happened to earlier today, you know, and I do not try and do these things, but sometimes it happens. I just happen to come across an old, I think, 2007 UBP platform.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: And I just looked through it because I look through things . . . I read all types of books, you know, I read stuff. And having listened to the presentation of the leader of the OBA, and I saw their Throne Speech Reply, it felt fairly familiar. I saw a lot of words in there that I recognised . . . really, really tight.

An Hon. Member: Hand in glove.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I am not accusing them of plagiarism, Mr. Speaker, of any kind because since that is who they were, it is really their stuff. It is really their stuff.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Good ideas.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: It is really their stuff; right? But I keep hearing that they are something new, but they are borrowing from the old. I thought they were new ideas. Actually, you know, I am a guy who likes new ideas, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: You keep hiding under your desk.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I strive to sort of get involved with new ideas, to listen to them, to hear them. Even from the critics, new ideas of tourism. They are good. New ideas keep my family on their game. Right? New ideas on the game.

It forces us to reflect. But I did not see anything that jumped out as new ideas in this Reply. I did not. I did not. I mean, you know, I am being honest. Hey, that is just how I saw it and I looked at it continuously since I have been up here through the day and this evening and I am not seeing it. Not seeing the new ideas. New name, no new ideas. Not here. Not here.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: No. New name, but no new ideas, you know? So, hey, but perhaps, Mr. Speaker, there is more to come in some form or the other.

Mr. Speaker, another statement jumped out at me. The question for Bermuda, this is coming out of the Reply, is whether this Government can be trusted to follow through on all the promises. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the answer to that is, yes, because the people of this country have continuously put us in trust. The people who need to put the question of trust is that side, Mr. Speaker. They do not have the trust of the people. They have yet to go to the polls to get it

under their new banner. The question of trust is squarely on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, not over here.

An Hon. Member: Wow! Wow!

Mr. Walter H. Roban: This Government has already received that trust. That group has not. The question of trust must be squarely, ultimately, a question they have to ask right now of the public. We endeavour to move forward with the trust that we have been given because we have been given that trust.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it is difficult for them to rise above the murky, so I hope they can. Maybe in their newness, like children the discipline is hard to hoe. I understand. So they are new and I will put that down to their newness, lack of discipline. They have to delve into the murky to make a point because staying above in a Parliamentary way . . . but anyway, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I won't digress any further. Again, Mr. Speaker, I think that is where the question of trust does lie—

An Hon. Member: That is murky.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: —with the Honourable Member on that side. But, again, they have to—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: —they have to, they have to get—

[Gavel]

The Speaker: It is Standing Order 11[(2)(iii)]. It says that "While a Member is speaking, all other Members shall be silent or shall confer only in undertones . . ." not this crisscrossing. We cannot have it while Honourable Member is speaking.

Carry on, Mr. Roban.

Standing Order 11, read it, please.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will continue. I appreciate your assistance, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I will move on, Mr. Speaker, just touching on a few things, not too many in the Opposition's Reply. There were some statements made about bringing back. I am going to make a few points because I am sure my other esteemed colleagues will highlight other things as the Honourable Member just before me did and some others have already done.

But I am going to touch on a few things that I found somewhat alarming under the health proposi-

tion of bringing back and reopening the medical clinic. When I saw that . . . and, again, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of stuff in this statement that was not new because the Honourable Opposition Leader said some of it himself a couple of weeks ago on television, so there are things in here and it has been popping up in some of their utterances in the public ongoing in recent days and even on the recent campaign trail . . . bringing back the medical clinic, Mr. Speaker, that is such an archaic proposition, to bring back the medical clinic.

I want to touch on it just slightly because I think it just speaks of trying to limit care in a way that . . . in many ways has been seen as being somewhat reminiscent of the dark ages of medicine and reminiscent of a time when there was not a belief that medicine should be equal to all.

In fact, I had a conversation with an esteemed doctor about this issue because, as I said, this was uttered from the OBA ranks some days even prior to here, so it is nothing new; this is a proposition they have been putting out for a little while now. And that doctor is somebody who is a senior doctor in the community and has an experience around the issue of the medical clinic. I spoke to him because I was concerned that this was even brought back as a possibility and like a rationale . . . bringing back the medical clinic?

That esteemed doctor said to me that he remembers that some of the proponents, senior doctors, years ago in the medical clinic said, *Well, one of the rationales was that . . . well, the clinic was there because, actually, those people who are the recipients don't really need to have the highest standard of care.*

Now I am not saying that this was a recent statement, but that is reminiscent of the rationale for the medical clinic of when it was put together. It was meant as a tool to segregate out a group of people who were identified as indigent or poor in Bermuda, and that somehow they needed to be treated in a way that, *Well, they don't really deserve or should have the care that the other part of the community is getting.*

To me, at least from my belief standpoint, that is an anathema, because I go from the standpoint . . . and certainly this Government in what it has been doing around health, certainly since it has been in administration and what it continues to do, is about assuring equitable care for all in the best possible way, in the most reasonable, affordable way possible. That is the reason why the clinic was eliminated because it did not speak to that particular principle for us in that it was not a clinic that was open all the time. It was open on a few days of the week, so those people who were limited to the clinic could only perhaps get their care a couple of days a week. For a limited time they could only go to the clinic.

Now, for others who can go to a doctor of their choice at any time, who certainly can go to the Government clinic on Victoria Street or now, certainly,

Lamb Foggo, or certainly at least somebody who can go to the doctor of their choice and make an appointment to go at any time that they may need, you know that is more at least pursuing the ability to act as quality care whenever you want. But then you have people who because they were classified in some way, this clinic was set up for them.

Anyway, I know that this Government is not interested in going back down that road because we are going in a different way with health care. And there is a revolution in health care in this country, trying to provide health care. The Honourable Minister, Mr. Zane De Silva, has been aggressively pursuing a plan to revolutionise and change health care to bring affordability, equitability, sustainability, and care that at least every citizen can have a minimum quality standard of care. That is what we are pursuing, irrespective of your place, your socioeconomic background.

The persons who live in places like Fairylands should be able to get the same care as the people who stay on Angle Street or Middletown. That is my view. But perhaps that is not the OBA's view. I do not know because I am limited to this statement here which is reminiscent to me of that era of segregated care. So unless they are going to flesh it out a bit and tell us more about what they intend, that is what I am left to think, Mr. Speaker, about health and what they are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, there was some comment about the upfront payment issue. Well, I will just say it again. There have been guidelines in place for quite some time, put together by the Health Council in consultation with local physicians to deal with the issue of upfront payments. It has been an issue for quite some time. Those guidelines are in place. The sad thing is that health professionals have not been quite following them. And I sympathise with the stories that the Honourable Former Shadow Minister of Health articulated on because that is the reality that many people are faced with. Some persons who do not have much money go in to a doctor where they need critical care and they cannot afford it because they are faced with the full bill at the doctor's office, and sometimes not aware that that is the case when they get there. That is reprehensible and it must be dealt with and that is why there is a proposal to deal with this legislatively.

Unfortunately, our health care professionals have not been following the guidelines that they presumably were comfortable with, at least most were. So here we are, we are moving to a legislative solution, to a solution that we had hoped could have been dealt with in collaboration. So that is where we are going, and I applaud the Minister for bringing that forward. Absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, touching slightly on the environment: In the statement in here on page 16 of Throne Speech Reply about Government has a poor record in protecting the environment. I think that is an

extremely broad, but essentially false statement. Certainly, when it comes to . . . I could go through a whole lot of things, but I am not going to spend a whole lot of time. But it is false on the basis in that everything from the fisheries paper, everything from plans concerning our coral reef, everything concerning foreshore encroachment, all things concerning conservation plans, better conservation plans for our land, also giving hundreds of thousands and providing in the millions of dollars for buy-back programmes with charitables to buy back open spaces, Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years, 13 years. And they are saying that we do not have a good record in the environment?

I am sorry. You know, what we are doing in relation to the Sargasso Sea with international partners to like protect not only our local oceans, but the oceans of the whole region. And this Government has no positive record of the environment? Nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

But, you know, perhaps in the newness of their formation it is also the ignorance of the knowledge. I do not know. But what I am reading here are their words, so I have to respond to them. They are suggesting that we are doing nothing to support farming, the fishing industry, establishing mangrove protection areas, and the promised actions of a water supply master plan. And I am sure the Honourable Derrick Burgess would have some issues with that statement because we do have a water supply master plan that is being followed and put in place as we speak. All the work that Public Works has been doing to put down infrastructure to deal with the water issues, to the reverse osmosis plants that we have put up . . . no water management master plan?

Again, maybe it is the newness of their formation which accounts for their ignorance in information, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: They are young.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Like I said, it might be their youth, and we often forgive youth, Mr. Speaker. So perhaps they should be forgiven because this party does believe in redemption.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I am not so sure, Mr. Speaker, about that side because I do not know, they are really very new. So perhaps they will have to declare that, if they believe in redemption. I do not know.

Bans on plastic bottles, bags, illegal dumping . . . there is a Bill listed as being tabled in the House to do with litter which is going to address that. The Honourable Minister, Derrick Burgess, some time ago made a statement about some of the prohibitions that we are looking to make on certain products that are not recyclable, like Styrofoam cups and cans, that we

are looking to prohibit bringing in to ensure that they do not pollute our environment.

So when they say certain things in this statement, I scratch my head again, perhaps, the youth and the newness account for ignorance in the information, Mr. Speaker. But anyway, I will—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: What is your point of order, Mr. Pettingill?

POINT OF ORDER

[Unparliamentary language]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Enough please. It is unparliamentary to be saying “youth” and “ignorance” and all of this, particularly, coming from this Member today. It is just enough. I would just caution.

The Speaker: Carry on, Member. He wants you to be more polite.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Well, I thought I was being polite. I do not believe I am using the word in a way that necessarily . . . ignorance is a lack of knowledge. I am not suggesting that they are limited in learning or anything. Certainly they are here, they certainly have the opportunity to hear more and they can come back with more information that would show us that they are not—

An Hon. Member: So ignorant.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: —less understanding or knowledgeable, if I can say that, Mr. Speaker, of information.

I see that they talk about energy goals, 20 per cent of acquired energy from renewable sources by 2026. Well, frankly, that is not that aggressive if you look at our White Paper which is available. Maybe, Mr. Speaker, they did not read it, so, again, perhaps a lack of knowledge of the information about what this Government’s energy plan says because this is much less aggressive than ours, what we have said already for Bermuda. By 2020 we want to be 20 per cent or more done, so.

But I am sure that the esteemed Minister from the environment and infrastructure will deal with the salient points when he gets his opportunity.

But, Mr. Speaker, I will move on a little bit from there. I do not want to spend any more time on the Opposition, but I want to spend more time on what the Government has said as they seek to move forward the theme of “Masakhane.” And, Mr. Speaker, this is a very good Throne Speech that was delivered by His Excellency the Governor.

I believe there was a significant balance in economic and social objectives. There is a significant

amount of content in this speech about the economy and, in particular, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the economy, I believe that part of this Government’s objective and this speech outlines it in a number of areas. It is about the development of our people to transition into the economy as it begins to reshape itself out the recessionary times. And that means training, that means jobs, that means development of our people. That is a major core of what we is being structured here.

The other major core, Mr. Speaker, is obviously, economic stimulation in a number of ways. In the way I have just mentioned, but also with dealing with the issue of flexibility with business, international business and local business. And this has been a global phenomenon. Because of the recessionary condition many businesses have found themselves strangled, if not through lack of capital, then perhaps through certain regulatory regimes that would have traditionally been seen as the norm, when they had the resource and the ability to manage through, but now are constraining.

So this is not only a Bermuda issue, but it is a global issue with how do we free-up some of the regulatory framework to cultivate and stimulate business activity. This Throne Speech addresses that particular issue.

The stimulus programme the Government announced, which was announced in the plan, is to help reignite demand for Bermuda’s human-based capital. That is the piece that I talk about, the development of the people, Mr. Speaker. We are a Government, Mr. Speaker, that sees the development of our people as a priority in getting the country out of this particular economic situation. That is why there is a lot here about Job Corps, about the Tri 30 programme, about the YES initiative. It is all here, plus the reorganisation and the one-stop-shop under Economy, Trade and Industry, Labour and Training, and the National Training Board. Those are the pieces that are being used.

Mr. Speaker, I am always a little puzzled because, like I said, my political memory is pretty good. I am not perfect, but it is pretty good. And what I do know is that as far as back as when the former Minister for Labour (who sat in another place) was responsible, we were doing things to try and get Bermudians moving back into retraining and jobs with his “take it to the people” initiative that he put out to go to the people, taking information on job opportunities for them.

We have been dealing with this issue of Bermudians and their position in the workplace for a number of years now. But the recession has accelerated and made it into a more severe situation. But we were addressing it even before the recession. I will contend that and I believe the record shows that, with the former Minister who had the “take it to the people” initiative.

There were job fairs at Bermuda College like what has been done more recently. They were being done back then as well. So we have not just recently begun this, but the recessionary period has created a more acute situation for our people because of the type of job losses that have been experienced.

There has been collaboration on all levels of business with the Chamber of Commerce, with the best alliance where we try and help Bermudians more efficiently get into the work place. People like the former Minister, Mr. Dale Butler, in his private, and I believe also in his public, capacity has worked to do this for quite some time because this was important to get people, particularly, our people into hospitality and, obviously, it has been a challenge. There is no one who denies that. But we have been doing it for quite some time. So Job Corps, which is being set up, and the new one-stop centre to bring the resources together for our workforce, and getting people redeveloped, retrained, and back to work is crucial and this Throne Speech speaks to that priority. It is a top priority.

What is also very clear by what is proposed, Mr. Speaker, is that we do not see this Job Corps as just an exclusive Government initiative. It is part of a partnership that we are developing, a partnership model that this Government has been using for quite some time with working with the business community because we understand that Government has a role to play, but much of the job creation is going to be and, essentially, will be and has to be in the private sector. We recognise that. That is why we are ensuring that the Job Corps programme and these other programmes are done in a collaborative nature with the business community.

It is important that we focus on development of our people, Mr. Speaker, and their ability to re-enter the market of jobs trained. That is why the Cisco Academy, which the Honourable Minister, Michael Scott, under his Ministry is spearheading—a private/public collaboration—has expressed its interest in coming here, working with the Government to set up an academy to train our people in IT and it is a global understanding that IT jobs are in demand, it is a growth job area and Bermuda with a very robust IT environment, that is going to serve us well.

I am hoping to see, once the Cisco Academy gets here . . . and I do not know what the timelines are. I do not know what has been organised by the Minister, but I hope that he is able, Government is able, to push it even earlier to get as much on-Island so we can get moving as quickly as possible to train our people.

The Bermuda College has recently announced itself that it is looking to have training in the applied sciences area where people can get skilled up in a variety of applied sciences area quicker than normal, so that they can get out. Because they have

identified areas of where Bermudians are needed and trained Bermudians are required.

So there are a lot of pieces of the Government which are feeding into what the Throne Speech is focusing on, the development and training of our people—our young people, our not so young people, and the one-stop career sources. This is what is going on and the Throne Speech is showing this is where we are going.

Mr. Speaker, there is the other piece of the picture. The Government has been talking for quite some time with the private sector and their needs in a variety of areas and the issue around how we attract the foreign investment here. How do we get people here who are going to create jobs, invest in the economy? That is why, without violating any of the sacrosanct policies that we have put in place over the past 10 years in protecting Bermudian job security, or preventing situations such as long-term residency become an issue again, we have created a much more mixed tier of opportunities for people to come here, who are job creators, who are going to employ Bermudians, to invest, settle here in some form or the other, invest in properties, but establish their businesses and invest real capital into the country, which is going to be of benefit to Bermudians.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the requirement to do things this way is nothing new to Bermuda. I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that when we were transitioning as a community in the early 20th century from agricultural to perhaps in the 20th century to being more tourism focused that the Government of that day had to also think of ways to attract persons to come in here and invest and build up hotels or to develop a visitor industry which would be attractive to build that economy up in Bermuda.

So we had to do things then legislatively to attract capital that would invest, that would develop, that would build in ways that would be lucrative to the country. I am sure that when international business was seen as a . . . in the pioneer, the same thing. What legislative measures do we have to make and put in place that will ensure that Bermuda is an attractive place for investment and international business? So we are at that stage again. And for persons to say, *Well, it should have come earlier*. I am not sure that is the case.

I think we are at a point where it is clear that we have to make changes. Because let's face it, this Island has had a somewhat protective, protectionist, sort of regime in place. But guess what? That has ensured, somewhat, levels of prosperity for many, many years. It has. The 60/40 rule; other rules that govern how all types of how capital come into here and how that capital is managed. Certain company regulations. But we are at a point now where the economy has changed. The global economy has changed. So we now have to rethink where can we create more flexibility without giving up regulatory requirements that

are essential in a more international, financial environment.

We are doing it. And the Throne Speech speaks to ways that we can legitimately attract investment to this country, making changes to company legislation, changes to the Hotels Concession Act. That will respond to what is required in this era because the Hotels Concession Act was a piece of this Government's effort to attract new investment into the hotel industry. And I will [contend] that it was successful. Because over the period since the Hotel [Concession] Act was put in place in 2000 there have been hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in our tourism product from a variety of players.

We have the Tucker's Point as an example of that investment. They benefitted from hotel concession, as has the Fairmont which remains a dedicated partner to the country.

But we now have to rethink how that Act is applied and create other incentives around it to ensure further investment in the hotel industry, just as we are doing to the company legislation to facilitate further or more flexible investments and more flexible practices in the business environment that do not give the regulatory strengths that we have become known to have.

Let's face it, I am sure the Honourable Finance Minister and Minister responsible for business development will tell you that there is more pressure from other types of regulations in our environment. It is not about freeing up the regulatory environment so that any willy-nilly comes here. It is about prescriptive, legitimate changes that are going to facilitate legitimate, positive investment and flexibility for business to operate in our country. We have built up a reputation which is good, we must maintain it, but if we have to be more business friendly—less red tape more red carpet—we are taking the steps to bring that about, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me move on a little bit here to some of the other things the Throne Speech addresses, which I think speaks to the balance between the economic robustness it talks about, the social issues which it also deals with dealing with the economic times that our people are faced with.

Mr. Speaker, there is another issue that this country is faced with, and that is the infrastructure. I do not want to talk on it too much because the Honourable Minister is here and he is going to flesh it out real good, I am sure. But we have come to a point in our history where we must look at some of the things in our infrastructure. And it is no one's fault that we have come to this point other than time.

The infrastructure, the investment made in the '50s and '60s, and maybe even further back, like the Causeway Bridge, has now eroded and needs to be revitalised for the Bermuda of now and the future. And there are considerable opportunities for investment here in this new environment, even in the recessio-

nary environment. And so this Government is coming up with a national infrastructure strategy to deal with that, to deal with all the issues that I am certain the Minister is going to detail further, so I am not going to go there too far.

But it is an exciting thing and . . . he is telling me to go, but I am not because it is his game. This is his ball to carry and I am excited to see that he is going to be carrying it. I know he can do it. But there is a lot around the issue of infrastructure that is real opportunity for this country to move forward with and I can tell you that there are international players interested in taking up the Bermuda ball.

The hospital project has done us well. Not only that because there is a proposal in here as to dealing with "rapid-response capability in support of plans and projects considered economically important to Bermuda." Our central coordinating committee that helped to develop the hospital, Mr. Speaker, was not only a success for Bermuda, but it was a global success. I can tell you that from my experience. It was lauded globally as one of the great case studies of infrastructure development.

Major infrastructure players around the world have seen that model and are keen that it be duplicated in a variety of ways. So this particular proposal I know that is here on page seven about the inter-agency partnership is emulating that model. That will serve us well as we move into this age of dealing with infrastructure. And, again, I am going to stop there because I look forward to the Minister touching on it.

Mr. Speaker, our people have been dealing with some serious economic times. Prices have been (if I can just use the word) [pillaging] some of our people, putting a lot of pressure on their costs of living, their ability to function, and is an issue, which is why the Price Commission which was launched is getting on with work.

The question of the surcharge in the utilities and, again, we are now a country that desires to have the lights on 24 hours and a whole lot of other things at our feet immediately. So we want to make sure that we have goods that are here that we can consume. We want to make sure that we can turn on the lights and they are on irrespective, but there is a huge cost to that. So the fuel surcharge issue is here because it is a part of the pressure that is on our people and it has to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, because we are concerned about these costs this Government has been doing a couple of things. This environment has put a lot more pressure on the Government as it relates to how it services people who are in need. But the Honourable Minister, Glenn Blakeney, last year, I think in the last Budget, proposed some tightening expenditure measures around the provision of financial assistance to try to be more lean, but also to attack waste. That in itself was important, but there are a lot of people in hard-

ship, Mr. Speaker, in a variety of ways, so we had to devise ways to deal with the hardships.

We have to be firm on waste and abuse, but we still have to be compassionate. This is a compassionate Government, Mr. Speaker, which is why a number of things in this Throne Speech speak to the compassion as well as dealing with the issues of belt-tightening which we have had to deal with over the past year.

Mr. Speaker, some of the compassion that has been built in has been with amendments to the pension legislation which will allow persons who are meeting financial stress . . . and the Honourable Finance Minister has put this in place to give them some relief. They can access pension funds at a limited level to deal with any issues that have arisen in specific criteria. And that is being extended as is stated here to the [Public Service] Superannuation, private pension, and also the public pensions.

This is the part of the compassion that this Government has had to ensure, on the social end. I have articulated things around the economic side that we are doing, but there also has to be built in some compassion that deals with our peoples' needs as they are right now, as some of them are suffering.

Now, part of the belt-tightening and the rationalisation of what we provide is the means testing to some of what is [provided] in pensions and the contributory pension size. I think people understand that we have to be rational with how we provide these provisions. Means testing makes sure that those who can afford to pay more may have to pay more. And I say "may" because these are proposals.

I am sure in the wisdom of the Finance Minister and her team, they will work it out as best they can, so that we have something in place that is reasonable and that works and ensures that those who can least afford can receive a reasonable benefit. But there are those in Bermuda who perhaps can afford to pay a little more and they may have to. But I respect and I support the wisdom that will be exuded by the Finance Minister and her capable team to deal with this issue as we go forward.

Our seniors, as has been talked about this evening, Mr. Speaker, who may be property rich (and I say "rich" in a figurative way) and cash poor, who have limited access to the funds that are available through financial assistance. We are going to deal with that. I remember that being an issue when I was the Health Minister, Mr. Speaker, and we were working with the departments to devise a strategy to deal with it.

I am pleased that something is being worked on that because it does need to be dealt with. But, again, this economic environment has created a more acute situation in all these areas, so the Government has had to ramp up a little bit more aggressively, clearly, and make sure that these things will be accomplished. I applaud that effort by the Government.

Discrimination is mentioned here on page 12, Mr. Speaker, of the Throne Speech. With interest, I listened to the presentation of the Opposition Member earlier today, with the Honourable and Learned barrister who seemed to suggest, *Well, just do it*. That seemed to be the essence of what he was saying, the Honourable Member. *Just do it*. Well, again, Mr. Speaker, my political brain is pretty good. And, as if that is all that has to be done, I can certainly say, and I do not mind saying it in this House, we have not had to deal with the issue yet, but I am an advocate of doing what we can do to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

As far as I am concerned, the PLP embodies a party founded for that purpose in 1963 to attack what was an environment that was fraught with discrimination and to challenge it. This place was a little apartheid, South Africa, back in 1963. I was not here. Persons as esteemed as you, Mr. Speaker, and the Honourable Mr. Lister were.

I will say again, my mother was sent overseas by her family as a young girl in the early '60s because there was no future for her as a young woman here in that time, irrespective of their means or their ability or her ability as an educated person. But certainly by the grace of the Lord and tireless efforts to change the country, by the time she returned things had changed and I am a result of that.

So Bermuda has changed. But there are still some things we have to do. But my point is this, I do remember a former Government—and I am not trying to tag anybody left here in this House with this label. But there was a former Government one time before us, you know, the world did exist before 1998, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it did. I think most people know that. And this issue came up with a former Government.

I know a late Member of that Government could not get that Government to deal with it. As I recall, the Human Rights Act was passed in 1981, so there was a Bermuda before 1998. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, to make the public understand that I am not attacking this group, the Honourable group on the other side. It is not that simple because that Member had to table a private Bill to address the issues of the change to the Criminal Code at the time—which was a major leap at the time, because the Government of the day could not deal with it as straightforward. So it was not always that simple, Mr. Speaker. But perhaps that is not remembered by some. But I remember.

I remember the public discourse that went around at the time about that change in the Criminal Code. Some people perhaps even still today harp on it. But it was necessary. It was right! We know that. But it is not that simple, Mr. Speaker. It is never that simple to do certain things.

But this Government is committed to dealing with it in a careful and considerate way as is outlined in the Throne Speech. And I am certain that this might be one of the issues that there will be cross-party

support when it comes. I suspect so, which will be a good thing, Mr. Speaker. And then we all can shake hands on the achievement of moving forward in this way, once it is proposed on the variety of areas that are proposed here.

So I look forward to that day, I genuinely do, Mr. Speaker, but it will not be just a credit for the Government it will be a credit for Bermuda when we make some of these changes. And that is really my honest feeling.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I believe that this Throne Speech is well balanced. There are other areas in relation to crime and changes in legislation around crime. I happen to believe that this Government certainly continues to resource our security service as well. And I do believe that the public opinions of the security service has gotten better in recent periods, which is a testament to their dedication and work in dealing with crime.

Yes, there are some serious issues in some areas of crime. This Government has put down some serious prescriptive legislation in some key areas to deal with crime in recent years. But I do believe that we must give credit to the police services and those who work with them and the rising community support and willingness to participate in the process of dealing with crime as a tribute to some of the success we have had.

There have been some areas of crime that have declined, but unfortunately there are still some areas which pervade us that are a problem. But I do believe that whatever successes achieved in the past couple of years are because of the police getting better at what they do, the public participation in assisting them with apprehension, with identification, and assisting in the process of prosecution. These things have helped. So there has been a very balanced approach moving forward.

But we have more work to do as a legislature in this area and that is proposed in the Throne Speech with amendments to the Criminal Code and the Proceeds of Crime Act, and giving the courts some extra tools to deal with issues around justice and crime.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other things that are mentioned in the Throne Speech, but I am going to move to conclusion by speaking about a couple of things. The Honourable Premier has made it her purpose to ensure that good governance, accountability and transparency are a theme for how we do things. That it is no longer business as usual. That purpose I fully support and will continue to support.

It is mentioned here in the Throne Speech about furthering the good governance legislation that the Honourable Premier has already begun to roll out. There are many things in good governance that this Government has put in place—the Internal Audit Department, more power to the auditor ensuring that the auditors have resources to do their job as an agency

under our Constitution, the Office of the Ombudsman and what they do. These are things that this Government has either put in place or strengthened over time to ensure that transparency, accountability, and good governance have been a theme of what we do.

I support the continued efforts of the Honourable Premier and this Government in these areas. These changes are, I think, more than just prescriptive, Mr. Speaker. They are actually substantial changes in our democratic and governmental framework which are aiding how the Government operates. They are aiding in the services that we provide to our citizens. They are aiding in the accountability in the expenditures that we are given responsibility for, and I do believe that it is helping our Bermuda to be a better place as a member of the global community.

As we continue to press on dealing with our issues and ensuring that we are a place “open for business” and we are a place that takes care of our people and their needs economically, as we deal with our social issues and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward building one another, together, I believe that we have many proud years ahead of us as a country. I am firmly of the belief that we are going to get over whatever economic and social humps that we are currently dealing with—not just because of the PLP, but because we as a people have persevered.

I look forward to moving forth with assisting my Government with fulfilling these Throne Speech mandates and great work in this parliament for this session.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East.

I am going to recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. M. Bean, from Warwick [South Central].

Now, Minister Bean, you have the floor.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And good evening to Honourable colleagues and you notice in the latest of the hour and expecting us to go past us midnight, I make a promise that I will not speak for longer than 15, 20 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I think I will start by addressing the Reply to the Throne Speech. First and foremost, as many of my Honourable colleagues have noticed the first half of the Reply to the Throne Speech did not hesitate to offer us credit for the various initiatives that we presented in our Throne Speech. And I note that. I do note it, and I appreciate the honesty of the Opposition in recognising when something is right, and it feels right.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I am a little disappointed. While it was not unexpected, it is still disappointing that the Reply by the Opposition really lacked substance. And what do I mean by “substance,” Mr. Speaker? I have said it before, or Mr. Acting Speaker, sorry.

[Hon. Dale D. Butler, in the Chair—9:50 pm]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I have said it before. The responsibility of a viable Opposition is not just to criticise, but to offer viable alternatives to governance, but yet half of the Reply was giving us credit for our ideas. I have yet to read—and I have read this Throne Speech Reply three times—any substantial ideas which one can frame within an overall vision for the country going forward that has been presented by the Opposition. In fact, what they will consider to be vision, for me, is more like illusion. It is illusionary.

Why is that the case, you may ask? Because trust me, Mr. Acting Speaker, I was not impressed. So much so that I do not even know why I am still here debating it. Why are we not being properly served within this parliamentary system by the Opposition who claims that they would like to be Government, but yet has never, not once, proven to us on this side of the House, and I am sure the majority of the people in the public, that they are capable of being the Government?

The reason why, Mr. Acting Speaker, is because the Opposition is focused very narrow-mindedly on one thing, and that is to gain power by any means necessary.

Now, usually, Mr. Acting Speaker, you have a political group that either pursues populous ideals, which I consider to be short-term—sounds good, helps you get votes—or, they can pursue ideals that one can describe as stewardship—where they look at everything strategically, not for today, but for the benefit of tomorrow. Not for themselves, not even for their children, but for their grandchildren and posterity. That is stewardship. Yet, Mr. Acting Speaker, this Reply to the Throne Speech is neither popular nor a reflection of stewardship. It is just an attempt to gain power. And for that, Mr. Acting Speaker, I am very, very disappointed.

As an example, Mr. Acting Speaker, I note that in addition to the credit that they give us for the ideas that have presented in our Throne Speech they have a tendency to come across as being contradictory. Let me give an example, Mr. Acting Speaker, and especially when it comes to the economy.

On page three of the Reply, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Opposition Leader said, “The Government likes to blame our hard times on the global economy. Its Ministers say that as often as they can, because it gets them off the hook. But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker. This is a Bermuda recession caused by the Government’s financial and economic mismanagement.”

Okay.

But then we go to page nine, Mr. Acting Speaker, second paragraph on the top, quote, “Reinsurance is one of the very few sectors in the interna-

tional economy that has actually grown during the worldwide recession . . .”

So on page three it is a Bermuda recession and it is the Government’s fault. By page nine it is a worldwide recession. Didn’t they proofread this Throne Speech Reply? Or did they just cut, copy, and paste.

An Hon. Member: Cut, copy and paste.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Acting Speaker: You are raising a point of order?

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Yes, I am raising a point of order.

Mr. Acting Speaker: The Chair recognises the Honourable Mr. Bob Richards.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. Acting Speaker: In what way?

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: The reference to the world recession. There has been a world recession, but we are not saying that there wasn’t a world recession. We are saying that recession in Bermuda is a result of mistakes made by this Government.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: And the reference to reinsurance proves that the recession in Bermuda is a result of bumbling of this Government, because our main industry is growing.

The Acting Speaker: Okay, thank you Mr. Richards.

Continue, Minister. I am sure you heard him use that word, “bungling”.

Continue Minister, and address that.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Mr. Speaker, you know how they say no man is an island, no man stands alone? Well, no country is a proverbial island, no country stands alone. And we understand that. Now, let me address that point from the guru with the all-seeing economic eye.

An Hon. Member: Oooh!

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Let me address that point. Let us talk about this economic recession in the world.

First and foremost, without hesitation I can say that everyone was guilty of living high off the hog.

Everyone was guilty. Even some noted economists in Bermuda have stated that, yes, the Bermuda Government has \$1.2 billion in debt. But of note is that we also have (what is it?) \$4.2 billion of private debt. Four point two billion dollars of private debt on top of your \$1.2 billion of public debt.

Now Mr. Speaker, did the Government force private citizens and corporations to take up \$4.2 billion of debt? Did we lead by example to a point that everyone else exceeded even our behaviour?

An Hon. Member: Whoa.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I think not. I think not.

An Hon. Member: That is a slam dunk.

An Hon. Member: But the people do not have to pay for it.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Actually, all debt has to be paid for.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Go on, Minister.

The Throne Speech...

Minister, you have the floor.

Minister Marc Bean.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Four point two billion dollars in private debt; \$1.2 billion in public debt. Now, where did this debt come from? Where did this bubble come from? I have not heard one credible explanation as to from where it arose, except that it was the Government's fault.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Well, how about the Honourable Member taking the opportunity to listen to me?

An Hon. Member: Well, when you make sense I will listen to you.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: All right, let me make sense out of nonsense. Let me make sense out of nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, those who are learned in economic theory understand that today, general economics—the so called gurus, the academics—99 per cent of those that you see in the worldwide media are adherents to Keynesianism economic theory.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I am sure the Honourable—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Go on, Minister.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now Keynesian Economics is a theory that encourages central banking, it encourages money printing; it encourages government intervention—so much so, that on either side of the political ideological divide you will find people who are adherents to Keynesianism. On that side you will find a corporatist mentality, where they are seeking big government to ensure the benefit of big business. On our side, one can say that we have pursued the socialist theory which requires big government for the benefit of the people. That is the whole idea of it—government intervening in the economy to serve someone's special interests.

Now, money printing, Mr. Speaker, is basically the root of all evil. When you have money printing you have a flush of excess paper circulating in the market. Not only does that devalue the current stock of money in circulation, it also increases inflation. Money printing creates what we call today "bubbles." And every single bubble since 1914 has burst. But during that bubble, everything seems to be going well—until it bursts.

Now I know the Bermuda Monetary Authority does not print money. I know the Federal Reserve does. I am sure Members on the opposite side would agree.

An Hon. Member: I think they understand.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes, they understand. I am sure they understand. Money printing has led us to this economic downturn, depression and recession. It is generally speaking worldwide, but mostly in the industrialised nations. Because if you were to go to Brazil, Russia, India, China, and, most importantly, the African continent, you are not going to see this concept of recession as you find in western economies. You would not see it. That is why most capital is fleeing towards what they call the BRIC nations, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Developing economies.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes, developing economies.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes. So I am bringing that to light to dispel this myth that the situation that we find ourselves in today is strictly the fault of the Bermuda Government. They know, like we know, that is false, unless they are educated in anti-economics, some crazy theory by John Maynard Keynes.

Now, let me declare my interest. I am a proponent of the Austrian School of Economics.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, enlighten us on that.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes. It is the free-market school of economics.

An Hon. Member: What does this have to do with the Throne Speech?

The Acting Speaker: We are giving him a little leeway. He is a new Minister; he is entitled to it.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: It is not leeway. They claim that the recession is a Bermuda recession—

The Acting Speaker: That is right, he said his premise.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: —and then six pages later they are saying it is a worldwide recession.

The Acting Speaker: That is right, he was addressing it . . .

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I am explaining your inherent hypocrisy.

An Hon. Member: Do not speak to the Speaker like that.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Sorry.

The Acting Speaker: I'm not offended; go on Honourable Member.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I am explaining their inherent hypocrisy and contradiction, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I understand your enthusiasm. Go on.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: So I think it is disingenuous that the Opposition continuously tries to attack our Government, feeding on the fears and insecurities of the people to make it seem like it is all our fault.

Yes, we have made mistakes. We are not perfect. We are absolutely not perfect. Yet in this Throne Speech Reply, I do not see any alternative solutions. So that means that while we are on one side of the box and they are the other side of the box, at what point are we going to break out of the box?

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I have to give great credit to our leader, the Honourable Premier, Madam Paula Cox. When she said she was going to reset the dial she did not just say it, she meant it. Now what do I mean by that, Mr. Speaker? Well, if you look at our Throne Speech, page seven . . . this is the one term that stood out that made me smile. And I quote: "Previously when discussions were held, there was both

more resistance and a more protectionist stance adopted by stakeholders. That has changed. Given today's economic landscape, there is apparent agreement between all business sectors that they need greater access to capital."

But this is what stands out, Mr. Speaker. "In effect, today's mantra now states: 'Free up Bermuda.'"

Now I know the Opposition claims that we took a lot of their ideas, but I can tell you for a fact that the phrase "Free up Bermuda" came from within the PLP and not from without. It came from the intellectual capital within our Government, and not from without.

What does "Free up Bermuda" mean?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Maybe.

The Acting Speaker: No. More red carpet, less red tape. That is what it means.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: It might mean call a few shots.

The Speaker: Go on.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: It might mean having a referendum for gaming. It might mean looking at the 60/40 rule. It might mean changing the dynamics of your relationship in this country between business and labour. That is what it might mean.

What our Premier is saying is if we are a pro-labour Government, we have to be pro-business too. We have to recognise that we are not a centralised economy. We are not Cuba, we are not North Korea. Economic growth—and I know we all agree—must be generated through the private sector. So it means we have to have an adjustment in the way we think and approach the relationship with one another.

If we love labour, as a labour government, if we want our people to be working, then we have to be pro-business. This natural antagonism that has been created in this country because of historical reasons . . . we have reached the point now, today, that we must shift and change course. And our Premier, as an able captain, is changing course. Changing course, Mr. Speaker; because the circumstances we find ourselves in today is the fact that we are flying into a hurricane, a proverbial hurricane, socially and economically.

That means that we have to adjust the way we do business, as any wise and prudent government will do. If you do not adjust, if you remain fixated and stuck in the place that you find yourself in, you will perish. That is natural in any aspect of life, Mr. Speaker. To be pro-labour means to be pro-business.

As an example of freeing up . . . and this is something that for some reason, Mr. Speaker, people missed. I do not know why, but people—the press,

even the Opposition—missed it. So I am going to touch on it, because it is in the Throne Speech. Page 17, Mr. Speaker. “Incarceration should only be used where there is no other course of action, for example in cases where the seriousness of the offence, the history of the offender or the risk to the public is such that a prison sentence is warranted.”

But check this: [Our] “Government will introduce a new sentencing framework for young people” (and I would encourage old people too) “including the establishment of a new classification of sanctions related to different types of drugs.”

For some reason, everyone has missed that statement in the Throne Speech. Either they missed it, or they are trying to avoid it for political reasons. Because we know the Opposition has this strategy when it comes to elections of peeing in a cup and all of that populism foolishness.

But our Government is a little bit more farsighted, a little bit more connected to the realities of this country. Our Government is a little bit more tuned in. We understand the negative effects of our young people who, through wise and unwise choices in life, find themselves in a position where they are not able to pursue their purpose because of mistakes. We understand the effect of an overburdened budget in terms of national security and the judiciary and the prisons because of this very same issue.

And yes, we are bold enough to not just consider it internally; we are bold enough to put it in the Throne Speech. We will look to reclassify the sanctions when it comes to certain types of drugs. I have said it before and I will say it again, Mr. Speaker. On the issue and topic of drugs in this country, for one: socially, we cannot live with it; economically, we cannot live without it, Mr. Speaker. That is one of the dynamics that we have to understand when it comes to drugs.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, as we all know because we are all humans . . . some of us try to act like monks and nuns and angels and priests, but I know for a fact that no one elected anyone in this country as a politician and expected them to be a priest. We are humans. This is not a theocracy. It is supposed to be a democracy.

So we have to understand, Mr. Speaker, that drugs, under the concept of liberty, every single person is free to put whatever substance they want in their body. That does not necessarily make them a criminal; but it would make them a fool. And that is the difference.

An Hon. Member: Whether prescription or otherwise.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Whether it is prescription or otherwise, Mr. Speaker.

Because you want to do something to your own self, for instance drinking alcohol—you might enjoy it, but it is going to destroy your liver and kid-

neys—that does not make you a criminal. Even if we made alcohol illegal, it still would not make you a criminal, it just makes you a fool.

An Hon. Member: The same holds true for tobacco.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: So how do we deal with that foolishness when it comes to human choice? The only way, Mr. Speaker, is education. Okay? It is not punitive measures such as locking people up.

When you think about it crime only is derived from the drug trade, especially in this country (breaking and entering and whatnot), because drug addicts do not have the access to what they want.

Now there are examples around the world of alternative approaches to this vexatious issue, and our Government, like I said, has the wisdom and foresight to now start pursuing one of those alternatives—I am still touching on the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker—while establishing a new classification of sanctions related to different types of drugs.

The Acting Speaker: I understand that is one of your passions. Thank you for your leadership.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: It is not one of my passions, it is just one of the many issues that I am willing to talk about.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I am not afraid to talk about it, because I walk out of this House and I go amongst the people of this country every single day. I know what time it is. I am not in an ivory tower, aloof, speaking from on high. I am speaking from the perspective of being a roots man.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Not even grassroots, deeper than that.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, that just reveals the wisdom and leadership of our Honourable Premier. We are looking to change the relationship in this country. We are looking to allow our people to feel the rhythm of a new relationship in this country. And when we pursue our economic policies, being pro-business and pro-labour, it is not from the perspective of how can we ensure the wealthy remain wealthy or continue to be wealthy, that corporatist mentality.

We actually are looking at it from the perspective of what is the best approach that we have to take today to ensure that our people's future in this country is secure, from the bottom up. From the bottom up. Okay? Not helping people for the sake of helping them, as a sense of entitlement, but helping people help themselves. Everything we do we consider from the perspective of our people, and that is one of the

things that differentiates us and them—leadership and wannabe leadership, stewardship and populism looking for power, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close now. I am going to speak briefly on the fact that I have been given the opportunity and responsibility to deal with what I consider to be a mandate that is based around stewardship, telecommunications, infrastructure strategy, energy, planning and sustainable development.

My job is to think about tomorrow. My job is actually to think as an airline captain—not focused on the point of origin, but focused on our destination, Mr. Speaker. Whether the plane is at one waypoint, the pilot is always three waypoints, or tack points, ahead of the aircraft. That is my responsibility, in support of our Premier. That is why I am honoured to be able to serve in this Government, and that is why I have no hesitation in letting the people of this country know that, yes, we are going through perilous time. Perilous times. The whole essence of our Throne Speech is “Let Us Build One Another, Together.”

Mr. Speaker, the Psalmist says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, the weary builders toil in vain.” “Unless the Lord builds the house, the weary builders toil in vain.”

We have a Throne Speech that has as its intent and spirit to reach at the heart of our people’s consciousness to encourage them to lift themselves up by their own sweat and brow, to move away from a concept of entitlement and dependency—which I absolutely cannot stand.

In fact, the political construct of this country for the last 40 years has fostered nothing but dependency on the people. At what point are we going to break away from the dependency mindset and move towards a space of freedom? I think our Throne Speech is an excellent starting point to move towards “freeing up” in this country.

And to close, I find that the irony was heavy that the last two pages of the Reply to the Throne Speech spoke about race. The irony on me is heavy, because on both sides I have still yet to hear someone come with a rational, reasoned approach on how to deal with this vexatious issue of race. Not the appeasement, not the stories about what we went through. Everyone has been through something in this country when it comes to race, especially our people.

An Hon. Member: The black people.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes, of course! We have been through it. Even I, born in the 1970’s, have experienced racism in this country. Well, Mr. Speaker, one thing I was taught by Marcus Garvey is that a man respects you when you respect yourself.

Mr. Speaker, I chose not to complain, I prefer to compete. Let me repeat that; I chose not to complain, I prefer to compete.

Now, how can we become competitive? because I know the Opposition is always speaking of giving 20 percent of contracts to black businesses for economic empowerment. That is just corporatism.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes. It is light, it has no substance.

At what point are we going to encourage the people of this country to be competitive? In order to be competitive black people in this country, instead of complaining, have to cooperate with one another to be able to compete. In other words, this crab-of-the-bucket mentality has to cease. Stop blaming everyone outside of ourselves.

Yes, I understand what happened in the past, Mr. Speaker, but today is a new day—if we chose to embrace it as a new day.

So at what point are we going to move to a degree of competitiveness? My mate, a well-known artist from White Hill, said, “Hey, you know something?” (they call me Jah Pilot up in my neighbourhood)—

An Hon. Member: Yes, he flies the planes.

An Hon. Member: Correction.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Correction what?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Go on, Minister. We are learning.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I am actually going to write that on the blogs. But I think I should address that too.

[Laughter]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: But you can go check the record, it stands for itself. As an air traffic controller—

An Hon. Member: Correct.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: —highest theoretical and practical grades.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: You did not have to say “correction” because I was already an instrument rated pilot, if you know what that means. Okay?

An Hon. Member: Whoa!

The Acting Speaker: Go on, Minister.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes, well some people call themselves accountants.

An Hon. Member: Some people do.

An Hon. Member: Some people call themselves leaders, or new leaders.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Right.

Mr. Speaker, again, how are we to move across this vexatious issue of race? My mate says, "You know something bro? We have all been here for almost 400 years, we eat food every day, and we do not even own a supermarket."

An Hon. Member: We used to.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: We used to? I am hungry today and tomorrow. "Used to" ain't going to me, and cannot feed my children, right? So we should not blame Mr. Lindo or Ms. Ferreira or Mr. Arnold or anyone who chooses to bring food and sell food at whatever price. No one is stopping us from going and being competitive.

No one is stopping us from pooling our resources together and going abroad, finding an exporter where we can bring in the same food and sell it at a cheaper price. It is called free market economics. It is called competition. So as a people, if we are going to move across this vexatious issue of race, we as a people need to be competitive.

Now the question I ask for the other side is what happens when you see us competing? Instead of us begging for you to share your rockfish, because we have been eating cow polly every day, and we are tired of eating cow polly and white grunts, and you are eating rockfish, and begging you for a piece—the head, the tail, whatever. What happens when we say no, we are not going to beg you anymore, and we are not going to be dependent on you? We are going to get our own boat and we are going to catch our own fish. What happens then?

Are you going to have an issue with us doing for self? If you have an issue with us doing for self, which is the natural right of any human being, that is when there is going to be a real problem in this country.

Let me show you (and I am going to close with this), when it comes to race, the more people try to hold on to, the more you stand to lose. Give and receive, that is the only approach. Cooperate to compete, do not complain. Do for self. That is what we have to be dealing with from this point going forward. Anything less is unacceptable.

If the Opposition is genuine in dealing with that, then get together amongst yourselves and ask yourselves the question, *How can we help people*

help themselves?, especially those who have the talent and ability but do not have the access to capital or opportunity.

You will realise that in about five to 10 years, many of the tensions that we face in this country at a social level would diminish. Try it. Try it; try freeing up. Let us not move toward the equality which is an illusion, because there is nothing in this world that is physically manifested that is equal. Let us not move towards equality—I do not want equality, I want freedom. I do not want my people to be equal; I want them to take their rightful place and be free men and women in society.

Let that be our mantra, "Let Us Build One Another, Together."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Okay, thank you, Minister Marc Bean, for landing your plane safely with that front page headline.

Now the Chair recognises the Honourable Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, JP, MP, Shadow Minister of Public Works and Public Accounts Controls, is that correct? Paget West, Constituency 23?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No sir, Transport.

The Acting Speaker: Who?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Shadow Minister of Transport.

The Acting Speaker: Shadow Minister of Transport, my apologies, Paget West.

You have the floor.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Acting Speaker, to the Honourable Member who just took his seat, let me say that he rapped on a point that actually is very dear to my heart. That is one that says that we ought to compete and not complain. From this side of the aisle, he will get no argument. He will get no argument. A significant portion of his comments were relatively useless, but that part was poignant.

The Acting Speaker: No, do not spoil your speech by going down that road, no.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That part was poignant, because one of the things that I think is important to state is that for 14 years under the Government, when we start talking about 'today is a new day if we chose to embrace it,' let us not talk about the inability for people to have opportunity when that has been their mantra.

When the electorate of Bermuda chose to change a Government that existed in 1998, it was ap-

parently because some of the practices and procedures that were employed were no longer attractive, and as a result the electorate chose a different path.

What they did not anticipate is that 13 or 14 years later we would hear people as senior as your Education Minister, or people as senior as any minister in the Premier's Cabinet, saying that that is what you used to do 40 years ago and 30 years and 20 years ago—it is absolute nonsense.

It makes no sense for anybody to stand and look that far back when, in fact, you have been driving the bus. And if you have been driving the bus and you have not been able to sense or to effect change that has been positive for everybody—not just the blacks in the society, not just the whites in the society, not the few that one party or the other may be able to win over to themselves for whatever reasons, but for everybody. If we have not been able to determine a measurable advantage for all of the people, then we have failed. And if the former Government failed, the present Government has failed, because that has got to be.

If the Premier talks about keeping your eye on the prize, the prize ought to be that the average person in the street finds himself better off than he has been historically, and I do not believe that is the case given what we are able to glean from the people with whom we come into contact.

But let me just go to some of the comments that were made before I go on to my specific area, which is transport. I am going to touch on tourism, because it is an area that I was responsible for for the last three months, since the formation of the One Bermuda Alliance, and it is one that created a bit of a passion for me during the period that I was responsible for it. So I will make reference to that period of time and the information that I have been able to glean from my shadow board during that period of time.

I just wanted to make quick reference, if I may, Mr. Acting Speaker, to the comments that were made by the Honourable Member, Louise Jackson, and that is when the Honourable Member indicated about legislation for upfront payments.

I believe the Premier indicated by way of information that the Throne Speech is the Government's legislative initiative plan for the ensuing year, and we buy that. But one cannot help but embrace the concerns of the Honourable Member, Louise Jackson, for the simple reason that if our seniors were a priority to the Government we would not be seeing, 'We are going to table it at some point in time.'

We had on Throne Speech day four pieces of legislation tabled. Today, two weeks later (because we were off last week), three additional pieces of legislation tabled. And let me just say that the type of legislation that we have tabled—Protected Species Amendment, Waste and Litter Control Amendment—can hardly be primary to the concerns of our seniors. So you can understand the frustration, and it is only in

that vein I am absolutely certain that the Honourable Member, Mrs. Jackson, wants to bring to the attention of the Government, that the urgency (as our leader said) is now.

We have to prioritise those things where people are impacted. Do not tell me that the Protected Species Amendment Act is going to take precedence over the plight of our seniors. That cannot be right. That absolutely cannot be right.

I also wanted to look at one of the comments that one other Honourable Government Member indicated, and that was talking about housing. I am not absolutely certain which Member it was, because I wrote the comment, but I did not write who said it.

It said that the Progressive Labour Party Government cannot be accused of failing to provide housing for people. And with that they talked about the plethora of building projects that have occurred. But I think that one of the things that absolutely must be impressed upon, and we hear it all the time, that a former Government did not build any houses leading up to 1998 on the back of the base pulling out in 1993 and a glut of houses being made available.

How irresponsible is it for a Government to have a glut of houses being put on the market to build additional houses when there are vacancies existing, when people are unable to pay their mortgages because there are no tenants to occupy their accommodations?

That is exactly what is happening. In this day and age, there is a glut of houses that have been put on the market that the Government has facilitated through its PPPs and whomever else. And you find at the end of the day you have one or two people who are these key stakeholders in the building industry basically riding off with a Government guarantee to ensure that they have put up . . . you see these houses over on south shore—a ton of them. How many of them have been sold?

What has happened is that those houses, based on Government's input and support, have ended up with the unintended (unintended, I am certain) consequence of devaluing people's existing properties because those houses have gone in direct competition with the private market. But it is being done on the back of the taxpayer. The taxpayer is paying to help to devalue his own house.

And if Government considers that to be right, then I would really like them to reconsider the economics of what it is that is being done in that particular area.

An Hon. Member: Point of order, Mr. Speaker

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

The Acting Speaker: Can you state it?

An Hon. Member: Yes, it is a gross misleading of the facts. Only a few years ago everybody in this country was crying for housing. Now you do not even hear of housing being on the tongues or the lips of people with regard to need. So we answered a problem, and notwithstanding that, we are still getting the criticism.

So we are going to blame answering and responding to the needs of the people, and now, because of circumstances beyond the control of most people in the world, we are going to be blamed again.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you—

An Hon. Member: There was a bank in this country (and I will end on this, Mr. Speaker) that this Government guaranteed so that they could substantiate their existence, and they were in deficit as a result of sub-prime investment.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Minister, thank you for the explanation. I was not quite clear on your point of order, but thank you.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, there was none, Mr. Acting Speaker.

But Mr. Speaker, I can say to the Honourable Member that he has actually proven my point, because housing is not on the lips of the average person in the street. No—because there is a glut of them. And because of the glut a significant number of them are empty. And it is those empty houses that are selling at a price that undermines what the free market had initially set their prices at.

Yes, I understand the Honourable Member's comment that bubbles will burst. That is not the issue. But to have significant inventory of houses that serves to devalue the cost of people's one major asset . . . what people do is invest in their houses. And nobody wants to know that they have purchased a house for \$800,000, the Government has built a kazillion of them and they are going to be sold for \$600,000, and, therefore, that person's \$800,000 house is not just underwater on the mortgage, but they cannot find people to put in it because of the policies that have been in place.

We have found that people who would normally even rent those houses the private market used to be able to rent, those people are no longer in Bermuda.

So those are the considerations that the Government must have. Nobody is saying that you do not build houses for your people when there is a need; but one does say that the entire situation must be evaluated. And it must be evaluated effectively in order not to create a glut, in order not to create a diminution in value for somebody's hard-earned asset. That is where the challenge is.

I want to speak also to the issue of private residential care. The Elder Care Abuse Registry, which the Honourable Member, Mrs. Jackson, indicated was actually already in place, that the Government is talking about bringing in some new legislation . . . maybe what they are trying to do is to enforce some of the existing legislation. Because I can tell you that with some of the inspections that may have occurred in such an environment as a residential care for seniors, some of the inspections have either been nonexistent or have left something to be desired.

I speak to specific cases in which there is a particular patient who has developed bedsores as a result of policies and procedures that are in place in particular nursing homes. And when you hear the kinds of stories that a patient is suffering because there is a lack of prescribed care, generally accepted conditions for care, then we have a problem. We have a problem.

The Acting Speaker: You have taken this up with the Minister, or at least written him, or informed him?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I have not taken this particular matter up with the current Minister. No I have not, because it was just brought to my attention just in this past week.

The Acting Speaker: But you will be?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I absolutely will.

The Acting Speaker: Because you want something done.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That is the key; that is the key.

The Acting Speaker: Okay.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Because I can tell you beyond a shadow of a doubt, Mr. Acting Speaker, that there are some things that we have to recognise in this Honourable House that bridge the gap of politics.

There are some things that you do not play politics with. Seniors' health is definitely one of them. The things that are our bloodline are something else that you do not play politics with. I say that, and I am going to just jump there for a moment, and I will just leave the issue, and I will just put a note on my notes that I will bring up this particular issue with the Minister.

The thing is, you bring up issues with the ministers, you tell them about it, you ask them to look into it, and nothing gets done. I have heard the Honourable Member, Louise Jackson, talk about challenges in nursing homes, challenges in conditions, forever. She has talked about it ad nauseam—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of order.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —and many things that she has spoken to have been left unaddressed.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

The Acting Speaker: Hold on.
Minister Blakeney, we recognise you.
Your point of order?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member has called me on occasion, and we work through situations and I have clarified certain situations for her when she brought to challenges to my attention.

Yes. But you have made a general comment.

The Acting Speaker: That is a good point of order. Thank you for sharing that with us, Minister.

You can go on.

An Hon. Member: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

The Acting Speaker: Sorry, we have another point of order.

Mr. Lister?

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I was just concerned that with the 36 Members of this House, why do sick people just call one Member?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: He is stating it . . . Just hold on, he is stating his point of order.

Go ahead, I am listening.

He has hardly said a word.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you, very much.

The Acting Speaker: Go on.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you. They want me to say, and I will give them their point, they want me to say that they are misleading. But it is obvious. I do not have to say the obvious.

The point of my question was, Why is it that there are 36 Members in this House, and only one Member seems to have calls from seniors? I do not understand it. If they called the person who was responsible, they would get results. So those people who called that one Member really are not concerned about their real—

The Acting Speaker: So you are giving us some advice. Thank you, Mr. Lister.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: If they show their concern, call and get results.

Mr. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

The Acting Speaker: We have another point of order from the Deputy Premier, the Honourable Mr. Derrick Burgess.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, let me say that I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House. And I say that respectfully, because I do not think she means to do that.

But I can say, and I think any Member of the House can say, if you call Minister De Silva for anything he works very hard and he gets right to it. That is one thing I can say about that Minister.

The Acting Speaker: Okay, thank you.

I would just like to remind Members that we are looking at “Let Us Build One Another, Together,” the Throne Speech.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, absolutely.

But I think it is very important that as all of these Members have defended their Minister I can say unequivocally that many of the comments that were made by the Honourable Member, Mrs. Jackson, we have heard before.

So, if these issues have been taken on board and have been addressed by the substantive Minister, there would be no necessity to bring them up again. So clearly, something is left wanting. And while we might hope that things are addressed, while we might recognise that some ministers are proactive and respond, there are others who do not. It is just as simple as that.

Anyway, I will not belabour that any further.

I want to also make reference to the situation respecting the docks, the Heritage Wharf. We heard earlier in one of the Honourable Member's presentations that that dock came in at a cost of \$65 million, it has brought in revenue of \$75 million to the country, and therefore it has paid for itself in a three year period of time.

But guess what, Mr. Acting Speaker? If that dock had come in at \$38 million, which is what it was supposed to, then there would be an extra \$27 million that went in the kitty. So, instead of it only just breaking even and paying for itself, there would be \$27 million extra in the kitty to pay for some of the pro-

grammes that the Government has had to cut back on.

And that is our level of concern. That is where we come unstuck. It is not to say that the Government has done nothing. We have never said that the Government has done nothing. All we are saying is that what the Government has done . . . if we get one for the price of two, that is not money well spent.

Mr. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

The Acting Speaker: Hold on. A point of order from Minister Derrick Burgess, Deputy Premier.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, all of the monies that were spent on that dock were approved in this House, question on the expense of it. So to stand there and say that it should have cost \$58 million (or allude to that) and it cost \$65 million, or whatever she was saying, is not here or there.

The money was approved and was properly scrutinised by this House. So to mislead the House with anything different is totally wrong.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Well, let us just say that—

The Acting Speaker: Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Let us just say that the Auditor General may have a different opinion, and I will leave it at that. Because there are reports that are going on, and the work that was done on that Heritage Wharf . . . because we were promised that we were going to have a full report in this Honourable House, which is yet to be tabled, but we can see by photograph that the thing is falling apart. It is falling apart.

So we do not know what it is actually going to cost in addition to the \$65 million that is already on the books and a significant portion of what the original TAFs were. These would be the final costs thus far. That gets approved after the fact. So the money is spent.

Yes, it is one thing to say it comes to this Honourable House and it gets approved. Yes it does. That I give to the Honourable Minister. But it gets approved after the money is already spent. What can you say? What can you do, say no we are not going to approve the money? That makes no sense.

However, that having been said, we do not know whether we are going to wake up after the next blow and find a significant portion of that dock floating off into the Great Sound, because it is deteriorating by the minute. We have seen the wave thrusts and the like at that dock. It has been poorly constructed and we do not know where the issues lie in that particular instance. We do not know if the issues are—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

POINT OF ORDER
[Clarification]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: The Member has the dock and the thruster wall confused. The dock is solid. It is just the thruster wall that is compromised; not the dock.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

So Member, you are giving us an example of your concern about Government spending, and you are bringing this up under the Throne Speech?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am bringing it up under the Throne Speech, in which the Minister said that she was going to give . . . the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Premier and Finance Minister . . . the Honourable Premier indicated that she was going to commit . . . or the Governor on behalf of the Government indicated that he was going to permit legislation that permits people to follow the money.

When you are going to follow the money, you have to know where the money went. It is not so much that we need legislation to follow the money; we need people to follow the money. That is where the concern is.

The Acting Speaker: I think you have made your point.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: When I start to be concerned about the fact that we have overspent . . . there is a lot. I think my honourable colleague, Mr. Richards, has brought home several, several times the idea that a lot of our challenges are self inflicted.

When we have self-inflicted problems, when we spend more than we ought to spend on any given project, when we have to write off . . . if you want to go back and be retrospective, the \$40 million written off from the Housing Corporation, that was deemed to be an investment. I have never seen an investment that has no return and no terms of repayment. But that is neither here nor there. But it is all in the realm of following the money.

It is all in the realm of following the money. I just think that when we hear defence of inordinate ex-

penditure, I think we need to be able to get a grip on it and make sure that we know exactly what is required.

I also want to speak very briefly to the issue respecting the clinic at the hospital. I think that one of the sad things when we hear Government defending and saying, *We don't want a different standard of care for one lot of people than a different lot of people and the like*, I think this is where vision is lacking.

To say that there ought to be a clinic . . . that we know that there are people in the Island who do not have access to effective health care, who were able to get access at that particular place, at a time and under conditions where they were able to have dignity, then I think that if your vision is broad enough, you can make that facility something to be proud of, as opposed to looking down on it as something to be abhorred because of what it used to be.

You know, I remember not too long ago when we were having issues with my mother trying to determine what was going to happen as she was developing Alzheimer's, and trying to determine what we would do with her during the day while we were working, because we could not leave her on her own. And we said, "Mom, they have a wonderful day care at Pembroke West Home, and we are going to inquire about letting you be there just during the day." It was a daily day-care situation. They would bring her home in the evening.

My mom's response was "I'm not going to that place. That is the poorhouse."

You see? Because that is the way it was known in the area when she was growing up. It did not matter that this was a totally different approach, a different facility, a different service. To her mind, the property denoted the poorhouse.

So, unless we are able to use a broader vision and to be able to make something better of that which used to be, and to sell that to the public because we believe in it and because we would buy it, then that is where we are failing.

We are standing in this Honourable House trying to differentiate and say, *Oh, that is an indigent clinic, and it is for people who don't have any money and whatever else*. What we are trying to do is to ensure that everybody has quality healthcare, and that is what we would be trying to do, as opposed to coming up with a nebulous plan that says those who have more money can pay more for health care premiums and . . . How do you determine? How do you determine?

If one listens to today's arguments by saying that if one has a house . . . the Honourable Minister indicated that if you own your own home then you are not necessarily poor. Well the bottom line is there are some people who are in that situation. But just say for the sake of argument, if the Minister makes the determination that somebody who owns their own home might be deemed to be in that "better category" and therefore has to pay more . . . when some of those

people in that "better category" do not even have a dime to even pay for lights or pay for food.

So there has to be something that we are able to hang on to a little better and show that it is fair and equitable across the board, and not just come up with pie-in-the-sky ideas. To be able to ensure effective healthcare at every level is something that we ought to be embracing in this Honourable House.

That said, I think that I have dealt with those areas where I felt the necessity to respond to situations that other Members have spoken to that I thought were important.

Now one of the things I would like to do is to go to my area and to specifically speak to page 19 of the Throne Speech. It is the second paragraph, talking about good governance legislation. And it says, "As with any ambitious transformation, your Government had to learn lessons and acknowledge that sometimes mistakes have been made and things have gone wrong. The Government regrets those mistakes."

Well some of those mistakes have been terminal to some people in terms of their economic success. Some of the mistakes that the Government has made have had significant impact on whether people are able to keep their businesses going or whether they are not able to keep their businesses going. You cannot say in a cavalier fashion, *We messed up and we are sorry; now continue to allow us to keep going*.

Because the Honourable Minister, Mr. Bean, spoke about trust (I believe it was the Honourable Member, Mr. Bean) and it was like, *Can we trust those people over there?*

If I go to page six of the Throne Speech where it says—we are going to talk about trust—and it says "the Government views its responsibility for sustaining Bermuda's, and indeed, the planet's environment as a sacred trust." Well I have to ask the question, was that commitment, was that responsibility before or after the signing off on some of these unfortunate situations that caused a ministerial resignation? I mean, you cannot on the one hand say we take this very seriously, and on the other hand have people around you who are just flying in the face of that which you say you are attempting to do.

Mr. Speaker, there is a philosopher who once said that the first method of estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him. Well I can tell you that the people who are around the Honourable Premier as the leader of this country are not making her look too good. They are not making her look too intelligent with some of the choices and decisions that they are making that are causing not just the Government, but it is causing Bermuda to have to sit back and pay attention, and hence the world is looking at us. Because we know that these things go off into cyberspace—

The Acting Speaker: Mm-hmm. You are not going to move too far from your own page one, right?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am sorry?

The Acting Speaker: You are not moving too far from your own page one. I cannot tell you what to say; however, on page one of your own document, you talk about what is best for the people. "Our job is to serve the public, to solve their problems, to run the country on their behalf efficiently and well." Yet we are hearing attacks.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And then we have Ministers . . . No, this is not attacking—

The Acting Speaker: This is a powerful page one of a new direction. I am hearing the old direction.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, you are not hearing an old direction. What you are hearing, Mr. Acting Speaker, is a Member and a Party who have said that we will critique that which is not being done effectively. Being cooperative and collaborative does not say that we are going to roll over and play dead, because we would be abdicating our responsibility if that were our approach.

I am trying to be helpful here, but I think it is very important for us to understand that if we want to start building one another together, let us not just make it lip service; let us make it real. Let us make it real, and let us be real about it.

There is also another philosopher (I believe it was Machiavelli) who said "Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be great." That suggests that some of the challenges we have . . . if we just put a little bit more determination into a resolution we will be able to get there as a people.

Let me just tell you a story, and when I say there are some things that ought not to be politicised . . . I had an email somewhere around the middle part of August from a gentleman whom I did not know, who (and this is speaking to a tourism aspect) sent me an email to say, "I have some great ideas for tourism for your country. I have sent an email to your Minister and to your Premier and I have heard no response."

Now, I could have said, *Tell me your ideas*. But you know what? Tourism is the next lifeblood of this country—bigger than politics, bigger than the OBA, bigger than the PLP, and certainly a heck of a lot bigger than Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

And what did I do? I responded to that individual by saying, "This is the address of the Minister, and this is the address of the Premier, just in case you had the wrong address from the beginning, to make sure that if you wanted to have communication that you were not mis-communicating," because that is my responsibility.

He came back to me and said, "I have sent further information and I have still heard nothing." And I said, "You know what, I cannot force people to re-

spond to you, but I can at least make certain that they have the information that you are trying to share." [UNVERIFIED QUOTES] Because that is important. It is bigger than any of us individually, and we ought to collectively be looking at challenges that we have and also looking at the answers to be able to resolve those challenges.

Mr. Acting Speaker, when I talk about the willingness and the difficulties cannot be that great—

The Acting Speaker: So what happened? You led us down a road, about how this person could not get the Minister . . . so what are you saying?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I gave him the address. He continued to correspond with me. He sent various ideas, and the like, and I said to him point blank, "Look, let me tell you, I am not the Minister. I cannot" . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: There are a plethora of ideas. A plethora of ideas. And I can tell you that I am happy to share, because as I said, this goes beyond *us and them* and *him and me*, and whether he is good, bad or indifferent. I can spend an awful lot of time right now because, based on some of those ideas, we actually discussed them at Shadow board. With my Shadow board, they have come up with some amazing ideas. I have an incredibly talented team of people who sit on the Shadow board who are able to come up with ideas so that I could say, *Here we are. Here we are. There we are.*

The Acting Speaker: I am listening. I am listening. We are all listening. Go on.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I shared some of those ideas when I did the motion on tourism. But, you know, that was not my point at this particular stage to speak with respect to that. I just wanted to point out that we are willing on this side to reach across the divide to say that the things that are important to Bermuda, that we will share.

The Acting Speaker: Like tourism.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: We are willing to share, and tourism is one of those.

The Acting Speaker: Share. You have an offer, Minister.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And tourism is one of those.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, I will give the Minister a list when I am done.

The Acting Speaker: Sounds like a good lunch meeting to me.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It could very well be.

The Acting Speaker: I could recommend a restaurant.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Because, you know, one of the things I want to say is that I do not believe that a major player in our tourism product from a transportation perspective would have effectively pulled the plug and left us in the lurch. One of the things that I am not sure was known was the relationship between the *Veendam* and the Carnival Lines, being one and the same corporation. Carnival Lines is actually the parent of Holland America, who are the owners of the *Veendam*, okay?

So when I was aware that the *Veendam* was pulling out, probably almost a month before it was actually announced, about a month before it was announced, and once I was made aware of that—and certainly the Minister would have been aware—the question would have begged, from my perspective, because we had put a significant number of our eggs in one basket (i.e., in the Carnival Lines), Was there something that ought to have been done or that we could have done to help to at least determine whether the action of the one (i.e., the *Veendam*) pulling out was likely to impact on other companies in the same group? Which was the reason I asked the Minister this morning, in his Ministerial Statement, *Were there meetings with the Carnival people to help to mitigate against the risks that the Minister indicated existed because of the shorter period that they were only able to have berths at Heritage Wharf?*

There was a reason for that. Because if you knew that one ship from your corporate flow chart, from your corporate organisational chart, was going to pull out, then you have to start to link the two and to find out, Have we built a sufficiently good relationship with the Carnival people? Albeit it is called a different name, it is the same company. Do we have a sufficiently good relationship that we could help to, you know, grovel if we have to. There were no contracts in place. Let's face it.

I understand the Minister indicating this morning why there were no contracts, so I will accept the explanation. But given that there were no contracts in place, am I to believe that somebody who has been a significant player would not have been amenable, if our attitude had been right, to the idea of saying, *Okay. We had 13 trips next year. We definitely have decided to go elsewhere, but we could probably delay going to (wherever they are going to) Aruba, and give you the first three or four, and then go down there afterwards, so that we don't lose all of the revenue for that period of time.*

Would we not have been able, with good communication and a nurturing relationship, to determine that kind of arrangement? It seems to me that it would not have been beyond the realm of possibility. But we will never know, because the Minister indicated that, you know, this is a high risk. There were no meetings necessary because they came when they came and they left when they left, and we were left holding the bag. That is just not good management.

It is in that vein that I am making the offer. Because if we take the time to build effective relationships, we do not get left in the lurch like we did. We do not do it. It does not happen. It just does not. If we recognise that link between the ship that was going to pull out the following year and the one that was pulling out next year, we would have been able to at least minimise the impact and the loss of revenue for Government and how it was—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member says there is no loss of revenue. The Honourable Member says there was no loss of revenue.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: There were 13 berths that—

The Acting Speaker: The Minister will have his chance shortly.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He will have his chance.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But there were 13 berths that were allocated to a ship. According to the Minister's Statement this morning, there are two that are going to replace that 13. So there is still some shortfall.

Now, the Minister may be saying, *Oh, we are going to bring in bigger ships; and because we are bringing in bigger ships, then the numbers might work out the same.* Well, that is kind of like voodoo economics.

The Acting Speaker: So, the OBA's solution would have been to build closer relationships, you are saying?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Certainly.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That certainly is kind of like lesson one, page one. Lesson one, page

one. You might bring in a bigger ship, but I do not think that you are going to . . . that one bigger ship coming in one more time, or paying two visits . . . bigger ships paying two visits is not going to make up for the shortfall of the 13 visits that we are not going to get from the other line. It is just not going to happen. I do not care what your maths are; you could build a triple super tanker.

That having been said, with bigger ships coming in, I question whether we have effective tug power. Because I know some of our tugs are very old, and our tugs worked when it came to the older and smaller ships.

The Acting Speaker: It looks like we might have effective tug power. The Minister is prepared, if you can just . . .

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay. I will be happy to yield for a few minutes.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, yield for a few minutes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I will.

The Acting Speaker: Minister Derrick Burgess, Deputy Premier.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Acting Speaker, we will not sign any contract with any ships if we could not handle them. That is plain common sense. That is on page 101.

The Acting Speaker: Page one.
Go on, please, Honourable Member.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: All I am suggesting, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that some of the larger ships do require, if they are going to be . . . I know they have thrusters and the like, and they can probably almost dock themselves at some point in time. But I just wanted to ensure that the tugs that we have that have been out there for 20-odd years, or however old they are, and that cater to the smaller ships, the likes of which came into the harbour and we have not seen bigger tugs or another adequate sort of tug coming on line . . . I am just asking the question because I believe that it is important that, you know, sometimes the obvious can escape us. And I just wanted to find out.

The Acting Speaker: Sure.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: So I am going to pass on from the dock. Oh, and I just wanted to say, too, that the information that I have is that RCCL

[Royal Caribbean Cruise Line] has committed to the 2013 season. I just want to say how much we appreciate that, not just from a governmental perspective, but from a Bermuda perspective, because at least we are going to get some revenue coming in. We are going to get some ships docking up at the Heritage Wharf, and it is a good thing that we have been able to negotiate to confirm that the 2013 season is safe.

The Acting Speaker: So you are happy about that?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am absolutely happy about that.

The Acting Speaker: Good. Go on.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: As far as RCCL is concerned.

Now, let me go to some of the real issues because when these major ships come into harbour, we have noticed that there have been problems shipping people—

The Acting Speaker: Shipping people?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Moving people from the port onto the bay—

The Acting Speaker: Activities, yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —and various on-shore activities. More importantly, getting them into Hamilton by ferry, or whatever other means, to ensure that they are able to enjoy the entire amenities that Bermuda has to offer.

I do not know what the thinking was behind the changing of the ferry schedule. But somehow, when the left hand does not appear to know what the right hand is doing, there is an awful lot of slip between the cup and the lip. I think when you have got people standing on the dock waiting for transportation and there is none, when you have people who are in Dockyard wanting to come to Hamilton, but they cannot because the latest ferry is going to go back out to Dockyard at a time that is inappropriate or inconvenient, and as a result they get stuck and stranded in Hamilton, their only option would be to take a taxi that they may not necessarily have built into their budget. It is just . . . Somebody needs to look at an integrated transportation system that not just accommodates those people coming off the ships, but also that accommodates those commuters—commuters, visitors, everybody.

I am going to speak specifically with respect to the ferries on the Pink Route. If we are starting to talk about being able to put Bermuda in such a light that people want to turn their—I think the way it was worded was that *we want to turn our cruise ship visitors into air visitors*. We must first offer a good expe-

rience to the cruise ship visitors. If a cruise ship visitor comes to Bermuda and finds that he cannot move from point "A" to point "B," he is not going to come back and spend three times as much in a hotel and find that he cannot move from point "A" to point "B." That makes no sense.

But we did hear earlier in the year that there was to be an increase in fares on the Pink Route. And what has happened with that is that the fares doubled. There was some kind of strange approach towards the doubling of the fares.

The Acting Speaker: It was deferred, for one.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, it was deferred. But it came into effect on November 1.

Now, what I find very interesting is that commuters on the ferry used to be able to give a ticket. They had a little ticket, and they would give a ticket. And the fare doubled. So, what would you think would be the obvious thing, Mr. Acting Speaker? If you used to give one ticket and the fare has doubled, so now you give two tickets. That should accommodate your fare for that particular ride. But the crew were instructed to not accept the tickets at all.

So when somebody comes with a ticket, *Sorry, we can't take your ticket. You have to go inside and you have to buy a token that has been specially minted*—in an environment where we talk about doing more with less. But we have minted these tokens specially for that route! And you have to go in, and you have to pay \$5.00 to get this token, and that is the only way you can get on the ferry.

Well, I just decided that I wanted to understand firsthand what some of the frustration was.

The Acting Speaker: So you took a trip.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I took a trip. I took a trip. I paid \$10.00 because I thought, *I am going and I am coming back, so I need \$5.00 to go and \$5.00 to come back.* But what I did not do, I did not get off the ferry. So when I got there, I actually gave the one token to the attendant. I got onboard, and I had the opportunity to have incredibly informative interviews with some of the commuters who were on that boat.

What I found interesting was, when I came back, I thought, *I do not know where I am supposed to put this*—because I know it is \$10.00. I have heard everybody complaining about \$10.00. *I do not know where to put this token.* As we got off the ferry in Hamilton, I saw most people going out the side gate. And I thought, *There is no way I am going out the side gate because I do not want anybody talking about me saying, She got off the ferry and did not pay her \$5.00 return fare.*

So I went into the terminal. I went into the terminal because there was a time when there was a turnstile in the terminal, and you would go in and put

your money in the turnstile in order to get egress from the building. Well, when I went in, I am saying to the attendant, *Where do I put my token?* At that point (I just happened to be there) this gentleman comes up to the counter and absolutely berated the staff, the two people working behind the counter. Eventually they were joined by a third lady. He was saying, *I have got this ticket. They told me that the fare has doubled. I want to give them two tickets. They told me they cannot take tickets. So they told me I have to come inside and I have to buy a \$5.00 token. I have no money.*

Then he proceeded to say, *I live at Salt Kettle! I am going to get on that ferry! I do not care what anybody says! I could just see an altercation ready to happen. I said to the man, Sir, take my \$5.00 token. Take the token.*

The Acting Speaker: How kind.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Because I did not want the crew to be subjected to the ire of the commuter. But I did not fault the commuter. The commuter was . . . I did not know the gentleman, strangely enough. When he said he was at Salt Kettle, I do not know whether he was at Salt Kettle at a guest house, whether he was at Salt Kettle living—

The Acting Speaker: So the big issue is?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The big issue is that, notwithstanding that there was a change in the format and how it was able to be effected—

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The big issue was that, in addition, the staff have been left hanging out to dry, as this poor woman says to the guy, *Sir, this is the rule. This is what we have to do. We cannot let you take the tickets.*

You know, the staff ought not to have been in that position.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Last week—a week ago Thursday, a week ago Thursday.

Following which, we have complaints from people who have purchased quarterly passes in good faith, to be told, *You cannot use your quarterly pass. You have got to cash it in for the bit that is not used and then you have got to pay a differential.* We cannot treat people like that. We cannot treat people like that!

You know, if we want to make changes that are as significant as what obtained on that particular route, you have got to look at the entire structure. Is it fair that the shortest and most economical route has doubled in fare? I mean, by the time I got on, inter-

viewed . . . Maybe there were, I think, maybe 18 people upstairs and maybe 10 downstairs. I did not get downstairs. It is a short ride. I mean, the ferry left at 5:15 and was back in town like 20 minutes to 6:00. Short, short ride!

It is just not fair for the staff to be left hanging out to dry. It is not fair for fares to be doubled, certainly not for commuters. Then what I found is that, you know, my first question was, *Well, what is the big deal because there is hardly anybody on this boat?* To which I was told that there are times when we used to have this boat running backwards and forwards and it was standing room only—standing room only. But there is an orchestrated boycott of that service.

The Acting Speaker: Since the fare increase.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Since the fare increase.

The Acting Speaker: And as a result?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: As a result—

The Acting Speaker: You are asking?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: As a result, I am asking—

The Acting Speaker: The Minister—

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —that the Minister have a look.

And you do not have to prompt me, because I understand that you are a schoolteacher, and I am certainly perfectly capable of being articulate.

The Acting Speaker: No. I want to get to the big issue. Past the stories.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: What I would like to get the Minister to consider is having a look at the entire fare structure around the ferries.

The Acting Speaker: Right. That is the big issue. Okay.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That one little piece ought not to be targeted unfairly on the most economical route that the ferries are running. So, that, I think, is very important; and to consider the impact on the staff who have to give this bad news to the commuters. The increases have been discriminatory, and that is not the sort of thing that a Government who wants to bridge and bring everybody together, and *Let's all get along together*, and *Let's work together*, and *Let's build* (what is it called?)—“Let us build one another, together.” That hardly engenders that environment, hardly engenders that environment.

The one thing that I also want to say is that, while we are “building one another, together,” let us ensure that we have people who live in the East End who can get home. Let us ensure that the people who live in Lower Ferry can get to work on time because there is not a ferry that gets them in town until 9:30. The one thing a government wants to do, as we “build one another, together” is at least make sure that their people can get to work. Jobs are hard to come by. We heard earlier today with the statistics of the fewer Bermudians who are now employed, we do not want to exacerbate that situation by a company making a determination that their employee cannot make it to work and, hence, they will not have a job. Then they end up adding to the statistic.

We need to be sensible about the choices that we make that impact everybody. I talked about the East End. Let us not leave them out of the equation

Let me just talk about the buses. We know that there have been issues with the buses. It is very, very important to have, as I said, an integrated transport schedule. When these people who have chosen to boycott this Darrell's-to-Hamilton ferry, do you know what some of them are doing, Mr. Acting Speaker? Actually driving to Rockaway because it is cheaper to get on the ferry at Rockaway, or, they are driving into Hamilton because it is cheaper to come into town, including the bottleneck in traffic. It is cheaper for them monetarily. It may cost them in terms of frustration and everything else. I am not talking about that. But some of them are carpooling and driving into Hamilton which goes against the intent of a good integrated system. Why would we add to the traffic when we can use the waterways? It just makes sense to have it thought all the way out so that we eliminate frustrations that people are experiencing.

Buses—now, we have heard that we have had lots of breakdowns in buses and the like. As we “build one another, together,” we want to alleviate the frustrations, both for the bus operators as well as the commuters. These are situations that, as we have seen them develop, we know that we are working under tight budgetary constraints. That is why I said, you know, we have that extra \$27 million that we spent up at Heritage; we could have had some of the stuff that we needed to be able to fund whatever the buses needed for maintenance and the like. So part of the maintenance schedule has been cut back. As a result, we do not have as many buses; so, therefore, we are stranding some of our children at school in the afternoon.

These are things that, if we want to produce a cohesive and well-oiled society, we have got to look out for those vulnerable. We cannot have our children walking into town and congregating and being a nuisance to themselves and to other commuters, when there are specialised school buses, but they cannot get on the school bus because the bus is not fixed

and therefore the bus is not coming to school to pick them up.

These are things that have to be looked at. I recognise that in tough economic times— notwithstanding whether we created it ourselves, but in tough economic times there are decisions that have to be made in order to make the money stretch. But there are some things that you just cannot afford not to do. Some things you just cannot afford not to do. To leave our children stranded is certainly one of those that we cannot afford not to do.

The other thing that I also wanted to mention with respect to the buses is that we had a Minister (who is the Honourable Member who is now the Minister of Transport) who has an incredible amount of union experience. Now, the way I look at collective responsibilities in Cabinet—

The Acting Speaker: Yes?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —is that if there is an issue in one area, and one has expertise in another, you marry up those talents. I cannot believe that we had such challenge industrially with the bus service when you have got a union man sitting in Cabinet. Somebody needed to be able to say, *Hey, look. Let us get this right. Let us put this right.* Now, we have that Minister now responsible for Transport.

The Acting Speaker: For Transport.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I do not know whether the schedule, which has been a problem, whether the maintenance, which has been a problem, whether somebody is going to take a drug test or not take a drug test in compliance with their collective bargaining agreement, whether that is going to work or whether it is not going to work—all those sorts of things. I do not know whether this Honourable Minister will be able to iron those out. But certainly one would think—

The Acting Speaker: He is not going to ignore them.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Well, no. I would not say that he is going to ignore them. But I said I do not know whether he will be able to iron them out. I did not say he would ignore them. I am saying that I do not know whether the influence that he has with those people within the union hierarchy, whether they will be able to have the sort of working relationship that helps to resolve the challenges. I just do not know.

But I certainly hope that something can be done. And if it can be done now . . . I am a little disappointed that it was not done before, I have to say. Because we should not be held hostage to situations that are not of our own making from a public perspective because somebody gets their knickers in a twist res-

pecting the schedule or whether somebody should or should not be working and whether somebody did or did not follow the rules—when we have got the expertise. It just does not make much sense to me. I certainly hope that the Minister is able to effect a better solution and resolution than what we have seen.

I want to speak about the trucks—this is all in the confines of the Transport Ministry—and the frustrations that some of our truck drivers are experiencing. We cannot look them in the eye and say, *We are building one another, together.* We have major dumpster trucks that are being permitted, because they have been licensed so to do by TCD [Transport Control Department] when the Director has effectively said, *This is not the intent of these dumpster trucks to haul aggregate up and down the street,* the apparent equivalent, approximate equivalent of five loads at a time on these big dumpster trailer trucks. They are going up and down the highway, notwithstanding the damage to the infrastructure and the like.

But just looking at the loads themselves, if one dumpster can carry five loads and you have got 10 truck drivers sitting down at the Quarry from seven o'clock in the morning and being sent away at ten o'clock to say, *There is no work for you for today,* why is one dumpster being allowed to carry aggregate? We understand specialty stock. Why are they allowed to carry aggregate up and down the street when you have got five truck owners who can each take one load. And at the end, come Friday, each one of those truck drivers has the ability to put a slice of bread on his children's table, as opposed to allowing one truck to carry five? There are a couple on the road that do that, so you need three . . . If you have got three of them, there are 15 loads in three trucks that the owners of those three trucks are getting all of the revenue, and these poor guys are standing, waiting for the crumbs to fall off of the table. Is that right? I do not think so. I do not think so.

One can understand the frustrations that people are experiencing. One can understand the reaction that one would have, having had to have that sort of experience. I think that one of the biggest challenges is that the major concern that we get, somebody says that one of the Government Ministers, actually, is one of the culprits in this particular situation, in that his private company dumpster—

The Acting Speaker: Careful, now.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —private company dumpster. People have given me pictures, so I am not speaking out of turn. I am speaking with absolute fact. You know—

The Acting Speaker: Well, he is not in the Chamber to answer.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Whether he is here or not is his problem. He should have been here. He should have been here.

The Acting Speaker: He is away on Government business.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That is quite possible, too. I accept that.

However, what I am suggesting is that within the entire group, let us look at this and embrace how the actions of people who are in the inner sanctum are impacted. If we start talking about world recession, we talk about, you know, *It is just a sign of the times, and that is the way it is*—and then when we sit and allow some fat cats to get fatter, and Mother Hubbard's cupboard on the other end is bare—we cannot do that to people. We cannot do that to people. That becomes the powder keg.

We cannot afford to frustrate people to that extent. It is not fair. I implore the Government to be able to look at the entire situation and to come up with a resolution that satisfies equality, equity, satisfies equity.

The Acting Speaker: So the OBA would do what?

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The OBA certainly is about fairness. That is one of our key, core principles—fairness. Certainly, it cannot be fair to let somebody go stroking down the street with five loads when somebody else has got none. That is not right. That is not right.

First of all, the Honourable Member asks, *What would I do?* First of all, I would ensure that the dumpster trucks are being utilised for the purpose for which they are intended. If the Director indicates that these trucks are not permitted to carry aggregate and that is not the intent, then why are they carrying aggregate? Why are they carrying aggregate if that is not the intent?

An Hon. Member: If they are.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am not saying *if they are*. I am telling you, I have seen the pictures.

An Hon. Member: I am saying *if they are*.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: What do you mean “if they are”?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Then the law should be enforced, I think she is implying. Yes. That is what she is implying. Go on. Go on.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I think it probably just got by him.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But the bottom line is, you know, when you have got people who are trying to meet their obligation, and we are thwarting them at every step of the way, that is not how you build people together. That is just not how you do it. It is not working.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: You have had 60 minutes already. Go on.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Oh, my gosh. I cannot possibly have had.

The Acting Speaker: Oh, yes. I have been watching you carefully.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: All right. You know what? Let me wrap up on a couple of issues here.

The Acting Speaker: Okay.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Just a small issue.

The Acting Speaker: That will give others a chance.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I certainly will. I did not realise that I had spoken for so long. But I think most of it had to do with people jumping up and down because they could not get the point that I was trying to tell them.

The Acting Speaker: You have that impact, I noticed. Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I think I do. I think I do.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That certainly was not the intent.

The Acting Speaker: Good.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: However, let me just wrap on this because I will have other opportunities to speak of things that are important. But let me just go back for a minute to tourism, and I will wrap on this.

In an all-embracing and an all-encompassing concept for tourism, we have touted the Tourism Authority. Now, I think I heard somebody say that the

Minister told them that they will be bringing in a Tourism Authority as part and parcel of what they are planning to do. All I want to say is that if that is the case, I wish to applaud it. We have asked for it. We think it is the right thing. I know that when I heard that the Minister, having been newly appointed, had just gone off to the UK, I just thought, since he said he is going to be bringing in a Tourism Authority, maybe he is over there looking for some of the best and the brightest to help to run this Tourism Authority, because that was what I thought, until I heard differently that it was for a different reason.

But I would certainly like to think that all the i's are dotted and all the t's are crossed, that we are going down that road to a Tourism Authority, because I think that we need to be able to put tourism in the hands of those who know exactly what they are doing. We need to ensure that Bermuda, that we reach across the divide in terms of ensuring that we have the best possible outcome for all of our people, that we can effectively and truly "build one another, together." That the building of one another together is not restricted to one or two people, that we are not forced to be in the situation where the public is screaming that if one Minister has to resign, the other two who caused the resignation should also go along with him. These are the sorts of things, not from my perspective, but certainly the things that are being demanded of us to address.

You know, it is like the elephant in the room. I do not have a problem addressing the elephant in the room; trust me, I do not. But I think that we need to show fairness. In some instances, we have not seen that. We would certainly like to implore the Government, as they make decisions and talk . . . Because we cannot have a document that is rife with words that ultimately have no meaning. This is the Throne Speech. We cannot have a document that does not support that which the Government has elected to do.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: We cannot have that document and leave it hanging out there unchallenged. It has lots and lots of things. I think it is just important as I wrap to say that jello does not nail well against the wall. We cannot just throw jello against the wall and then wonder, *What can we nail up, and what is likely to stick?*

So I would just ask that the Government consider that we are concerned about how this country is being run. We are concerned about the ideas that . . . where the deficiencies are, that we choose to make constructive criticism, that we will continue to do that. And notwithstanding that you may not get the rancorous kind of presentation that I might have been known for historically, you will certainly get honest and constructive criticism.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much, Mrs. Pat Gordon-Pamplin, JP, MP, the Shadow Minister of Transport, Pembroke West.

Then we have our Deputy Premier, Paget West.

Deputy Premier, the Honourable Derrick Burgess, Minister of Transport, you have the floor.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think first and foremost, we as Bermudians must "buy Bermuda" in order to save jobs. We are not just talking about the retail shops downtown. We are talking about supporting our fishermen, and we are talking about supporting our farmers. Because I do know that a group, a wholesale group is trying to bring in carrots. Carrots are on the embargo list because of the carrot rust fly, and we will not want to bring in any carrots to bring in that pest.

Most of all, we have got to support our farmers. They do a very important job. We have got 400 acres of arable land that is being farmed. I think some of us take farmers for granted. They do an important job, and we certainly appreciate them, and we certainly will support them in all their endeavours.

Mr. Acting Speaker, on page 17 of the Reply to the Throne Speech, they talk about the disparity in incomes between blacks and white. Mr. Acting Speaker, you will see that that just did not start in 1998. In fact, if you look at the Government agreements, that disparity does not exist. There is equality in the Government agreements and what is paid to Government workers. There is no gender bias in any such form. You have got a category there, and the job is the way it is paid. It is in the private sector, basically, where that disparity exists. The Government does not control the private sector as far as the wages are concerned. We cannot tell a company, *You have got to pay this wage or that wage.* That is not how free enterprise works.

That is something that the unions of this country—the BIU, the BPSU, and all the other unions—have been working hard at, to get better wages for the workers in this country, only to be fought (and I use that word) before 1998 by the Government and the private sector. So, to put this in their Reply to the Throne Speech is great. But do not put it in there like this Government has been responsible or this Government developed that disparity—not so. We have always been trying to get that gap to close up. It was not the intention, but that is the way it comes across, Cousin.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Right.

Now, also, they talk on page 6 about eliminating a portion of the payroll taxes for the employers.

They also say for those that . . . for new hires, a payroll exemption for new hires.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we already have in place the payroll tax exemption for apprentices. Whether that apprentice takes two years or four years, it is in place, has been in place. We have had it in place for a couple of years now. So we are already doing that. What they have got in there is nothing new. Maybe they are not aware of what we are doing in that area, Mr. Acting Speaker. So, you know, it is covered; it is done. That is page 6, about the payroll tax exemption for new hiring.

Now, when we talk about racism, they have got in their reply about racism. Mr. Acting Speaker, I have said this before, and I will say it again. Had we paid attention to Dr. Hodgson many years ago, over 20 years ago when she was talking about the racial equality and also the economic equality . . . Many people in this country turned their noses up to Dr. Hodgson. You know, not many years ago, I remember a gentleman by the name of—I think NAR brought him here. He was named Dr. Wise.

The Acting Speaker: Tim Wise.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: That is it. That is it, Cousin. He said the same thing, same things that Dr. Hodgson was saying. It was accepted. Nothing was done, but it was accepted. Because Dr. Hodgson was saying it, it did not go too well.

This Government does not practise racism. When we talk about it, because you talk about it, they will try to turn it back on us. I have never seen in any other country (I guess in any country I know about) that we try to make racism the responsibility or that the victim caused it. It did not cause racism, Mr. Acting Speaker. It was fought against. In fact, we have had members of the other race that have joined the PLP, only to be ostracised.

I remember I was a young boy then when Alex Outerbridge (I think was his name) joined the PLP. Heard in the papers one day; the next day, he was fired. And the former Government said nothing about it, publicly—nothing. Dr. Ball, how she was ostracised as a white lady because she joined the union. David Allen, another one—his mortgage pulled. The treatment that Zane De Silva and Jane Corriea have taken because they joined the PLP . . . We accept all members, all members, regardless of their race.

We all know that. But they always try to use that race card on us. We only react to what is put in front of us, you know, Mr. Acting Speaker. You know? I mean, I have been to some of these forums on racism. When the interracial marriages occur, I have heard some of those folks tell us, particularly white folks who married somebody black, what has happened to them since they married a black person. Not my words, things that they said. You know? And we want to eradicate that! We do not want that.

You know, Jim Woolridge said it right. I would always quote Sir Jim Woolridge. He put it in his book. He said it. He said, *They do not mind you having a job, as long as they remain in charge*. What he was referring to, he was saying, white people, they do not mind you having a job, as long as they remain in charge. That is not my words; that is the words of Jim Woolridge in his book—great book he wrote.

Now, when we talk about gangs, I think the National Security Minister is making some great inroads, along with the police. But if you remember, I think it was in 2008, when we heard about gunshots—nobody was being shot—Dr. Brown, our former Premier, went to Government House because, you know, the police do not come under us. They come under the Governor. That is his responsibility. And the Honourable Minister Glenn Blakeney was with him. My good friend, the late Honourable Nelson Bascome and the great Colonel Burch. And they asked for assistance from the United States—I think it was the Giuliani Group — on two occasions, and were told no. But last year, I think it was in December, our Prime Minister of the UK, David Cameron, he says, *I am going to the United States for help*.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Oh, yes, he did. Oh, yes, he did. In fact, I cut it out of the paper the other day.

Right now, he is using—what does it say? It just says—in the *Royal* whatever it is, November 2nd, Wednesday—it says, “Britain to roll out the US-style anti-gang programmes.” Now, that came from the Mother Country, because, as you know, we are an independent territory—not an independent, but a *dependent* territory. But when we wanted to do it, the Queen’s representative said no.

So, there we are. We did our job to try to get the assistance here and it was turned down. Do not ever forget that.

Now, when they talk about recession, sometimes, I know the song says, “Bermuda is another world.” Well, we are not in this world by ourselves. We control none of the economy of any part of this world. We earn our revenue through foreign exchange. If our main revenue supplier is not doing well, then I do not think we are going to do too well, that being the United States. They have got this in the United States, the UK, my cousins down in Portugal, Greece, and all of them—Italy. They have got problems, Mr. Acting Speaker. If you hear the other side, they would make you believe that it should not happen in Bermuda.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, we do not have any gold. We have no oil to bargain with. You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, when I hear of the job losses in the States, when you hear of 10,000 people lose their job, I would venture to say, out of that 10,000 people, maybe 2 per cent or 3 per cent had intended a vaca-

tion in Bermuda. Well, the loss of a job, we are going to lose that. So that factors out. Anywhere they are losing jobs—the UK, Canada, United States, particularly those three places—if they lose jobs, we will lose revenue. That is not rocket science! That is the position we are in today, Mr. Acting Speaker.

So, yes, we have lost jobs in Bermuda. We expect to. We expect to. If you lose them in the States, if you lose them in Canada, if you lose them in the UK, we will lose jobs. Again, we do not have any oil or gold. We are part of a global economy, the global world. And we have to adjust. If we do not adjust, we lose out, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Now, let us talk about the cruise ships, Mr. Acting Speaker. During the reign of the former party—they have changed names now to the OBA—I think the maximum amount of cruise ship visitors to the Island at that time was 188,000. I think that was at the time that we had about 10,000 hotel beds. There was much fuss about that, particularly from the other side, because we thought we were overcrowding the country, and probably so we were with all those cruise ship visitors and the tourists that were coming in, because I think there was probably in 1988 or 1989 that they reached those numbers.

I know at one time, I think it was during Sir Jim Woolridge's time, they had a ceiling of 120,000 cruise ship visitors coming here because we did not want to be seen as a cruise ship destination more so than a hotel because, for obvious reasons, a hotel guest spends more. But, Mr. Acting Speaker, now we have about 5,000 beds in that area, half. So, the Government was very prudent in tapping more into the cruise ship market so we can get some revenue. So that number, 188,000, is just about almost doubled. In fact, in 2010, which was the best year to that point, we had 347,000 cruise ship visitors. This year the number is expected to be 390,000.

Well, for 2012, the projection is 363,000. I am sort of comfortable with that, particularly for Dockyard. We had some problems up Dockyard this year. I think I would venture to say that the former Minister, Terry Lister, managed it quite well, particularly on the morning that we had two ships coming in. One was supposed to arrive at 8:00, and I think the other one was supposed to arrive between 10:00 and 11:00 or something. But they both came at the same time. So you had to move 6,000 people. I think the ambassadors—meaning the bus operators, the taxi operators, and the many bus drivers—did a marvellous job. Not to say that we could not do better, and it is our intention that it will be better. It will be better managed this year because what we have done under the former Minister, he set up a taxi group, a taxi commission, and they recommended that we have a Taxi Authority. That authority will govern everything about taxis. Well, you know we have got 600 taxis on the Island.

I think this will be very good because they will control the rates of taxi drivers. In fact, the taxi drivers

have not had a rate increase in five years. I think the increase that they have now they got that after seven years. So, they will control that. Also of paramount importance is the conduct of taxi drivers and bus operators—very, very important. I think that is a cardinal sin that cannot be broken. They will set up the regulations for that, because what annoys me about, let us say, a bus, is, if Ms. Smith is running for the bus and she is a little late, and the driver, the operator, sees Ms. Smith running for the bus, most of them will wait. That is the Bermuda way. They will wait and let Ms. Smith get on. Some will not.

I am asking our bus operators, *Wait for Ms. Smith so she can make her time. Yes, she is a little late on the bus, but, hey. Come on. We can wait 30 seconds so she can get on the bus.* That is the Bermuda way, and that is what we will be encouraging. I am sure my cousins around at Union Square agree with that. I am sure Glenn Simmons, the president of the bus division, agrees with that. I am sure most of the bus operators agree with that, because we could be talking about their mother or their granny running for that bus.

But let us get back to the taxi. Mr. Acting Speaker, what I envision this Taxi Authority to do is that, if you have got 3,000 cruise ship visitors arriving in Dockyard, by a certain time they should have “X” amount of taxis available up there. What we want to do, we want to make the taxi driver as the first choice, meaning that a taxi driver should be a more attractive rate than, say, driving a bus. In other words, let me simplify that. This is not the rates. I am just using this; it is just an example. You should be able to buy, let us say, for a taxi, you get six in a taxi. You say, *Okay, it is \$5.00 to get to Horseshoe Beach.* Thirty bucks, right? You can get a taxi for 30 bucks. For a bus, you may pay \$6.00. So, you know, for one person it would be cheaper—or two persons—to get on a bus. If you have got six together, six on a bus would be \$36. So the six say, *We might as well get in a taxi and save five bucks.*

So we want the taxi to be the first choice. That is what we want to do. So I am sure the Taxi Authority will work with us towards that. That is the intent, because we want the taxi drivers, the taxi operators, to be available when the harvest is there. As the Bible says, during harvest time be on the job. That is in Proverbs. If you walk around with your arms folded, you will end up poor. You know, that is the Bible. That is the way that goes.

On the buses, we have got some plans for that. I think this year we will get that right. That is our intent. Also, the Pink Route—we will be meeting with some of the folks on that next week. I am positive that we will get that right also.

Mr. Acting Speaker: Well done, Minister.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, we will get that right. That is what we do in this Government. We try to get things right. I am the eternal optimist. We will get it right.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Now, Pat, what are you talking about, Reverend?

[Laughter]

The Acting Speaker: Go on, Minister.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes.

Now, when it comes to good governance, people think that good governance comes because we became Government in 1998. Well, good governance goes back further than that. That is what it is about. Because let me read from the March 31st, 1998 report of the Auditor. If you permit me, Mr. Acting Speaker, page 24?

The Acting Speaker: Sure. Go on.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: It says, "When the Accountant General assumed office in 1994, they recognised and reported to the Ministry of Finance that stamp duty revenues were not being administrated and collected properly and that revenue was being lost." That was page 24.

Page 25 says, "While the Accountant General collected \$10 million in stamp duties on land and property transfers in 1998, a review of the Land and Valuations Office records indicated that stamp duties of \$16 million should have been collected."

That is a \$6 million shortfall, right? And it goes on to say that the 1997 shortfall was almost \$10 million. So in two years, \$16 million was not collected. Let me read the last paragraph. It says, "Unfortunately, records were not maintained by the Accountant General to identify the land transfers to which the \$10 million was collected. Therefore, the transfers on which stamp duty was not collected also cannot be identified." [UNVERIFIED QUOTES]

You know what is amazing about that? There was no special order, no enquiry. It is like, *It's okay. It's all right.* In this book, you do not see anything. It is all about late reporting. Everything is in here, plus what I read. You do not see one word in here. There is no word in here that mentioned fraud, misappropriation, anything of that sort in this book. But if you look in the 2005 book, it is riddled with the words "fraud," "misappropriation," and those types of things. Different language for a different government. Do not ask me why. I do not know! I do not know.

Sixteen million dollars short, right, we should have got. You know what happened there, right? When you do the conveyance and you are putting in

the papers, if the house is worth \$1 million or the real estate goes up \$1 million, they put "\$500,000" and pay less. That is where we lost money. That is where you lost money. Now, this was identified in 1994, when the Accountant General went into it. But in 1997 and 1998, it continued.

What has happened? You recognised it in 1994, and you did not do anything about it? So when we talk about good governance—which I am all for, this good governance legislation—it does not just pertain to 1998 and onwards, you know. It goes back further. That is what that is about.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes. So let us make it right.

Then, we have this talk about, this Government is in debt. Oh, yes. We can account for it, too. When you start talking about the Heritage Wharf, what we have done, we have done TCD, the Dame Lois-Browne Building. The airport runway—that was an expense that we never had to incur because it was done by the Americans. When we did that runway about two or three years ago, it was \$17 million. We did houses out on Perimeter Lane, Sylvia Richardson Rest Home, Harbour View base housing, incineration screens, the RO plant, Port Royal Golf, the Anchorage housing in St. George's, Club Med demolishing, the Berkeley School, hospitals—both the one and St. Brendan's.

The Acting Speaker: Mid-Atlantic.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: There is Mid-Atlantic. (I know it as St. Brendan's.) You know, we purchased buses. We purchased new ferries, Butterfield Lane, and the list goes on. That list alone here is about \$700 million. We inherited an infrastructure that was old. You had to repair it. You could not leave it like that. It cost money. Day care—day care put \$200 a week, if you had one child, if you qualified, in the pockets of that family. If it was two children, it was \$400. You know about it, Minister. You were there when it was implemented.

The Acting Speaker: Implemented, yes.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: That is right. You were there. That is a year for \$200. What is that? That is \$10,400. If it was two children, it is \$20,800. That is a lot of money to go in a household, what we have been doing for this country for a long time.

When we talk about not taking care of the elderly, the seniors—my favourite group of people . . . up until (I think it was) 2007, not all the war veterans got a pension. Why? This Government did something about it. [We] brought legislation here, and they now get a pension. I think it was either 2007 or 2009.

The Acting Speaker: And a beautiful Memorial as well.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Right. And the widows and all that, they all got a pension.

So, do not say this Government is not taking care of seniors. The social security cheque that they get—we call it pension cheque—it was not designed to take care of all your expenses. The Honourable Sir Walter told us earlier, helping our seniors, first must come from the family. But if you are dependent on that social insurance cheque or pension cheque to take all your needs, no, it is not going to do it. I do not think anywhere in the world, other than the socialist countries—and even sometimes that is a shortfall. That is how it works. That is how it works, certainly.

Age discrimination—Mr. Acting Speaker, that has come into the House already. We have done that. In fact, in most governments, under government employ, you can work until you are 70 years old, provided you get the doctor's certificate saying that . . . they also write and blah-blah, you know, all that there. You can go to 70. So it is already in place.

So, when the Opposition replies to things that we already are doing . . . they wrote this here. They sit in this House. But they do not know what we are legislating. That is all I can figure. That they do not know this. They know we took care of seniors. Yes, they know all that; they should. Yes. I do not know.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes. In there, it says "mortgages pulled." Well, I know we did not pull them. The Government did not pull any mortgages. The mortgages were pulled by the owners who were in the former UBP, now OBA. That is who pulled those mortgages. I knew a few fellows who had their mortgages pulled because they joined the PLP and refused to be quiet about it. They were proud PLP Members. We did not pull any mortgages, you know.

Just one second, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Take your time. We are still awake.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes. Now, term limits, Mr. Acting Speaker. The term limits were there to protect Bermudians. I think that is what they have done. Now we are making some adjustments to it, which I think is good.

Let me say, when it comes to our guest workers, we appreciate our guest workers. In fact, I think all of us saw about a couple of weeks ago that some guest workers outside of their house, bikes burned and . . . very, very unpleasant. It is shameful. The next day I went around there to that spot with my PS [Per-

manent Secretary], knocked on the doors, apologised to those folks.

The Acting Speaker: Well done, Minister. Well done.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I was really hurt about that because, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have Bermudians that stay in other parts of this world.

The Acting Speaker: That is right.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Not only that, they go to school in other parts of this world. When our Bermudians get sick, do you know where they go? Johns Hopkins, Lahey [Clinic], and wherever. You know who operates on them? Foreigners.

You know who teaches our children when they go overseas? Foreigners. Right?

The foreigners come here because . . . You know, it was earlier this year there was a job fair at Princess. It was 180 waiter jobs. My cousins here only applied for five of them. So when we as Bermudians say, *Well, I was served by a foreigner*. Well, thank God somebody served us. I appreciate that.

The Acting Speaker: Let me commend you, Minister, for not only making that visit, but working closely with BELCO in getting them some lights because the area near the Paget Post Office was extremely dark. So I would like to commend you on that.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: He was talking about foreigners.

An Hon. Member: Outside lights.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, outside lights.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: That same area where those bikes were burned was very dark.

The Acting Speaker: The bikes were burned.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: And I met BELCO there the next day.

The Acting Speaker: That is right.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: BELCO had that pole up the same day, and lights on the next day.

The Acting Speaker: That is right. That is why I commended both of you.

Now do you understand, Honourable Member, Mr. Cole Simons? Or do you not get the picture?

Right. Thank you.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Right, yes. Cole is my cousin. He can get the picture.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

An Hon. Member: It is late.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Well, he is a little sleepy right now.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

The Acting Speaker: Careful, now. He is on your team.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, yes.

So, they are welcome. They are welcome in this country. But understand that Bermuda is only a little dot on the map. We are very small. We could not survive here by ourselves. We need foreigners coming here so we can get that foreign exchange. No matter where they come from, we need that foreign exchange. Not taking anything away from us Bermudians, they have worked very hard, did a great job in this country.

We must change our attitudes about jobs because in the rough times, regardless of where you stay or where you are from, you may have to do something else in order to take something home to pay for the mortgage or whatever. I have said this before: Up until about the early 1990s, about 65 per cent of the people that worked nights in the hotel were Bermudians, as a second job, paying for a mortgage, sending Johnny to school or whatever, or just trying to get ready for retirement day.

I do not think it is 10 per cent today. The jobs are there. You know, they have got to be done. So I would ask Bermudians . . . It does not have to be as bad as it is if we would adjust. We cannot eat steak and lobster every night. We might have to have corned beef hash one night.

The Acting Speaker: A good meal—that is a good meal! That is a good meal, too.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Let us break down. Sardines, I guess, skinless and boneless are the ones I eat, yes, in olive oil.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

The Acting Speaker: Go on, Minister.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Well, yes. Some of us eat Cow Pollies and Black Joe's and Breems. That is what we do, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I think most Bermudians can have jobs. You have heard Minister Minors talk about the 600 jobs that are available in the hotel industry. I am hoping that those that are unemployed will take advantage of that. No, it is not going to eradicate all of the unemployment. But it certainly can make all of our jobs a little easier if they will take these jobs, because hotels is a very rewarding experience, at least it was for me.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, you have quite a good reputation in the industry.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: If you work, you will make money.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: But you have to like what you are doing. You have got to like what you are doing. I really enjoyed myself as a hotel worker because I liked pleasing people. So it is not a bad job. I know once upon a time, I knew a couple of taxi drivers in New York that had law degrees. They drive a taxi because they could not get a job as a lawyer. That is what survival is all about.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Doing what you have to do to pay the bills. We must get off this thing about entitlement. Some of us—not all of us, I think most Bermudians—do what they have to do to make ends meet. Some of us, we have got to get off of this entitlement. Let us get out there and work; and we can make it better for each other, and make this one happy family life we are so used to doing.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much.

We have been listening to the Deputy Premier, the Honourable Derrick Burgess.

Now I see only one Member standing, the Minister of Business Development and Tourism, the Honourable Wayne Furbert, JP, Hamilton West (do I have it right?), constituency 6.

Okay, you have the floor.

Sorry, you did not catch my eye. My apologies. I apologise. Sorry.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Acting Speaker: Now, would you like to yield to the Honourable Member? Yes.

You did not catch my eye.

Thank you very much for yielding, yes.

We are going to recognise now Mr. Charles Swan, Southampton West Central, constituency 31.

My apologies. Go on, Mr. Swan. You have the floor.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Don't apologise, Mr. Acting Speaker. I am used to being treated like a mushroom.

[Laughter]

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to speak for a few minutes, and I am not going to speak on replies to the Throne Speech and that type of thing. I want to go through the actual Throne Speech from the Government currently in charge of being the stewards of the affairs of our lovely Island.

This is my third, I believe, Throne Speech that I have been through. I have been in this House for that length of time. My mantra, Mr. Acting Speaker, is, *Build on what is good from the past and make it work. Let's not waste when we want. Save where we can. Provide for the future.*

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Swan, if you can, according to Standing Order 10(4), "When the Speaker (or Chair) rises during a debate, any member then speaking, or wishing to speak, shall immediately resume his or her seat and the House (or Committee) shall be silent."

So, if you can indulge just a one minute break. Thank you.

[Pause]

[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair—12:09 am]

The Speaker: Carry on, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from Southampton West Central.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I will continue.

Yes, my mantra, as I said, has been to build on what has been done in the past, the things that have worked. Try to improve them, the things that serve our country well. As any government is a steward of the country it is the government of.

We heard that line spoken at the Prayer Breakfast this morning. We are not here by our own efforts or for our own reward. We are here by the grace of the Almighty Father above. That resonated with me, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about stewardship.

The Speaker: It was uplifting, was it not?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: It was very uplifting. I do not know the Reverend Barber very well, but I shall certainly be going out of my way to get to know him. He landed here by what he says "happenstance."

The Speaker: He pastors at St. John's Church.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Yes, I do know where he practises.

Why I am saying that, Mr. Speaker, is because some of the things that I have seen in this current Throne Speech are things that (I think one of the other Members said), *Well, could it have been done before? Well, maybe not. Now is the time for it.* Whatever. But I find that a little odd. Some of the things in here are things that have been mooted by this side of the House, and certainly the United Bermuda Party in the past. So it is good to see that happening.

Should they have happened before? Again, I will go back to my previous statement about, if it worked, if it sounds like a good idea, why not use it? I have tossed out ideas, suggestions, in this House before. I do not think any one of us or any group of us has a monopoly or good ideas, if they are for the betterment of the people of this Island, Mr. Speaker.

I want to allude to . . . I think it was the Honourable Member, Mr. Bean, who spoke earlier. I sense his passion. We talk, because we both live at the same end of the Island. We talk and bump into each other fairly frequently. I imagine not only he, but his leader, probably wishes he was around 10, 12, 13 years ago to bring some fresh ideas to the fore in a form where they can perhaps be listened to and acted on.

I do not want to . . . I am going to throw roses, as I said before, where they are due. I think (and I have said this before) that this Island is the perfect place. It is small, fairly, not a huge land mass. We should be able to galvanise people, our people—and I mean everyone—towards almost anything that is for the betterment of the Island.

The first thing I am looking at on page 7 is these green initiatives. You know, Mr. Speaker, the ability for this Island to become energy independent is very, very real, or certainly to a very large degree less energy dependent. I applaud any and all efforts towards that end. So it is really nice to see this in here.

Obviously, I would not like to see it done at the expense of or detriment to the health and safety of people and buildings, which is something I addressed recently. But properly done, researched, this Island has the ability, I believe, to show the world what can be done, at least on a small scale such as we have here. I am talking about waste-to-energy. There are all sorts of systems around these days. We can get them in here, obviously, research them properly, and be energy independent at, say, a place like Southside. There are small packaged nuclear plants. I know a lot of alarms go up when you hear about these things. But they are worth exploring. We do not have to travel, necessarily, to do it. We can do a heck of a lot of research right from our desks. Computers are wonderful things.

The streamlining . . . One of the focuses I am going to have is on the economy, because those are things that are put in pages 7 and 8 here. The things

that are mentioned here first that the Government is looking at doing are great. I want to touch a little bit on things that we should not be doing. This country has finite resources. We have an educated workforce, educated population. Our people are friendly. Those are assets. Our proximity to major markets is an asset. Our beauty is also an asset. Those really are the only assets we have, and those are attractive. So far, we have used them well. We have used them to, probably, our best ability. So we had the development of tourism, we had the development of international business.

Now, until such time as we have researched other forms of industry that can benefit this country, to my country mind, it makes no sense whatsoever to do anything in any way that detrimentally affects or negatively affects the ability or sustenance of our major industries. We have seen that happen, not just because of worldwide economic things, [but] because of our own hand. That is a travesty. It can be overcome, yes. But for what? Why? We should not be doing anything to detrimentally or negatively affect the sustenance of our major industries.

But, yes, we should be thinking outside the box and exploring new ways to earn this country foreign currency. These are the only ways that we are going to be able to sustain the standard of living that Bermudians have been accustomed to. You know, I believe that Minister Scott was the first person on the Government side who was pursuing these satellite orbital slots and what have you. I believe we missed an opportunity about three or four years ago with obtaining a slot. It might have been shared with another country or something like that, and we either declined or we missed a deadline or something like that.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to do things like that. If an opportunity comes up for a little island of 20 square miles on the world stage to get some sort of technology that benefits or can become another industry, we have to snap it up, whether in whole or in part.

The other thing I wanted to touch on, a little bit of out-of-the-box thinking, is gaming and a referendum. I heartily support a referendum on gaming. I will say that I believe that when most people think of gaming, they probably think of a physical presence here on the Island, which is one way. People talk about that it attracts visitors and that type of thing, or attracts a certain type of visitor and what have you.

The reports that were done—and I attended one of the seminars, and I am going to touch on two aspects of this type of thinking that gives me pause for concern. But when you have on-Island gaming, I think one of the statistics that was thrown out was, you are going to have problem gamers. The statistic that was thrown out was that out of the population that would be aged in that group that would have the ability to game, probably 18 to 40, or 18 and above . . . And that was sort of like our voting population of about

40,000 people. One of the statistics that was thrown out was the incidence of problem gamers might amount to 1 per cent, perhaps 2 per cent of those people.

Now, not everybody goes gambling. Whether we should allow our own to gamble is the point here. I had a lot of difficulty with the fact that there might be 200, 300, or 400 of our own people who would be problem gamers. So I believe that if it is decided in a referendum that we should have gaming, we have to be very careful as to how we handle it. I am sure if it comes to that, we will.

The other thing I wanted to toss out to do with gaming—and it is something that other islands have done—is to become a host for online gaming. I believe that is a revenue generator. I do not know if it something that has been mooted here. I have actually had discussions with people who would like it to come here.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Well, yes. We do it now.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: I don't play. I do not gamble.

But anyway, if it is a way to generate revenue that does not have a bit of a physical presence here, it is something that perhaps should be explored. People do it now already. But if Bermuda became a host for an online gambling company, then there is a revenue stream that can be derived from that.

The last thing I want to touch on out of the Statement here . . . well, not the last thing. This is on page 15, the new approach to find ways to inject financial support devoted to cultivating the arts. I support that as well. I have spoken on it before. One of the things that I threw out as a suggestion was a national lottery to support not just the arts, but sports and the like. That probably comes under a referendum on gaming as well. We do need to think out of the box. I have to admit, I am glad to see my friend and the Honourable Member, Mr. Bean, because he does think out of the box. We may not like it a lot, but I think, like I said, no one of us has a monopoly on ideas, and all ideas should be considered.

One other thing I do have a little bit of an issue with, and this touches on the race issue. I am not going to get into the race issue, Mr. Speaker. The idea of incarceration or alternative methods of incarceration, I actually think there is merit in there somewhere. What I want to be careful of is that, when we are talking about the history of . . . And when I say "our people," I am talking about black people. The Honourable Member, Mr. Bean, was talking about getting away from this culture of dependency, becoming more competitive, and that type of thing. I agree, heartily

agree. I call it “making ourselves the architects of our own fortune as opposed to misfortune.”

Now, once you get into what to me is a sticky area is that it could be seen as condoning something, and it does not need to be. But the way it is worded here, it does look at the person’s history and that type of thing. I am having a little trouble wrestling with the idea of putting things in place to cater to a minority. When I say a “minority,” it is the people who have a problem with something even though they . . . that they are legally . . . or that they use by their own free will. It is the same way my thinking goes with the gambling issue. I have a little problem with that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: I do not know if I can make that any clearer. But I just wanted to address that.

Those are really the substance of my comments tonight, Mr. Speaker. I did toss out, I guess, a couple of suggestions. One was the online lottery. One that came to my mind the other day, and it came about through this whole issue with the post office and the increase in duty at the airport for incoming . . . Now, the Government wants to encourage people to shop in Bermuda. It also needs revenue. Well, here is another idea. You know, I might get vilified for these things, but that is fine. Some people import a lot of things through courier services . . . Christmas gifts, clothes, whatever, TVs, the like.

Well, perhaps, if you want to encourage people to shop here and at the same time increase your revenue—and I got this idea from putting a note on Facebook, a wonderful thing. (You might think I am an old person, Mr. Speaker, and do not know anything about these things. But you get a lot of feedback sometimes.) I heard from a friend of mine in Australia where they have a duty-free allowance. I mean, it is a completely different setup in a big country. But they get a duty-free allowance for imports that are done online or goods that are ordered online, a thousand Australian dollars. I wondered if that was for a month or a year—any time you purchase.

But my suggestion that I was going to . . . Well, maybe we should do that, not a thousand Bermuda dollars, but some sort of duty-free allowance, but make the duty on the excess of that higher. There might be a hue and cry; I do not know. But I thought it might assist in two areas. It might encourage people to shop here in Bermuda, and it will also increase Government revenue.

Those are my comments for tonight, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from Southampton West Central.

I am going to take Minister Furbert, who yielded to the Honourable Member Mr. Swan.

Minister Furbert, from Hamilton West, has the floor.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member was just trying to play games just now.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say that first of all this is pretty late for me as far as staying up. I have been up since four o’clock this morning, working on things, trying to make some things happen. So I am pretty well shot and done.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am excited. I am excited because I believe in the possibilities. I believe that I do not see things as they are; I see things as what they could be.

An Hon. Member: Robert Kennedy said that.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, somebody said it.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about our airlines, when we talk about the business opportunity, I see Bermuda in a light that is . . . I tell people that I am tired of us trying to say that we are chasing the Cayman Islands or we are chasing Ireland or we are chasing another jurisdiction. I want to get back to the position where people start to look at us as the lighthouse on the hill. So they are chasing us.

So, to do that, Mr. Speaker, the Premier . . . Let me just say that this particular Throne Speech very much impressed me because, Mr. Speaker, first of all it took time for us to what I call “interpret the times.” So, by interpreting the times, we took the opportunity to produce a plan. This plan, Mr. Speaker, looked at these key words, which I would like to say a few of: “tough decisions,” “solutions,” “formidable challenges,” “world financial turmoil,” “Government not deterred,” “emerged stronger,” “more united,” “finding solutions,” “restore harmony and prosperity to Bermuda’s people,” “steps that will help strengthen the economy,” “to deliver value for money,” “committed now to taking bold steps,” “free up.”

All these good things help to develop . . . Inside, it helps develop a clear vision of where we want to go. So by having a clear plan, Mr. Speaker, we now must do what I call “initiate a plan.” So interpret the time, conceive a plan, and then initiate an action.

So, this Ministry, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Development and the Minister of Tourism, is very key in this light because when you look through the Throne Speech, it looks particularly at—and I am going to go through some of these action steps which we hope to put forward. It is not about two months down the road. It is not about two years down the road, Mr. Speaker. We hope to put these things in plan, in action, very early.

First of all, let me thank the former Minister, Patrice Minors, for some of these ideas that have come forward in this particular Throne Speech.

The first thing I would like to talk about, first as far as a step, is foreign direct investment. Let me talk about foreign direct investment. We are looking at what you call the 60/40 rule. This is about freeing up Bermuda. Mr. Speaker, we could either do nothing at one end of the barometer or we can open up. Open up everything or do nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot do nothing, and particularly, we cannot open up everything, because there are certain things of Bermuda as far as protecting what I consider the national interests—the national interests. In other words, we cannot let Starbucks come out here and just flop on Reid Street and say they are here and just leave all the other small businesses out there. You cannot allow other certain competitors which will mess up Bermudians overall.

So, somewhere in the middle the Government will be going as far as clarifying the investment policy position on where we will be heading.

Here are some of the national interests that we must take into consideration:

- the economic situation in Bermuda and the protection of persons already engaged in business in Bermuda;
- the nature and previous conduct of the company and the persons having an interest in the company, whether as director, shareholders, or otherwise;
- any advantage or disadvantage which may result from the company's carrying on the business in Bermuda; and
- the desirability of retaining the control of Bermudians over the economic resources of Bermuda.

In other words, we have got to allow capital in, but we have got to find a way to also make sure that Bermudians are protected.

But there are certain things, capital, that . . . there are limits to capital here. Let us look at that particularly in the Ministry of the Environment, the renewable energy. Now, if we want to move ahead with renewable energy, a company may have to find further capital. That capital does not necessarily sit here in Bermuda. So a company may have to work with foreign capital to come here. So that is where the foreign direct investment comes in. That is as far as the 60/40 rule.

You are aware right now, Mr. Speaker, that there are certain licences given to the hotel sector which allows them to have significant amounts of shares owned by themselves directly, or the banking sector. These are particular entities within the industry that Government has, over the years, allowed these companies to have beyond the 60/40 rule that we are familiar with. So that is one of the action steps that we hope to move forward.

By doing that, Mr. Speaker, of course, it would create more capital, more jobs, growth in our GDP, and the list goes on and on.

Another thing that the Government will be moving as far as action steps will be amending the Companies Act. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to talk too much on that because very soon we hope to be laying something before the House. But when you look at the Companies Act, we have to remove proven inefficiencies and unnecessary formalities that may create a competitive disadvantage. You may be aware that certain jurisdictions allow one director now. You may be aware that certain jurisdictions remove the requirement of mandatory annual general meetings. So these are the things that the Government are looking at, and very soon we will be . . . There is much more which will be involved in the Companies Amendment Act.

But by doing that, Mr. Speaker, again, it makes us more competitive with other jurisdictions. Again, what? Create jobs, create GDP, and of course, bring more companies here in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited about what you will see in the Throne Speech called the "inter-agency partnership." Now, what does that mean? I describe it this way. I describe it like the Navy SEALs. If you think about a Navy SEALs, it is a rapid response team. They move in quickly. If there is a problem, we are able to call on the Minister of Planning. We are able to call on the Minister of Finance. We are able to call on the Minister of Immigration to quickly respond to a situation and work on that problem. Instead of taking its time for the Ministry of Planning to deal with a problem or the Minister of Immigration to deal with a problem, we are able to call up a rapid response team, moving on it quickly, Mr. Speaker, and deal with the problem. I heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about something similar, and I think he probably realised that that is where we were heading.

So what will it do? Create jobs; increase the contribution of international business and tourism, and of course, GDP (gross national product). So if a person has a problem, let us say with building a hotel, we were able to move quickly by bringing in Planning, bringing in Immigration, bringing in Finance, or a mixture of different . . . It may be just three Ministers at a certain time, or it may be four of us all sitting down. It may not necessarily be Ministers, but the workers within the department sitting down, working quickly on a task force, rapidly working on the situation so we can move quickly and get things done on a more timely fashion.

So this is where we are heading. We are trying to move ahead of the problems, so when people come here they feel much more welcome. Whether it is building a hotel, whether it is creating a particular product in Bermuda, this team will move. So that is what you can see coming out of this Government over the next couple of . . . We hope to move quickly on

this over the next couple of . . . quickly. I just say quickly. I am not going to say how long it will take.

You may be familiar with the corporate service providers. Now, what are corporate service providers? Corporate service providers are law firms, maybe an accounting firm, whatever it is. I do not think accounting firms do, but particularly law firms. In this instance, Mr. Speaker, law firms are involved in share transfers. But then, also the BMA [Bermuda Monetary Authority] is involved in . . . regulators in charge of share transfers. So, we believe that the law firms are already doing the work, that it is important that the body is able to move again, save time for . . . I think right now it takes three or four, maybe five days for this transfer, for the vetting that is already done by the legal firm. The vetting moves over to the regulators at the BMA. So it is important that we move quickly.

So, what do you see us doing, Mr. Speaker? It is becoming more streamlined—more red carpet, less red tape—on the whole three particular issues.

An Hon. Member: You put a lot of that red tape in place.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, we got it from you. Yes, we got it from the United Bermuda Party. So we are now removing some of those red tapes.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, from you. No, I am on the PLP side.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am on the PLP side. So I got it from . . . As a matter fact, it was Grant Gibbons. He was the Minister of Finance at that time.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Minister of Finance.

The Speaker: It was there for good reason.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: He was the Minister of Finance in those days.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: So, Mr. Speaker, it is more red carpet, less red tape. So those three particular issues, Mr. Speaker, the OBA . . . And I notice they are very quiet, listening to what I am saying. The Government is going to be taking action on issues that directly impact investment, directly impact individuals. So, of course, it is very clear what we are doing. So, corporate service providers.

An Hon. Member: A perfect case study was the 9 Beaches mess last year. It was a horrendous mess.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: So, Mr. Speaker, the other thing you will have heard about is Islamic finance.

An Hon. Member: Explain that.

An Hon. Member: Yes, explain that.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, it is basically just investment products. That is all it is, basic and simple investment products. So we already currently have regulations in place already in Bermuda.

An Hon. Member: Investment vehicles.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is right. They are all investment vehicles, which allows the Islamic world to invest their products in Bermuda. Now, at the initial stage is that they require certain blessings on their products. This is simply what it means. They require certain blessings on their products. Whether it is insurance or whether it is trust or whether it is asset management, they will get the blessings first. If they are given the blessing, Mr. Speaker, they will be able to do those certain services here in Bermuda. It is as simple as that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: And so be it, if that is what their products are. If a company wants to come here and not have interest, that is up to them, the Honourable Member. But at least we are allowed to have that particular service here in Bermuda.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I do not find that difficult. I mean, I find that welcoming.

So, hopefully, we will be bringing that up very soon.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard of the Space Enterprise Zone. Now, we are not putting on any space helmet and going up in space. But, again, you may be aware that we have this slot up there. For awhile, the Isle of Man had a chance, but that period expired. So we now have it back. So, the Governor is negotiating, which allows us to put—not us, but a company—something up there in the slot, which, of course, would affect maybe the insurance products again. So the Government is moving in so many different facets. I am hoping that the OBA can keep up with us, because, Mr. Speaker, I am on skates to make some things happen very quickly.

So, these are some of the products that you see coming forward, particularly, and those are just the ones that you see in the Throne Speech. Mr.

Speaker, there are much more products that we are working on, many more products that we are working on that I am not at liberty to release yet. But the country, I am asking them to get ready.

Mr. Speaker, I see so many good things happening in Bermuda over the next couple of years. It is going to take some time for us to put some things together. I have a meeting on Friday with an accounting firm . . . sorry, yesterday, Thursday. (No, what day is this? This is Saturday.) On Thursday, with an accounting firm, and they are talking about these new products. What we are doing within the business unit is taking that idea and saying, *Okay. If you want that idea to develop, we are creating these task forces. So you produce it, we will then push those things forward very quickly.* Again, it is that direct response team making things to happen.

We have got an excellent team in the Ministry. Jasmin Smith, who is at the Ministry of Tourism; Travis Gilbert, who is a dynamic young gentleman at the business unit—these two, Mr. Speaker, these individuals work hard. They work hard. I have been in the Ministry now for just over two weeks, and there has not been one day, one day, that I have not been in that Ministry. Today I have got a meeting at eleven o'clock at the Ministry. You will never see me standing up here, or in a press conference, talking particularly about a hotel unless I know that t's are crossed and the i's are dotted.

So there are a lot of things happening, many opportunities. The Honourable Member, Mr. Wayne Perinchief, the Minister, and I met with a group last week. So, be prepared! Be prepared for the things that we see that are happening. Bermuda is still of great interest. I met with (I forgot what they are called) an insurance committee here, that is here. (I just cannot remember the name of it.) I told them, I said, *Why can't you just go and tell people the good things that you are hearing about Bermuda?* So it is not about everybody talking about leaving Bermuda. I understand that some of the low backroom jobs are leaving here. But people are still interested in Bermuda, still interested. We recognise, particularly on the asset management side, that we have about 800 or 900 funds here set up in Bermuda. The Cayman Islands have about 10,000. Mr. Speaker, we are going after that business. No longer will we be sitting here waiting for things to come. We are going to make things happen! We are going to make things happen!

I am talking about with that rapid response team that we are talking about, Mr. Speaker. You are going to see things coming, Mr. Speaker. I am so excited, Mr. Speaker, I cannot wait to see those things rolling in. So, Mr. Speaker, get ready. Get ready. I see two lawyers over there. They are going to be smiling. Oh, Mr. Speaker, I know they are going to be smiling.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: So, Mr. Speaker, that is part of the business side. I said I was not going to be able to tell you everything. There are some more things happening on that side, which I have got to go to another place first before I talk about it in this arena.

Mr. Speaker, let me just talk a little bit about tourism. It is interesting that . . . I read the response from the Opposition. It said that . . . Mr. Speaker, the long and short of the situation is that "2011 has been a lost year for the tourism industry." I was trying to figure out what they were talking about.

What proof do you have that it was a lost year?

Mr. Speaker, for the last three quarters, we are up higher than we were in 2010. For the last three quarters, we are up over 2010. "There has been no direction and no meaningful marketing presence." Well, can you imagine if we had done much more marketing? It would have been even higher. I mean, the room occupancy at these hotels was packed during the summer season—packed!

Mr. Speaker, let me just say this to you so that the people of Bermuda will know, that in 2007, we had 659,000 visitors to Bermuda. Honourable Member, Mr. Crockwell, I want you to hear this. We had 659,000 visitors to Bermuda in 2007, one of our highest years. Mr. Speaker, I go back to 1980, and we do not have those numbers. The highest between 1980 and 1998 was 631,000.

An Hon. Member: That is cruise ships.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, it is visitors. I am talking about visitors. I am talking about visitors.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. I said visitors. I said visitors.

Now, I accept, Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between air arrivals and the cruise arrivals. We accept that.

This year, Mr. Speaker, I am projecting for 2011 roughly about 632,000 visitors to this Island—this year. This will make it the third largest arrivals for visitors since 1980. No year between 1980 and 1998 beat this year.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: It could be better. What I am saying about this, Honourable Member, is this: We recognise that we need new products as far as our hotels. Mr. Speaker, as I said, I do not see things as they are. I see things as they could be. So I do see a hotel up there at Morgan's Point. I do see a hotel down there in St. George's. I do see a hotel up on So-

nesta Beach. I do see . . . As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, probably next week—as I said, I cannot reveal it yet—but there are certain hotels that are building about 16 more rooms. When they dot their i's and cross their t's and I get approval from my colleagues on the other side, I will come forward and tell you. All right?

I have got someone who called me on Thursday (and I have got a meeting on Monday) to let me know about another hotel. I will let you know. So I see it! So we recognise that we need new products. The excitement that I heard from the developer that I heard about up at a certain place (I will not call the name of the particular hotel), the excitement that I heard, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to call the Premier and say, *Let's call an emergency Cabinet meeting, and let's get it signed tonight!* Call a rapid response team to make this thing happen.

Mr. Speaker, we know what has to take place. I mean, this is an analogy that I took out. I believe that this year could even have been better for arrivals. What happened was that in June and July, State Farm was here. As we all know, it is one of the largest conventions. They took the whole hotel in Southampton, which means this. They came in on, let us say, a Sunday and left Saturday. So they took up the whole seven days. So if my wife and I came in on the Saturday, then that is worth two. But normally, people stay three or four days. If the convention group was not there, we probably would have had four people for that week. Do you follow what I am saying? So it limited the amount of people that we can get on the Island during that time. It limited . . . You will see that our air arrivals were down during that time because they could not get the bookings in these hotels.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am excited. I am excited. Now, they talk about Bermuda needs professional leadership that is responsible for setting clear, strategic directives. Bermuda needs professional leadership that is responsible for setting clear, strategic directives. Mr. Speaker, are you trying to tell me that Malcolm Butterfield is not a professional leader? Are you trying to tell me that Brian Duperreault is not a professional leader? Are you trying to tell me that Vince Ingham is not a professional leader? Are you trying to tell me that?

But, Mr. Speaker, these gentlemen have worked hard over the last year, working out with others a Strategic Imperative report. They have worked on a report that hopefully I will lay before this House sometime in the future. By doing that report, Mr. Speaker, it takes that report and then works out a five-to-ten-year projection going forward.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Ten years?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, I could tell you the Bahamas has a 20-year plan. I will produce it for the Honourable Member, Grant Gibbons. It may not be 20,

but I think it is at least 10. I will produce it for you. I will have it for you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, yes. But how many years do you project for your company?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am sure you do, Honourable Member.

Mr. Speaker, he knows that there are companies that project out 5 to 10 years. Now, as time goes on, you make further adjustments. We know how that works. We know that we make adjustments as time goes on. Most companies, large companies, do not project one or two years. Most companies project more than one or two years. That is my point that I am trying to say. They lay out the capital flow for that period, as far as fixed assets or where they want to go. Okay? Then they make further adjustments as time goes on.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about bringing and looking at our branding going forward. You may be aware that . . . I know this. The Honourable Member, Patrice Minors, my cousin, came up with the idea of College Week Reunion, which allows those who are 60s and 70s and 80s to get together here in Bermuda, or 50-plus years old. I think that is going to be an exciting time, the period of March 15 to March 18. There are 13 hotels that are getting involved in this package.

I cannot tell you too much on the Corporate Games, but we are excited by what we are hearing about the Corporate Games. You will hear more about that. I am limited as to what I can say, but just say that we are working with someone to make that happen, and you can imagine what Corporate Games will mean. But you will hear more about that in due season.

The sponsorship for something like that for the Government will be roughly \$200,000. I can tell you that. I will at least tell you that part.

There is a Spring Break Week coming up, and that will be held from February 18th to the 24th, March 3rd to 9th, and March 10th to the 16th. Basically, how we are going to do that is work with our own students in school. So what they will do is invite their friends to Bermuda. We will be giving them an incentive. The Bermudian Minister will offer them an incentive to attract their friends here to Bermuda. So you can just imagine, at least those of us who are at least my age and above—I am not sure if the Honourable Member Shawn Crockwell will remember—how beautiful College Weeks were. And when college students came here . . . now, we are only going to try to . . . Our test is that we can get about 200, 300 college students here this year, we will consider it a success. We are

going to start small from there, and hopefully build from there on.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to be looking closer at the Hotels Concession Act. Things will be coming forward. It is time to take a look at that and make some improvements to get more incentives for developers to work as far as hotels are concerned.

Entertainment is always exciting, at least from my side. As you probably know, I love entertainment, particularly on the singers' side. So we will be working to improve that here on this Island. This summer we have significant amounts of entertainers working in hotels. You may be aware that we had groups down there at Barr's Park. We had them all through the Island. So we are looking at, again, about also doing some further improvement.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the things I wanted to touch on in the short time that I want to speak. But I am confident. I mean, this season—I can tell you right now—from the months of January, February, and March, we have a \$500 credit we are working with to attract more people from Europe. When I was up there, we had meetings with (you are probably aware) with BA Holiday. I said, *Well, look. Why can we not get as much as Barbados?* Barbados is probably the largest suppliers of tourists or visitors. Europe is only, probably, 10 per cent of our visitors. So we want to increase the lift from Europe, but the price structure between . . . It is interesting that our price structure with the airlines and with the hotels and with other things all-inclusive, is pretty expensive, Mr. Speaker. So we are trying to work with the hotels. That is why we are giving the \$500 credit to hopefully at least be competitive with St. Lucia and some other islands down there.

There is one island that does all-inclusive packages. They are doing quite well with the European market. But the other hotels—you know, you go in and you either pay for the hotel or your food, so everything is not inclusive. So we are trying to encourage more hotels to move in that direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the short comments I want to make in regard to this Ministry. Like I said, we are working around the clock to make things happen very quickly, because we want to recognise that we need to make sure the Bermuda product is right. We accept some of the points, as far as that we want to make our tourists and our business people feel more welcome as they come through our Island or through the gateways to enter here. So we are working with that, the Minister of National Security and I have a meeting to discuss ways on improving that. There is always improvement in every area. Everything can be improved. I mean, we can improve this carpet, or whatever it is.

So, things are going to be happening. So just stay tuned, and you will see, like I say, over the next couple of months, an exciting and busy Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Furbert, the Honourable Member from Hamilton West.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. S. Crockwell, from Pembroke West.

Mr. Crockwell, you have the floor, sir.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just make a few comments on the Throne Speech. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Opposition Leader for his maiden speech (almost over 12 hours ago, Mr. Speaker). But I would like to congratulate him for a strong and outstanding delivery today.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleagues, who I believe addressed all of the major issues, major areas that are concerning Bermuda. I certainly do not wish to regurgitate what has already been said. Members dealt with the area of the economy and crime, education and seniors, Mr. Speaker.

You know, what is interesting and what stood out to me when I think the Honourable Minister, Mr. Marc Bean, said whilst he was speaking, was when he said that we are "going through perilous times." Those were the words of Minister Bean. And he said some other things that I agree with, and I will probably touch on if I have a moment. But he said we are going through perilous times. We, as the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, have an obligation to address and deal with those challenging and perilous times.

What is important, Mr. Speaker, is that these perilous times have arisen under this Progressive Labour Party Government. That is a fact. We can debate all day. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have debated all day about who is to blame. Is it a global recession? Or is it a home-grown recession? We can debate all day whether or not the Governor should have brought in the Giuliani Group or there should have been some other initiatives created to address the issue of crime.

The fact of the matter is that the perilous times have arisen under the leadership of this Government. That is a fact. Mr. Speaker. Whether they have a plan in 2011 to reverse the difficult times that we are dealing with or not, they cannot absolve themselves by this one Throne Speech. We do not know how much time is left before the next election will be held. But what they plan to do between now and then, whether or not they implement all of the promises that they have stated in this Throne Speech—and there were many, many promises.

In fact, this is the most comprehensive Throne Speech since I have been in this Honourable House. But let us say they implement them all. That will not absolve the fact that the past 10 years . . . we have seen these perilous and difficult times emerge under this Government. I agree—the last 10 to 13 years, the time that the Progressive Labour Party has been in Government, this one Throne Speech . . . I believe

there is some good stuff in this Throne Speech. There is no question that there are some ideas that emanated from this side of the Chamber in the Throne Speech. And that is a good thing, Mr. Speaker. I do not say that as a criticism. I say that to congratulate this Government for standing up and saying, *That's a good idea; let's do it.*

There are quite a few initiatives that have come from the Bermuda First Report of 2009, lifted right off of the pages. That is a good thing, Mr. Speaker. What is the point of having these organisations and commissioning these groups of highly intellectual individuals to come up with recommendations if we are not going to take the advice? So there are some good things in this Throne Speech.

But what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that if the Government—and it is a big “if”—if the Government is able to implement the things that they have suggested over the next few months, that will not erase their performance up until this point. Let us be real, Mr. Speaker, because there is an election coming. This Throne Speech is designed to win the next election. That is what this Throne Speech is about. *Let's take some of the better ideas of the Opposition. Let's take some of the good recommendations from various reports. Let's get it done just before the election. Or if we don't get it done in its entirety, we can say it is a work in progress. Then we can tell the people, Look what we are doing now!* That is what politics is all about, Mr. Speaker: *What have you done for me lately?*

But I am standing here to say that this Government must be held accountable for its time in Government, Mr. Speaker! What I found interesting was that when you look at the various areas that the Throne Speech covered, one of the most important areas was creating jobs and stimulating the economy. There is no question that creating jobs is one of the most important challenges confronting Bermuda. But we would not have this challenge had we not lost so many jobs, Mr. Speaker—had we not lost so many jobs because of some of the decisions that have been made over the past few years, because we have lost jobs. There have been businesses leaving this jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, which has led to the loss of jobs. We know that. The Honourable Member who just took his seat knows that, because we have discussed this in another place in different circumstances.

These situations did not just create themselves. The question is, Where is the accountability? What you have got to deal with now, Mr. Speaker, is reducing serious crime, dealing with gangs and guns and violence. I heard the Minister for National Security get up, and he debunked comments that were made in the Reply to the Throne Speech by saying that it is not true; people are not afraid. And referred to statistics. I do not know where the Honourable Whip was, but he got up and he referred to the Throne Speech, and he said it was not correct that people were afraid

at home and seniors were afraid. He said they are not, that they have confidence in the Police Service.

Well, I will tell you. Just this week, Mr. Speaker—just this week—I was going to a place of business in Hamilton on Reid Street, and I was trying to get there before they closed. I got there five minutes before they were supposed to close, and the door was locked. So I looked at the individual, the manager that was working, and I pointed to my watch to see if I was too late. She said, *No, you are not too late.* She came and she unlocked the door. She said, *I don't feel safe after dark. So I lock my door, and I allow the patrons to come in when they come.* It means that people are not feeling as safe as they used to on Reid Street, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just took his seat—who is a good friend of mine, I applaud his optimism. But being optimistic is not going to change reality, Mr. Speaker. I think he has the right attitude. And let me say this from the outset: I wish the Honourable Member, Wayne Furbert, well in the position as Tourism Minister and Business Development. I wish him well. We as a country cannot afford for him to fail over the next 12 months. We cannot! I want to say to him, as his Shadow, that I am here to work with him and support him 100 per cent because the Government, this country, must move in a positive direction. We have to!

But when he says to me that tourism is doing well, and he says that this might be the third best year since 1980 in terms of tourist arrivals, Mr. Speaker, something is wrong! Because I am talking . . . especially, Mr. Speaker, when it was not that long ago that in this honourable Chamber we had to pass legislation—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Take your seat, Mr. Crockwell.

Mr. Furbert, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member knows he is misleading this House. I said the tourist numbers are up, and we can show those numbers. It is clear that the numbers are up, and that it could do better.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Furbert.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: Yes, Mr. Speaker. He said the Tourism numbers were up, and I believe he said that it may be the third best in terms of overall aggregate numbers since . . . I do not know if he said 1980 or the 1980s.

But what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, [is that] the Honourable Member knows that he is dealing with

cruise ship numbers on an inflated level. He knows that when he looks at cruise ship numbers and tries to make the statement that Tourism numbers are up, trying to insinuate that all is well with Tourism . . . The suggestion, when you say that tourism numbers are up, and that this is going to be the third best year since the 1980s gives the impression that tourism is on a good foundation.

What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that it was not that long ago when we were in this Chamber passing legislation to rescue probably the best property we have in this country because they were about to possibly close their doors without that support. I have spoken, Mr. Speaker, to hotel owners in this country who are telling me that this winter season will be difficult, and that they are really doing their best to try to find ways to keep their doors open because the occupancy is that bad.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that when we speak about tourism and when we speak about the recovery of tourism and the health of tourism, we are talking about air arrivals, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, those numbers have been going consistently down quarter after quarter—quarter after quarter. If we do not do something about that now, then this industry is going to be in grave danger. That is why I say, Mr. Speaker, we must support the Honourable Member Wayne Furbert. We must support him. It is not his fault that it is in the state that it is in.

When I look at some of the initiatives that he has put forward in this particular Throne Speech, some of them, certainly, we support. We all know that some of the major issues affecting tourism, number one is maintaining and expanding the air lift to Bermuda. As I just said, that is the key. We have to figure out how we can attract more tourists via air to Bermuda to stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, and enjoy our amenities.

Now, in the Throne Speech, it says they want to turn cruise tourists into air tourists. I do not know if I am putting it correctly. But they want to have a scheme to convert cruise visitors into air visitors. The irony is that recently we saw that the Government was having a hard time even maintaining and keeping their cruise visitors. But certainly, I am interested in hearing how this scheme is going to work, what the details are of this scheme to convert cruise visitors into air visitors. That is something that needs to happen, and it needs to happen immediately.

Number two, we need to improve entertainment. That we see, Mr. Speaker, on page 9. We support wholeheartedly the attachment to the Hotel Concessions Act to the utilisation and employment of local entertainment. We need to have it, so well done. We support that.

Number three—and I like this one for my good friend the Honourable Minister, Mr. Wayne Furbert. They are going to have a referendum on gaming. I like that. I like that, Mr. Speaker. Let us have a referen-

dum on gaming. Now, at this stage, having the referendum on gaming, we are all nice and safe. We are all nice and safe. The Honourable Member, Mr. Furbert, can sit there and not squirm yet, because it is just a referendum. But I cannot wait to see what is going to happen if the people say yes, and he is still the Minister. I would like to see what is going to happen if the people say yes and—

POINT OF ORDER

[Clarification]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, point of order, clarification. If they say yes, it happens; that is all.

The Speaker: You should not . . .

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: I am hoping . . . I do not know what the issue is. If the people say yes . . . I stood on this honourable Floor in support when we debated gaming. I supported it, okay? I outlined my reasons then; I am not going to do it today. We may have another opportunity to do it. But my point is that the Honourable Member who is responsible for Tourism was vehemently against it. So all I am saying is—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: I am just saying it is going to be interesting. It is going to be interesting to see what is going to happen if they say yes and whether or not then at that stage . . . Because let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that during the debate on gaming, the motion was defeated.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: It was defeated. It was a Government motion, brought by the then Tourism Minister and Premier, who must have thought he had some support. But he got a little euchred on the day of, Mr. Speaker, and the motion was defeated.

So all I am saying is, yes, I think the right thing to do is go to the people and find out what the people want. But if the people say yes, then we have to get real about it and come up with a plan and institute the right, proper framework for gaming, and go forward. If it were up to me, Mr. Speaker, I think we are wasting time. I think that the industry requires the stimulus of gaming in this country. Then, as my honourable and learned friend always says, we will see some hotel development coming to this country if they know they will be able to have the licence for gaming. But I am looking forward to the day after the referendum.

An Hon. Member: When is it? When is it going to happen?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: Now, Mr. Speaker, another important issue for tourism is improving public transportation—very important. We saw that this summer, Mr. Speaker, how if we do not have an effective and efficient public transportation to ensure that our guests are able to get to where they want to go in a timely and a comfortable fashion, it could have disastrous effect on the enjoyment of our visitors when they come here. We have seen what can happen. So it is paramount, Mr. Speaker, that the Department and the Ministry of Transport work closely with the Minister of Tourism to make sure that we have adequate transportation for our tourists when it is high season because of what happened over the summer. We can gloss over it all we like. What happened over the summer was disastrous, Mr. Speaker. It was disastrous.

Everyone in this House travels. We know what it is like to go in other jurisdictions. What happened there, especially in a destination like Bermuda, should have never happened. It should have never happened. So, Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that our public transportation is at its operational best when we have our tourists here. Mr. Speaker, I think this is very important. We must ensure that we improve our service on this Island as it pertains to our tourists. We have to give them . . . There was a speaker earlier today (it has been a long day) who was talking about within a minute they needed a service. And within a minute that service was provided to them at a resort. It was the Honourable Member, Mr. Richards.

I was recently in Boston, Mr. Speaker, and had the pleasure of staying at a very nice hotel. I was astounded by the quality of the service. I had an interesting experience. I went out with some friends. We went to this lovely Chinese restaurant. The food that we got was just an abundance of food. It was so much food it was over . . . I said, *You know what? Look. We can't throw this away.* So, I told the lady to box up the food. My brother, who travelled with me, said, *You're not going to be able to heat it up back at the hotel.* I said, *Well, I will just put it in the fridge and see what happens. I may eat it cold.* You know, it was good.

The next day we were unable to go out to dinner. We were flying back home the following morning. We got home late, and I called the kitchen. I said, *You know, I have this leftover Chinese.* So they are not benefiting from the food. I was not buying the food from the hotel. I said, *This is an unusual request. I have this left over. I am wondering, can I come down to your kitchen and just heat it up in your microwave, please?* And the lady said, *Oh, no, Mr. Crockwell. Don't worry. We will come, and we will get it for you.* I said, *No, that is not necessary. I just want to come down and heat it up real quick.* They said no. Within a few minutes, someone was at my door to come and get my leftovers.

I felt bad. I said, *Okay. Thank you very much.* They took my leftovers and went down. I said, *All I want you to do is heat it up and bring it up in the same way as I gave it to you.* It came back on silver plates and covered, and you would have thought they made it for me, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You did not get charged for that?

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: All I had to do was pay the tip. Why? Because I was a guest in the hotel, and they were giving me five-star service—five-star service. It is not common, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay, fine. That is fine.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: But you know what? It needs to be common.

The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is I hope it is common here. As a guest at that facility I had a request. I had a need. And without grumbling, without complaining, and in a very expeditious manner that need and request was fulfilled beyond my expectation. That was something that stuck with me about that facility. I will go back to that facility.

So we need to understand here in Bermuda, as well, that we can have a five-star hotel physical plant. We can have five-star amenities in terms of the golf and the tennis and the spa and, you know, going to the gym. But if you do not have five-star service, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: But the Honourable Member, the Whip, says, *Who says we don't?* A lot of people say we do not, Mr. Speaker. People complain about the lack of service in this country all the time. If the Honourable Member does not know that on the other side, she does not know what is going on in this country!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: There is an issue with the provision of high-quality service. We need to improve our service. I have heard the Honourable Deputy Premier talk about this all the time in this honourable Chamber, that we need to improve our service.

So what we need to do collectively, Mr. Speaker, is we need to understand that this is our industry. I think that the best way to do it, if we can, is to get more Bermudians in the industry. There is nothing more palatable, I think, and appealing to a tourist than to have a Bermudian provide that service. So it would be great if we could come up with initiatives to get locals back into the tourism industry. But we have to provide top-notch service to our tourists, and then they will come and they will say, *You know what? It*

may have been a little expensive, but it was worth it. It was worth it. And they go away, and they will tell their friends, and they will come back.

So those are the things that I think are important. Some of them were covered in the Throne Speech. Certainly the referendum on gaming, as I said, and entertainment were in the Throne Speech. But there was one area that was missing in the Throne Speech. It has already been touched on by my honourable colleague who helped the Shadow prior to me, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin. That is the creation of a Tourism Authority. That is, I think, the most important initiative that needs to be done to get tourism back on track. We need a non-political authority that would help implement the strategies without any interference, Mr. Speaker, without any way that Government can be affected by change in Government or change in Government approach. We need to have an independent body to implement a tourism strategy.

They can be consistent, Mr. Speaker. They can manage the strategy, Mr. Speaker. They can manage the promotion and development. Do you know who said that, Mr. Speaker? Do you know who has been extremely supportive of the establishment of a Tourism Authority? One of the individuals that the Honourable Member mentioned, Mr. Ingham. Mr. Vince Ingham has come out publicly and said we need a Tourism Authority.

Now he is a Senator, and he is a candidate for the next general election. I hope that this Government takes his recommendation and puts people or . . . those who are already on the tourism board are eminent individuals, no question about it. No one is going to question their professional qualifications in their specific areas. But what we need to have are people who have been in tourism, understand tourism, live tourism every day on the Tourism Authority to get tourism where it needs to be.

Also, another area that we have heard, Mr. Speaker, as far as the path to recovery for tourism, is to come up with a way to extend the now-shortened tourism season. We need to figure out ways over the next three months, which is our down season, Mr. Speaker, come up with innovative ways to tell the world that it is now a good time to come to Bermuda during these times and see if we can come up with creative and innovative marketing strategies to be able to fill our beds during the off-season.

So, Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Minister said, there is much to be done in the area of tourism. I support his efforts, but being optimistic alone, Mr. Speaker, is not enough. It is not enough. We have to be realistic about where we are, and I hope that he has sufficient time, and I hope he is able to implement some of these things in short order.

Mr. Speaker, he also is responsible, and I am Shadow for Business Development. I thought that most of the recommendations in the Throne Speech seemed to mirror quite a few of the recommendations

coming out of the Bermuda First Report of 2009. I questioned why now in 2011, the Government is now just starting to entertain the implementation of these recommendations that have been around for a couple of years, because the urgency of “now” existed in 2009. That is why Bermuda First was created. So I think that we have wasted some time. But I am glad to see that these initiatives are now being given the attention that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, we have to bring investment and job creators back to Bermuda. That is important. We believe wholeheartedly that the number one issue factoring to bring more international business to Bermuda is the term limit policy. For whatever reason, Mr. Speaker, this Government refuses to recognise it has not achieved the objectives that it wished to achieve when it was first implemented.

The reality is that there are less Bermudians working today and more foreigners. That is the reality of the term limit policy—which was supposed to protect Bermuda jobs. But we have more foreigners working here, and not necessarily, Mr. Speaker, working in international business. We have more foreigners working in landscaping, more foreigners working in auto mechanics, more foreigners working in all sorts of industries in this country. And we have less Bermudians working than prior to the implementation of the term limit policy.

That is empirical evidence, Mr. Speaker, that the term limit policy has not worked. It has not worked. So, why not take on the recommendation to suspend it, as we in the OBA have pledged that we would do? Suspend the term limit policy then have a look at it and try to come with the best . . . Because I do not think that (this is my personal view) we should not have any term limit policy at all at the end of the day. I think there needs to be an assessment, because there are some jobs that should be set aside for Bermudians. But we have to make sure, first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, that those Bermudians are properly trained and are capable of doing the jobs.

There are many jobs that foreigners are doing today that Bermudians should be doing. They are not doing it because there has been a breakdown somewhere along the way, Mr. Speaker, whether it is in training, whether it is in education. Somewhere along the line, there has been a breakdown when we are not employing Bermudians in the field of landscaping, in the field of auto mechanics, in the field of plumbing, in the field of tiling, in the field of masonry. Something has gone wrong.

Now, we keep hearing resistance from the other side as it relates to term limits. But it is interesting. The Honourable Member, Mr. Furbert, said we do not want to be chasing the Cayman Islands. We want the Cayman Islands to be chasing us. But the Cayman Islands has already recognised—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: No, no, no. The Prime Minister of the Cayman Islands, Mr. McKeeva Bush, said this, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence:

He said, "The continuation of the term limit [policy]" (this is in Cayman Islands)"has led to a decline in all sectors of the economy and negatively affected jobs for Caymanians." This is what he said! Okay, there may be some difference. I am saying what the Prime Minister of Cayman said, and the Government of Cayman has made the decision to suspend term limits. Our competitor! Our competitor!

So, what I am suggesting . . . You know what, Mr. Speaker? Bermuda First also recommended that we should waive term limits and work permits for occupations that historically have permits approved 100 per cent of the time. Bermuda First said that. Now, is there some difference there? Our own Committee, commissioned by this Government, recommended that we waive term limits and work permits for occupations that historically have permits approved 100 per cent of the time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I really think that we need to have a look at that. It is late in the day. So I will truncate my speech this evening. I want to just say that we support quite a few of the initiatives in the Throne Speech. In my Shadow area I support the Minister for Tourism and Business Development. I found it interesting earlier when the Opposition Leader read that "When we become the Government, we will put an Opposition Member in Cabinet." I heard snickers from the other side. I said to myself, *Well, we thought that was a novel idea; but the Government has already done it.* They have already done it, Mr. Speaker. I looked over and saw the former Opposition Leader in Cabinet, and I said, "We are behind the eight ball," Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: We thought we were coming up with something novel, but actually, Mr. Speaker, the PLP Government beat us to that one.

So we will follow their lead, Mr. Speaker, and when we become the Government, we, too—we, too, Mr. Speaker—would put a Member of the Opposition. It could be a former Premier. Who knows, Mr. Speaker? But we will follow the lead of this Government one day.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, I just want to deal with this one issue, and that is dealing with the issue of collaboration. You know, we spend a lot of time in this House of Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Here it is 1:30 in the morning, and this is not unusual. Mr. Speaker, you know, for the amount of time that we spend in this House we should be one big happy family. We really should. We spend so much time. I hear people get up, and they attack us, and they accuse us of attacking

them. We have this cantankerous tone when we are up here sometimes.

We have been accused of not fulfilling our pledge of collaboration. Collaboration, Mr. Speaker, maybe in this specific context, is we are prepared to work with the Government when they have good initiatives that we believe will benefit this country. We will work with them to make sure it gets . . . We saw it with the Joint Select Committee on Crime. They worked together, they worked hard together, and they came up and produced a very useful report. That is collaboration. But we will not, Mr. Speaker, abdicate our role as the Opposition.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: We will not. Yes, we are the Opposition. We are the Opposition. We will continue to do our job. We ask the Government to do its job, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, as the Honourable Member, Mr. Marc Bean, interpolates, he said himself, "We are going through perilous times." These times did not exist, Mr. Speaker, in 1998.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Crockwell, the Honourable and Learned Member from Pembroke West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mrs. P. Minors. Minister Minors, from Smith's North, has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in my reference to our Throne Speech, threaded throughout this document as strategically formed by our Premier, is the Nguni expression of "Masakhane!" which states, "Let us build one another, together." Mr. Speaker, it is my position that this very expression is one that resonates throughout the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. One might ask why.

I look first to the creation, as mentioned in the Throne Speech, of the one-stop career centre, an opportunity for two entities—that being the National Training Board and the Labour and Training Department—to come together, building one another for the aim of building our workforce, providing opportunities for our unemployed and those that are seeking improved training to find their way and find a job that meets their skill set and meets their career aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, the one-stop career centre represents the efforts to administer career and educational development programmes that will hopefully solve problems, build relationships with employers, and help place people and ensure their success. There are many factors that were driven for the crea-

tion of the one-stop career centre. Some of the factors include:

- creating a more modern approach to the assessment and training and placement;
- to better form partnerships that complement the career aspirations;
- using the resources that are available to offer opportunities across the Island;
- to improve service delivery.

As I spoke earlier today, pertaining to the waiter/server programme that we have implemented, whereby a component of it is to provide those interested persons (some of them do not even need to have any experience in working in the food and beverage arena) with the skill set, both hard and soft, to be successful in our hospitality industry.

Another factor is to create a higher rate of success in employing job seekers. We all know that there are many occasions where persons, without having the proper training, are taken on for a job and then within days, and in some rare instances hours, they have not continued on with that employment.

Those are the types of things that we are attempting to do through the creation of the one-stop career centre, and that is to ensure that those persons that come to those offices are provided with a holistic approach to preparing them to be effective and efficient employees and working with employers who are open and receptive to having given these persons the opportunity to work within their establishment and help build their establishment to a successful one.

So, this, Mr. Speaker, to me is a clear example of us building one another together. Even throughout this whole Ministry and through Government as a whole there is an indication of working together to build one another. And with the outcome of the recent decision pertaining to the Ministry of Community Development and the opportunity—and I look at it as a great opportunity, Mr. Speaker—that Job Corps now comes under this Ministry. *What is the significance of that?* one might ask. The very establishment of a Job Corps has a training component. It has the intent to reach young people from the ages of 16 and over, providing them with free education and training designed to equip them to complete stable and long-term, well-paying careers.

This is an ideal connect and will work quite synergistically with the existence of the one-stop career centre. It provides an opportunity for the young person coming in to get the appropriate training and can easily move straight into the one-stop career centre and can easily transition into finding gainful employment. So all of these things are quite indicative of departments working together to “build one another, together,” as a whole and spreading out into the Bermuda public. We are bringing together also those business establishments that see the benefit of being tied to the formation of these centres.

When I speak with regard to the one-stop career centre, we have the Bermuda Hospitality Institute being involved in this. When I speak of the Job Corps, we have the private sector. We will soon be meeting with interested business institutions for the purposes of presenting what the vision is of the Job Corps and encouraging them to become a part of this. All, Mr. Speaker, an indication of us building one another, together, building this community together.

The other area that I wish to speak to that is mentioned within our Throne Speech speaks to the area of work permits. One may say, *Well, how does this speak to building one another, together?* Well, it does, Mr. Speaker, when you are making efforts—and I think these efforts are appreciated by our international business sector—whereby we are making and seeking to make for a seamless process of their applications in a fashion that will lead to the success of their institutions and their businesses, and would lead to the success of making sure that Bermudians that have the appropriate skill set and the certification are given a great opportunity to be employed in our international business sector, as we know it is a field for which we are challenged to ensure that our Bermudians are employed.

We have been quite constant, I should say, in our position pertaining to term limits. We believe that with the introduction of the job creator legislation and the policy that was instituted on November 1st, whereby we are offering now 10-year work permits, I believe this will go a long way to dispelling that myth that we are not a jurisdiction that is receptive to the international business sector and the business that they seek to bring in. We are not ones that are turning a blind eye to the comments that are made pertaining to business leaving the Island.

We are not prepared to sell ourselves—let us make that clear, Mr. Speaker—as some jurisdictions have done, and just given up and said that you can have all that you desire. We are one that recognises quite highly our regulatory reputation that we have and want to maintain. We want to make sure that the decisions that we do make are ones that are going to continue to have us be an attractive destination and one that continues to contribute to building opportunities for new business coming on the Island.

We have seen that most recently. In the short two weeks that I have been the Minister, I have had the pleasure of being . . . The Premier spoke to it in an anonymous fashion, because obviously we do not want to give away the names of the businesses that are seeking to come to the Island. But the fact that we can turn around a request for work permits in a matter of two days for a nature of business of \$500 million coming to Bermuda to set up shop is something that is indicative of Bermuda and this Government being prepared to work with our international business sector to show that we are open to and for business.

So, we are working together to build one another, Mr. Speaker. The incentives for the job makers—I am sure that the Premier will elaborate more significantly on this. But this is a continued example of what we are doing, and it is linked to the employment and benefits for Bermudians. We recognise that if we want individuals and their companies to provide long-term investments in Bermuda and for Bermudians, we must be prepared to offer them benefit in return, obviously, job security and opportunity to have a permanent home for themselves and their families. Hence, while we appreciate that we cannot open the door entirely, which is what I mentioned earlier, we do have an interest in making sure that our international business is happy, and with regard to making sure that we keep our reputation in high regard.

I would like to touch on something that I did speak to earlier today when I made my Ministerial Statements. While it may seem repetitive, it is important that we speak to it. This is an initiative called the Small Jobs Initiative, which we join forces with the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, formerly the Bermuda Small Business Development Corp. We have also had the benefit of support from the Ministry of Finance. It pertains to a programme that we established whereby individuals that have been referred to us by Labour and Training, about 20 persons in total over a period of between 8 and 10 weeks—and I am pleased at having met with these individuals today—that could be extended for an additional two weeks, whereby they are paid \$600 a week, Mr. Speaker, in doing jobs throughout the Island.

I happened to see them, as I said, during my lunch hour. They were at Bermuda Economic Development Office. Due to the inclement weather, it was decided they will still come in and do some work in office. They were showing a PowerPoint presentation of the jobs they had done. They did some painting up at the Sea Cadet Building, and it has been a tremendous benefit to them.

As I stood there, Mr. Speaker, and looked into the faces of those that were there, the joy that they had over the fact that they had a job, the fact that we as a Government . . . I said, *I heard that you are looking for more work*. They say, *Yes, we sure are*. They are eager to work. We are encouraged that the ethic that has been established over these past 8 to 10 weeks will continue, and then we can make every attempt to ensure that these young men and women—and I cannot say “young” because they were of varied ages—will be able to find some permanent employment beyond the period of time that we have committed to assist them.

For those that may question the costing of this event, of this programme, I just want to say that . . . I will just go on and talk about this as well. This is pertaining to the waiter/server programme. That one, which is run by the PACE [Professional and Career Education] at the Bermuda College is one that will

have some five sessions that will run through December and March. I spoke to the waiter/server programme earlier. It is going to cost about \$90,275. And it will provide, as I said, an opportunity for the applicants to learn their best practises in tableside and beverage service, and hygiene and operational procedures.

This will involve also the assistance by the Bermuda Hospitality Institute. They will play a significant role in making sure that they will carry through the application process prior to the candidate being accepted. So we have a programme whereby it is not just our Ministry or department. We are working with the Bermuda College. We are working with the Bermuda Hospitality Institute to make sure that it is successful, to make sure that those applicants that join up have a great opportunity for succeeding.

Also, as was spoken earlier, with pertaining to the actual hotel establishments, they are very much engaged in this through the Bermuda Hotel Association, and they too desire to see an increase of Bermudians working in their establishments and seeing an increase in the services that are provided.

Mr. Speaker, there is definitely, I believe (in working with in this Ministry over the past couple of weeks), a great opportunity for synergy, great opportunity for working together with the dynamics of labour, working together with the unions in ensuring that we are working together for a great purpose, and that is to see our Bermudians being gainfully employed, to make sure that our Bermudians are open and receptive to improving their skill set such that we can address the many concerns that we are faced with through these tough economic times.

I will just touch one more time, to reiterate what I spoke to today, pertaining to the criteria for the 10-year work permit. I think this is a message that we have to continue to get out there, appreciating that, having launched it, as of date we have had no applications being made. But this is a policy whereby there are criteria and we are looking for and we are encouraging those companies that have a significant presence in Bermuda and have a staff of at least 20. Of those 20, at least 50 per cent of them should be Bermudian.

While the cost is stated to be \$20,000 for a permit, we do not believe this to be one that will turn away any international business entity from making application because of the individuals that can be afforded this opportunity include chief executive officers, chief operating officers, and chief financial officers. These are positions where we know it is unlikely for Bermudians, at least at this point, to have the qualifications to assume the positions. So we recognise the importance of continuity of these businesses to be able to fill these posts, to be able to continue with their presence in Bermuda.

We know that many of these companies do have a commitment to Bermuda through their charita-

ble efforts. So I am more than confident that this 10-year work permit policy will be received favourably, and has been received favourably by our international business sector, and will go a long ways to continue to build and merge the gap or the . . . I would not say “gap,” but the displeasure that has been expressed in times past pertaining to how this Government has embraced the work permit procedures pertaining to our international business sector.

So with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again speak to what has been threaded through our Throne Speech pertaining to us working together. I believe at the end of the day, we will make it through what has been deemed these “perilous times,” and see Bermuda succeed and prove itself durable, irrespective of the times, irrespective of the criticism that we receive for the decisions that we make during this time. We will be a community, both business and social, one that has proven itself internationally and globally that it can succeed and will succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Minors, the Honourable Member from Smith’s North.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. N. Simons, Smith’s South.

Mr. Simons, you have the floor.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very late, so I shall not be very long.

The Speaker: Yes, it is very late.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said this evening about the economy and about jobs. We touched upon the environment. I thought I would peel back some of the skin to just drill down further on the environment and e-commerce.

Mr. Speaker, when I was sitting down at the opening of Parliament, when the Governor read (from page 6, if you would follow me), it says: “Madam President and Members of the Senate, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, the Government views its responsibility for sustaining Bermuda’s, and indeed, the planet’s environment as a sacred trust. It is currently developing a National Infrastructure Strategy for Bermuda which will be completed before the end of this calendar year.”

I think what struck hard to me was the Government’s so-called commitment to the “environment as a sacred trust.” Mr. Speaker, what came to my mind immediately when I read that was the issue of the report with the channels, the report entitled “Study of Bermuda’s Shipping Channels to Accommodate Larger Cruise Ships,” Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I went to those presentations. I went to the Hamilton presentation and the St.

George’s presentation. I said, *If this Government is concerned about the environment, if they see the environment as a sacred entity . . .* for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, I could not understand—and I cannot understand—how the Government could consider through this report the possibility of blowing up Higgs Island, of blowing up Hen Island, of destroying Lefroy Island in the south, and also reconfiguring the Town Cut channel in St. George’s.

Then, Mr. Speaker, what made matters worse, I am saying, *Okay. We are going to propose making all these dramatic changes to our environment, getting rid of three-and-a-half islands for the shipping business in this country, and to hear that we do not even have contracts with the ships for the long term.* Then natural justice as it is, the current Minister realises that the Carnival Cruise Lines will not be coming next year.

So, I am saying, if that instability . . . There are no guarantees as far as getting a contract for Bermuda for the shipping industry for their Panamax ships to go inside and come into St. George’s and provide the needed business from tourism. I say, you know, we are going to blow up these islands in vain!

The Speaker: Well, that was the report to the Government.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I know. But the Government is leaning . . . They were basically leaning towards that.

The Speaker: Oh?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Because they were saying—

An Hon. Member: Why do you say that?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Because that is what the Minister said.

The Speaker: Oh?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The Minister said that we cannot get any small ships anymore. And at the end of the day, the only way we can accommodate tourism, they are going to lean towards having mega-ships coming to St. George’s.

As I said, in my estimation, blowing up those islands for uncertainty (when it comes to Bermuda’s cruise ship attractions) was not on, Mr. Speaker.

So, to me, the sacred trust to the environment, as far as I am concerned, is a sound bite only. Then, recently, we have the encroachment on the Devonshire Marsh with the recent situation with our Cabinet Ministers that, to me, again, is not a commitment to our environment.

So this “sacred trust” that I am hearing from this Government, as far as protecting the environment, I have to question whether it is just a sound bite or whether they are really, really serious about protecting our environment. But I am leaning towards it being a shameful sound bite.

Now, in the Throne Speech response, my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, went through a number of undeliverables (as I call them, undeliverables) from the Throne Speeches of 2008, 2009 and 2010. The question is: If they did not deliver on those issues in 2008, 2009 and 2010, how can we expect to believe that they will deliver on the issues raised in the 2011 Throne Speech? So I would like, Mr. Speaker, to share with you some of the issues that have not been addressed in other Throne Speeches.

The Speaker: Well, you always probably put more in there hoping you will achieve it. But sometimes, you do not.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I know. But there is a trend. And that is my concern. That is my concern.

The Speaker: *[Laughing]* All right.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The first one was . . . They touched upon this one earlier. What happened to the bottle deposit system which was supposed to be developed to encourage recycling to keep Bermuda beautiful? The Minister, Walter Roban, jumped up earlier and said, *Oh, oh, oh! Well, it's in the current legislation, the Waste and Litter Control Amendment, which comes to the House.* Well, Mr. Speaker, they were misleading the House because that legislation does not talk about recycling bottles.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: So there is no plan at this point to recycle bottles and have a proper bottle deposit system. It was planned in 2008 and, again, it is not here.

My friend, the former Honourable Minister, Mr. James, was going to address bringing back the citrus industry, having a Bermuda fruit culture. I think that is a splendid idea. Again, he did this in 2008. Where are we on that? Did that drop by the wayside when the Minister retired from his post? To me, a sound, sound initiative.

When I was growing up, there were plenty of citrus trees around this Island. Now try to find them! I mean, when you were a kid, you probably had plenty of navel oranges, grapefruits, just in your neighbourhood. Now, when was the last time you saw it? When was the last time you saw an orchard of oranges, navels, tangerines? Not for awhile. I thought it was a sound programme that Minister James was going to implement. So again, another hollow promise.

In 2008, we said there was a focus on farming and fishing. Well, I admit the fishing industry . . . We helped them a bit last year. But the farming industry, again, like the tourism industry, there is no Government paper on farming in this country. Former Minister Butterfield did a study on the farming industry—sound recommendations, a thorough report, an enlightening report. But that report is collecting dust. What is Government's position on developing farming in this country? Farming is an industry that can create jobs. It can create jobs for locals. It can be soothing. It can also help our young people become more in tune with the earth. So again, 14, 13 years after the PLP came to Government, we have an industry that has been part of our culture for centuries, and we have not put together a White Paper that will help our agricultural industry to succeed going forward.

The other issue, in 2009, we had issue with our queen bees. We were going to implement a queen bee-rearing programme. There was talk about importing some queens from overseas that were resistant to the diseases that have been prevalent in the bee industry. Where do we stand on that? Because, quite frankly, without the bees, our fruit, citrus industry, our produce, you will not get the pollination, and as a consequence our produce from our orchards will be . . . has been down around 56 per cent.

You talk to the farmers. You know, the peach trees, the orange trees, some of the apple trees, the loquats—because we have a problem with the bees—the production is down dramatically. So again, this was the priority in 2009. Where do we stand on trying to retrieve and save our bee production industry in this country? Again, no update. And I thought some of this information would be shared by the outgoing Minister of the Environment or the incoming one. But they were silent on it.

The other issue that I would like to address is the issue of litter. As I said, the litter situation has been addressed in this legislation, so I am not going to spend much time on it. This legislation will be forthcoming within a week or so.

The Speaker: Yes. It is on the Order Paper.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Right. So I am going to pass that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. That is the right thing to do.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: That is right. I am learning. I am learning.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that we said we were going to address in 2009 on the telecommunications side, the Throne Speech then indicated that we were going to have a regulatory authority and that some piece of legislation was going to come to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to tell you about the chaos that has been happening in the telecommunications industry. Part of the frustration there is that there has been dialogue, dialogue, dialogue, but no action. The telecommunications industry has been working with Government, and they have become frustrated because there is no clarity. Some of the current licensing regime is dated and was appropriate for the time when the legislation was crafted. But going forward, because of the convergence of new technology, because of the convergence of new services within the industry, our ABC system of licensing is dated, and we need to revisit what is there now, because that programme, that equipment is ever evolving. Like the IT industry—here today, gone tomorrow; new innovation today, derelict today.

The Speaker: It is dynamic.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: It is dynamic. It is very, very fluid. We need to keep on top of that, and we have to ensure that we have the best practise. So I think it is important that we bring that information to the House and that we keep in tune with the industry and that we also keep in tune with our partners' needs so that their capital can be well utilised and so that the consumers of this country can get better IT telecommunications, digital information, cablevision, better service at a cost-effective price. I will get into that later, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we in the OBA believe that for us to have a prosperous and equitable society, we must live in harmony with our environment. We must live in harmony with our environment so that we can protect it for future generations. I believe that we should produce an eco-friendly Government, and we have touched upon this before. We need to consider environmental issues in all Governmental decisions, be it Planning Department, be it vehicles. I mean, we have now a fleet of cars in Government. Are we managing the transition from the traditional gas car to hybrid cars to electric cars?

Mr. Speaker, I was up in Toronto last week, and I was at a fair. They had this car about the size of my SUV. (I have a RAV4.) It was an electric car, completely electric. Have we been able to transition from our gas-guzzling fleets to an electric car? I have been told that recently we bought four new GP cars. Have they been purchased with the green initiatives in them? Or were they just the same old gas-guzzling cars that we have? Government must—must—lead by example.

Mr. Speaker, as I continue, the Planning Department. Mr. Speaker, we have to demonstrate to this community that our planning process works efficiently and that our planning process is free of influence. Mr. Speaker, what has happened in the past three or four days does not boost the confidence of the planning process and the perception by the com-

munity of the planning process. Now, I know that Government and the Premier and the Minister have addressed this. He has given a Ministerial Statement. But what we need to do is build confidence in the community that the planning process works and that it cannot be influenced by undue process.

Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker, of how badly people perceive the Planning Department and how it works. This morning I was astonished. I said, *I can't believe what has just happened to me.* I was coming to work. I stopped in the gas station down in North Shore. The gas station attendant said to me, *Mr. Simons, come inside, please.* I said, *What's up?*

I went inside, and he gave me an envelope. I said, *What is this envelope for?* He says, *This is the envelope that you need to get things through Planning.* I said, *Oh, no. We will not have that type of behaviour.* He said, *Well, that is the perception out there, Mr. Simons.*

Mr. Speaker, I was stunned. I said, *Our Government will not do that. That is unacceptable.* It is all basically as a result of what has been going on with the perception of the community. I think the issue with the (and I will say "the perceived") indiscretions of the past few days has just fuelled a lack of respect for our planning process. We need to manage that perception. So as far as I am concerned, we in the OBA would like to have an operational review of the department to make sure that it is adequately resourced. We want to have its organisational methods reviewed to look at the procedures. We want to make sure that there are sufficient resources made available to the management to ensure that the process works efficiently and in accordance with our planning laws.

Mr. Speaker, we have our planning laws, and I think our planning laws are fairly robust. But we just have to stick to the regulations, bring the discipline, and, again, ensure that the department has the resources in place to ensure that the department works efficiently.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, I am hearing comments from the Minister. He had plenty of opportunity to talk about the Planning Department when he was on his feet. But he chose not to. So I thought I would give it a good airing, given that he did not provide the attention.

So as I said, Mr. Speaker, we in the OBA would very much appreciate a comprehensive overhaul and review of the Planning Department and the planning process.

Mr. Speaker, another issue that I would like to address . . . We said that we want to encourage a green environment. We would encourage Bermudians to use solar panels, renewable energy, in their house. I was, again, coming back. A Bermudian came up to

me and said, *Mr. Simons, Mr. Simons, I want to talk to you about something!* I said, *Yes. I am available.*

The Speaker: They love you!

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I do not know about that. I mean, I must look like a person they can bounce everything off of.

An Hon. Member: Hollywood superstar.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: What can I say?

Anyway, he said, *I just had solar panels placed on my roof, you know, to be energy conscious. A colleague of mine, my partner at work, did the same thing. And guess what happened?* I said, *What?* He said, *My annual rental value went up \$10,000 because I put this panel on top of my roof to conserve energy. Is that a motivation for me and others to continue to go green energy? I don't think so.* So, because the land tax value has gone up, his annual taxes on his house will go up dramatically.

The same thing occurred to a colleague of his. He said, *I am going to double-check.* So he got home, he called his colleague. He had the solar panels on, and his place was smaller. And his ARV went up \$10,000. So is that an incentive for the people of this country to actually use solar panels? If they are going to have additional expenses on the maintenance of their houses, you say, *Okay. We are going to reduce our electricity bill, use green energy. But at the same time, we are going to ding you by increasing the land tax fees because you have added solar panels to your roof.* So I would revisit that. I mean, we cannot be talking out of both sides of our mouth.

The other issue that I would like to address is recycling. We had a recycling plan. Are we really encouraging recycling in this country? Do we have a campaign to encourage recycling in this country? I would go as far as to say that Government should present its position paper on recycling.

An Hon. Member: What is your position?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: On recycling? My position is that we should have a national plan of recycling.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Yes, a recycling plan so that everyone can buy into it and so that the country can go forward and reduce its carbon footprint and ensure that we are doing our best to be a green economy.

The other issue that I would like to address is, during the speech it talked about re-examining the land use and land management programme. Again, we in the OBA would like the Government to really,

really be supportive of developing our brown fields. I know they have started. We would also like for them to deliver on the promise of developing Marsh Folly Park. I mean, to me that can be a beautiful park, a place to relax, a place to really enjoy. They have a marine water feature, with birds. There could be a bird sanctuary as well as a place to relax. Again, I understand the challenges we had with the thermal heat, but time has passed. I think the delivery of the Marsh Folly Park cannot be put off forever. The young people at the school, the neighbours, to continue, they should be able to see there, going forward, a park will be there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: You are not putting much waste there anymore. You are not putting much waste.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue I would like to have addressed is the issue of the Southlands Park. We did an exchange agreement with Morgan's Point, with the owners of Southlands. When can we expect movement on the development of the Southlands Park in Warwick? A pristine property, there is a nice beach there. I think that park would be ideal as an amenity for our people and our tourists, a lovely, lovely nature environment.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, I shall continue.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I would like to address is the issue of national reforestation. I said this once before. I believe that, again, if we are serious about reducing our carbon footprint, if we are serious about open spaces, let's have a national tree planting programme. That can be hosted by Government. It could be hosted in partnership with the nurseries, the public/private sector initiative, where we can reforest our Island with cedar trees, endemic trees, out hoards, just something that we can leave for generations to come. When you plant a tree, you do not plant it for yourself. You plant the trees for the next generation.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Someone said to me, *Go plant a tree!* I plant trees all the time, all the time. So I am encouraging the people share that same enthusiasm, not just for us, but for generations to come and that we preserve the open spaces that we have.

On the issue of the agriculture industry, again, I said we need to have a White Paper in place so that we can enhance the productivity, the product quality, have a paper that will also address the cost reduction of farming in Bermuda, and also, as I said before,

manage harvest loss. In addition, a lot of the farmers have indicated, like the fishermen, that they want some type of insurance programme, health insurance. They have challenges getting health insurance. To me, if we are going to promote that industry, if we want it to be a viable industry, then the professionals working in that industry should be able to get affordable health insurance like any other profession.

So I think the Government could work together with the insurance companies to see what can be done. Even if they have a policy that pooled all the farmers in the industry under one policy, where you have the numbers. You get some of the young farmers, you get some of the older farmers, to mitigate the risks within the portfolio of farmers. Then we should be able to have some type of policy that will be acceptable to farmers.

The Speaker: Why should they not do it themselves?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Because, number one, it is expensive; and, number two, they are not really given the respect. They are not given the support, and the coverage is rather limited by the insurance companies, limited coverage. It is limited coverage.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I would like to have addressed is the issue of expanding our dairy industry, our pig farming industry and our chicken industry. Again, if we want to go forward to be more self-sufficient, to reduce our own grocery bill, why can we not produce more animals that we can slaughter for consumption? I mean, chickens, geese, dairy farms, pigs.

An Hon. Member: Geese?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: No, but other people do.

The other issue is backyard gardens. Why can we not encourage people to have a backyard garden? Studies have shown that if you have your own backyard garden, you produce your own meat, you can reduce your grocery bill by 20 per cent to 40 per cent per week. During these difficult economic times, you can help yourself by having some backyard garden. There is a community garden down in Trimmingham Hill. There are other community gardens throughout the Island. So if people do not have the space in their backyard, go and see if they can get involved in a community garden. That way they can try to supplement their income from our soil. So I would recommend that more energies be placed toward backyard gardening and promoting backyard gardening.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Oh, that is smart.

An Hon. Member: That is not backyard.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: No, but I am talking backyard farming.

[Gavel]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Backyard farming—

The Speaker: You are talking to the Speaker.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Backyard farming is where you build a square foot garden in your backyard. Or you have potted plants that grow tomatoes in the vertical stand. Or you can have lemongrass or your lettuce or your parsley growing outside your kitchen window. So those things there can help you with your food bill and help reduce your living expenses.

As I said, a lot has been said about the fishing industry. I am sure something will come up later, so I am going to pass on that this evening. But again, what I would like to reiterate on the fishing industry is the health insurance. They have the same challenges as the farmers.

Mr. Speaker, on page 8 of the Throne Speech, the Government spoke about outer space, a Communication Orbital Slot. Mr. Speaker, I find this very, very interesting. I did some research on it, and I thought that I would hear more information on what this was all about. How they intended to use the slot once they had it. Were they going to rent it out? Were they going to use it for other companies that had satellites to basically operate within our orbital slot? How much was it going to cost? When did they intend on having it in place? Again, silence. So I would like to know, what is the Government's thought? What are their plans? How are they going to deliver on this initiative? I am not saying that I am against it. All I am saying is, we would like to see more details on the orbital slot.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The other issue, as I said, that I would like to address is the issue that surrounds the current telecommunications crisis. Now, I am saying it is a crisis because you have an industry that is ill at ease with itself and Government—the “A” carriers, the cable carriers; the “B” carriers, the telephone companies; the “C” carriers, the Internet companies. The issue is, as I said earlier, when we set up the ABC licence template, it worked well for us in the early 2000s, but now it is dated. People are looking for bundled services, so they can provide more efficiency. When you start your current Internet system or your telecommunications system, you have to have three

carriers. You have to have telephone company, you have to have digital, and then you have to have logic—three separate services in the three separate licences so that you can have the Internet or so that you can have Skype.

So the industry has progressed. What they have said is, *We would like to have it all bundled for the customer, and the customer can just sign up at one shop and get their telephone, long distance service. You get your telephone service. You get your WOL service, and you get your Internet service.* That is the way the industry is going. But our licensing arrangement has not caught up with that as yet.

Now, we understand that they were supposed to be tabling some legislation today to address that very issue. But it has not been tabled at this point. Now, as I said, there are people waiting in the wings to invest millions and millions of dollars in this industry. But they are not going to do it until the legislation comes before them.

The Speaker: This is our second week for the session.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I know. I know. But I am just giving an overview, because no one spoke about the telecommunications industry.

An Hon. Member: There is no need.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: There is no need? How can you say there is no need, and the industry is fighting each other? They are going to court. They are challenging Government on decisions that were made. We never had that issue with our telecommunications people.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: So I welcome the legislation. I welcome the legislation.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Oh, no. You are not going to . . . I will give you my positive criticisms and contributions.

So, as far as telecommunications, we look forward to legislation.

The other issue, as I said, in 2009, we were told we would have a Telecommunications Regulatory Authority. This here is a sensitive one. The regulatory authority should be there, as far as I am concerned. But the industry is concerned about them carrying the cost, given these difficult circumstances. They are feeling the pinch like everybody else. They feel that they can ill afford to carry the costs of running the regulatory authority for the telecommunications industry. But again, we may be able to have an industry

that may not be cost burdensome to the industry. Maybe we will work out some arrangement whereby it is palatable from an economic point of view for the industry players and Government. So I look forward to the Government's recommendations in regards to the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

The other issue that I found most interesting when it comes to this industry is the 60/40 foreign ownership issue. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the "A" carriers, which are the Cable and Wireless, or links (the Brazilian companies that bring in the cable, but they do not do business in Bermuda, what they do is do business from Bermuda, internationally), those companies are exempt from the 60/40 rule. So that is all foreign capital. Then you look at the "B" companies, which are the mobile companies and the telephone companies, online telephone companies, those companies had the 60/40 requirement—that is, 60 per cent Bermudian, 40 per cent foreign.

Now, that was waived for most of the companies awhile back. So most of the players in the telephone area are foreigners. There is no 60/40 rule for them. They are all basically 100 per cent owned by foreigners with deep pockets. The Internet companies, the ISP servers, the Northrock, Logic. You know, they have been told—I know one for sure applied to be exempt from the 60/40 and was told they cannot. So you have a few of the Internet providers having the 60/40, others have it waived. As a consequence they have foreign ownership. So the Bermuda companies that have applied for the 60/40 are playing on an uneven playing field as far as the attraction of direct investment into their industry, because they are still limited by the 60/40 rule.

So, what we need to do is make an even playing field so that everybody has a chance to get the capital to make their industry viable. You cannot have foreigners competing with Bermudians, and Bermudians cannot have access to capital. Whereas some of these other players within the same playing field have unlimited resources because they have a foreign partner that has a deep pocket. Yet we have an all-Bermuda company basically that cannot have access. They have applied, as I said, to the 60/40 and they have not been able to achieve that licence. I would like to have that addressed so that our Bermudians can play and operate in the Internet business on an even playing field as some of their other competitors within the same sandbox. Mr. Speaker, that is all I will say.

One other thing, the other issue that I think we need to address as an industry is the portability of local numbers. What do I mean by "portability of local numbers"? Mr. Speaker, what is your cell number? Do you have a cell telephone number?

An Hon. Member: It is none of your business.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Your number, if you went to a different carrier, would have to change. Then if you went to another carrier, then that telephone number would have to change. So what we are suggesting is, if we are going to basically provide for the services and to be the best of the breed—

The Speaker: Keep the same number.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Keep the number. Keep the number. The Government needs to address that issue.

An Hon. Member: We have been working on it.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: “We have been working on it,” but “we” have not delivered.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: “We” have not delivered. Again, nothing mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this industry has so much potential, so much potential. I met with the executive of one of these companies, Mr. Speaker. She was so enthused about where we can go with the telecommunications industry in this country. We need to do the same thing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on the E-Government side, as was said in my Throne Speech—“my Throne Speech”—It was not my Throne Speech!

The Speaker: Your Leader’s.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Opposition Leader.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: No, no, no.

The Opposition Leader’s response, he raised the issue of E-Government and absentee ballot. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the time has come for us to really, really examine the possibility of offering absentee ballots for our people.

Mr. Speaker, recently we had the by-election in Devonshire South. There were, I think, 1,100 registered voters, and approximately 200 were unable to vote because they were students or they were overseas and they could not do the advanced polling. So that is 20 per cent of one constituency that was disenfranchised because we did not have the tools to have absentee ballots.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned more about our young people.

An Hon. Member: Twenty per cent?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Twenty, twenty.

Our young people who are overseas studying, Mr. Speaker. And when they [turn] 18, they can serve in the regiment, Mr. Speaker. They can serve in the regiment, but they cannot vote.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, I am being an advocate for our young people. You will be surprised at how tuned-in our young people are to what is going on in this country. I was in London, and I visited a young student. It was Sunday evening, late Sunday evening.

An Hon. Member: Just one? We visit them all.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I was sitting in the room, and it was a Sunday evening. They turned on their computer, and there was HOTT 107. They were listening to Larry Scott. They said, *We listen to him every week. We want to know what is going on in our country. You know, we may be in school, but we are listening. We are listening!*

Mr. Speaker, I went up to visit my daughters last week and on Friday. I flew from Montreal to Toronto. By the time I got to Toronto, my younger daughter says, *Daddy, I just came off the Internet, and this morning you had the Remembrance Day Parade. These were the issues. This is what people were wearing. You know, I watch every day because I want to know what is going on in politics, and I want to be actively involved despite the fact that I am studying overseas. To me, that is what we want. We want to get these people are engaged. They are more engaged and more connected than we think. I think they have a right to be able to participate in our elections, should they be called when they are not home for Christmas holiday or summer holiday.*

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, absentee ballots is not a new phenomenon. They have it in large countries—Germany, UK, Italy, Netherlands, Philippines, Switzerland, Ireland. If they can have it in those countries where there are millions of people, there is no ungodly reason why we cannot have absentee ballots in this country of 65,000 people where only 35 registered voters can vote. So, Mr. Speaker, this is not rocket science. It is something that we can basically address within our own backyard.

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about Cisco Academy. We in the OBA support this initiative. As my colleague, Dr. Gibbons, said, we would like to ensure that our young people get the best education, be it technical, be it academic, be it vocational. With the IT

business, IT support issues, I think what we need to be cognisant of is that a lot of these larger companies are exporting these jobs overseas. So we may have qualified people here. I am just hoping that once they become qualified, they are interested in working overseas for our companies, because to me that is going to be their momentum for optimum ability on a career path.

I was talking to a mother. She said her daughter got a degree. She got a good job at one of our local firms. The firm manager sent her to London for seven, eight months. The mother was saying she hates London. I mean, that is just the first child that I have met that hates London. She said, *I don't like the people. I want to come home. I don't want to stay over here.* The company has invested in her, and they feel very positive about her future. But she does not share that short-term sacrifice, so to speak, in her eyes so that she can get the international exposure that will help her going forward. It will be invaluable experience.

She is still over there. Her parents are just trying to say, *You know, it is just a short time. Stay, stay, stay. These people are investing in you.* We have to have our young people to be open to the experience. They can do it while they can.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I would like to touch upon is the—

The Speaker: I thought you said you were going to be short.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I am finishing now. I am about to go out.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: Carry on, Mr. Simons.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The other issue is the Space Enterprise Zone. Mr. Speaker, I would love to see another NASA down at Clearwater. Mr. Speaker, to me, that is another opportunity for employment. It is another opportunity for us to basically build a third pillar within our society.

An Hon. Member: Or maybe a fourth.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Or maybe a fourth. I have no problem with that.

But, Mr. Speaker, that is something that we have been successful at. The place is suitably located, and there is no reason why we cannot sell that to space agencies overseas so that we can continue or go back to the arena where we had a crucial role in space adventure. So, Mr. Speaker, I support that and hope that the Government will act expeditiously and do a real good job in marketing Bermuda as a home for space enterprise businesses.

So, Mr. Speaker, on that, I will take my seat. But as I said, I look forward to the new Parliamentary year. I have a new role. I look forward to shadowing Minister Scott. I will be still working there as Junior Minister of the Environment and Telecommunications. So Mr. Bean and I will be working together.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Simons, the Honourable Member from Smith's South.

Are there any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Ms. L. Foggo, from St. David's constituency, Government Whip.

Ms. Foggo has the floor.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Much has been said during this debate. I will try not to be long. In fact, I do not plan to.

The Speaker: Well, that is what the Honourable Member told me over here.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: But you carry on, Ms. Foggo.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have heard many facts or so-called facts spoken on this Floor this evening. I would like to make a statement which is a fact as well, and I think it is a fact that is known worldwide. That is that there has been a global economic crisis. This crisis has proven detrimental to many countries worldwide. Has Bermuda been unscathed? No. But it has challenged us to create an environment that continues to encourage foreign investments, and this has been highlighted in our Throne Speech.

We have introduced quite a few initiatives which are beneficial to the foreign sector, while ensuring employment needs for our people. Surely, our Government must implement strategies and policies that will ensure that Bermuda is indeed for Bermudians, while maintaining a friendly relationship with our expat residents.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have invested much in our young people here in Bermuda. I think we pay still about \$17,000 per student, and we do this to ensure that they become productive members of our society. We provide many scholarships for tertiary education. We do this, again, to ensure that we have productive citizens. In so doing, we must ensure that we have policies in place to encourage such.

Term limits is one such policy. Certainly, when a country invests hundreds of thousands of dollars in its people, you have to put policies in place that will ensure that those same people can become produc-

tive members of their society and that they can realise their opportunities that remain available to them. So, by putting in place term limits, this encourages the foreign sector to be able to . . . especially with the new changes that are going to be made with things like term limits, where it can be a win-win situation for the foreign sector as well as for many of our Bermudians who come back with all sorts of qualifications and at times find themselves in a situation where they cannot be employed. Well, by having such programmes in place, you are trying to ensure that they have something to come back to, and that Bermuda, indeed, along with foreign enterprise, is in a situation where we are winning.

This Government recognises the invaluable service that the foreign international business provides for our people, but we are mindful that it is our responsibility that we ensure that we have a productive society, a productive work environment for our people. I cannot think of any country that would not want to put such policies in place, because if we do not have working Bermudians, then indeed we are in a situation where, I guess you could say that you have maybe failed. But indeed, we are making every effort, with all of the new programmes and policies that we are suggesting for success for many of our Bermudians who find themselves, right now, in tough times. They have been clearly outlined, unlike what has been said on this floor today, in our Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, with our public school system, I can stand and say and attest to the fact that we do a phenomenal job. I do not think you can look around worldwide and find that many societies can brag that they are graduating at a 90-percentile-plus level their students from their secondary education system. I do not think you will find too many countries that can rival those types of statistics. In fact, as the Minister for Education pointed out—and she said that of those who graduate, at least around 55 per cent to 60 per cent (I think she said something like 55 per cent) are graduating with no less than a “C” and above. I can tell you that within our educational system, a “C” is a 70 percentile level.

There is this notion out there that we have a system where our grades are so low, but if you compare that with places like the United States and other countries worldwide, I think you will find that our standards are indeed fairly robust. Many of our students are likewise performing very well in foreign examinations, such as the GCSE. When they take these exams, they are not just taking these exams in a local environment. They are being compared to students worldwide who likewise sit the GCSEs. I have been to many prize-givings, and I can tell you, a high percentage of our kids achieve A-plus, A, and B's. They are not achieving U's, G's, F's, and E's. They are scoring at the upper end on these examinations.

I think that that speaks to success in our educational system. Yet, I hear time and time again that

gloom and doom being preached about our educational system.

Now, when I stand here and speak, I am not saying that there is no room for improvement. There is always need for improvement. Education, like many other entities, is and should be dynamic. We respond to the changes in the educational system. I guess the Internet and computer have had a phenomenal impact on the way in which students learn. We have done much in education to change our instruction delivery to meet the type of student that teachers are confronted with in the classroom today to ensure that they are engaged and that they receive the type of education that will keep them competitive in any environment.

I will go back to the stats by saying this: Those students who do graduate from our educational system go on to other countries to receive their tertiary education. Most graduate with a minimum of a bachelor of science degree or some other diploma-type certificate in whatever type of tertiary level education they pursue. We do not send our kids away and the majority of them come back as failures; they perform! They compete, and they succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I can say personally, some of them perform at the very highest level. I know personally of one such person—and that is just one person of quite a few—who topped their programme in a very well-acclaimed international university. This is a public school system graduate. They performed at the top of their programme in the bachelor's degree. They were in the top three students, so the top 1 per cent, in their master's degree. I know of another, others who go and engage in degrees such as actuarial science, engineering—and those are some of the most rigorous programmes in university—and they succeed. Surely, if we have an educational system that is failing our kids, I cannot see where in the world they would be able to succeed in programmes such as that.

The Speaker: They would not be able to get in.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: You know, I do not understand why we want to preach this gloom and doom about our system. Again, we are working tirelessly as a Government to fix whatever, I guess, shortcomings there are that exist within our system. We are doing whatever we can to augment whatever programmes are in place to ensure that our students continue to do well, Mr. Speaker.

I think when you go and look at these statistics, rather than just preaching gloom and doom and saying . . . Okay, jumping on the bandwagon with everybody else and saying, *Ah, you need to fix the school system, we are not doing well.* They need to go and look at the stats and let the stats speak to how well we are doing.

We do not need to tell our kids that they are in a system that is failing, because what does that mean

for those kids? You are telling them that they are failures. That is not true. We have too many success stories in Bermuda that speak to otherwise. I think that is what we should be promoting, our success stories, so that they can serve as models and encourage people to continue to do well.

Mr. Speaker, I heard comments being made about—and I will just call it the Hodgson report because I cannot remember the actual name of the report. I heard someone say that we have not followed the Hodgson recommendations. That is not true. I said last year that we were following it. I think I said it the year before. We had the Minister clearly highlight the fact that almost every recommendation that was put forward by that report has been implemented in some manner.

I would say that that speaks to success on behalf of this Government. Education is seen as key, as fundamental to success in almost every aspect of a person's life. So if we are getting it right in education, and it has the spill-over effect, I think that we can get it right everywhere else. Yes, in hard times it means that we have to use our ingenuity and implement programmes in different ways to encourage success for our people. But I do not think that anyone can stand and really just say outright that we have failed, because we have been able to show success in various areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, because I am a former educator, and I look at myself as an educator, I have to stand here and speak on that and support our Minister with her comments that she shared with us about the educational system. Mr. Speaker, I think that I have done my job in pointing out where we have had success, and I will leave others to speak to any other areas that they feel we have not clearly highlighted for the Opposition, proving to them that we have succeeded in areas where they seem to constantly think that you have nothing to show but failure.

So, in spite of the downturn in the economy, we continue to strive and develop programmes that we feel will provide job opportunities for our people and will lead to success. By "success," what I mean is that we will help provide a shoulder for many of our people who are struggling in these difficult times so that when good times do return, they will still find themselves in fairly good stead.

So, on that note, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

The Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Foggo, Government Whip, from St. David's constituency. You kept to your word.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Hunt, St. George's South.

Mr. Hunt has the floor.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I shall, too, join in the chorus of those who say, *We are going to be short*. I am going to be short. The time is late. Much has been discussed. There has been a very robust and very good debate here.

I am going to bring something that I have not heard much of. I should be more correct—I have not heard anything of today.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this as I commence. Strong countries, strong nations are developed by strong families. I will say it again and again. In fact, when I ran in (what was it?) 2007, that was part of my speech that I made, and I will continue that speech now and probably forevermore. Strong nations are built on strong, strong families.

I looked at this particular Throne Speech with that lens, once again, and what I found, Mr. Speaker, was that I only had one paragraph, maybe a sentence or two, that spoke to families and how this particular Government was going to support our families and help nurture our families in order to create a strong Island.

Let me say this, Mr. Speaker. Children need—in order to develop into great citizens for any community, they need attention. They need consistency. Statistics show they need two parents. They need a male and a female as an example in how to grow. They need that. This is all statistics now, Mr. Speaker. They need love. They need care. They need unconditional love.

They need family, Mr. Speaker.

Without that, what happens is, without all those bits and pieces you find that children go delinquent. They actually go crazy. They go to a point where we find ourselves today. We see a rise in crime. Why? Because I think we see a disintegration of the family. We see a disintegration of family values and family morals.

Without strong family, Mr. Speaker, we see children who lack the ability to listen and learn. As a result, I feel we see the graduation rate and the education level lowering. We see students who come to school not prepared to learn. Why? Because they have so much stress. They have so much on their shoulders that they have to deal with coming to school, that once they get to school they cannot learn the ABC's and the 123's. They are thinking about Mommy and Daddy, and *Where's Daddy?* and *Where's Mommy?* and *Why am I getting screamed at?* And blah-blah-blah, blah-blah-blah, the whole issue of having families or having parents that, one, may not be there or parents that are just not getting along—a terrible home setting.

I believe this is a very, very serious situation that you can find yourself in in any country when you have an epidemic of families that are disintegrating, families that are not providing the nurture that children require.

Mr. Speaker, as I look at page 11, which is the only page in the Throne Speech where I find any reference to family and what this Government is going to do in this particular year for families, allow me, if you will, to read it here. It says, and I will start sort of mid-sentence: "A critical component in the fight to reduce gang membership is preserving and strengthening the family unit, regardless of whether or not both parents live in the same home." This Government—and I must give kudos where kudos are due—understands that it is the strengthening and nurturing of families that reduces crime. They have said it here, and I admit that.

But, Mr. Speaker, it stops there. It stops there. I am not too sure, based on the Throne Speech, how this Government intends to help them. Well, I will say this, and I will highlight this from the Throne Speech. They mention that they will look at . . . here it is, further down on the second sentence. The Bermuda Family Council ". . . to promote cohesion through the development of effective parenting skills. . ." Well, I think that is great. That is what we need. But that is not enough. Parenting skills in isolation is like a lame duck. So what? As a father, if I know a bit of parenting skills, what is more important, and what is most important, is that I learn how to communicate, how to relate to my wife.

You see, when you have two parents, whether they are together or not, whether they are divorced or not, when you have two parents who can agree on how to parent their child, then that child can flourish. Parenting skills in isolation, as I said, is a lame duck. It is nothing. What we need to do and what this Government has to understand, what this nation, what this world has to understand, is that it is about relationships. It is about nurturing children from a perspective of parental guidance, if you will.

You know, there are statistics, and I will beat this like a dead horse, statistics that show that when you have parents, whether they are together living in the same home or not, and they are on the same page, they understand, *Look. We are not together, but we are going to parent as if we are together*, then these children flourish. You see the evidence that has shown that we have a problem with our families. We have a problem with our extended families. And we need to come up with ways to deal with that.

So, offering parenting skills, yes, that is a good step. I have been talking about nurturing our families for some time in this House. Offering parenting skills is good. But it is not enough. It is nowhere near enough. What we need to have, Mr. Speaker, is mediation. We need to involve mediation with couples, whether they are together or not. Mediation, in fact, and relationship skills, is where I think we should start for almost every couple. I think that is a revolutionary mindset for most people, but something that is mandatory for all people.

I was looking at a TV programme the other day on one of the big networks. And they were talking

about two of the world's best education systems. What they said was pretty interesting. One, I believe it was South Korea. I cannot recall. The other one was Switzerland. So, I know one was in Europe and one was in Asia—South Korea or Switzerland or Sweden, I am not sure.

An Hon. Member: Finland.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Finland. Finland? Was it Finland? It could have been Finland.

The Speaker: He saw the same article.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Well, he probably saw it, too, yes. Thank you. Thank you, my good Member. Finland, yes.

But they have a great education system. They have students who are just phenomenal. They are fattening their economy; they are fattening their environment, their society. That society is beginning to flourish, if not already flourishing.

But the thing was that these two countries, they had different sort of education philosophies and ways in which to educate their children. One was, *Look. Let us immerse the children into school and learning all the time*. I am talking about something like 10 hours a day of learning, 15 hours a day. It was absolutely phenomenal. But they did it, and that is why they were successful. The other one had a focus on teachers. Getting a job as a teacher was like being a lawyer. It was like being a doctor. You had to have a master's. I mean, you would not be hired. And they compensated accordingly.

But I say all that to say, Mr. Speaker, the differences highlight the fact that there could be various approaches to education. But the consistent thread in the two countries was that they had parents that were there, parents that were focused. Both countries focused on parents and their role in their children's lives, whether they were together or not. Mr. Speaker, it is key. We need to understand that as a country. This Government needs to begin to promote the importance of family, needs to promote the importance of not only parenting, but coexistence, parents that coexist, that learn how to communicate, that learn how to operate together despite their differences. It is key. It is fundamentally key to the success of this country.

Mr. Speaker, as I move on, I said I will be short. I will not belabour that anymore. I turn to page 12 with regard to the Government's assertion that they will look at sexual orientation, something that I think we certainly (I know I have, on behalf of this side) talked about. I am quite glad that Government has placed this into their Throne Speech. But as my Honourable Member on this side has spoken to, it seems as if this Government has not definitively made a stand. They have in fact thrown it in here in sort of

wishy-washy. I do not mean to be disrespectful, but that is the only term that I can come up with, Mr. Speaker. They have sort of thrown it in here, understanding that this is a hot topic. So, one could only gather from reading it that it has been put in here in order to appease both sides or to be on the fence.

It reads, "While the Government is aware of the sensitivities in the community surrounding sexual orientation, it does not condone discrimination in employment and accommodation based on a person's lifestyle choices. Accordingly, Government will assess whether it is feasible to introduce an Equality Act."

"Accordingly, Government will assess whether it is feasible to introduce an Equality Act." An equity act in and of itself . . . Maybe if I were one to read the Throne Speech before it was disseminated, I would have said, *Let's take out that sentence*, because if you are going to try to determine whether an equity act is feasible, then I am not sure where you stand as Government. You are certainly not decisive. Everybody needs equity. Equity is good for every nation, every community. They are admitting that it should possibly—

An Hon. Member: What page is it on?

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: It is on page 12. It is on page 12, mid-sentence.

The Speaker: "Equality," yes.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: I am not talking about ours. I am talking about the PLP's Throne Speech. It reads, "Accordingly, Government will assess whether it is feasible to introduce an equity act [*sic*]."

The Speaker: No, it is "equality."

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Sorry. Sorry, "Equality Act."

The Speaker: "Equality," yes, yes.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Sorry. It is late, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Oh, yes, yes. I know it is late.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: It is three o'clock in the morning. I am wilted. I feel like lying down on your floor right now, I will tell you.

The Speaker: [*Laughter*]

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: But at the same token, it is the Equality Act. Of course, equality is important, Mr. Speaker. Of course, equality is important. So my question is, here, Mr. Speaker, How could a Government assess whether it is feasible to implement an Equality Act in 2012? Of course, we need equality. Of

course, people should not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation in the work field.

Because it plays out like this, Mr. Speaker. You go to a job. Somebody in your employment process feels that you may be homosexual; you may be not heterosexual. So, they discriminate against you and they say, *Hey, look. We are not hiring you.* Is that right? No, of course, it is not right, Mr. Speaker. So the point being, why assess whether it is feasible to introduce an Equality Act? I think an Equality Act is what we need. It is a human rights issue. That is where we stand. Okay, personally, you might have a view on one's sexual orientation. That is fine. That is okay. I mean, there is no dispute on that. But in terms of legislation, in terms of what our role is in this House, we must provide people with the equality that they require to operate in our society.

So, I find that as a glaring issue, a glaring sort of problem that this Government has, which is trying to appease. They are trying to appease both sides here. They are not willing to make a decision. Let us be decisive. Let us make a decision. You are either for an Equality Act or you are not. What are you trying to assess? That is my question to this Government. That is my question that the people of Bermuda should be asking themselves about this Government. What are you trying to assess here? Do not try to fluff us, give us a lot of fluff.

An Hon. Member: We are assessing what is most appropriate for the context of Bermuda.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: I hear interpolation. We are trying to assess what is most—that was actually "appropriate"?

An Hon. Member: What is most appropriate.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: What is most appropriate for Bermuda.

I think equality is most appropriate for Bermuda, and it is in the name of the Act, Equality Act. Having equality for all is most important for this country and for any country or community.

An Hon. Member: Yes, but it is not a one-size-fits-all.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Equality is imperative. See, what happens is, Mr. Speaker—and as I hear the interpolation—what happens is, we get confused with one's personal view and what is right from a legislative or policy perspective. That is what we are getting confused with. Also, the other thing—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of order. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.
Take your seat, Mr. Hunt.

Minister, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Misleading; misleading this Honourable House. There is no ambiguity or confusion. It is very, very concise. The Government will only consider what is good for Bermuda in the context of Bermuda. It is not a one-size-fits-all. We just cannot adopt any and everything and stick it in and rubbers-tamp it because we think it is right. We have to know it is right. That means due diligence, consultation, and then extracting what fits Bermuda ideally in serving our people.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.
Carry on, Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: So, from that point of information, was it? From that point of information, what I gather is that we are not quite sure if one who goes for a job (and I am using an example) should be, based on their sexual orientation, treated equally. That is what we are saying. We have to assess . . . I am putting it in practical, pragmatic terms—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: A point of order.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Let me finish this.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: No.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: I am not accepting that because I am finishing my train of thought.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: A point of order.

The Speaker: There is a point of order?

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Excuse me.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes.

The Speaker: The Minister has a further point of order.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: I would finish my train of thought.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes. He is misleading. We have stated—

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Of course I am not misleading.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: We have stated unequivocally and categorically that the application for the hu-

man rights relative to sexual orientation will, first and foremost, ensure that people are protected for employment, accommodation, goods and services. There are other considerations that we are looking at as well. But those three will be the pillar of protecting the rights of all people.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Carry on, Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Well, I continue with my train of thought. I really do not know what the Member was talking about, to be honest. But my point is this.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: It says here, “Accordingly, Government will assess whether it is feasible to introduce an Equality Act.”

An Equality Act. It is in there. I can highlight it. I think it should be highlighted to the people of Bermuda. “Accordingly, Government will assess whether it is feasible to introduce an Equality Act.” The sentence before that says, “While the Government is aware of the sensitivities in the community surrounding sexual orientation, it does not condone discrimination in employment and accommodation based on a person’s lifestyle choices.”

So we are talking about exactly what I am saying in terms of my example in how this applies in a real-life situation, Mr. Speaker. What do you have to assess? What are you trying to . . . You are straddling the fence. We are going to assess what? It is an Equality Act. Let us remove one’s personal thoughts and let us go on what is right from a human rights perspective, what is right. Let us do that. Let us do that. This political expediency stuff here does not read well or settle well with me.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I would like a point of order, or if the Honourable Member would yield, a point of information.

The Speaker: Point of order. Take your seat, Mr. Hunt.

Madam Premier?

POINT OF ORDER

[Information]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Because I think the Honourable Member is looking at it, and I can see why he might have some queries when you talk about assessing the feasibility of an Equality Act, because you can do it a number of ways.

The Honourable Member, Mr. Blakeney, and his team have looked at it and done a lot of work. There are two ways or three ways of approaching it, though. The UK has an Equality Act which uses it to

deal with both sexual orientation, disabilities, and also age. You can do it that way, or you can go through a purely Human Rights Act or doing some sort of declaration.

So it is a question of which is the best wrap-around? So that there was no ambiguity as to the principles, the standard principle, we are saying that this Government does not condone or endorse discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and also in terms of accommodation. But what is the right legal wrap-around?

I think the UK has taken one position, and they call it an Equality Act, and it includes a number of things, in terms of the age (as I said) discrimination, disabilities discrimination, and also sexual orientation. But there are other legal frameworks that you can do it, purely by sort of a declaration or amendment to Human Rights Act. So that is why you are looking at the assessing of the feasibility because you are looking at which would be the more appropriate. As opposed to taking a position categorically, you are giving yourself some distinction and discretion as to which option is chosen.

But at the same time, you are not playing with people, so that people know where your principle stance is.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.
Carry on, Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Madam Premier. That was actually clear, and clear to the public as well. That is what we are about on the OBA side. We are about trying to flush out things, trying to make sure that things are right and good for this country. It makes sense what the Premier spoke to, and we look forward to the development of the Equality Act or whatever mechanism that this equality is provided to this country with regard to sexual orientation.

I move down, Mr. Speaker, and as I wind down, much has been said, again. (And everybody is tired.) I just move down real quick to page 12 here. It mentions “. . . the present environment of fiscal tightening” and “the Government as well as the business community has reduced the amount of grants to charitable organisations.” Then it also goes on to say, “The Government will be formalising social pacts with the private sector and the various charitable and sports organisations to examine how to make better use of the limited resources.”

Mr. Speaker, I will stop there and say a couple of things. One is that this Government has placed us at a point where we have to look at alternative means to providing funding for charitable organisations. Having this in a Throne Speech, I think, is brand new to Throne Speeches of past, whether it be this Government or past governments. This just speaks to the overspending, the mismanagement that this adminis-

tration has had on this country. It makes me cringe, Mr. Speaker.

When I think about, for instance, the Berkeley project and how many millions have been spent on the Berkeley project that could have been allocated to charitable organisations. I say to myself, *W-O-W, wow!* Do you know why? Because there are so many charitable organisations out there that just require maybe \$300,000 a year. But when we are talking about \$20 million, \$30 million, \$40 million, \$50 million that have been—\$60 million, \$70 million, I am talking maybe even more, double that, maybe \$100 million, \$150 million . . . What is the last number of that Berkeley—I do not know.

An Hon. Member: A hundred and twenty-five million.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: A hundred and twenty-five million, and counting. This is enough money to feed a whole plethora, maybe all the charitable organisations in Bermuda for multiple years, multiple years. So, to see this within the Throne Speech makes me cringe. I think about that. I think many Bermudians think about that. I speak on behalf of them, of course, as a Member of Parliament in this House.

“The Government will be formalising social pacts with the private sector and the various charitable and sports organisations to examine how to make better use of the limited resources.” Well, this social pact should have happened a long time ago, Mr. Speaker. This social pact should have been something that was done in the outset, maybe in 2000, 2001, not now, not after what multimillions have been given to the sports industry, to cricket and football. We find ourselves in a position where we are scratching our heads and saying, *Where did the money go? Why have we not seen the performance that should be expected, based on the amount of money provided?*

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Can I give a point of information, if the Member would yield?

The Speaker: Would you yield?
Minister Blakeney.

POINT OF ORDER [Information]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Honourable Member Hunt.

As promised, with regard to the inquisition, it has been completed. The Chairman now is just fine-tuning with some oversight editorial issues, making sure there is no . . . proofing the document, pretty much. Then it will be disseminated among the Committee Members for their final blessing. I will have a look at it and decide on when it will be forthcoming to share to the general public.

Outside of that, notwithstanding the point that he is making, I think people will look at the recent run-up to the World Cup and say, *You know what? That is the level, comparatively speaking to up here, south of us—where we are, in that particular region—we are competitive!* We are beating now, as we speak, the best in the region. So there is some manifestation that there has been some success.

But we should not measure success by win-loss column. We should measure it by the standard and the level of play that makes us competitive with those that are our peers within our region.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think what we have had to do . . . We have to do some sort of inquisition. I think that is what I am saying here. Recently, we saw that our national team was doing quite well. But this is so soon after this inquisition. Why did we do an inquisition? Well, we did do inquisition for a reason, Mr. Speaker, because we found that a lot of our athletes were not operating at a high standard. They were doing things that were suspect in their personal lives that would affect their performance. Their performance in and of itself was not high.

What we see today, I would say, is much of a phenomenon. It is. I mean, how can the Minister do an inquisition into the spending of the funds, and then all of a sudden we are doing okay? That was done for a reason. It was done for a reason. I respect what the Minister just said. But at the same token, we have to understand that the inquisition was done not because the performance was high. It was done because performance was relatively low, and we were saying, *Where has the money gone?*

An Hon. Member: No, no, no. That is not true.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: If the Minister wants to speak to that, I will allow him to speak to that for the edification.

The Speaker: Well, I would say (not to talk about it) that the Minister has appointed a commission to look into that. Let us see what they have to say. I think that would be the correct approach.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: But the reason for it, Mr. Speaker, is just so that the public has a transparent look from an objective perspective. That is all. There was no insinuation, no aspersion that anything done was wrong. I am happy to say, having a preliminary look, that this country will be satisfied with the fact that there has been no impropriety in any area relative to the spending. We just wanted to ensure that the public had an overview based on an objective body looking at it so that there was no perception that there was

influence by the Minister or anybody else closely associated with the sports.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.
Carry on, Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Mr. Speaker, the hour is late. I have said much of what I had to say.

The Speaker: Yes, and you promised not to be long.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: I did also promise. I have been way long. Mr. Speaker, on that note, thank you very much.

The Speaker: *[Laughter]* Thank you, Mr. Hunt, the Honourable Member from St. George's South.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise Mr. A. DeVent, from Pembroke.

The Honourable Member, Mr. DeVent, from Pembroke South East, has the floor.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief.

The Speaker: Good. I will try to hold you to it.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the country is facing challenges that none of us in our lifetimes have faced before. I think in the Government's Throne Speech we said that Bermuda today is facing historic challenges. I think the Opposition looked at it as, *Bermuda is in crisis.*

Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear that we can all agree on that, and I think as we move forward in crisis—and some people have termed it uncharted waters . . . the one thing, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we want to go in uncharted waters with a team that has a captain that does not even seem to be able to hold his own tonight.

[Laughter]

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: This is his first, one of his first or second, Mr. Speaker. If you want to run this ship and take us on that course, you have to be able to handle what we handle all the time up here.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that . . . But that is the nature of this game. I think in some ways the Opposition has been somewhat disingenuous in not addressing the fact that this is a world crisis. They have made it almost as if we could have avoided it and it was just us. But this is a world crisis. Enough of the people on this side know that. I mean, a lot of business-sense people over here know that. I think if we are going to be honest, as they try to say they want to be, as we move forward, let us be honest and tell the country that that is where we are.

I mean, if we look across the world to the United States, there are somewhere in the region of 14 million people unemployed at this time, 9 per cent; UK, 1.62 million. The world is changing. It is so strange, Mr. Speaker. I came back to my desk, and somehow, someone must have taken a magazine off my desk that had been there at some time. It has come back, and most people here have seen it. It is the *Time* magazine, and the title on it is, "The Decline and Fall of Europe (and maybe the West.)" So we are not where we have been before, not in our lifetime.

My late father probably knew what it was because he had lived through the end of the Depression. So, we are in a new era in this country, and we need to be blunt and open and honest, and not play political games at this point, because we have to clearly begin to tell our people where we are and begin to change the mindset so that we can be able to deal and charter ourselves through this course.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Throne Speech that the Government has produced this year has looked at all of the issues that we need to look at and deal with to move forward. I think even the Opposition has said it was a good Throne Speech. They have called it an election speech, but they said, nevertheless, it was a good Throne Speech. It has dealt with many of those issues that we will have to deal with as we move forward.

The Throne Speech said, Mr. Speaker, job creation—job one. That is a problem, again, that this entire world, particularly the Western world, now faces. We know in the East, people are working. Part of that, a lot of that is because of cheap labour, and a lot of the work in the Western part of the world has moved over to that side of the world. So again, we are in a dynamic that we have never faced before.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I think it has been well thought out, and it has put into place the things that we are going to need to do to begin to deal with these issues. Job Corps, Mr. Speaker, is something that has worked in other places in the United States. We are putting it in place, and it is hoped to be in full swing by 2012. We have also the one-stop shop, Mr. Speaker, which also looks to put those people unemployed on financial assistance automatically in the programme to begin to help those people to work, Mr. Speaker, and find work.

We are beginning to look at legislation with regard to sham marriages, Mr. Speaker. A lot of the things that were in this Throne Speech, today I do not think anybody touched, strangely enough. But a lot of the things that are key and that the public care about have not been mentioned; have not been thought about from either side. I can understand why the Opposition on this side might not speak to them. But these are things that we needed to look at.

It is also promised to look, Mr. Speaker, and amend legislation to remove incentives that allow employers to choose to hire non-Bermudians over Ber-

mudians because they do not have to pay social insurance or pension on temporary work permits. Mr. Speaker, let me talk about employment in this country. Let us really be honest about it. We are a country that all my life had over-employment—over-employment. So we are reaching this point now where that is beginning to change, but there are still a lot of foreigners in this country working, and a lot of it is for cheap labour. Let us be honest about it. It is about cheap labour. That is the world we are living in now. It is cheap labour.

In some sectors, Mr. Speaker, I think that wages in this country for Bermudians have actually dropped. Because they have been able to get cheap labour in and manipulate the system and pay people less than they paid people before. You see it in the construction industry. You may see it in some of the service industries. But it is an issue that the country has to really deal with because, Mr. Speaker, I am beginning to see people now becoming resentful of the fact that, *I might not be working, but somebody from somewhere else seems to always have a job.*

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I think at some point we are going to have to consider setting minimum wages, but in certain categories, not just like in the United States, where they have one straight minimum wage, because that can tend to drop overall wages. But I think we have to set some categories, and I think we also, Mr. Speaker, might have to think about taking some of those categories and closing them to foreigners. I mean, really, we have to take the bull by the horns and begin to deal with this issue before some of those flames we see in Europe and the UK and in France begin to become a problem, because young people who do not have something constructive to do will normally find something dangerous and detrimental to do.

Mr. Speaker, one Member talked about families and how little he read in our Throne Speech about families. I think it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that we have discussed an important issue—shared parenting. That is a beginning of getting that together. Mr. Speaker, the word "family" is not the end-all and be-all of it. This is a Government that has looked at alternatives to incarcerating people. Because when you just lock people up, you are beginning to break up a family.

This Government, Mr. Speaker, is beginning to look at that. For the first time, Mr. Speaker, some of us are thinking or we are going to look at how we deal with drugs, because that is another issue. Hopefully, Mr. Speaker, the country and the public will begin to realise that, in some regards, it is a sickness. It is called a sickness, those that become addicted to drugs; it is a sickness. It might not be in the best interests of the country or families to incarcerate those people. So we are beginning to look at that.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Opposition talked about having to take control of the roads and what is

happening on the roads. We covered that, too, Mr. Speaker, because much and probably a lot of that behaviour comes from our people driving under the influence. Our Throne Speech said that we are clearly going to look to increase the penalties for that behaviour. So, you know, Mr. Speaker, we are in different times, and it is going to take some completely different thinking to get us out of this.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has been bold enough to say that it is going to have a rethink and consider possibly a referendum on gaming. That, in itself, Mr. Speaker, will give the country the chance to finally look at it and make that decision. Again, Mr. Speaker, I have heard quite a number of people begin to say that they are looking at gambling and saying that people were allowed to gamble on ships in port. Mr. Speaker, I have been on a few cruises, and it certainly did not happen in any of the ports that I visited. So I think people have to be very careful how they throw out information that is not necessarily true. I do not know where it happens. I want those people who say it happens to clearly tell me where it happens.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, Mr. Cole Simons, who loves the environment—and that is a good thing, because I plant, and I like the environment as well. He did give us a good idea, and I will hope that the Minister responsible on our side will give it some consideration. He talked about the encouragement of backyard gardens. I fully agree with that, and I think a good way to do that, Mr. Speaker, is to somehow offer prizes to people who have the best-looking garden. But we encourage people to do that because that is the beginning of a step towards becoming self-sufficient, incentives to create a garden. Let people look at them and see whose looks the best and the neatest.

Mr. Speaker, another thing, I think there are communal gardens in the country, and I also believe there are some spaces now that are not planted. So I would encourage the Minister to look at those spaces and offer them up to people and give people those opportunities to get them. That is a good idea. I will give him credit for that.

Mr. Speaker, I think we have mentioned that we are going to expand whistle-blowing legislation, another thing that I have not heard anyone mention out of our book today.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: Well, maybe I missed it.

Mr. Speaker, following the Joint Select Committee, the Government is looking to restructure the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force, another important step toward dealing with the issues of crime and gang violence. Mr. Speaker, we are looking to reconsider and look at changing the legislation with regard to sentences, with considerations of anyone serving a two-year sentence will serve at least a year.

The Speaker: All of which is in there.
Carry on.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: We are also looking at additional tariffs for certain offences involving gang activity, another one that I did not hear anyone talk about. They all alluded to the fact that we are not tough enough on crime. But those are the thoughts that have been put in this book, Mr. Speaker. That is the plan, and I think these are the important things. These are the important things.

We have looked at implementation of some of the recommendations of the Price Control Commission—important things, Mr. Speaker, to help those families. That one Honourable Member said it does not seem like we are doing enough for those families. It is there. I guess it just depends, Mr. Speaker, on how you read and want to interpret a document. It is easy enough to read it and not see something, but you can also read it and see a whole lot of things.

Mr. Speaker, I saw for the first time—yes, probably for the first time—the Opposition touch on that subject of race. I saw them touch on that subject of race, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Ended the speech on it.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: And ended it, too. That is a good thing, because it is one—another one of those issues that this country has to be blunt and honest about. That one side of the House would probably have more difficulty being blunt and honest about it than the other. So, the mere fact that they are beginning to embrace it really—Oy, Bermuda is beginning to move in a great direction.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: No, not like this, not like this. Not like this, Mr. Speaker. To say it is one thing, but to really confront it and deal with it, time will tell. Time will tell.

Mr. Speaker, another one that will help build communities and probably will help strengthen and make our families a little bit safer that we mentioned, public nuisance legislation, particularly to deal with crack houses. I mean, there was so much, Mr. Speaker. I really do not want to belabour the point because it has been a long day. People are tired. But I think, again, Mr. Speaker, we are in a new place. It is going to require people that are going to stand and be strong. It is going to require people to be prepared to embrace some changes and probably some tough changes, some tough changes.

An Hon. Member: And be committed.

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: And be committed. It gets to the point, Mr. Speaker, and we talk about service, and yes, there are some issues with service in this country. A lot of that goes probably way beyond or away from actual Government. It is not governments that instil that in people. A lot of that goes back to homes and what happens in your homes and how you instil values in people that it is not such a bad thing to serve somebody or to do the best at whatever task you are attempting to do.

These are things, Mr. Speaker, that go way beyond what we do up here. Really, they go way beyond what we do. This goes back to families, to the country, to community, to where we want to go and how we are going to go. But, Mr. Speaker, we will never get on the right track if we are not prepared to tell the honest truth about where the world has changed, where that world change has affected Bermuda, and where some employers in this country are unscrupulous and looking for cheap labour at the expense of Bermudians. Because eventually, Mr. Speaker, those people who are doing that, they are going to be their own worst enemy. Yes, Immigration is an important part of it, and the Throne Speech has definitely said that there is going to be a rethink of how it works and where it works because that is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, we all know . . . Well, it would appear to me, because I get the reports, that there are people still working illegally. Then now it comes, Mr. Speaker, the owner is on Bermudian . . . I heard recently that some Bermudians are becoming a little bolder and reporting it. That is a good thing. I want Bermudians, if you know of it, stand up and report it!

There is no sense sitting in the barbershop, there is no sense sitting in the hair salon, and complaining about it. Stand up and report it! We must be prepared, I think, to look at legislation that says—because as my *Time* cover reports, Mr. Speaker—it appeared to me that the heavy weight came down on the employee. We need to burn employers that are carrying out these practises. They should pay heavily. They should pay heavily, Mr. Speaker, because all of what is taking place in this country can—and if we are not very careful—will lead to social upheaval. Because you cannot continue to have certain classes of people and certain professions of people—construction industry, service industries—not working, where other people are.

Mr. Speaker, there is a practise in this country where it appears that you come in under a work permit, and these things are difficult to catch unless Bermudians become prepared to reveal it. But you come in under one work permit, Mr. Speaker, and you work—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Ashfield E. DeVent: Construction workers. That man hires you out to another company because he does not have any work right now. He hires you out to another firm who has work at the time, at a profit to himself.

Mr. Speaker, much, much of where we are is similar to where the world is, and it has been fuelled by unbridled greed—unbridled greed. I mean, that is where the world is. Until we really begin to embrace it and look at it and say, *What will happen tomorrow from the action I take today to fill my pocket?* It is no different, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the guy who sold the drugs, today he wants to make \$1 million overnight. What effect? No different from that employer who is saying, *To heck with that Bermudian! I am going to get some cheap labour to fill my pocket.* Eventually, it will come back to haunt him. That is where we are.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to stop playing like this is a Bermuda problem all on its own. We have been affected what has happened in this world. If the Opposition is honest and really going to be what they profess to be in here, then they need to say that, big and boldly. The world has changed. Bermuda is not another world, and we will be affected by it. We could be affected by it in a more serious way than other places because of how we are made up, how our economy has been based in the past, and our size.

So let us stop playing political games, honestly, about this. I know everyone in this room knows that financially, economically, the world is not what it was five, six years ago, definitely not. It might not come back as quick because both sides are hoping and saying *Tomorrow, next year*; and there are those that are saying, *Maybe not, maybe not, not as clear-cut.* So we are in a new day, a new world, and we have got to stop playing old games, really. Do not talk the talk if we are not prepared on this side of the House in the Opposition to really walk the walk. It is not going to work, and it is not going to improve the country.

Mr. Speaker . . . what else did I see? There was so much that was in the book, in our Throne Speech, that really was . . . Well, we are prepared to rethink 60/40. The Opposition on this side thinks that is a good thing, good suggestion. So they agree with that one.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important one in my area and for young black men. We are prepared now, Mr. Speaker, to rethink and modernise the Bermuda Police Complaints Authority. Because, quite frankly, that one is long overdue. I see a suggestion in there that some of the old policemen will be brought back. Mr. Speaker, I honestly would like, if we can, to find some independent people. Because, generally, policemen do not normally investigate each other that well. Whether they are old, it just does not happen. Let us be honest about it. It is hard, you know. That blue wall, it exists. We must be real about it. So if we are really going to get this thing running, we should be

prepared to find some independent people to investigate our police when a complaint is lodged.

Mr. Speaker, I personally had a complaint that just never got dealt with, never. It went on and on and on and on and on until I got tired of chasing it until I finally got a "Dear John" letter saying, *Hey, we never found enough evidence to really deal with your complaint*, and I know that something untoward took place. So that is another good one, Mr. Speaker. I think if we really want to get our young people on board with it, the idea of independent people will go down better.

The Cisco Academy, Mr. Speaker, I forgot that one. I think the Opposition agreed with that one as well. They think that is a good one.

I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the equal parenting. I mentioned that. So basically, Mr. Speaker, I think it is getting late. Again, let us man up, be honest. It is going to be interesting to watch, Mr. Speaker, from my perspective. I am really going to be interested to watch how this new group, with some of all of our old issues, how the new group deals with that wrong old issue in Bermuda, racism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. DeVent, the Honourable Member from Pembroke South East.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member Ms. D. Butterfield, Pembroke West Central.

Ms. Butterfield has the floor.

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ditto some of the information and comments that my colleague mentioned, the Honourable Ashfield DeVent, on the Police Complaints Authority. I myself trust that it will be independent persons as well. From my own experience—and I can recall when I had written to the Police Complaints Authority, straight to another place—very difficult, very trying times during that time. So I am pleased to see that and hope and trust that it will be independent individuals instead of us, probably seasoned or senior or those who have retired from the Police Service.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Throne Speech, I go directly to page 5, which speaks about "The workplace has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Many job categories have already gone the way of the dinosaur while new categories are being created." I want to talk about the job creation in a former Ministry. What we did there was to look around at Government properties, which were buildings and lands, and to find out what we can repair, maintain, or touch-up and create some jobs. One of them, as you recall, would be the Sea Song at St. John's Bay in Smith's Parish. That went out to the small business

incubator initiative, and what a great job they did down there.

Now, some of the Government properties were the post office, where jobs were created for individuals to go by and paint; and also some derelict buildings and lands and property that needed some landscaping. So I want to commend the Government for the job creation, but we know that most of this job creation should come also from the private sector as well, because eventually you are going to run out of things that you want to do. I am pleased with that, and we must continue to look for jobs that we can give to our young people.

On another note, moving from the job creation, I do not want this thought to leave me because the Honourable Member from the other side, Mr. Donte Hunt, continues to get up and talk about families. He touches something with me because he talks about the role of the father. I can recall when I was one of the founding members of S.T.A.R. (Supportive Therapy for AIDS Victims and their Relatives), that a lot of these young men had died of AIDS and left children behind. I think when we discuss families, let us always remember that there are some fatherless young children now, or teenagers. They are fatherless not just because there has been death or divorce or desertion, but sometimes because they just do not know, Mr. Speaker.

I am back in another place called C.A.R.E. Learning Centre. In the past two weeks, I have been able to interview different young people one-on-one to find out what has been going on in their lives and what can I do better to build them up. So, I decided to take . . . A young man said he needed his passport, so I signed the back of his picture. Then I said, *You know what? Why don't you give him the opportunity to see how he can go into the passport place and fill out the forms, and so forth?* Of course, when you do that, they do not have any money. So I kind of stepped out in faith and told him, if he spends it, well, he will get a little spanking from me. (You know I was not going to hit him, Mr. Speaker, just a little warning.) But he did his best.

When he did go, they said that he needed a birth certificate. I could not understand why he would want a birth certificate, because it was a lost passport, and he was just trying to get another one. So I said, *You know what? Come back, and let's go together.* We went back, got a copy of the birth certificate, and we sat, and I let him go through the process with the clerk there.

She said, *What do you need a birth certificate for?* He explained it to her, only to find out he had a double-barrel name, and that is why they could not find his name in the system. So when I looked at him, and I said, *This is your father?* because he had his father's last name.

I said, *Oh, my goodness. I taught your father when he was 16 years old, and he was a rascal.* Right? So you see what I am saying. The little boy just looked and said, *Well, I don't know him.* So, you see, what happens in life. *I don't know him.* So, I said, *Well, since I know him, we are going to get to know your father.*

So, just to let the Honourable Member know that, in the future, it is important that when we do talk about the whole family there is not always a parent there to help that individual. Some have foster parents, especially some of those who have just returned from, I would say . . . What is your department called now? Psycho-Ed? Some have returned from there. The Minister does not know; he heard this for the first time that some of them are enrolled at C.A.R.E. Learning Centre.

An Hon. Member: No, I am aware.

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: A few of them have come back. But this one who has just come back is very interested in explaining to us how he enjoyed the programme and he wished they would send him back tomorrow because that is how much he enjoyed that programme.

But again, this is a foster child who does not have a mother or a father. But he has a foster parent who is raising him and looking after him. So it is not all the time that we can stand here and say, *Well, where is the father?* We have got to think about it and be careful what we say about it. Because the minute I interview, like I did in this last two weeks, the anger that is within these young teenage young boys, it is something, and even the girls. Because when you mention—*Okay, your mom is here. Your mom has come to sign you up, or, Where is your father?*—right away you can see that there is a lot of anger there.

So we have to keep building these young people up and letting them know that something is important as this is education. I looked at one guy, and I said, *You know, knowledge is power.* He said, *Yeah?* I said, *Yeah, but right now it is ignorance because you are acting up.* So we are getting together and we are doing these things together to give them the power, and they can get that power by themselves and with the help of others.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would go on while I am on education, and I appreciated what Madam Whip said about there are enormous amounts of success stories, and I agree with that. But there is an enormous amount of failure as well, especially in the basic skills. As you can see, there was a write-up in the *Royal Gazette* yesterday. I do not know who the person is. As always, those non-Bermudians can tell us so much about ourselves, and this was someone speaking about the Bermuda College and the basic skills that those who are in the college need. But this has been going on for so many years.

I have to take my hat off because the Minister of Education said this morning, or this afternoon, that the College is going outside the box to do so many things that is not their role. I appreciate that. But when we have so many young people ready for college or going to college and have those basic math and English problems, it still tells you something is not right. We really have to strike a balance and try to fix that so that we can build these students' academic achievements even to a higher level.

We must get serious about that because, seriously, I am a little bit tired, maybe 20-something years tired, of hearing about these basic skills. There are only four things you have to do in math: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division. You could do the adding and subtraction. You could talk about how . . . Honourable Member Ashfield DeVent always talks about the drug dealer. But they could do that counting real fast, very fast. They know the costs, can divide, multiply. You put this practise into math with people, they get it.

Mr. Speaker, it is important because it is really painful when you say to someone, *Write an essay,* and they write you a sentence. Has no one in this day and age has told anybody that an essay is made up of several paragraphs and not one sentence? So it bothers you because here, on the one hand you have got so much success, and on the other hand there are too many failing because they cannot write. It is being proven by this gentleman. I do not have his name because the newspaper clipping is down in my car. It was yesterday. It strikes me that someone else comes and tells us that our young people must be prepared to go to college.

I believe that if they are going to be prepared, we have to start early, from the middle school and secondary school, and even if we have to continue to do it with those who graduate in some after-curricular courses. So, Mr. Speaker, again, we must be careful. It was years ago that I heard a speech, and they said, *Too many of our young people are growing up like weeds in a parking lot.* Well, you can just imagine. You see a parking lot, and it is not being taken care of. Some of them nowadays—that is a speech long ago—so nowadays, they are actually hanging out in the parking lot or homeless in the parking lots.

Now, I am going to just continue to say a few more things and close on the Cisco. I believe that follows right from that page 5 in the Throne Speech, talking about, "The Government is pleased to share that it is engaged in advanced discussions with Cisco Systems, the worldwide leader in networking products and services, for the establishment of a Cisco Academy in Bermuda." Now, I did hear the Shadow Minister of Education, Dr. Grant Gibbons, say, *Why Jamaica?* Simply because I had travelled there to see this academy.

Hopefully, he would tell me or let me know why he said that because I think people, no matter

where they are from around the world—what I saw were some very bright young people. This system—and he probably needs to know more about it—is also linked up with the University of the West Indies in the IT programme. So we have got to be careful to say, *Well, why Jamaica? Why?* [Be] quiet about that. And I would like to get the answer from him as to why he spoke on that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I visited there, they did the workshops, and the workshops were very good, discussions. Even though it was in Kingston, some of the work is done in Montego Bay as well, but we were unable to get up to Montego Bay simply because we were only there for a couple of days. Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I am saying that the Cisco is very important. I decided to go on the Internet or the blog to see just what people had to say after the Honourable Minister in charge of this had done his Ministerial Statement.

Some of the comments that I read, Mr. Speaker, *We are five years too late*. I believe that it is never too late. Someone wrote, *This is five years too late*. I believe that it is never too late when one has had no opportunity to see what Cisco is all about, and it is never too late to learn or have any knowledge about this.

So with your permission, Mr. Speaker, this is dated Friday, October 14th, and it is [for a] Senior Network Analyst. I am going to call the name out because it is in the newspaper, and it is, “Oil Management Services, Ltd., invites applications”—and my eyes are not too good with this lighting, and I do not know what is going to happen back here, but I am having a difficult day today, starting out with a very serious headache. So I am doing my best to see this—“for an experienced Senior Network Analyst to join our busy network support team who are responsible for pure, voice, and data services.”

Mr. Speaker, “Qualifications and experience: Strong working knowledge in Cisco UCS. Call manager, switching and routing.” [UNVERIFIED QUOTE]

Now, five years too late, Mr. Speaker? I do not think so. Because if someone who will be enrolled in their Cisco programme becomes certified—and when I say “someone,” I am saying a young Bermudian or just Bermudian can apply for this job. I am not saying that there are not some who are not Cisco-certified that are Bermudians, because there are. And there are those who are overseas. I was reminded today that someone that attended my school . . . Their parent is in these Chambers, reminded me that his son is doing the Cisco programme overseas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yesterday—remember I said October the 14th? We are in November now. So yesterday’s “Senior network administrator, Bermuda Commercial Bank, Ltd. The successful applicant should possess experience in the programming and configuration of Cisco switches and routers.” [UNVERIFIED QUOTE]

Are you telling me what that blogger said, *five years too late*? No.

So I believe that this programme is going to be an excellent programme that we can get our young people prepared and ready to be certified and to take these positions because, yes, as the Throne Speech said, technology is here. The world has changed. When we go back to the dinosaur, that is quite a long time ago. Things have changed, and we must equip our young Bermudians for this kind of work in the workforce. Now, that is just one on October the 15th and one in November. There are many more; I have seen them, because I know that I have family members who are into IT and also have the Cisco-certified experience.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am just going to say I am pleased to hear that that is in the makings, and I look forward to seeing that happen. One of the other things that happens is that when young people go to the career fairs or just register somewhere for extra lessons or whatever, they have always asked what their career goals are. Some put “computers.” Some put “IT.” So the Cisco Academy is ready for those individuals who, over the years, have said their career goals are in IT or computers. So let us build our young people to where they need to go, and let us do it together, because without networking, as they would say, we would not be a successful country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member Ms. Butterfield, from Pembroke West Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member Mr. D. Tucker.

The Honourable Member, Mr. D. Tucker, has the floor.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pleasure this day to speak about the Throne Speech that my party and the Government of the day have written. One of the things why I am excited about this, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party was based on trying to ensure that people were treated fairly and was able to progress within the country.

But the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party has now become the Government, and because they are a labour-based party, they have become the Government through having great support from labour. But also, they have also matured into a Government that now also has to represent the business sector, the labour sector, and also represent themselves on the international floor.

The Government is doing a job that for a long time people thought they would never have the ability to do. But they are doing it, Mr. Speaker. It comes with

tough decisions at times. So they go on about doing what has to be done because that is what governments do. They make tough decisions during tough times. Sometimes, they make very unpopular decisions. But they have to be made because that is in the best interest of the country at large.

So that is how we go along and we function. As we mature as a country with having a Labour Government, we will understand that these are the things that have to happen. So that is why it is very important that the information that people are given is factual and not just based on politics, because politics does always exist, but the information is factual. That is what helps people to make a good decision on what they are going to do.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be very long. I go back to when we talked about Tucker's Point and all the noise that was being made about Tucker's Point and this and that, and we are saving them and we are doing them a favour financially and all. But I do not think it was more than about two weeks ago we read about Tucker's Point. The numbers were up by 10 per cent. They are talking about doing some new construction on the properties immediately around the hotel area.

Now, just think about the jobs that have been lost during these tough times. The Honourable Member, Grant Gibbons, had brought some figures out, and they had quoted that under this particular Government that all these jobs have been lost, and this and that. But just think about what would have added to those figures, if we did not help Tucker's Point, to those Bermudians that rent homes to non-Bermudians. So those were some tough decisions that we made. I mean, I took my share of stick. I have been called all types of names because I represent a particular constituency (number 7) that that particular property actually resides in.

But you know what? You make these decisions because you feel within your heart it is in the best interests of the country. But once again, in our Throne Speech we have talked about looking at the Hotels Concession Act to make sure that it is not abused and it is in keeping and it is going to help entrepreneurs with job opportunities as we go forth. So this was, once again, just showing that the Government of the day was being responsible.

We are going to work with business. We are going to work with small entrepreneurs to ensure that they are taken care of, and just, like we say, modernising and updating things. That is what governments do. Governments ensure that the people are taken care of. That is what they do, in the best interests of the people at large.

It is a mammoth task. I am happy to be a part of this Government that is ensuring that these things are being done.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, Dr. Grant Gibbons, talked about technical training and

things like that, and that it has already been started. Well, you know, something should have never happened. Tech should never have been closed. But guess what? It was closed. Then they would say, *Oh why? That has been some 30-odd years now, and by now the Government should have done this and should have done that.* Well, you should have never closed it. Because those young men who were developed within that Technical Institute were coming into Bermuda and they were being well trained and well schooled and being productive and responsible citizens of this country.

So now we are in a situation where we have the Opposition of the day asking for these things to be done. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can clearly remember going to Warwick Secondary School and having day release programmes. Just this week, some people that work for a particular company within this country, when they started calling the names of these people, they actually went to Warwick Secondary. But this private company is now offering day release programmes to middle school students, which is now at T. N. Tatem.

But when I went to Warwick Secondary (which is now T. N. Tatem), we had metalwork, woodwork, technical drawing, automotives, and we had a hotel training school up there. This was at Warwick Secondary. So when you went into Warwick Secondary as a first-year student, and five years later, at some point you would have had the opportunity to explore one of these opportunities to be involved in a trade, or the hotel industry.

So, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the Government needs to get on this post-haste, is unfair when some of the very same people that are in the OBA were former Members of a party that I was involved in (I will admit that) and had a way in closing down the Technical Institute. So I feel to some degree that we just need to leave that conversation alone and let it be the last time it is spoken, and let us go on from here.

As you can see, even with the National Training Board now marrying up, it has got to the situation where it is important. But one thing that I would say about this particular issue here is that a lot of businesses that are in the industry choose not to hire Bermudians because of the fact that it cuts into their profit margin. Because hiring a non-Bermudian to perform certain tasks, they do not have to pay pensions for them. They do not pay major medical. They may just have HIPP for them. But yet when they bill that non-Bermudian out, they will bill them out as if they are billing out a Bermudian to perform these tasks. So right there and then, that will increase the profit margin of these businesses.

And, no, no one goes in business to lose money. I am not saying that. But it is a reality, and it is a fact, without a doubt. So, when we start to employ our Bermudians—and I am not saying they can get that \$65 an hour and \$75 an hour. They definitely will

not be getting those rates at this point in time. But the businesses must realise that Bermuda has a very high cost of living, and they must be fair and equitable in giving every Bermudian the opportunity to be employed when they have that skill set. I am not saying that all Bermudians have every skill set that is needed for a particular job. But you should not expect a Bermudian to be working 50 to 60 hours and be a part of that daily work schedule, and want them to work for straight pay. That is unfair to a Bermudian, knowing that they have a family. But yet you are going to say that they are not spending time with their family and that is why their children are acting like that. They cannot attend PTA meetings.

So the employer has to be fair to the Bermudian. That is a very important part, because now you say they have to work a minimum of 50 hours, have to do overtime, six days a week and seven days a week. I remember when I was learning the trade, Mr. Speaker, I worked from 7:30 to 4:00, half hour for lunch. If it rained for the first hour and a half, I got knocked off. I went home for the day. But now they are working in the rain. They are working in the rain. What I am saying is, that is to get their 40 hours in. But, fine, we are going to work hard. Bermudians do work hard, and they are very resilient people. But they need to be respected, Mr. Speaker. Employers need to respect the Bermudian worker. It is very important.

I am not advocating that we should be going around and not working hard. But we also need to remember the Geneva Convention that goes all the way through the world when it comes to the workplace and what has been agreed upon when it comes to work hours, work conditions, and all these things. It is very, very important, Mr. Speaker, as we go forth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is something else that I am excited to see that my Government has. It is the discussion of price controls, which is on page 9. Because, Mr. Speaker, I am one of those Bermudians, I love my mayonnaise. I am not going to deny it; I do love my mayonnaise. When mayonnaise goes on special . . . Hellmann's, because that is the only thing that is mayonnaise, the rest of it is—I would not call it anything, but it is not mayonnaise.

An Hon. Member: How about Kraft?

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Kraft does not exist. It is only Hellmann's.

But I would say this here, Mr. Speaker, that in May, mayonnaise was \$4.98. I went into a local grocery store. Mayonnaise is now up to \$7.77!

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: It was not on special, Mr. Speaker. When it goes on special, it goes down to \$7.07. I can tell you because I watch it. I am a mayonnaise lover.

[Laughter]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: They have also taken two ounces out of the mayonnaise bottle. It is no longer a quart. It is now 30 ounces.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Okay? So I am letting you know, and I am following a lot of things because of the fact that I am observing the prices. I am not saying that everything is the fault of the Government or everything is the fault of the wholesalers, because we do have pressures from external areas, without a doubt. But I am happy to see that my Government is going to be looking at some of these things that are relevant to the day-to-day costs that affect Bermudians' pocket-books.

An Hon. Member: Through the Price Commission.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Through the Price Commission, because it is important.

One of my little pet peeves right now is that we have a particular company in this country that makes a profit every year. Now, this particular company is the only company that does what it does. But I have not heard anybody say anything about this company that has shareholders that are not prepared . . . I could be wrong, and I stand to be corrected. If I am corrected, I would be corrected.

Would you not say, *Well, you know what? Let's not take a dividend, and let's try to help the country. Let's hold off on a dividend for a little while, and let's try to keep some of the money inside of the company so we don't have to go to the consumer to raise funds for our expansion.*

I mean, no one, once again, invests or buys share and does not want a return on them. I would agree to that. But if we all have got to take the hit, and there are some other people that needed to just suck it up for a little bit longer too and just let some of that money stay in that company and stop drawing some—*I have got to get my dividend, I have got to get my dividend*—because it is important.

An Hon. Member: In this time of challenge.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: In this time of challenge, because we are all feeling it. Like I say all the time, those who have the means to give, it is now time for you to give a little bit more.

Some of them may be receiving a very small dividend check. Some may be larger than others. But that is something that I think that this company should consider. They certainly should consider it because, just to read the newspaper talking about—*What?* I am saying, *Man, we just had . . .* But, hey. We as Bermu-

dians, we just get mad for a little while, and then we just go along because we have no choice, because at the end of the day if we do not pay the bills, there is a consequence. There is a consequence if we do not pay the bill.

But I also take the fact and do agree that this particular company has to keep looking onward and upward, and things do cost, because they do not control what they need to give us the environment. I know for a fact that their profit may be down because there has been a downturn in some rental units that may not be rented. There are some office buildings that are not burning a whole lot of electricity. And yes, they are buying back electricity from various different entities. But there are people that may be investing into solar panels, but those are people that have means. Those are people that may have means. You know? So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to highlight those few things.

Now, one of the other things that I found a bit disturbing (and we have heard it over and over again when it came to health care issues) was upfront payments. It has been mentioned before, and I am just going to say it because I feel I have to say it because it has been resting on my chest. The physicians in this country, I do not know of a poor one. I honestly do not. I do not know of any poor physician in this country. It may be, because I do not know their financial status. But I do not know of any.

I feel that we should not have to legislate the physicians to take upfront payments, but we have been forced to because of the fact . . . Most of these physicians are actually specialists in what they do. It is not your regular GP that at the end of the day you may pay your \$25 or \$30. We are talking about specialists. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, if you had to go see a specialist and they tell you that you have got to pay \$275 or \$300?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: It could be. And upfront, and he sees you for five minutes. Because you have just come back for a referral or something like that, and he sees you for five minutes. Would you not call that robbery, Mr. Speaker?

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

The Speaker: I would not be very happy.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take away his knowledge. I am not going to take away whatever staff he has. But for five minutes of his time, I mean . . . Yes, your health is very important. In knowing that you now have to take that and you have got to go to that office, put in a claim, so you might lose more time from work, you know, because if your boss is really checking your time during these hard

times . . . And you are saying, *Now do I . . . Man.* So, you go through this process.

Yet, within two weeks, that insurance company has given you back your portion.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: No, some are better than that. Some are better than that.

But there may be three months for some insurance companies. But guess what? That can be done, too, if they decide that is what they are going to do. Because I can tell you what, when you go overseas for treatment, as soon as you say you are from Bermuda, you have no issues. They know the money is coming. They are certainly paying those overseas hospitals on time for when you go for your treatment, because they do not refuse any Bermudian. You say you are from Bermuda, you can have all the treatment in the world because they know you have got good insurance and it will be paid. So do not tell me that it has to be that long. It is only because of the fact of process.

One thing also I will say about these upfront charges and insurance companies at this time here. The people that manage these companies, these insurance companies, these local health insurance companies—they are going to have good insurance, and they are going to be taken care of because of the fact that they may have some executive insurance plan for themselves. They will have insurance until they die. So I would hope that these insurance companies will consider the people that have paid for long periods into various different plans, and because they reach a certain age, now they want to drop them from the plans or have all these high rates.

That is one of the reasons why the Government has had to do various different things in order to give people the maximum coverage.

Yes, as it has been said before, there is some difference in the rates and things of that nature there. But it has had to happen. It is still cheaper than what some of these private companies give, but these private companies are still making money.

I would agree, no one goes in business to lose money. But it is very important that for a small Island, we need to be conscious of our people and be considerate of our people as we go forth, because it is only 21 square miles. No matter how far you walk or run, you are going to run into water or you are going to walk overboard. So as we collectively look at certain situations as they arise within the country, we can certainly make it a better Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Tucker, the Honourable Member from Hamilton South.

Are there any further speakers?

No further speakers. Madam Premier has the right to reply.

Madam Premier?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at what a Throne Speech is, you have got to look at what is required for the times. You have got to be conscious of where people are at the particular time, whether we are talking about the pain, whether we are talking about frustration, whether we are talking about even seeking to provide hope for how people are feeling as they are going through a time where there is uncertainty, where there is fear, and where there is concern about the future. Certainly, when people see that others have lost jobs, it causes a destabilising effect. So what the Throne Speech has to be is really a means of cushioning and also providing a sense of a lifeline and reassurance.

I like to think of it in this context, in particular, as a sort of pact with the people, and that our responsibility as the people's Parliament is to seek to meet the people where they are and provide a menu of options and also solutions to help them navigate through these difficult times. The Throne Speech 2011/12 is geared specifically to that. The concept is of recognising that we need to rely and lean on each other. That is why the phrase by the former President of South Africa, the Honourable Nelson Mandela, "Masakhane!" "Let us build one another, together," resonated. That really is what is going to typify our pathway to alternate success and recovery.

Mr. Speaker, as you look at the options, as you look at the provisions, as you look at the programmes that are set out in the Throne Speech, one has to also recognise that often what people want most of all is the acknowledgement of sensitivity to their circumstances. That is why it is the simple things and the little things that can count and make most of an impact. Last Saturday at CedarBridge (and, I guess, soon it will be time for them to start setting up again) with the entrepreneurship market, they enjoyed the then Minister for Community Affairs, Minister Weeks, the Honourable Member and I being there before they opened at nine in the morning, and walking around talking to all of the individual vendors and also purchasing some advance Christmas gifts and things of that nature, because we were showing that what they were doing had value and that it was considered important enough at that hour of the morning.

You heard this week a lot of talk about the market that is going to be opened again, starting today, in a new venue. For us it is about none of us are in a position of surplus wealth; but we have a responsibility as the standard-bearers and as the leaders of the country, representing the people's market, to do our part, to generate and to show trust and confidence in the economy by spreading some dollars around and

by spending a bit—not more than one can afford. But it is part of showing faith in what we have.

Mr. Speaker, if you are to look at the Throne Speech, I think it is important to highlight . . . The Honourable Member, Mr. Ashfield DeVent, his tone and tenor was one that was helpful. While I am sympathetic to the time, I think it is important, since I am not the one who reads the Throne Speech, that I go through some of the particular aspects of it.

Mr. Speaker, they include . . . When we say "jobs, job one," and I also am very clear because everybody should appreciate it is not the Government that creates the jobs. But it certainly is the Government that has a responsibility to provide an enabling environment for job creation. So, Mr. Speaker, part of that also includes that we have got to recognise where we are and the nature of the labour market. We also have to recognise that not everyone is going to have a smooth pathway to success. So, we have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to find ways that can help those who need to take and find success by some curves in the road.

Not all of us are nuclear physicists or anything and just got there. We just woke up and it was like, *Lights on!* That's it. We have all had our setbacks. But we have a responsibility for those in the community that we have a responsibility to provide leadership that we also provide opportunities. We cannot complain about when we see people going off the roads if we do not also provide a pathway to help them.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why you have heard the clarion call, the simple, direct reinforcement of the message and the commitment to Job Corps, not because we see it as a panacea, but we recognise that when people are going through tough times, we have to recognise that when we have young people who do not always, for whatever reason . . . Sometimes, it is because they feel they are susceptible to bullying. Sometimes it is because they do not feel they fit in. Whatever, they need to have another option.

Job Corps—let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. While it is a route and an avenue for those who have felt screened out of our traditional education system, in no way, shape or form should it be seen as purely an option for those who were seen as special, bad, or difficult. In fact, there are also, and there is anticipated, contemplated, planned, Mr. Speaker, that there will also be the link to post-secondary education. So you even have links in terms of beyond the Bermuda College and abroad.

But the Job Corps programme, Mr. Speaker, is to provide eligible Bermudians, age 16 and over, with the education and training designed to equip them to compete for stable long-term well-paid careers. It is also to provide these students with the classroom theory. But even more importantly to me, from my perspective, is the practical training and learning experiences, learning experiences that are catered and catering to our labour market. That is why

it is all-important that there is the marriage and the meeting of the minds with the private sector. So it is very much about strategic, effective partnering with the private sector between the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I am so very pleased that the Honourable Minister Minors, my Honourable Member, has accepted the responsibility to take on the responsibility for Job Corps, since we are at this time having one less Minister, and that Community Affairs Department, Ministry of Community Development is being segmented. Because there is a link between the one-stop career centre, the Department of Labour, and also what is happening with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. A meeting had already been set up by the former Minister for Community Development, the Honourable Member, Mr. Weeks, for Monday. Minister Minors, the Honourable Member, is going to be following through, as she should; because Government is not supposed to be having . . . It has to have continuity. Ministers may come and go, but Government programmes should still continue.

As a result, she will be meeting with members of the business community, and there are a number. They also want to have a chat or a breakfast meeting at some time with me. But this is going to be clear, the Government has committed to seed funding. There are some things which are non-negotiable. However, part of partnering, they want to know how committed we are, and they have indicated tacitly and informally to the former Minister that they are committed to put their money where their mouth is because they see job creation, and also a safe and stable environment, as one that can help to further anchor them in their commitment.

So, I am pleased that that will continue without a ripple, and Minister Minors, the Honourable Member, is going to take that on and take it on with vigour and with pride.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is one option. That is one of the programmes that is contained in the Throne Speech for this administration for 2011/12.

There is also, Mr. Speaker, as you have heard already, so I do not need to spend too much time on it, the one-stop career centre. That is also part and parcel of the legislation that you saw tabled today in terms of the National Training Board. That certainly is going to be very much a key element of part of the Job Corps programme. It also has the joined-up Government piece because you are linking with the Minister who has responsibility for financial assistance, the Honourable Member Glenn Blakeney. Again, it is, for those who are able-bodied and able to work, there is going to be this one-stop career centre, which is going to assist all unemployed clients, a financial assistance department, who are able to work. They will automatically become clients of the one-stop career centre, which, again, will assist in obtaining employment for those persons so that they can re-enter the job market as soon as possible.

The one-stop career centre will also coordinate with the unit that processes work permits, ensuring that there is the necessary link, due diligence and compliance, and governance in terms of checking that those who need jobs and have applied for jobs, that where there is also you see that there is the application for employment by an employer that there is the link-up, Mr. Speaker.

Again, part of the job creation . . . you have already heard the Honourable Minister and Member who speaks for Government Estates and Information Services, who is now being reunited back with charities, given the change in Ministry responsibilities, and that we are one down in terms of a Minister. Minister Scott talked about the Cisco Academy, and you heard from the former Minister, the Honourable D. Neletha Butterfield, who gave us some background on that.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is not the Government who creates the jobs, but provides the enabling environment. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it was so very important for us as a Government—and for me personally, having said that I was going to do it—that you saw the tabling of the legislation this morning (or yesterday morning) of the incentives for job makers. I promised and said that there will be a Bill in this first session of Parliament to provide eligible job creators in eligible businesses with benefits, benefits such that they do not have work permits, and after 10 years residence, where they are eligible and qualified, they may get permanent residence. It is not a freebie, but it certainly is something that shows a commitment to be open and welcoming, and also to provide options.

Mr. Speaker, you know that some reference was made earlier (or yesterday) to the Cayman Islands. The Cayman Islands is very clever. They tend to model themselves on Bermuda in some ways. In some ways there are very distinct differences in terms of our approach. But I believe it is important to note that Premier Bush has noted . . . and after the Honourable former Minister for ETI (Economy, Trade and Industry) indicated our 10-year permit they have come out with that, and they have also indicated that there will be . . . They know that not everybody . . . They see that . . . You see, they took a different approach. They, I think, would have been better off to have really followed us a line and a length and not introduced legislation for the term limit policy because it means that they have got to go through a much more convoluted and complicated process for changes to their term limit policy, because they actually embedded it and enshrined it in legislation, whereas we had it as a matter of policy.

Minister Bush looks to be seeking to calm the fears of the Caymanians as to the fact that he may be putting them at risk by noting that the term limit policy, that not every worker would be able to stay beyond the seven-year limit, and an extension would be granted when the employers have demonstrated a

real need and they have done everything possible to employ Caymanians.

He also indicated the importance of partnering for businesses providing scholarships. He says that, while long-term permits will provide much sought-after security, he certainly did not say that they would be across-the-board automatic rollovers. So I think it is important as we note that where in many ways they draw some comfort from what Bermuda has done, but it is not that they have just enshrined forever and ever that they are going to just abolish term limits. Certainly not.

I think that they are also politicians, and they recognise the temper of the mood of people who are frustrated when they see that they are out of work and wonder why there is such extraordinary lengths being gone to, seen to by government, which is not, in their view, seeking to protect their interests.

That is why the Bermuda Government really treads a very careful path. While we recognise that we have got to be open to, welcoming to business and that we want business, at the same time we are also being very clear that we have a very primary responsibility to take care of the needs of the domestic stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important to note that from a legislative point of view and from a business point of view, the incorporations (I just divert for a moment) have certainly increased by 17.9 per cent. I think it is important to note, because sometimes people wonder: *What is the value? What is the worth? What is the merit of signing these Tax Information Exchange Agreements?* While I will not name the competitor of Bermuda, or they probably would not see themselves as a competitor, as an independent jurisdiction, island jurisdiction, but certainly our Canadian Tax Information Exchange Agreement has engendered voluminous inflows of business to Bermuda, and that continues.

I think certainly that is on tap to continue to cause Bermuda to become a magnet in that regard. That is as a result of that Canadian tier that was signed, and it certainly helps also that the Minister of Finance in Canada seems to have an interest in coming to Bermuda sometime later this year, but also with the stock exchange link with the exchange in Canada, it is very helpful.

Mr. Speaker, you have also heard from my Honourable Minister and colleague, the Honourable Member Mr. Perinchief. Because again, you are seeking to stimulate and prime the pump and encourage greater economic activity, and it certainly has. In yesterday's lunch period the Honourable Member spoke to a group about the land policy changes, which certainly they found interesting and exhilarating because they see the potential for further activity being generated with the fact that you are going to . . . There is the potential of seeing some relaxation in that regard. Certainly, it will have to be qualified and blessed by

the appropriate Government authorities, as well as in due course, I am sure, this people's Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure strategy, that is key. This Government in partnership—and that is what you will hear. It is a people's Parliament. It is also about partnerships that benefit the people. The Waterfront project is one that is certainly . . . I am hoping if Honourable Members pass legislation in a timely fashion, I am hopeful that we will be able to have our two-day sojourn on that, with possibly investors, in January on the Waterfront, and prior to the middle of December, because that is certainly going to get the benefit of the input of the people of Bermuda into what the Waterfront should look like so we can move with some degree of rapidity in terms of moving, progressing that. Again, it is about how you find ways to generate enthusiasm, instil hope, and also see action.

The hospital Central Coordinating Committee is certainly a template that most are finding very attractive and alluring in terms of how we proceed, Mr. Speaker.

There has been discussion about the 60/40. Let me just remind Honourable Members who may have forgotten. There is already the inherent authority of the Minister of Finance, based on a prior decision by the first PLP Minister of Finance, that there is already the discretion by the Minister of Finance, an ability to change in terms of, and allow 60/40. What we are talking about, though, is the fact that, notwithstanding this inherent ability to modify . . . You know you have it in terms of banks, and you can have it in terms of telecommunications, certainly in terms of hotels. What we want in terms of encouraging foreign direct investment, we want to basically remove or limit some of the discretion, because what capital needs, what businesses need, what investors need is certainly, more than anything else.

So, you want almost to have the legislation, notwithstanding the ability of the Minister of Finance, whomever that may be, to provide that dispensation. You want to be able to set out a degree of certainty that *There shall be*. That is where we are, Mr. Speaker.

We used to have an approach which was much more protective of the status quo, if you go back over the years. That is also where you saw the leaching away of business. It did not just happen, you know. It is like the knee-bone and all the rest of it, a connection. To every action, there is an equal, but opposite reaction. What you are letting people know is that Bermuda is not that protectionist, nanny-type approach. It is the nimble, innovative approach that we want to sell as our brand and as our cache. It is those sorts of things which we sought in this Throne Speech to further underscore and emphasise as to where are now.

You cannot progress by standing still, and you also have to be prepared to be bold, even when you recognise that you are at some political risk when you

put in terms of your legislation and in your Throne Speech issues about referendums on gaming and also talk about what people do not want to talk about sometimes, which is about sexual orientation. You have got to let people know where your standards are and what your principles are and then you have a discussion.

Politics is about the art of having crucial conversations. It can be the art for some of the impossible; or, really, politics is the art of taking the impossible and making it possible, because if you believe in democratic social transformation, you have to be prepared to push, and you have to be prepared to progress. That is how you get progress, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Islamic finance. You do the conversations, you do the interviews. I was on a telephone conference call last week or so about this. It is starting to catch on, Mr. Speaker. It is starting to catch on. Bermuda is starting to be seen as a credible jurisdiction for that market. Mr. Speaker, trust me when I say that if I say that one thing you can guarantee, Honourable Speaker, that if I say that I went to Business Bermuda in New York, and if I say that I met and was asked to go to the Emirates Airline office to meet with the Vice President, and I say that there is an interest, and then I come back and have a chat with the Governor, I can assure you it is not a fabrication or a delusion of my mind.

But in any event, what we are going to continue to do is to push forward. When I say that somebody was here a couple of weeks ago to check and canvass what the business interest was so that they know how they can chart their way forward, it is not a fabrication of my mind. That is not my stock and trade, Mr. Speaker.

You have already heard from the Honourable Member who speaks for Business Development and Tourism. What is interesting to note—and I said in the meeting at the AGM for ABIC [Association of International Bermuda Companies], what I appreciated in terms of out-of-the-box thinking by the former Minister for Business Development and Tourism and the current Minister who speaks for ETI (Economy, Trade and Industry) is the fact that, recognising that we have to do things differently, it is looking at, What are our assets? What are our resources?

Taking the aspect of our office in London and seeing that as a catchment area, a magnet for new business coming to Bermuda, and using that. Now, with the remit of Immigration under that Honourable Member's responsibility, the Honourable Member Minister Minors, there is the opportunity to use that, not just in London, but in terms of Washington and even in terms of New York.

There are active discussions and explorations to see how that can be used to benefit us, especially given the work that had been done by her and the team in terms of asset management task force. That is a potential source and a real source of new busi-

ness opportunities for Bermuda. Sometimes, it is not so much by diversification in terms of radical, different types of products. But it is about looking at how we can use existing international business and diversity in terms of jurisdiction.

That is why you go into the BRIC countries. That is why you go into the Islamic countries. Because that is where there is greater economic activity, and if we can get a piece and lure some of that, it shows and it helps, and it helps our GDP, it helps job growth, it helps job creation, and we are creating some dynamism, Mr. Speaker. That is what we are about right at this stage, Mr. Speaker. We want to continue to build on that in terms of a platform for action.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk about the frustration, when I talk about the hurt, when I talk about the fact that we have to provide some means of comfort, what are we talking about?

We are talking about supporting hardship. That is why, Mr. Speaker, when we talked last year about the Occupational Pension Fund, I indicated and signalled that there may be the opportunity. And you will see reflected in this Throne Speech the idea of widening the net, so that it can incorporate the Government pension plans and providing people with some means of having access.

What is surprising to some, perhaps, but many really do not like the idea of asking for financial assistance. Despite these difficult times, people are resilient and they do not want to, though it is there for them and they should not have hesitation if they qualify. But they want to go into their own pocket rather than have to go and ask for something that they believe is a handout. So, Mr. Speaker, this is what we are providing through the legislative framework, and we signposted it in the Throne Speech.

I also have signposted, Mr. Speaker, necessary changes that may come as a result of the Price Control Commission, which was set up earlier this year. What we talked about in terms of needing to see how we can bring down the cost of living for people . . . We also have the issue of the fuel charge by the new Energy Commission, which in some ways is seen as a means, again, of helping to regulate and assist those who need to find a way to make life more affordable, especially in these times.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is the proposal to amend superannuation legislation, also to modernise contributory pension and occupational pension legislation so that those who have the greatest need can get the greatest benefit. Government does not have a pot of money. So you have got to look at using the money that you have and making sure that those who have the greatest need are getting it. So where we have been overly generous in some areas with those who can afford it, some of those changes will be made to address that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we also talked in terms of families, about providing the Bermuda Family Council with

a statutory footing. We talked about shared parenting legislation. Also, Mr. Speaker, we talked about the seniors and eliminating age discrimination. You have also heard the discussion about eliminating upfront payments for medical treatment.

The Honourable Member and Minister who speaks for Health is keen and was keen to table legislation ASAP, but he recognised the need for making sure that, despite the consultation that has already occurred, there is a need for some further consultation as opposed to just dropping it like it is hot. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to make crystal clear that there is no question that there should be legislation that shall come to this honourable place sooner rather than later.

Mr. Speaker, you have already heard from the Honourable Member who speaks for education, when certainly you heard also about the fact of our arts and culture and the need to establish an artists' registry. Somebody told me that when they heard that, it just caused them to light up because they felt that finally they were seeing that culture and the arts were being given much greater prominence.

Mr. Speaker, also the areas of addressing justice and fighting crime, but I am conscious at this hour that, while I did not want this to be a one minute wrap-up, I think that there has been enough talk over this last day or so that I can now probably conclude, being sensitive to people's bedtimes, or morning times, because it has been probably covered already before. But we did talk about the conscription issue. We talked about good governance, and we also talked about, as I said, the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force.

Mr. Speaker, the points made really are all geared to making sure that we set the right platform for action going forward. They said when I did the budget in 2011 that it was an election budget. They said that this is now an election Throne Speech. I suppose anything that comes before an election can be said to be that. But I think really, it is really about recognising where the people are and what greater reassurance they needed, and making sure that we delivered what was required.

Mr. Speaker, I anticipate that over the next Parliamentary session there will be much food for thought, and also there will be many positive actions that will continue to be taken by this Government. But it is all within the framework and context of recognising that we have to provide relief as it is needed, when it is needed, and to provide the necessary hope and reassurance for people who are feeling a sense of frustration and fear.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Government's Throne Speech is one that certainly typifies, as President Obama has said, it is part of the era of engagement. I think it is also one that is an enlightened Throne Speech that talks to the issue in very simple, direct terms that we need to rely, that we have to rely on each other more. That is part of building ourselves

and each other up, as well as our country and our community. That is how we will be successful, Mr. Speaker, and also be sensitive to the needs of the community and the society that we serve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would expect that the necessary formalities will now be attended to as the Throne Speech has been fully debated by the people's Parliament. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

Would you restate the motion, please? That a message be sent—

Hon. Paula A. Cox: That a message be sent to the Governor—

The Speaker: That a message be sent to His Excellency the Governor.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Yes. Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thanking His Excellency for the gracious speech.

Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The House of Assembly recorded its thanks to His Excellency the Governor for the gracious Speech delivered from the Throne.]

The Speaker: It is confirmed.

That brings us to the next Order, Order Number 2, the Second Reading of the Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011.

Madam Premier?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: My view, Mr. Speaker . . . I know we can be suckers up here. But I think at this hour it is inhumane to expect people to do this. I think it is inhumane.

You will not have me next week because I will be at the OTC. But you will have me the following week, Mr. Speaker. I would say let us carry it over.

The Speaker: So, all further Orders, Government Orders are being carried over.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: There are no further Orders.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I would move that the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: The House stands adjourned until Friday next at 10:00 am, Friday next at 10:00 am.

[At 5:08 am (19 November 2011) the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 25 November 2011]

BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****25 NOVEMBER 2011****10:04 AM***Sitting Number 3 of the 2011/12 Session**[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker]***CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES****18 NOVEMBER 2011**

The Speaker: Is there any objection to the Confirmation of the Minutes? Minutes have been circulated. Honourable Members should find them on their desks or in their seat. Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Motion carried: Minutes of 18 November 2011 confirmed.]

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: There are none.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING**

The Speaker: This has already been circulated. Honourable Members should find a copy on their desks.

COMMUNIQUE ON MEMBERS' CONDUCT

It has come to our attention that Members' personal conversations are being held while other Members of the House have the floor, and these same conversations can be heard over the radio. In light of the recent story published in the *Royal Gazette* regarding recorded audio sessions in the Supreme Court, Members must exercise caution and have all sensitive conversations outside of the Chamber.

Additionally, our *Hansard* staff overseas can hear all conversations. Please govern yourselves accordingly to avoid any negative feedback from the public.

The system that we have is highly, highly sensitive, and it picks up almost anything. So, Honourable Members, do act responsibly.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: There are none.

**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Member Mr. Z. De Silva. Minister De Silva, from Southampton East Central, has the floor.

Minister?

**BERMUDA HEALTH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT
FOR YEARS ENDING 2009 AND 2010**

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly Bermuda Health Council Annual Report 2009/2010.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister De Silva. Any further communications?

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The Speaker: I am going to take the Honourable Member Mr. G. Blakeney.

Minister Blakeney has the floor.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. If you would be so kind, I would like for you to indulge me. I have at least three Statements.

The Speaker: Go right ahead, Minister.

**HUMAN RIGHTS (UNREASONABLE HARDSHIP)
AMENDMENT ACT 2011**

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise and update this Honourable House on the Human Rights (Unreasonable Hardship) Amendment Act 2011. With that said, I would like to welcome to Bermuda and acknowledge Mr. Rick Williams, who is a very fierce advocate for the disability of people around the world. He is in the public gallery with Mr. John Payne.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Mr. Speaker, as Members of this Honourable House will know, the Human Rights (Unreasonable Hardship) Amendment Act 2011 was passed by the legislature in July of this year 2011. Since the passage of the Act, the Human Rights Commission has collaborated with the National Office for Seniors and the Physically Challenged to prepare for the implementation of this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to announce that Saturday, December 3, 2011, is the date that the Act will come into operation. The commencement date of December 3rd coincides with the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which is observed annually on the 3rd day of December. This day's theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is "Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development."

The observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities provides an opportunity to focus the attention of the entire community towards becoming a truly inclusive society, as outlined in the Bermuda Government's National Policy on Disability released in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, the Act amends the Human Rights Act 1981 and seeks to ensure that persons are not hampered in securing employment or in functioning at the workplace because of a disability if it is possible for the circumstances of the employment to be modified without causing unreasonable hardship on the employer. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Amendment is to afford greater protection to persons with disabilities against discrimination in the workplace. Another objective is to ensure that employers facilitate, wherever possible and without unreasonable hardship, measures and modifications to allow persons with disabilities to obtain positions and to do their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization estimates that around 10 per cent of the world's population, or some 600 million people, live with disabilities. Around the world, persons with disabilities participate in and contribute to the workforce at every level. However, many persons with disabilities who want to work do not have the opportunity to work due to many barriers to participation. The research conducted by the Human Rights Commission reveals that many companies around the world recognise the business case for hiring workers with disabilities and are committed to best practise in support of accommodating these employees. Simply put, the business case acknowledges that, if given the opportunity to utilise their skills, people with disabilities make capable and loyal employees.

Mr. Speaker, in considering what might constitute reasonable accommodation, it is imperative to reinforce that any determination must be made on a

case-by-case basis. There is no generic answer to identifying what constitutes reasonable accommodation for potential or existing employees within a particular company or organisation. Each case necessarily requires careful consideration of the specific circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, the following are examples of what might be considered reasonable accommodation:

- reassignment to a vacant position;
- part-time or modified schedules;
- acquiring or modifying equipment; and
- making existing facilities accessible.

On the other hand, the following examples could potentially be viewed as an unreasonable accommodation:

- eliminating an essential job function;
- lowering production standards after reasonable accommodation has been made;
- having to provide personal-use items for daily activities such as wheelchairs and hearing aids.

Mr. Speaker, an accommodation that would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of the business would be considered undue or unreasonable hardship. In those circumstances, an employer would not be expected or required to make any type of adjustment or modification.

Mr. Speaker, as to what could be considered when determining what is unreasonable hardship in real-life terms, some of these factors may be considered:

- the nature and cost of the accommodation required;
- the overall financial resources of the organisation making the accommodation;
- the effect on the organisation's expenses and resources; and
- a type of operation, including structure and function, of the workforce and the administrative and physical relationship of the organisation.

Again, consideration of what constitutes unreasonable hardship must be considered within the specific context of each case.

Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Commission, in collaboration with the National Office for Seniors and the Physically Challenged, have identified several studies which demonstrate that the average cost in providing reasonable accommodation throughout the world is minimal, and in many cases may be achieved at no additional cost to the employer. The Job Accommodation Network, known by its acronym JAN, which has been collecting data in this area for over 20 years, has reported that a high percentage—at least 56 per cent—of accommodations cost absolutely nothing to undertake.

Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Commission and National Office for Seniors and the Physically Challenged have embarked upon a public awareness campaign in order to inform the general public, persons with disabilities, employers and employees about the legislation and to collectively discuss the associated responsibilities and opportunities that will create a more inclusive and productive work environment in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I invite members of the public to contact either of these organisations, which are capable and prepared to answer any questions and, indeed, provide guidance, before and after the commencement day of December 3, 2011.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney. The Minister has a further Statement. Go ahead, Minister.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ZONE

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to inform this Honourable House of a unique collaboration, a very unique collaboration project to support youth development in North Hamilton. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that a Youth Development Zone has been established to provide coordinated services and support for young people and families in our community. This broad zone ranges across North Hamilton from the Dellwood Middle School to as far as the Victor Scott Primary School. At the centre of the zone is the Hamilton Community Centre under the direction of the Department of Youth, Sport, and Recreation.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Youth, Sport, and Recreation has joined with the Family Centre, the Bermuda Police Service, and the Economic Empowerment Zone to focus on positive youth development in a coordinated manner. These four key partners will be joined by other youth services, private businesses, funders, churches, sporting organisations, and the North Hamilton community to provide programmes, services, training, and support to our young people here in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, several initiatives have already begun. I will provide a brief description of these initiatives. Hamilton Community Centre staff has received TCI (or Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) training from the Family Centre. This valuable training equips the staff with the ability to spot precursors of aggressive behaviours and deal with situations as they arise. All Youth, Sport, and Recreation staff have received training in the Six Pillars of Character known as Character Counts. The Six Pillars include

1. trustworthiness,
2. respect,
3. responsibility,

4. fairness,
5. caring, and
6. citizenship,

which are all core values for all Youth, Sport, and Recreation after-school and seasonable out-of-school care programmes.

The YPI, the acronym for Youth Police Initiative, is a youth leadership training programme that helps young people build positive relationships with caring adult police officers and community leaders that they might not otherwise interact with. YPI strengthens communities by helping youth and police develop mutual trust and understanding.

Mr. Speaker, during the week of November 14th to 18th, 2011, fourteen young teens participated in the intensive YPI training, alongside Family Centre staff, representatives of NAFI (known as the North American Family Institute), and the Bermuda Police Service. A celebration ceremony was hosted at the Hamilton Community Centre on Saturday, the 19th of November. A full house rose in support of these young Bermudians, as they were celebrated for completing the programme. There were few dry eyes in the house as the young people moved down the line of committed police officers to receive hugs and congratulations.

Youth Leadership Academy: The YLA (the acronym for Youth Leadership Academy) . . . The graduates of YPI will now enter the Youth Leadership Academy to continue their leadership development in the safe and secure confines of the Hamilton Centre. Mr. Speaker, Family Centre staff will guide the youth through various activities and a social project. Youth will be surrounded by committed adults and have full access to the various recreation services offered at the community centre. As youths move through the YPI programme, they will be added to the YLA group. By the end of the first-year cycle, a total of 60 young people are expected to have received the training.

Beyond Rugby: Mr. Speaker, as a related initiative of the Youth Development Zone, several young teens and preteens from the Dellwood Middle School and CedarBridge Academy will be introduced to the sport of rugby. However, this is not just another sport programme. The Bermuda Rugby Football Union, Family Centre, and Beyond Sport, an international youth development programme, are combining forces to teach leadership, conflict resolution, and other life skills through the sport of rugby. Participants will also receive homework support, family crisis intervention support, and nutritional support.

Mr. Speaker, other initiatives associated with the Youth Development Zone project will follow, with new partners and private funders stepping up to the plate to support this collaborative effort.

Character Counts: Training will be made available to all zone partners on the basis and principles of Character Counts. Therapeutic family triage will occur at the Hamilton Centre. Family Centre staff

will meet with families in crisis to coordinate support services in the safe environment of the Hamilton Community Centre. Free lawyer support will continue, Mr. Speaker, to be offered through the Hamilton Community Centre as well.

A Community Youth Advisory Board will be established to create a voice for young people in the zone. And a community board will be established of local business, residents, faith community, and zone partners to identify what services are needed.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the Youth Development Zone project is an exciting initiative that embraces and encourages synergy and cooperation that goes beyond the public and private sector priorities and mandates. The zone focuses on the families and the young people that are looking for positive development opportunities. The Youth Development Zone is an effort to maximise resources and services for a common and consistent goal.

The zone is expected to change and evolve as the community takes charge and directs the services needed. A common measurement tool will be devised to measure success, and shared data collection will be critical to evaluating and improving the Youth Development Zone model. The long-term goal is to create a model that can be used in other communities across the Island.

Mr. Speaker, if Honourable Members or indeed any member of the public desire more information on how services, business, and individuals can participate in the Youth Development Zone, they should contact either Jason Hansford-Smith at the Department of Youth, Sport, and Recreation, telephone contact number is 249-9128—that is 249-9128—or Martha Dismont at the Family Centre, at telephone number 232-1116; that is 232-1116.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The Minister has a further Ministerial Statement. Go ahead, Minister.

UPDATE ON NATIONALSPORTS CENTRE AQUATICS CENTRE PROJECT

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to update this Honourable House on the progress of the National Sports Centre (NSC) Aquatics Centre project. Mr. Speaker, ground was broken in November 2010 to start construction of the National Sports Centre Aquatics Centre. The Aquatics Centre project entails the construction of an eight-lane 50-metre pool with moveable bulkhead and dive tower; a one-story building to house mechanical, electrical, and pool equipment; as well as installation of modular temporary structures to serve as administrative areas.

Mr. Speaker, in 2008, the National Sports Centre Board of Trustees was directed to focus on completion of the Aquatics Centre. Design work ensued throughout 2009 and 2010, resulting in an estimated cost of approximately \$18 million to \$19 million to complete the Aquatics Centre. Since November 2010, over \$8 million has been spent to advance the project.

Mr. Speaker, progress to date has seen several key milestones achieved. Site clearing and excavation, foundation works, electrical and mechanical substructures, pool side walls, and mechanical building were all completed by September 2011. Based on the current schedule, the project is expected to be fully completed by September 2012, on time and within budget, I am very pleased to say.

Mr. Speaker, the project has employed both Bermudians and non-Bermudians since its inception. As at November 1, 2011, there were 22 persons, 9 Bermudian and 13 non-Bermudian, employed by the NSC Board of Trustees, as follows:

- three specialist carpentry foremen, non-Bermudian;
- eleven carpenters, seven non-Bermudian and four Bermudian;
- three concrete finishers, non-Bermudian;
- one mason, Bermudian;
- one rebar installer, Bermudian;
- three skilled labourers, Bermudian.

Mr. Speaker, since November 2011, the National Sports Centre Board of Trustees has advertised and hired four additional Bermudian workers as follows: two skilled labourers, one carpenter, and one mason. At the present time, the ratio between foreign workers and Bermudians is 50–50, for a total workforce of 26.

Mr. Speaker, a total of eight employees has been terminated from employment at the site to date. This consists of two non-Bermudian concrete finishers terminated for cause; two Bermudian carpenters terminated for cause. One Bermudian carpenter resigned for personal reasons. One Bermudian mason who was suffering from poor health resigned. One Bermudian skilled labourer worked for four months, went on vacation, and never returned to the site. And one Bermudian rebar installer was not confirmed in his position during probation.

Mr. Speaker, some Honourable Members may inquire as to why it was necessary to hire foreign workers for this project, especially at a time when many Bermudian construction workers are out of work. Let me explain. Mr. Speaker, the Aquatics Centre project is a specialised project that has never been done in Bermuda before. This will be the first Olympic-sized pool built in Bermuda. As such, the plumbing, mechanical, and filtration systems are unique, given the very large volume of water required to be handled, which amounts to some 881,000 US gallons.

The National Sports Centre Board of Trustees had to ensure that there were some workers involved with the project who had experience in building a FINA-certified swimming pool. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may know that the acronym FINA stands for *Fédération Internationale de Natation*, the world governing body for the five aquatic disciplines of swimming, diving, water polo, synchronised swimming, and open-water swimming. FINA certification requirements are very stringent. Thus, the decision was taken by the trustees to ensure that workers experienced in constructing a swimming pool of this nature must be FINA-certified to be employed on the Aquatics Centre project.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to provide this brief update on the Aquatics Centre project, and I intend to provide further updates to this Honourable House as the development proceeds. I am happy to say once again that to date we are on budget and on time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney, the Honourable Member from Devonshire North Central.

I am now going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Perinchief. Minister Perinchief, Pembroke Central, has the floor.

Minister?

CRIME STATISTICS

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Mr. Speaker, there is an old adage that relates to crying *Fire!* in a crowded theatre. Mr. Speaker, there may well be a fire. So the acclamation by that individual has the immediate ring of truth. Mr. Speaker, shouting *Fire!* in a crowded theatre is never a wise decision. Shouting *Fire!* causes shock, awe, and alarm, and the perception that there is imminent danger predictably causes a stampede. In the rush to avoid danger, there is, invariably, a calamitous result of injury or death as the patrons try to escape what they perceive to be a life-threatening event.

Mr. Speaker, Monday's edition of the *Royal Gazette* shouted *Fire!* The statistics presented and the extrapolations based on the per-capita formula were correct. That, however, is not the issue. As a country, public safety and confidence in our institutions is one of the attractive factors to business, investment, and tourists. Each entity with a public voice has a role to play in promoting our single greatest attribute, our overall attractiveness as a jurisdiction to vacation, live, and do business in.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of the United Nations statistics published in the daily is not in question. What is unfortunate is the headline, the adverse comparisons with the United States and the UK, and the positioning of the story. Mr. Speaker, as the learned Attorney General said in another place, freedom of the

press is not absolute. There is responsibility which must go with that. Such responsibility is heightened when one's voice is a major source of international information.

That said, Mr. Speaker, there are some statistics which actually do apply to Bermuda and are more readily apparent to the man on the street. In summary, Mr. Speaker, I wish Honourable Members and the public to be aware that:

1. 2010 was the lowest year for all crime since the year 2000.
2. Although 2011 still has another quarter to complete, it is possible to compare the first three quarters of 2010 and 2011.
3. The first three quarters in 2011 were 8.6 per cent lower than the first three quarters of 2010.
4. 2011 is on track to be the lowest year for all crime since the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, none of this should be taken to minimise the scale of the problem we face. None of this can take away the pain of those families who mourn the loss of young men to violence. The message of these figures is that every waking hour of police time is spent pursuing a working strategy of disrupting the rhythm of gang violence and promoting safer communities for the Island.

Mr. Speaker, these figures are equally as available on the Bermuda Police Service website and could just as easily have featured in banner headlines. To have done so would have demonstrated the level of support commensurate with a country committed to inspiring confidence in those areas we need to promote economic stability in these challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage free press and do not shy away from bad news. I have presented today what some might term the silver lining to the cloud created by Monday's story. This Government, the Bermuda Police Service, members of the local community organisations, and ordinary men and women resident in Bermuda do their part every day to turn around bad situations.

To borrow from the international business slogan from a few years ago, *It's about all of us*. So, I repeat: Shouting *Fire!* in a crowded theatre is never a wise decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Perinchief, the Honourable Member from Pembroke Central.

Are there any further Ministerial Statements?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Z. De Silva. Minister De Silva, from Southampton East Central, has the floor.

Minister?

CAYMAN ISLANDS HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE 2011

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to report on my recent attendance at the Cayman Islands National Healthcare Conference. Mr. Speaker, some months ago, we were contacted by the Ministry of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports, and Culture in the Cayman Islands and were invited to attend their second annual Healthcare Conference and make a presentation on the Bermuda National Health Plan. We accepted. I attended the conference on the 17th to the 19th of November 2011. I was accompanied by Dr. Jennifer Attridge Stirling, the CEO of the Bermuda Health Council, who presented on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

Whilst at the conference, we attended several presentations:

- Health Care Pricing and Payment Models, by Seth Avery, who is the revenue cycle consultant to the Bermuda Hospitals Board; and Mr. Dale Sanders, Cayman's health IT consultant.
- The Role of the Health Insurance Companies and Their Role in Driving Health Care Costs, by Dr. Paul Nisselle of the UK Medical Protection Society, the organisation which currently provides malpractice insurance for Bermuda's physicians.
- The Impact of Over-Utilisation, by Dr. Brent James, of the Intermountain Health Care, who are pioneers in demonstrating that improving quality reduces costs.
- Medical Tourism and the Caribbean, by Renee-Marie Stephano, of the Medical Tourism Association; and also
- Key Metrics and Performance Indicators for a National Health Strategy, by Dale Sanders, which demonstrated the usefulness of tools like health accounts and benchmarks.

Whilst present, I had the honour of meeting with the Premier of the Cayman Islands, the Honourable McKeever Bush. I also took the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to meet with the Cayman Islands Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports, and Culture, the Honourable Mark Scotland, and his Permanent Secretary Ms. Jennifer Ahearn. In addition, I was able to hold discussions with the Honourable Elinor Caplan, who is the CEO of Canada Strategies Inc. and also former Minister of Health for Ontario, Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the attendance of the Bermuda delegation was appreciated by the conference organisers and Cayman's health leaders. Dr. Attridge Stirling gave an excellent presentation on Bermuda's National Health Plan, which was very well received by everyone present. We received a significant amount of positive feedback on our plan, and Dr. Attridge Stirling was invited to attend the conference again next year to provide an update.

The Cayman health delegation was impressed by the volume and quality of the data which Bermuda generates and uses to develop policy. Bermuda's model for licensing health insurers and gener-

ating annual health accounts, using data from insurers and other sources, was very well received.

Mr. Speaker, what struck me, after attending the presentations and holding discussions with those present, was that Bermuda's health care challenges are not unique. All of the health systems are struggling, with many of the same issues as Bermuda. These are not limited to:

- escalating health costs,
- over-utilisation,
- abuse of overseas care,
- lack of equality,
- quality of care,
- data sources,
- the increase in availability and the use of high-cost diagnostic imaging technology, and
- the real lack of integrated electronic health records.

Mr. Speaker, on top of all these, we are all challenged with an ageing population. The proportion of the population which is over 65 is increasing at a rapid rate. But, not only is the population getting older, the population as a whole is living longer and using increasing amounts of health care as they age.

Mr. Speaker, everyone is struggling to ensure that their entire population has access to not only acute care, but also to primary care. But the biggest issue is how to pay for it while keeping costs down. We are not alone, Mr. Speaker; we are certainly not alone.

Mr. Speaker, I returned to Bermuda last Sunday so that I could attend Bermuda's own Health Financing Summit, which was held at the Tucker's Point Club on Monday of this week. In addition, I was able to attend the sixth Caribbean Conference on Health Financing Initiatives, which was held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at the same venue. Mr. Speaker, I will provide this House with a report on those conferences next week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister De Silva.

The Minister has a further Statement, I believe.

Minister?

HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to update the public and the Members of this Honourable House on the progress of the construction of the new hospital facility. As Honourable Members are most likely aware, this is Bermuda's biggest-ever construction project and is Bermuda's first-ever public/private partnership, also known as Three P's, or PPP, as it is more often called.

It gives me great pleasure to say that we remain on budget and that we fully expect to open the

doors of the new hospital on schedule at the end of March 2014.

As a reminder—because I know that people are always concerned about the potential cost overruns and the delays in construction projects, especially in these economically challenging times—any potential delays will hit the pocket of the private partner and not the Bermuda Hospitals Board or the Bermuda taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. The cost of the project is already locked in. The contract is signed. This is a major benefit of a PPP project. It provides cost security for us, and at the same time provides a major incentive for Paget Health Services, our private partner, to ensure that the project is completed on time.

Mr. Speaker, as Honourable Members will remember from the 2008 Johns Hopkins Medicine International Review, Bermuda needs this facility, as it requires 50 per cent more clinical space so that it can meet the current and long-term health care needs of our community. These additional facilities will enable us to deliver services to an internationally accepted standard of care for the next 20 to 30 years. I am therefore very pleased to be able to report that much progress has been made.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who drove past the site over the past weekend will have noticed that a major concrete pour was taking place. During one day alone, Mr. Speaker—one day—more than 14,850 cubic feet of concrete was poured at the site. This is the largest one-day concrete pour in the history of construction in Bermuda. The base of the new hospital will contain nearly 90 tons of galvanised steel reinforcement alone. The concrete pour last weekend was for the foundation of a reinforced-concrete stairwell whose 12-inch-thick walls will provide lateral stability for the new building. This will ensure that the new building can withstand hurricane-force winds and seismic forces associated with earthquake events. The aggregate for this high-strength concrete being used in the building is imported from the Bahamas, and the concrete is produced locally by S.A.L.

Last weekend, about 110 loads of concrete were delivered from S.A.L.'s two batching plants. In all, this single concrete pour took about 14 hours to complete. Prior to this, the largest concrete pour in the Island took place at BELCO, and this required approximately 12,150 cubic feet of concrete.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hospital and Paget Health Services on the successful completion of this concrete pour. I would also like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank the hospital's neighbours, who are extremely understanding of the work that is taking place right on their doorsteps.

Mr. Speaker, this is exciting that this project is no longer just a hole in the ground. It is an exciting time, indeed. The structure of the new hospital is now beginning to take shape. But to get to this position, a bulk excavation of some 35 feet deep had to be completed. Approximately 40,000 cubic yards of rock has

been excavated, which has been recycled for the use in the construction sector. In total, over 5,000 cubic yards of concrete have been poured, and this figure will increase by 2,000 cubic yards per month until the foundations for the new hospital are complete. The water tank is now complete, and the work on the ground-floor slab is now started.

Mr. Speaker, people walking along Point Finger Road have noticed that a footpath has been constructed to improve safety for pedestrians during this construction period. Also, the work that can be seen on the access road through the Botanical Gardens is for the lane of large-diameter abstraction well-pipe work, which will draw seawater from two underwater lenses to cool the new facility.

Mr. Speaker, the project has been supported by a large number of local organisations and people. Orders placed so far for construction work exceeds \$110 million, of which \$100 million has been with Bermudian businesses. In addition, a further \$21 million of spending associated with this project has already taken place in the local economy, and on the site over 60 per cent of the workforce are Bermudians or spouses of Bermudians. In October, the workforce averaged around 89 persons, but it is anticipated that this figure will peak at about 250 as the project progresses.

Mr. Speaker, as the work has to take place whilst day-to-day hospital operations continue on the same site, infection control is a major issue. The Bermuda Hospitals Board has organised specialist training for local companies, and to date over 420 individuals have undertaken site induction training in health and safety and infection control, and 21 infection control permits have been issued.

On the design side, a temporary facility has been constructed onsite, which houses mock-ups of a trauma room, a patient room, a nurse's station, ambulance bays, and other ancillary spaces. This allows staff to test the designs and make any minor adjustments to the final layouts that are deemed necessary. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, it ensures that staff will be intimately familiar with the layouts before patients are admitted to the new hospital. This will greatly assist in a smooth operation transition in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to update the public and Honourable Members on this nationally important project. To conclude, and for those amongst us who are statistically minded, the project is about 15 per cent complete at this time. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we remain on target for the completion of the new hospital facility at the end of 2014.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister De Silva, the Honourable Member from Southampton East Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. M. Bean. Minister Bean, from Warwick South Central, has the floor.

Minister?

IMPORTATION OF DOGS AND CATS FROM THE UK

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, honourable colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to report to this Honourable House on an issue that has recently been of concern to many Bermudians, the importation of dogs and cats from the United Kingdom. Mr. Speaker, from the outset, let me make it absolutely clear: Government has not—and I repeat—we have not changed our policy regarding the importation of animals from the United Kingdom.

Recent changes, Mr. Speaker, in the United Kingdom have required us to review our policy. But that work is just beginning. Should a change in our policy be required, I will advise the public in advance of any such change.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the United Kingdom has announced that effective the 1st of January 2012 it will invoke new regulations that will bring its protocol for the importation of pets into line with that of the European Union. The new regulations will permit easier entry of dogs and cats into the United Kingdom from European Union Member States and EU-approved countries from around the world. This change has implications for Bermuda in terms of how we continue to view animals coming from the United Kingdom, and our response to that change can have wide-ranging effects.

Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture (Control of Animal Diseases) Regulations 1947 recognises the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and Jamaica as being rabies-free because these jurisdictions fulfil the international criteria for that status, including policies, to prevent the introduction of the rabies virus. That status gives Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, confidence that animals from these areas do not present a rabies risk. Thus, Bermuda currently accepts dogs and cats of any age from the United Kingdom without requiring any rabies vaccination. These animals enter Bermuda as young as the age of three months. In contrast, animals from rabies-infected areas require dual rabies vaccinations and do not qualify for entry before the age of 10 months.

Mr. Speaker, in our view, the United Kingdom's new protocol falls far short of the recommended protocol established by the World Organisation for Animal Health, or OIE. For us, the new protocol raises the question of whether it leads to an unacceptable risk of rabies virus being [imported] in animals coming from the United Kingdom, given that such animals may have originated in the United Kingdom or travelled there from elsewhere. This is an important con-

sideration, as we currently receive approximately 200 animals per year from the United Kingdom. Come January 1, 2012, the United Kingdom and Bermuda laws combine to effectively open Bermuda to easily accept animals from 79 other countries.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Bermuda recognises that the changes in the United Kingdom's policy represents a paradigm shift in the global rabies control, a shift that may be accepted by some jurisdictions, but one that has already been rejected by others. We must now consider our response. We also recognise, Mr. Speaker, the existence of the Schengen Area, a block of 25 European countries that have eliminated internal border controls and checkpoints. Within this area, people, their pets, and belongings move freely without controls. It is possible that the United Kingdom will join the Schengen Area at some point in the future. This raises the question of whether our import rules should be dependent on UK border control policy or whether we take ownership of the problem and impose our own import requirements independent of the United Kingdom's stance.

Mr. Speaker, it might be useful for me to clarify why it is important to keep Bermuda rabies-free. Because the clinical signs of a rabies-infected animal are not unique to that disease, the actual diagnosis may initially be missed by a clinician. Once confirmed to be present in an animal, all of the persons in contact with the rabid animal would require post-exposure treatment. In addition, all of the unvaccinated animals would have to be euthanised. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we wish to keep Bermuda rabies-free.

Through all of this, we recognise the importance of imported puppies being imported at a young age to permit proper training and socialisation, and that the United Kingdom is the closest place from which to import a young animal. For your information, Mr. Speaker, dogs and cats imported from the United States and Canada require vaccinations and cannot arrive here before the age of 10 months. We recognise that training and socialisation have implications for animal control and public safety. But all of this must be weighed against the issue of preventing accidental introduction of the rabies virus.

Mr. Speaker, additionally, the Government must be cognisant of the feral cat population and its close proximity to the human and pet populations in Bermuda. We are appreciative of the work done by the Bermuda Feline Assistance Bureau in curbing the number of feral cats. Notwithstanding their significant efforts, that population still exists. We certainly could not risk rabies becoming endemic in feral cats.

Mr. Speaker, Government values our rabies-free status, as it positively affects how our animals are received by other countries. While a change in our status may not affect most of our travelling animals, there is a segment of our pet population that travels overseas for various urgent veterinary treatments. It was the USA's recognition of our rabies-free status

that allows unvaccinated animals to travel there for urgent care. So, our decisions, Mr. Speaker, could impact this privilege.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Bermuda is very aware that our pets form an integral part of our families. Difficult import regulations present a barrier for persons entering with pets, be they visitors, guest workers, or returning Bermudian students or families. This consideration does not mean that we must have an open-door policy for all animals, but it does remind us that the implications of this issue are far ranging. As we explore the issue and our response to the new United Kingdom rules, we must keep our own welfare in mind. Our policy objectives will include:

- the prevention of any local incidence of rabies;
- the prevention of rabies becoming endemic in our feral cat population; and
- the maintenance of Bermuda's rabies-free status.

Mr. Speaker, leaving our legislation unchanged is not an option, as we will have legislation that is no longer effective. Therefore, some legislative change must occur. We are currently exploring the following options:

1. to adopt the European Union protocol;
2. to hold fast to the established World Organization for Animal Health protocol;
3. to adopt a compromise protocol; or
4. to establish a data-driven protocol irrespective of both the European Union and World Organization for Animal Health protocols.

We are looking at all of these options, including the risks and implications of each.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my opening comments, our policy on the importation of dogs and cats from the United Kingdom has not changed. However, a change will come. Following our review and a determination of a policy that is in the best interests of Bermuda, I will announce that policy and will ensure that a smooth transition to our new protocol will be made so that all stakeholders can plan appropriately. I anticipate receiving policy recommendations within the next two weeks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Bean, the Honourable Member from Warwick South Central.

Minister, copies of your Statement should be provided to me, the Clerk to the Legislature, and at least the Opposition, because there may be questions. I could follow. It was an easy matter to follow. But in future, ensure that copies are supplied. Thank you.

Are there any further Ministerial Statements?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Minister Weeks, from Pembroke East Central.

Minister Weeks, you have the floor.

EMPLOYEE ACHIEVEMENTS WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

Hon. Michael Weeks: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise before this Honourable House and my honourable colleagues for the first time during what I am sure will be a long and productive session, as the Minister now responsible for the Ministry of Public Works. It has only been one week since assuming this challenging position, but the management and technical officers are assisting me to assimilate into this new world quite well.

Mr. Speaker, during my first few days in this new Ministry I have had the opportunity to visit a few of the departments and specific sections under my purview and met a talented and skilled group of individuals that I am extremely proud to be associated with, those of whom I feel confident that I can call upon as my technical advisors during what I hope will be an experience to remember. These are electrical engineers, structural engineers, highway engineers, power engineers, waste and water engineers, horticulturists, park planners, scientists, conservationists, accountants, human resource personnel, along with a wide variety of support staff throughout the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, it is on this note that I would like to take a few moments to acknowledge the work and the individuals within the Ministry that make it the success it is at present, as well as taking it to the next level in years to come.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I would like this Honourable House to send congratulations to Mr. Daniele Bortoli, a trainee electrical engineer within the Ministry who was advised on October 28th that he successfully completed his Master's Degree in Building Services Engineering, with merit. Truly, all the hard work has paid off, and I offer my congratulations to Daniele in this public forum, as was done during my walkabout during my first week in the Ministry.

As part of the Ministry's development initiatives, two young engineers were recently returned from year-long secondments to outside firms, locally and overseas. Mr. Remi Subair, from the electrical section, returned in September of 2011 to the Ministry from his year-long secondment with Associated Engineering in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. During Remi's time at Associated Engineering, he carried out many tasks that augmented his experience as an electrical engineer. He has since returned to the Ministry as a trainee electrical engineer, with the exposure received during this secondment—truly a testament to the need to support our local talent.

Ms. Vanessa Turner from the structures section was seconded to a local engineering consultancy company, Entech Ltd. from September 2010 to September 2011, to further develop her knowledge in structural engineering. During Vanessa's time with Entech, she worked with the company's two lead en-

gineers where, amongst other duties, she conducted feasibility studies, structural designs and analysis, as well as structural and geotechnical investigations. Vanessa has since returned to the Ministry to a civil engineer-structured designate post.

Mr. Speaker, since inception, the Tynes Bay Waste-to-Energy Treatment Facility has found it difficult to hire and retain suitably qualified and experienced operational personnel due to the specialised nature of the work in light of the demand for such skills worldwide. Efforts to recruit and train locals through the normal Government trainee route proved lengthy and, ultimately, the Ministry was unable to match the rate of staff attrition. This ultimately led to chronic staff shortages within plant operations and placing unduly high work demands on the existing staff.

The Ministry could no longer do business as usual and, therefore, in 2006, consulted with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) of Ontario, Canada, the body that governs the Tynes Bay plant's operations, to investigate the possibility of training local staff overseas. TSSA, in turn, recommended Cambrian College of Southbury, Ontario, as the most suitable training provider, as they were approved by TSSA to train students to the level of second-class power engineer, the qualification required for Tynes Bay operations supervisors, an area where there is an acute shortage of staff.

Along with power engineering, Cambrian College also offered technical training for millwrights and instrumentation technicians, two additional skills sets in critical need within the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, due to the high demand of this programme in Canada, Canadian students oversubscribed to all three programmes. As a result, positions for local students were not readily available. However, through negotiations between Cambrian College and TSSA, special allotment was made to allow Bermudian students into the Cambrian Power Engineering Programme. To take advantage of the unique opportunity, the Ministry of Public Works partnered with the National Training Board (NTB), and a Memorandum of Understanding was reached whereby the tuition costs for the programme will be funded by the NTB, with housing and food funded by the Ministry of Public Works.

Mr. Speaker, since the initial recruitment four years ago, the programme has produced eight individuals who have successfully returned from Canada who are to be employed by the Ministry of Public Works, along with nine others who are still in training. The recent power engineer graduates employed as process controllers are Nijae Burgess, John Tucker, Colin Richardson, Nasir Brangman, and Naji Pearman. In the field of Mechanical Millwrights, the Ministry has Jokai Fox, Enrico Mitchell, and Kasey Smith employed as our tradesmen class two.

All of these young talented Bermudians, through their hard work, have qualified to fill long-vacant posts, thereby helping the Ministry and the Government of Bermuda in general, meet the objective of placing our locals in a better position for years to come.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael Weeks: Mr. Speaker, I must pause here to thank the former Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Derrick V. Burgess, JP, MP, for his vision, dedication, and hard work. What I have briefly spoken of here today are the results of his labour during the past few years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Weeks, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East Central.

Are there any further Ministerial Statements?
We will move on.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: I am going to take the Honourable Member Mr. H. Swan.

The Honourable Member, Mr. H. Swan has the floor.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these questions are for the Honourable Member—

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney?

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: No, sorry, for N. M. Perinchief, on his Ministerial Statement on National Security.

The Speaker: Yes. You want to change the order. Go right ahead.

QUESTION NO. 1 ON CRIME STATISTICS

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you.

Would the Minister and the Government prefer that serious crime be minimised or ignored in hope that the problem simply goes away?

The Speaker: Minister Perinchief.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: I accept the spirit in which he phrased that question. I said in my Ministe-

rial Statement that we do not dispute the facts. We are not trying to minimise the facts. But we are saying that there should be a responsible delivery of the facts and how they are handled.

As I said, shouting *Fire!* in a crowded theatre—even if there is a fire—is never a wise decision. Therefore, putting statistics and alarmist facts on the front page of the *Gazette* is the issue. There is another way to present that and a more responsible way to present it. I am not saying that they should not be presented.

We are concerned, naturally, that we have a high rate of murder. Nevertheless, we are saying that, with the strategy that the police are employing, those [rates] are coming down. There was a balance to those statistics which could have been presented by the paper, where they would have presented a balanced story. But they failed to do that.

We are asking for responsibility, a sense of commitment to the country rather than just presenting facts in an alarmist fashion. It is the alarmist fashion in which they were presented that we are objecting to.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Supplementary?

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Supplementary.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. Thank you for that, Minister.

How would the Minister characterise the steep increase in murders for a country with 70,000 residents?

The Speaker: Minister, do you care to reply? If it is not in the Statement you do not have to answer. I gather it is not.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Mr. Speaker, the specific question . . . you know, I do not try to obfuscate what obviously is a concern of the Opposition. Nevertheless, what I want to say is that there is a trend which started in 2009 which actually peaked shortly thereafter, around about 2010. But there was a decrease. If you will allow me—and I shall, Mr. Speaker, read from my Statement:

“2010 was the lowest year for all crimes since the year 2000. Although 2011 still has another quarter to complete, it is possible to compare the first three quarters of 2010 and 2011, and the first three quarters of 2011 were 8.6 per cent lower than the first three quarters of 2010. And 2011 is on track to be the lowest year for all crime since the year 2000.”

So, whilst there was a peak in 2009, there is now a corresponding decline over time. If you wish to actually track those figures, the Bermuda Police Service does have a website where they have got their

statistics posted. They are available. However, I will, if you require, give you the latest release from the Bermuda Police Service. It is not a secret document.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Perinchief.

The Honourable Member, there is a further question?

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: A main question?

QUESTION NO. 2 ON CRIME STATISTICS

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, this is a main question.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Would staff shortages due to mandatory time off contribute to crimes not being reported and therefore—

The Speaker: If it is not in his Statement, he does not have to answer it. Is it in here?

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: No, it relates. It is a question that relates to the report.

The Speaker: Well, you are drawing inferences from what is in here.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Well, I am asking the Minister a question that I am sure he would know the answer to.

The Speaker: Only what is in here.

Minister, do you care to respond?

It should be something that is in the Statement. If you wish to draw inferences, those sort of things are not entertained.

Minister?

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Mr. Speaker, I accept the challenges which the Opposition faces in not always having all of these facts. I am quite happy to elucidate.

I believe that the Member Opposite is actually mixing two situations. If he looks at the *Gazette*—and I believe he does—he has probably . . . I am going to now extrapolate.

The Speaker: I am giving you some leeway because he has only drawn an inference.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Yes, well, I am going to draw an inference that . . . you looked at a story which said that there is leave at the end of the year that the police are now taking. The question should

be, Has this caused the Police Service to be inefficient?

It has not. It has not.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Is there a further question?

We cannot have questions based on your inferences that you are drawing from this. They must refer specifically to what the Minister has said to Parliament.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, thank you.

This question for the Minister: Where does serious crime rank—

The Speaker: This is a third question.

QUESTION NO. 3 ON CRIME STATISTICS

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, sir.

Where does serious crime rank in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011? As the Minister reported on all crime. The specific question is targeted—

The Speaker: What is the question?

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Where does serious crime rank in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011—serious crime?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Minister Perinchief, do you wish to respond?

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Mr. Speaker, I did in my report refer to 2010–2011. I actually went back as far as 2009 as being a benchmark.

However, I will refer the person opposite, the Member opposite, to the Bermuda Police Service website for that.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Hunt, from St. George's South, I believe. Yes, the Honourable Member, Mr. Hunt, has a question.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: His question is to Minister Blakeney, I believe.

QUESTION ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ZONE

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Yes, Mr. Speaker, you are very correct; it is to Mr. Blakeney. This is in reference to the Youth Development Zone, something that I do appreciate.

The Speaker: I want to hear the question, though.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: The question is, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Let us hear the question.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: The question is, Mr. Speaker, on page 6 we talk about the therapeutic family triage. Simple question for the Minister: When they talk about families in crisis, can he provide a definition of what a *family in crisis* is? Who is eligible? What types of families are eligible? Not only for the edification on this side, but I think for Bermuda in general.

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond. Minister?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A family in crisis would be any family at all, any family from across all social divides that find themselves in urgent situations that they would consider to be emergency, or otherwise not have a solution or a strategy or a way to address in an appropriate manner. So it is there. Come one, come all. If it is assessed or evaluated not to be such an acute problem, they will then be directed to an NGO or a non-governmental helping agency, of which we have many in Bermuda that help in all areas of social remediation with regard to challenges that families or individuals in families might have.

The Speaker: No further questions?

We will move on.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons, from Paget East. Dr. Gibbons has the floor.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this question is . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Let us keep the undertones down.

QUESTION NO. 1 ON HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This question is for the Honourable Member who speaks for Health on the Government side and relates to his Statement.

The Speaker: The Minister of Health, yes.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Mr. De Silva, yes.

Now that the contract is signed and the cost is locked in, when will the Honourable Member provide this House with a schedule of the annual payments that will be paid to the private sector partners, and also a detailed budget indicating how and from where these payments will be funded every year?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister De Silva is going to respond.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to the question by the Honourable Member, he surely is well aware that the accounts for the Bermuda Hospitals Board will be tabled in this Honourable House every year. All the relevant information that he requests will be contained in that report.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Dr. Gibbons, is there a further question?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, supplementary.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

The Speaker: Supplementary. Yes.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Is the Honourable Member aware that accounts of the hospital are often a year or two behind? And this House would like to have what I will call up-to-date information on what these payments may be.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dr. Gibbons.

The Minister is going to respond.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, I would have to disagree with the Honourable Member. I think that the Bermuda Hospitals Board is one of those organisations that are very much up to date and have remained so for the last several years and will continue to do so.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister De Silva.

Dr. Gibbons? Yes?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Second supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Second supplementary, yes.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Will the Honourable Member provide a list of the subcontractors that are working on the public/private partnership for the new hospital?

The Speaker: Minister De Silva is going to respond.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I will be happy to do that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The Honourable Member, Mrs. Jackson, had a question.

Since the Minister is on his feet, responding . . . Mrs. Jackson, the Honourable Member from Pembroke South West, has a question for Minister De Silva.

Mrs. Jackson?

QUESTION NO. 2 ON HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the Honourable Minister could please advise this House or give us an explanation—probably would be better—of the problems incurred with the installation of electricity at the new hospital.

The Speaker: The Minister refuses. Is there a further question?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I am sorry, but he starts off with the progress of the construction of the new hospital facility. Obviously, installation of electricity is a part of the progress of the construction. It is in this Statement, and I demand an answer.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Minister De Silva?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member seems to have a bit of a problem understanding my Ministerial Statement.

The Speaker: Yes?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I did not talk about electrical. I did not talk about mechanical. I talked about the foundations, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: That is my recollection, yes, yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you very much.

Is there a further question, question number two?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: This is absolutely ridiculous.

The progress of the construction of the entire hospital obviously is in the intent. When you put this sentence here, "I rise this morning to update the public and the Members of this Honourable House on the progress of the construction of the new hospital," electricity is a part of the construction, Mr. Minister.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Jackson. Take your seat.

Minister De Silva?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer that, and so are the windows and so is the roof and so is the mechanicals and so and so. Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member would like some specifics on any part of the hospital, I would be happy to indulge.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: When we get to that stage, Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to give that information.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Mr. Speaker, I am assuming that he refuses because he does not know. He obviously does not know.

The Speaker: Is there a further question? Question number three? Question number three?

QUESTION NO. 3 ON HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Yes, yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Honourable Minister please advise this Honourable House and give us a timeline on the building of the facility for the extended care for seniors, as it is not included in the new hospital?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: You were too busy talking to somebody, weren't you?

The Speaker: Put the question, Mrs. Jackson.

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I would appreciate it if the Minister paid attention to what I am saying.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Put the question again.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Will the Honourable Minister give this Honourable House a timeline on the building of a facility for the extended care for seniors, as it is not a part of the construction of the new hospital?

The Speaker: Well, I know the answer, but the Minister is going to respond.

Minister De Silva?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The Honourable Member answered her own question, Mr. Speaker. It is not part of the new hospital.

The Speaker: Yes, yes, yes. I uphold the Minister; it is not.

Any further questions?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Supplementary.

The Speaker: I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. Swan.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: As the—

The Speaker: Take your seat, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Oh! I cannot have a supplementary?

The Speaker: The Honourable Member, Mr. Swan, has the floor.

QUESTION NO. 1 ON UPDATE ON NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE AQUATIC CENTRE PROJECT

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My questions this morning are directed at the Honourable Member who speaks for Youth, Families, and Sports, Mr. Blakeney. I am starting on page 5 of his Statement where he talks about certification. The first question I have is, Was it always the intention of the board to meet FINA certification?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, is the simple answer to that question. But to elaborate a little bit, with the commitment being so substantial with regard to the funding required for an Olympic-sized pool, it would have been foolhardy, foolish, and certainly without vision to build such a structure without having it FINA certified, which would require certain areas to have the expertise that would be necessary to ensure that we were not going to be feeling in the blind.

So, yes. Because of the commitment from the very beginning to ensure that we had a FINA-certified pool, which would allow us to facilitate internationally sanctioned swim competitions or aquatic competitions, we felt it was very necessary to have the required and requisite certifications in place for those who lent their expertise to that project.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney. Is there a further question, Mr. Swan?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Yes, supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary, yes?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: The FINA certification, I would imagine—most people are not familiar with it; I am not either.

The Speaker: Well, let us hear the question.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: But I am getting to the point of—

The Speaker: I know it is difficult, but this is—

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: I am getting to the point of the actual staffing at the pool and certification. I would like the Minister—this is one question—would the Minister please provide a copy of the FINA certification for this pool when they come?

The Speaker: Yes?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: In a Statement a year ago, the choice of pool was made for concrete provided by Bermudian companies and installed by Bermudian labour.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: So my question is, How does that jive with the fact that a year later we have 50 per cent of the staff, after the most recent hires are now Bermudian?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I do not understand the question.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Would you like for him to—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I mean, what is he asking?

The Speaker: Take your seat, Minister.

Please be succinct, to the point with the question.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: To the point. Can the Minister explain why in this current economic climate only 50 per cent of the staff building the National Stadium pool are Bermudian?

The Speaker: Okay.

Minister Blakeney is going to answer.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Well, there would have probably been more had some people not got fired for the various reasons that I cited, for one. And for two, we are running a very tight shop.

So, as we need the labour we will acquire the labour. Where there is a need, substantiated through the due process, to engage the labour from overseas as guest workers on the project, based on the expertise that is required, we will do that as well. Where there is a need for the Bermudian labour, we will continue to do that, as we have done on a continuous basis, through advertising locally in the daily publications.

Of those that apply, we choose the best with a very rigid application process, to ensure that we get the best that is available for this particular project.

So we are committed to Bermudisation, and I am happy to say Bermudians are working on the project.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Is there a further question?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: A further question, yes.

The Speaker: Is that supplementary number two?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: This is another question.

The Speaker: Another question. Okay. Let us put the question.

QUESTION NO. 2 ON UPDATE ON NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE AQUATIC CENTRE PROJECT

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Would the Honourable Member please advise the budgeted costs for this project a year ago and explain if there have been any cost increases over the intervening period?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I will answer the question in this way: There was, some years ago, \$15 million set aside for the project without any quantification being done. When I assumed the substantive role, I asked that a quantified projection be made, and that is the number that you see in the Statement, and that is the number that we are looking at. We are, as of today, on time and on budget.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.
Is there a further question, Mr. Swan?

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Actually, no. I will let my colleague go, Mr. Speaker, I believe he has questions for the same Minister.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member, Mr. H. Swan, wishes to put a question to Minister Blakeney.
Mr. Swan, from St. George's West.

QUESTION NO. 3 ON UPDATE ON NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRE AQUATIC CENTRE PROJECT

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I declare my interest. I do of recent times work from time to time around plumbing.

The question for the Minister with regards to his Statement, is there a local plumbing company associated with the installation of the pool?

The Speaker: Minister Blakeney is going to respond.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I will get that answer. I am not absolutely sure if the plumbing has been subcontracted to a local plumber. I am not absolutely sure about that, but I will get that specific answer for you.

The Speaker: Yes.

I recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Butler, Warwick North East.
Minister Butler has the floor.

QUESTION ON IMPORTATION OF DOGS FROM UK

Hon. Dale D. Butler: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This question is directed to the Honourable Member, Minister Marc Bean, concerning his brief on dogs. We had one report in the newspaper, and the Minister has indicated something completely different. So I would like to know why this information became public.

The Speaker: Minister Bean.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Honourable Member for that question.

As Honourable Members would be aware, it is our responsibility as Ministers to set policy. It is our civil servants' and technical officers' responsibility to offer us advice and recommendations on policy.

What has happened is that, through communications via e-mail, one of our technical officers gave her thoughts on the actual issue, and it became viral. Obviously, it created anxiety within the Bermuda public, for which I am very regretful, and I would like to apologise to the Bermuda public for that.

Going forward, you can expect, especially out of . . . Well, I could speak for all the Ministries, that all policy will come from the Ministers and not from the technical officers.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Bean.

The Honourable Member, Mrs. Jackson, had a further question. She was a little slow.
Did you still wish to ask that?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, she has forgotten.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: All right. Next time.

That ends . . . Mr. Swan, did you want to put another?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, no, I did not think so. All right.
That ends Question Period.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Mr. D. Butler, from Warwick North East, has the floor.

Hon. Dale D. Butler: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, because last week there was such a long list. I wish to be associated with the congratulations that were given to our own colleague MP Lovitta Foggo for her outstanding scholarship with regard to her master's degree. Associated also with the condolences sent to the family of my former classmate who passed, Roseann Pitcher, and I ask to be associated with the congratulations that were sent to the New People's Market at CedarBridge, Tracy Trott and Khalid Worrell.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of local books published recently, so I ask that the House send congratulations to the Senator who sits in the other place, Senator Jonathan Smith in his book, *In the Hour of Victory*; Betsy Mulderig for her publication, *Tippy Tours: The Dinosaur Cookbook*, which you have a copy of, I am sure; to the Honourable Teddy Tucker for his book, *Treasure—A Diver's Life*; and to Ras Mykkal for his book on photography, *Click*.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, in constituency 25, we had a five-and-twenty-five where the merchants of that area joined together to offer a 5 per cent discount. I would like for congratulations to be sent to all seven of them. They consisted of Bo's, Lindo's, Uppercrust, Island Spice, Creative Upholstery, Blue, and Fairways.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Butler, the Honourable Member from Warwick North East.

I am going to take the Honourable and Learned Member Mr. T. Moniz. Mr. T. Moniz, from Smith's West, has the floor.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to my feet today to give congratulations to the man who was the Honourable Member, Mr. John Barritt. He is being thanked in a variety of other places for his public service to Bermuda, but I think as yet in this House we have not been able to put on the official record the thanks for the long service that he gave in this place.

As most Members will know, Mr. Barritt was originally elected to the House of Assembly in October 1993, and over the period of years has served in a great variety of capacities I will not seek to repeat. He had done Ministerial service. He has done service as House Leader, he has served as Opposition Leader, he has done all sorts of different service.

But the thing I guess that most stands out in my mind, I would imagine with most people, is the way in which he gave his service, and hopefully, will continue to give that service. Part of my statement here today will just say that his service has been appreciated, and we want him to continue that service for the benefit of Bermuda as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, you will know most recently he did a vast amount of work on reconfiguring the Rules of this House, sitting down with his writing skills and his legal skills and reconfiguring the Rules of this place—which is a work in progress. I would say we have not yet finished.

But I just wanted to say that, obviously, his family has a long history of dedication to public service, with his uncle Bobby, who served in private capacities; obviously, his father, who was a Speaker of this Place. Mr. Barritt is a very intelligent individual. He worked very hard in this place. He was very diligent. He was very fair-minded. That is the thing that really stands out in my mind. He always listened to all sides of a situation before he would render any sort of opinion or jump into the fray. He was a very thoughtful individual, and he is still serving on some committees, advisory committees, for the Opposition. But certainly on this side, we appreciate that he deserves some time and some rest to spend time, obviously, with his family, his wife, his children, and his three grandchildren.

But I do not think his like will soon be seen again in this place. We hope that his service will continue. I know his dedication to Bermuda still burns very strong in him. We just want him to know that he is appreciated.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Moniz, the Honourable and Learned Member from Smith's West.

I am going to take the Honourable Member Mr. Acting Premier, Mr. D. Burgess.

Minister Burgess, you have the floor.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we want to be associated with the remarks regarding the Honourable John Barritt.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like this House to send condolences to Mrs. Carole Ming, wife of Louis Ming.

The Speaker: To the family?

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, the family.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: She certainly was, as I would say, a giant in the hotel industry. Her last job, when I worked with her, she was the Executive Housekeeper at the Loews Bermuda Beach Hotel. She is the mother of Caron Somner. She leaves 12 children who will certainly miss her.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess, the Acting Premier.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mrs. L. Jackson, from Pembroke South West.

Mrs. Jackson, you have the floor.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to be associated with the congratulations to John Barritt—I started to say “the Honourable Member”—John, former [Honourable Member], friend, colleague, and teacher. I have to say—and I often have said—that John Barritt taught me all that I know—

An Hon. Member: He did a great job.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: *[Laughing]* Thank you.

—about House rules, about how to give speeches, and just being a good politician. He was a tireless worker, teaching and advising, not just in the House when he was the House Leader, but also in his own time, describing to us how we should approach legislation, describing to us and teaching us how to speak to legislation.

This man had such a great knowledge of good governance and how to be a politician of good repute. He also is someone that I have known for quite awhile, as Honourable Member Trevor Moniz just mentioned. His father was Speaker of the House. That is, John Barritt was Speaker of the House when my husband was President of the Senate, and just was starting as President of the Senate, and certainly gave him such good advice. Of course, we all know Bobby

Barritt. All of these family members have contributed much to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like a message of condolence to be sent to the family of Leonie Dismont, the widow of Cecil Dismont, who was the Mayor of Hamilton for many years. I want to associate the Honourable Members, Bob Richards and Grant Gibbons with this. They say that behind every great man there is a woman. Leonie Dismont, "Lee" as she was known, was just that.

I would also like a message of condolence to be sent to the family of Stan Sheppard. Stanley Sheppard, I guess everybody knows Stan. He was a well-known businessman, a news journalist, and a restaurateur. Everybody certainly can get a good chuckle thinking about Stan. He always had something funny to say. He was just a well-rounded man that we all really adored.

Also, I would like to have a message of condolence sent to the family of Anna Lines Bliss. She was the mother of David and Donald Lines. She lived to be over 100 years old. This was a marvellous woman who contributed much to Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. K. Horton, from Southampton West.

Mr. Horton, you have the floor.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, all.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to associate myself with the remarks concerning the Honourable Member John Barritt, who no longer sits in this House. Mr. Speaker, I certainly had great respect for Mr. Barritt and his knowledge of Parliamentary procedure and also of his willingness to work to make Bermuda a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly had the opportunity to meet Mr. Barritt way back in, I think it was 1974 or 1975, when he wrote an article on "How the west was won." That is how I knew that John Barritt had great insight into politics. You will remember that Somerset won all four seats back in those days.

The Speaker: That is what he predicted, did he?

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Yes, absolutely.

[Laughter]

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Mr. Speaker, also, I would like to thank Mr. Barritt for the work that he did on the Parliamentary Select Committee. He made a great contribution to that committee that was looking into crime and gun violence.

So, I wish him all the very best. We will miss him here because he was a sound voice and a measured voice in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask that congratulations be sent to Anthony Peets. Anthony Peets is the only male counsellor in our primary schools. Tonight he is showing this documentary that is going to be shown at Bermuda Institute at 6:30, where he will be introducing MIA, which is called "Men in Action." Mr. Speaker, I will associate many Ministers and many Opposition Members with that. Everybody is associated with it.

But I think it is important for us to support this, Mr. Speaker. It is recognisable and it is well documented that boys do not do well in our schools, and the boys are treated differently. Our schools have not come to grips with how boys are different and treated differently, which is one of the challenges that we have. So, I commend him on trying to bring men together, because we have violence, we have dysfunctional families, we have many issues, Mr. Speaker, that come as a result sometimes of boys not having male influences in their life.

Congratulations, Anthony Peets, on this initiative!

I hope all of Bermuda will support him in this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask that the House send congratulations to the *Royal Gazette*. This is different—the *Royal Gazette*,—and I say that, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the magazine I saw today on parenting. There is parenting—parents need to have assistance in this country. I was pleased to see the (what do you call it) insert on parenting. Again, I hope parents will pick it up, and I hope it will get . . . I have not had a chance to read it.

The Speaker: Your time is up. I am sorry.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: I hope it will continue, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Time is up.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: And that more people will read it.

The Speaker: Any further speakers?

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons, from Paget East.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to be associated with the thanks and congratulations to a friend and a colleague, the former Honourable Member, Mr. John Barritt. It would be fair to say he was, in many respects, a Parliamentarian's Parliamentarian. He worked, as most Honourable Members know, very assiduously to make this honourable place more effective.

Certainly, in my opinion, he was one of the best debaters the House has seen in awhile. I think he understood that there is both substance and theatre in the House and used both of them to great effect. He was a crusader for good governance. I think that was his mantra for many years. I think he deserves some of the credit for opening up the House committees to the media and to the public.

He had a political conscience, which may be an oxymoron, but I think he certainly worked very hard to make Bermuda a better place. And lest this be seen as a political obituary, Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe in reincarnation. I think the Honourable Member, probably in many respects, has some very good years ahead of him. How that materialises, we will leave it to Mr. Barritt to see.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet I would also like to be associated with the condolences to the family of the late Anna Lines [Bliss], sons Donald and David. I would like to ask also that condolences be sent to the family, the widow, of Brian Rowlinson, whom many Honourable Members will have known. He did an extremely effective job in planning, from my perspective, was very fair, and oftentimes I would find he would come out to talk to constituents about issues which were difficult from a planning perspective. I think he will be missed. He did a good job in moving planning forward.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that congratulations be sent to Bermuda College on their Science Week. During October I had the pleasure of going up there. Not only did they do the liberal arts sciences—chemistry, physics, and biology, and did a very nice job—but they also introduced senior students and middle school students to the division of applied sciences and had some very good demonstrations in auto mechanics, air conditioning, plumbing, electricity, and some of the other areas. So I would like that congratulations be sent to the President of Bermuda College, Dr. Duranda Greene.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dr. Gibbons.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Tucker, Hamilton South. The Honourable Member Mr. Tucker, from Hamilton South, has the floor.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to send congratulations out to the participants in the Premier's Concert last week, Saturday. They all performed well. But, Mr. Speaker, there is a pair that I would particularly like to acknowledge, Mrs. Dawnita Smith and Mr. Dezjuan Thomas. It was unbelievable, the performance they gave in this dance that was choreographed by Mr. Eric Bean, Jr.

Mr. Speaker, to have seen this dance performance was unbelievable. It was truly a masterpiece

of timing and everything to the music by Mr. John Legend.

Mr. Speaker, we have so much talent in this country it is unbelievable. Those who had the opportunity to be a part of and to witness that truly saw a wonderful, wonderful sight.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add my remarks along with those regarding the former Honourable John Barritt to this House. When I was a member of the United Bermuda Party, I had a lot of talks with John Barritt, and he gave a lot of information about different things. Even going to his house and talking about different things and making sure you had a set of the Rules and very important parts of the Rules and the ones that you should know in being a Member . . . I can truly say that Mr. Barritt was an asset to the country at large, in his processes and helping around here.

Mr. Speaker, I would also just like to give . . . That is okay. I will do that next week.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Tucker.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Ms. Butterfield. Ms. Butterfield, from Pembroke West Central, has the floor.

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First, I would like to be associated with the congratulations given to Ras Mykkal on his new book entitled *Click*. Also, I would like to be associated with the condolences sent to the late Brian Rowlinson, who was my former Permanent Secretary when I was the Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like condolences to be sent to the late Mr. Earlston David Wilkinson. He is the father of Ms. Tracey Wilkinson and was a long-term employee of the then-Works and Engineering, and now Public Works. Minister Weeks would like to be associated with those condolences, and I am sure the Honourable Glenn Blakeney would also like to be associated, and the Honourable Walter Roban is requesting to be associated as well.

Mr. Speaker, I overlooked sending congratulations to Ms. Doris Corbin, who celebrated her 100th birthday. That is Ms. Doris Corbin, MBE, still going very strong, a woman of strength. Even on Sundays in church, she is still correcting the young people. I thought it was amazing, Sunday gone, when she just would not move her legs to let a little child go through unless they said *Good morning* and *Excuse me, please*. So I am telling you her mind is good. I am sure that the Honourable Ms. Patricia Gordon-Pamplin would like to be associated with those congratulations, along with the Honourable Louise Jackson, and also the Honourable Minister Michael Weeks.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to send congratulations to—and I am sure that she would go on

from strength to strength—and that is Ms. Dorothy Wellman Elliott of Spanish Point, who celebrated her 99th birthday. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that those genes are within me, because she is my great-aunt, my grandfather's sister.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Butterfield.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. E. James, who has been popping up. From Warwick North Central, Mr. James has the floor.

Hon. Elvin G. James: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask this House to send congratulations to a young man, Mr. Jaret Simmons, who recently took the top prize in the Tom Pettit Memorial Thanksgiving Essay Competition. His essay told how as a young man he was bullied and insulted, and he wrote how he became stronger as a result of all of this here. He decided that he was just going to become a stronger man than all of those that were bullying him.

Knowing this young man, he has truly become a role model for others his age. Apart from his writing ability, he also is an aspiring athlete. At the moment, he is in the track. He is the fastest young man on the Island in the under-17s. He truly is a Bermudian who has ambition, and I am certain he will go a long way. I just wish him well, Mr. Speaker, as he continues to achieve his goals while continuing to overcome all of his obstacles, as he wrote in his essay.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. James.

I have got to go back here to the Honourable Member, Mr. Hunt, from St. George's South.

Mr. Hunt has the floor.

Mr. Donte O. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join in the chorus with the remarks about my colleague John Barritt and his impact on this country. John, as we all heard, has made a massive impact, in my mind, on this country. I will say this before I move on: Very few times do you find an individual that has been able to etch their mark in the chronicles of history like John has. I am just glad to have been able to serve in this House with such a stellar performer in terms of his work for Bermuda and his love for Bermuda as well. So I would like to join in the chorus of congratulations or at least recognition for John Barritt.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer congratulatory remarks to Caron Bermuda, C-a-r-o-n Bermuda. Caron Bermuda is what I would term a beacon of hope in Bermuda for those who are addicted to any substance. They had a breakfast a few weeks ago, November 3, 2011, to which I was invited, and many others in this House were invited and I saw there. But at any rate, this breakfast was an awards ceremony.

There were many individuals who were awarded for their fortitude, their strength, their perseverance in overcoming addiction, as well as in supporting those who are afflicted by addiction. This particular organisation . . . and I will read this, based on your indulgence, Mr. Speaker: "Caron Bermuda continues to be a place of hope and healing, where lives are saved and families restored, where people desperate for help to overcome addiction can begin the journey of recovery for life."

So I would like congratulatory remarks to be sent to Caron and, in particular, Gita Blakeney-Saltus, who is the Regional Vice President of Caron in Bermuda.

Thank you a lot.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hunt, the Honourable Member from St. George's South.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. M. Weeks. Minister Weeks, from Pembroke East Central, has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, although I mentioned Mr. Daniele Bortoli earlier in my Ministerial Statement, I would like this Honourable House to send congratulations to Mr. Bortoli, our trainee electrical engineer with the Ministry of Public Works, for attaining his Master's of Science Degree with Merit in Electrical Building Services Engineering from the University of Manchester.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to congratulate the two great football teams of the past, the Young Men's Social Club, and I think it was North Village. I had the opportunity to go to a benefit game last Friday. I would like to associate the Honourable Member Mr. Swan, Mr. H. K. Swan. He was also there. This benefit match, Mr. Speaker, was for another great player that many people may know; that was "Mel" Lewis—Malcolm Lewis, but fondly known as Mel. He has a disease. That game was a fundraiser, and I look forward to many more. It was a good game, very, very well attended, and many funds were raised.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to associate the Honourable Dame Jennifer with these remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Weeks, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East Central.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. D. P. Lister, from Sandys North Central.

Mr. Lister has the floor.

Hon. Dennis P. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise just to be associated with the remarks that have already been expressed on the passing of Brian Rowlinson. Mr. Rowlinson, as you

know, was my Permanent Secretary as well when I served in the Ministry of the Environment, and I always found Brian to be one who was extremely committed to working with his Minister and looking at the best interests of all that was before us.

I truly can say that he was probably one of the better civil servants that I have worked with in the different Ministries, Mr. Speaker. Not only did we develop a relationship as Minister and PS, but actually a friendship from there. We have stayed in touch over the years since I was out of the Ministry and was really thrown back last year when he did take sick. You know, it is definitely saddening to hear that he has passed, Mr. Speaker. So I would like to be associated with all of the kind remarks that have already been expressed to his family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. D. P. Lister, the Honourable Member from Sandys North Central.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from St. David's constituency, Ms. L. Foggo, the Government Whip.

Ms. L. Foggo has the floor.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to give congratulatory remarks to Mr. Jay Alexander Butler, the son of Dr. June Hill and our own MP Dale Butler.

Jay recently was called to the New York bar—no easy feat, indeed, Mr. Speaker. He currently is working in the International Court of Justice at The Hague. I just want to highlight Jay because he is one of our success stories. You hear often that many young men are not doing well. Well, Jay had done extremely well. He was a graduate of the Warwick Academy, where he rose to the rank of Head Boy. He is an accomplished violinist. Jay graduated from Harvard University. He went on as a Rhodes Scholar to Oxford University. He completed his JD Degree at Yale. So, it is really wonderful to hear that Jay now is serving, I guess we can say, really, as an ambassador for Bermuda almost, at the Hague, where I hope he has a very long and successful career.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Foggo.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. N. Simons, from Smith's South.

Mr. Simons, you have the floor.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of people that I would like to send remarks on behalf of.

Firstly, I would like to associate myself with the comments made in regards to Mr. John Barritt, a colleague of mine who was a taskmaster, but an MP who stood for excellence. I would like to associate myself with the comments made in regards to Jay But-

ler, Anna Lines [Bliss], Leonie Dismont, Anthony Peets, and Brian Rowlinson.

Brian Rowlinson, was a man that made himself available to anybody who was interested in the environment and the development of Bermuda. As you know, I have been Shadow Minister of the Environment for a number of years, and he was always willing to lend a helping hand if I had any questions or issues.

In addition, on a personal note, when I was in South Africa with my family, who should I see walking with his family? Brian and Sylvie. So we had many times together in Cape Town. So again, I am saddened by his untimely demise, and I wish his family all the very, very best.

I would like to also associate myself with the comments made last week in regards to Kimberly Caines who was called to the bar. She is a fine young lady, a wise young lady. Again, I wish her all the success in her legal career.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also send condolences to the family of Shirley Edness. She was the wife of Quinton Edness, former Member of this House.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Associate me, Mr. Simons.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The Honourable Randy Horton has asked to be associated with those comments. Anybody who knows Mrs. Edness, she was a vibrant person. She enjoyed life. She had good in-nings. So, my condolences to her daughter Stacey.

I would like to also send out condolences to two teachers, Pam Harvey—she is the wife of Kendall Harvey—who was the teacher and the mother of Vashti (and I cannot remember her second daughter). She died an untimely death recently. Condolences to her family.

I would like to also send condolences to Mrs. Joyce Zuill. Mrs. Zuill is the wife of William Zuill. Mrs. Louise Jackson and Grant Gibbons asked to be associated with these condolences. As I said, Mrs. Zuill lived in my constituency. She was a teacher for 30–40 years, and she was an avid Rose Society member. She was into our garden, and she was a lady of stature and was well respected in Smith's.

In addition, I would like to send condolences to the family of Graham Simmons of Town Hill, hard-working man. His hard work paid off. He lived a very successful life on top of Town Hill overlooking the sound. He was a man that I admired and respected greatly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Simons.

I am now going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. T. Lister, from Sandys South.

You have been trying an awful long time.

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I was starting to get a little backache going up and down. But nonetheless, I do have a turn.

The Speaker: [Laughing]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: So I want to thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join in the condolences as they relate to Mr. Brian Rowlinson. Brian Rowlinson also served as my PS, and he was a fine, fine civil servant. He did an excellent job, not some days, not when he felt like it, but every day. Every single day he came to deliver on behalf of the people of Bermuda. I think that the people of Bermuda benefited significantly in the area of the environment through the talent and ability that he brought steadily to work every day.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to express condolences to Canon Nisbett on the passing of his dear wife of many, many years. I know it is a blow to him and to his family. Mrs. [Winifred] Nisbett was just a kind soul, who could always stop you and have a word of encouragement of some sort or the other. So I know many will miss her, and they will miss her warm ways.

Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the congratulations to Ras Mykkal on his book; to Jay Butler on his achievement, his very fine achievement, to not only be called to the bar of the State of New York, but to also be employed at The Hague, where I am sure he will develop himself further in the time ahead.

Lastly, I want to be joined with the congratulations to Ms. Doris Corbin. Ms. Corbin, having turned 100, has been a fine servant of this country in so many ways. I had the good fortune of working with her in the 1980s and the early 1990s on the Berkeley Educational Society when she sat on the committee as I chaired it. It was a joy to me to be able to turn to her to gain insight, knowledge, and guidance. I have tried to stay in touch with her over the years simply because I know that there is a saying, *A mind is a terrible thing to waste*. Well, in her case, we really do not want to let all of that knowledge go to waste. We want to be able to talk to her, gain it, and pull it out because there is so much there. So I want to be associated with the kind remarks relating to her 100th birthday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. T. Lister, from Sandys South.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Dame Jennifer Smith, from St. George's North, Minister of Education.

Dame has the floor.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, for the audible record, let me say I wish to be associated with all of the congratula-

tions and condolences given so far. But I will write them down for the other record.

As concerns young Jaret Simmons, who was the winner for the Annual Tom Pettit Memorial Thanksgiving awards, let me also send congratulations to the runners-up, Mr. Speaker, who were Jasmin Bacabac, Kennedy Middleton, Amber Reid, Jack Recciardi, and Tahirah Smith.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would also like to read something about Jaret, because we are talking about young black boys. People seem to get the impression that the majority of them are not doing well, when quite the opposite is true; the majority are indeed doing great things. This young man, who is 15 years old, is hoping to set a new record at CedarBridge Academy by studying for the four-year course in three years. If he accomplishes this, he will be the first.

In addition, he said he made the decision when he first arrived at CedarBridge to challenge himself. He said that he plans to be an aeronautical engineer, and he said he does not think that is going to be easy, but that his parents have instilled in him as a young man, from a young age, that if you are willing to work for things, there is no reason you cannot get it. He says he thinks he just decided after middle school, *I am going to start working harder, and I continually try to achieve what I can*. He credits among his parents, his mentor Dr. Timothy Jackson, and he believes that other young black men share his work ethic. He is talking about his peers, who are the same.

Now, in addition to all of that, Mr. Speaker, though his work schedule is demanding, he still makes time to volunteer and for sport and for other extra-curricular activities. He tutors young children at Victor Scott Primary, and last year he was named the fastest runner on the Island in the under-14 category. Next year he wants to win gold.

Mr. Speaker, that is just one of the young men coming up through our public education system.

I also want to be associated with Dr. Grant Gibbons, who talked about the Bermuda College's Science Week. I just want to recognise that the purpose of the Corange Science Week, Mr. Speaker, is to promote science in Bermuda in the community at large, and also to provide an opportunity to showcase a visiting Bermuda scientist. This year, that scientist was Dr. Tucker Murphy. It is as a result of Corange that each year a number of Bermuda scientists have been exposed to the youngsters so that they know there are Bermudians making their mark internationally in the world of science.

Mr. Speaker, I also ask to send congratulations to Dr. Derek Tulley, whom many will remember as the former Deputy Principal of Clearwater Middle School, but who has written a book called *A Man of Patience* about Admiral Sir George Somers and the mystery ship that saved America for England.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dame Jennifer.

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Crockwell, from Pembroke West.

Mr. Crockwell, you have the floor.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the congratulatory remarks made towards our former Honourable Member, Mr. John Barritt, on his retirement from the House of Assembly. Certainly he was a political mentor of mine, one of the more dynamic speakers here in the House of Assembly and certainly a balanced speaker. He continues to be a legal mentor as he continues to work alongside me at Mello Jones & Martin. So I certainly wish him all the best going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I would like a letter of condolences to be sent to the family of Ms. Hilary Soares, more particularly her husband Mr. Earl Soares, who passed away over the summer, on August 22, 2011. I associate the Members of the House on the Opposition side; if you would like to be associated as well, Members on the Government side as well, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Soares was the founder of Agape House, Mr. Speaker, which was a great contribution to our medical community, and has provided a great deal of comfort and solace to individuals with terminal disease; also a cofounder of PALS (Patients Assistance League and Service) that provides assistance to cancer sufferers. Mr. Speaker, clearly, she was a woman of service, and we would like her family to know that we have our condolences with them at this time.

Also, a letter of condolences to the family of Ms. Ida James, Mr. Speaker, who was tragically killed and murdered in the summer as well, on the 3rd of September 2011. She is the sister of the former Finance Minister, Dr. Clarence James, Mr. Speaker. But she worked as well in the service industry. She was a social worker, working for Government all her life. I had the privilege of meeting her a few times, and each time that I met her she was extremely warm and embracing, and [her passing] will be a tremendous loss to the community. I would like to associate the Opposition Leader with that, Mr. Speaker, as well as Louise Jackson, the Honourable Member.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like letters of congratulations, on a more upbeat note, sent to Mr. Saul Froomkin, QC, OBE, for celebrating his 50th anniversary of being called to the bar in October of this year. That is an amazing accomplishment, Mr. Speaker, and still he is a very active and very bright individual. We would know that he was involved in many famous cases here in Bermuda. As the former Attorney General, he has taken cases all the way to the Privy Council and has been successful, I am sure, more than not.

Also, Mr. Speaker, he was honoured in September with the gold medal of honour from the Government of Taiwan for his outstanding achievements in promoting international cooperation on combating trans-national crime.

So, when we have locals who are internationally recognised, I think that this House should recognise them as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Crockwell.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban, from Pembroke East. Mr. Roban has the floor.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to first be associated with the condolences to the late wife of Canon Nisbett. I would like to associate Dame Minister Smith with that as well.

I certainly would like to be associated, on a more positive note, with the congratulatory remarks to Jay Butler, the young Bermudian who distinguished himself in scholarship and also internationally. Certainly working at The Hague is quite an honour. It is something to note, and I definitely wish to be associated with Jay. He is following in a fine tradition that his family has established.

I definitely want to be associated with the unfortunate condolences associated with Mr. Brian Rowlinson. Perhaps a somewhat quieter piece of information about Mr. Rowlinson is that he played a very pivotal role with the development of the proposal that would eventually become the hospital project, with shaping that proposal as it went through the process to where it is coming now. His expertise within the planning area was of great service to the Bermuda Hospitals Board at the time. He was a member of the board and played a pivotal role in the formation of that proposal that eventually became the project that has been successfully implemented today and has gained international recognition, I would say, for its successful implementation. So Mr. Rowlinson played a quiet less-public role in that project. Certainly, when I was Minister, I was grateful for that contribution on his part.

I would also like to be associated with the tribute to the young gentleman, Mr. Simmons, who won the Pettit essay competition. Again, another young man, as has been stated, who is one of many successful young men in our school system, and he clearly, as has been outlined by the Honourable Dame [Jennifer Smith], is on his way to pursuing some very high heights in the sciences and in scholarship, and should be congratulated for the excellence he showed in that competition.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, from Paget West. Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin has the floor.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to be associated with the remarks that have been expressed respecting John Barritt, former Member here. Really, I would like to speak to his selflessness that made him make the decision to retire at the time that he did. He helped to shape the landscape of politics in Bermuda by stepping aside to enable the election of our new honourable esteemed leader, the Honourable Craig Cannonier. Also just to say that as a personal recipient of the example that he set, I certainly would hope that I can continue to strive to attain that level of excellence that he exhibited through his work ethic and through his ability to cooperate with Members on both sides of the aisle.

I would like to also send congratulations, Mr. Speaker, to four young people who in fact achieved individual successes in the BF&M National High School Challenge, in which fitness was the focal point. The ambassador award was given to Paul DeShields of Bermuda Institute. The other young people who had individual successes in their respective categories were Jaire Duke; Zindziswa Swan, who in fact is the daughter of the Honourable Member Kim Swan; and Ta-Shanae Pitcher Trott, who also was successful. I would like to recognise their individual successes.

Also, if I may, just very briefly, associate myself with the congratulations to Doris Corbin. I believe the Honourable Member Neletha Butterfield did that on behalf, but I wish to speak to that as well because Ms. Corbin, as a young student, finished with my curriculum at Central School and, waiting for time to go on to Berkeley, I was able to go down and assist Ms. Corbin in her class in marking books and helping to impart knowledge to some of her students. Many of them were older than I.

The Speaker: You were a bright student.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I was very blessed, Mr. Speaker, yes.

The Speaker: [*Laughing*] Now I know.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But it was such a privilege because that is a relationship that has gone on for nearly 50-plus years. She is ever-so vital, and it is just such a pleasure to see her Sunday after Sunday as she sits in church, and she does not miss a Sunday. So it is just quite an honour to be able to be associated with that.

Certainly, to Jay Butler, and also to the winner of the Pettit essay competition, young Mr. Simmons. It is just a joy to know that our young people are doing

well, are acquitting themselves well on every aspect and to know that we can look at the positive things that our young people do as opposed to focusing on the negative.

And by way of condolences, I also wish to be associated with those condolences to the family Hilary Soares, Ida James, and Canon Nisbett.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, the Honourable Member from Paget West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. M. Lister, from Sandys South Central.

Mr. Lister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too would like to be associated with the remarks for Mr. John Barritt, a Member of this House. I had the opportunity to serve here with him, also with his father, and also with his uncle. I think the Barritt family has contributed much to this country, and I think that they should be recognised for their contribution.

Just going to the next step, Mr. Speaker, I would like . . . On the first day of meeting we paused for a minute of silence for Mr. Walter Brangman. But we did not take the next step in asking that this House send a note of condolences to his wife Mrs. Lovette Brangman.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Brangman did not have an easy beginning in life, but he had determination. He was convinced that he was going to make something of quality of his life. Mr. Speaker, he talked about the difficult times that he had in Canada trying to achieve his degree. But once he came back to Bermuda, there are many buildings around this country which have his stamp on them, which will remain forever the Walter Brangman architecture buildings, also, his own building, I think down here on Reid Street.

He is a man who gave a lot to this country. But he never had it easy, because he came to this House the same year I did, in 1976, Mr. Speaker. I can remember that year because that election, we were all around the Alaska Hall wondering why Mr. Brangman had not come around to the hall. But we found out after that that he was challenged a number of times. The person who was running against him asked for a challenge.

The Speaker: He did.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Of course, he was challenged, and of course, he got a little closer to Mr. Brangman's total. But apparently, challenges went on and on and on until it was late in the evening. The father of the challenger of Mr. Brangman said, *Let me take the ballots home and come back first thing in the morning, and we can start counting again.*

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: But the returning officer said, *We will have none of that!*

However, Mr. Brangman was declared the winner. He was declared the winner, he came to this House, and he made a good representation of its people for Warwick West and Bermuda in general.

I think the day he was funeralised, Mr. Speaker, spoke to so many good qualities of Mr. Brangman, and not only him, but the way he has trained his family so that they will carry the medal on. That is a wonderful testimony to a man who, I believe, made a valuable contribution to Bermuda.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lister, the Honourable Member from Sandys South Central.

I am now going to recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. H. K. Swan, from St. George's West.

Mr. Swan has the floor.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to follow on with the remarks of condolences that were offered to the family of the late Walter Brangman. The Honourable Member who just spoke before me did an outstanding job. From a personal note, Mr. Brangman was a family member, my father's first cousin, and was one that could tell me about my great-grandmother Harriet Babe Batee, which I could always greatly appreciate in someone who spent a lot of time around, growing up.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: From the heart of Somerset, indeed.

I would like to be associated with the comments being made to former the Honourable Member in this House, Mr. Barritt, one who always made sure that every piece of legislation had the semi-colon in the right place, the i's were dotted, and the t's were crossed. I do not think you will find a Member who looked at legislation as thoroughly. I am sure there are those that do, but Mr. Barritt was the epitome of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the remarks made to the BF&M National High School Challenge. I would like to declare my interest. My daughter was a beneficiary of that, but I would like to salute the organisers and the persons who got up early in the morning to encourage these young people to improve their lives by appreciating healthier living and the importance of exercise.

I would like for a suitable letter to be sent to Dr. Jeffery Sammons, an esteemed historian from New York University, who came to this Island, Mr.

Speaker, to tell us about the history of Louis Corbin, a great golfer who helped reshape and desegregate golf at the professional level in the United States. He was joined at the Ocean View Club by the first President of Ocean View, my good friend, your uncle, Reverend Vernon Lowe, and indeed also thank the work of Mr. Ira Philip over decades in this country, cataloguing the works of great people in this country in the sport of golf.

I would like to be associated with the condolences sent to the family of Carole Ming, who is the mother of Assistant Clerk, Mr. Clark Somner, and my good friend Mr. Louis Ming from St. George's, and associate with the remarks made about Jaret Simmons, who won the Pettit award. The young man also plays for the Somerset Brigade Band. Amongst all the other things that have been noted that he does, he finds time to enjoy music. The visual performing arts and sports are a great way in which we can reach and help mould our young people, and Jaret represents that, Mr. Speaker.

Finally—and I know the Honourable Member Minister Bean would like to be associated with this, Mr. Speaker—the Hackers Cup was organised at Port Royal Golf Course this week by Cambridge Beaches, Port Royal Golf Course, British Airways, and the Bermuda Department of Tourism, bringing celebrities and journalists here from the UK to golf and get a first-hand flavour of Bermuda. This did great things for our country as we look to encourage more people to enjoy the sport of golf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from St. George's West.

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. M. J. Scott, from Sandys North.

Minister Scott, you have the floor, sir.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, continuing in the theme of the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, of recognising our young talent rising to the very top of their accomplishment, sir, I wish to ask that this House send a note of congratulations to a young lawyer who operates within the Attorney General's Chambers, Mr. D. Anthony Richardson, who, whilst full-time contributing to the Parliamentary Council mandate of producing legislation for us, is also a full-time doctoral student at London University where he hopes to complete his doctoral degree in law very soon.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Richardson continues to do really excellent work, and this is showing tremendous commitment to the task. When he returns as a Bermudian Parliamentary Counsel with those kinds of qualifications, we will all be the beneficiaries; indeed, the country will be.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated, too, with the offer of congratulations on the Premier's

Concert list by the Honourable Member Mr. Tucker. I would like to particularly single out the compare Mrs. Ruth Thomas, who made it her last appearance on this noble stage of coordinating, recognising the talent. Some of the talent includes the Jackson School of Performing Arts, who performed so well in this year's concert. Ms. Thomas handed over to young Jennifer Phillips—

[Gavel]

The Speaker: The Minister was in the wrong place. That is all right.

Carry on, Minister Scott.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Yes, handed over to Ms. Jennifer Philips. But before she did so, we all want to recognise how Ms. Thomas solidified this Premier's Concert's standards by selecting the best.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know Mr. Tucker mentioned . . . I wish to also join him in recognising the magnificent international standard of Dawnita Smith and Dezuan Thomas's dance duet, between his hellos and her good-byes. It was extraordinary. On any stage anywhere in the world, it would have held its own.

I stood and watched Kassandra Kaines, the granddaughter of Dame Lois, and I saw Dame Lois. This young lady was tall, and there are pictures of Dame Lois as a young woman, and there was her granddaughter. So I commend her.

Patience Lowe did a Shakespeare monologue. Everybody did well. But these were three that stood out for me. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to [give] these congratulations.

Associating Mrs. Louise Jackson, the Honourable Member, and Mr. Cole Simons, in the congratulations to Ruth Thomas.

The Speaker: Well, thank you, Minister. Time is up. Time is up.

Are there any further speakers?

I am just waiting so the Minister who should not be there is moving away.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Z. De Silva. Minister De Silva, from Southampton East Central, has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to associate myself with the condolences for Mr. Brian Rowlinson as well, Mr. Speaker. Brian Rowlinson, as we all know, was a long-serving member of the Department of Planning, who went on to form his own business and was quite successful indeed, Mr. Speaker. In fact, declaring my interest (if I need to do so in this space), Brian did do quite a bit of work for me in another area. He will be

sorely missed, not only by me, Mr. Speaker, but I am sure by many of the people who he touched.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister De Silva, the Honourable Member from Southampton East Central.

Any further speakers?

No further speakers?

It remains for me to add a comment or two. I wish to be associated with the condolences to the late and former Member Mr. W. Brangman. We know that Mr. Brangman was a very principled person. I think what we will miss is his infectious smile—always so very pleasant. We can say that we stand on the shoulders of one of the giants in our political system in Bermuda, Mr. Walter S. Brangman.

Also, I wish to join in the numerous tributes to the Honourable former Member, Mr. J. Barritt. I have never seen such a keen politician, one who spent so much time trying to get all of the Rules of the House changed so that they were more modern. I am sure that he is going to have a very happy retirement, and we hope that from time to time he will make himself available to Honourable Members of this House. He truly is one of the giants who has sat in these Chambers.

We thank you, Mr. Barritt. We know you are probably listening.

We will move on.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: There are none.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The Speaker: There are none.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Member Ms. P. Minors. Mrs. P. Minors, from Smith's North.

Minister, you have the floor.

BERMUDA MONETARY AUTHORITY (REGULATORY FEES) AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Patrice K. Minors: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the Premier, the Minister of Finance, Paula Cox, I would like to introduce the Bill called the Bermuda Monetary Authority (Regulatory

Fees) Amendment Act 2011, for consideration in the Honourable House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Minors.

I now recognise Minister M. Bean, from Warwick South Central.

Minister?

REGULATORY AUTHORITY ACT 2011

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing this Bill, the Regulatory Authority Act 2011, for consideration of this Honourable House.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. There is a further one? Yes. Carry on, Minister.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ACT 2011

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am introducing the Bill the Electronic Communications Act 2011, for consideration of this Honourable House.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

No leave of the House is required, under Standing Order 28.

Any further introduction of Bills?

[Pause]

The Speaker: I understand these are lengthy Bills, and they are going to be sent electronically. Of course, I would like a copy, though. Thank you.

We will move on.

Other introduction of Bills? There are none. We will move on.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Member Mr. E. Richards, from Devonshire East. Mr. Richards has a motion.

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE TAKE NOTE OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS HIGHLIGHTED IN BUSINESS BERMUDA REPORT ENTITLED "U.S.–BERMUDA ECONOMIC RELATIONS: ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY 2011"

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at the next day of meeting I propose to move the following motion:

That this Honourable House take note of the significant findings highlighted in the Business Bermuda Report entitled "U.S.–Bermuda Economic Rela-

tions: Economic Impact Study 2011" and the implications for Bermuda's workforce, economy, and long-term sustainability.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

I do believe copies of the report have been circulated. The mover of the motion has indicated that he has seen to it that copies have been circulated.

Are there any further motions?

We will move on.

[pause]

The Speaker: Mr. Acting Premier is on his feet. I do recognise the Acting Premier Mr. D. Burgess, from Hamilton East.

Minister, yes?

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn for lunch.

The Speaker: Pardon?

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Adjourn for lunch.

The Speaker: You mean it's that time already? I was enjoying it so very much.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I saw that.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to. The House stands adjourned for lunch and will resume again at 2:00 pm. The House will resume again at 2:00 pm.

Proceedings suspended at 12:33 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:03 pm

[Hon. Stanley W. Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair].

[Gavel]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: The Orders of the Day. Order No. 1—Second Reading of the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 in the name of the Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Minister, Mr. M. Weeks, from Pembroke East Central.

SECOND READING

PROTECTED SPECIES AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Michael Weeks: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the Bill entitled the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 be now read the second time and committed.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment before the House today seeks to amend the Protected Species Act [2003] in order to better conserve Bermuda's endangered species.

The Protected Species Act 2003 provides the Government the ability to conserve and recover Bermuda's most threatened plants and animals, including our national bird the Cahow, the Bermuda Skink (one of the world's oldest rock lizards), and the Spotted Eagle Ray (the newest addition, 2010) that was jigged as it passed under Flatts Bridge. These species serve, as much as anything else, to promote the truly unique identity that is Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the ultimate goal of this Act is to promote the recovery of threatened species to the point where they have a large enough population to survive without assistance, requiring no active support from mankind. And they can, therefore, be removed from the list—the smaller the list, the healthier our environment.

Unfortunately, many of our native species (those that arrived without the assistance of mankind) and endemic species (those that are unique to Bermuda) are under threat due to habitat loss, competition from invasive species, climate change, and pollution.

It is, therefore, the Department of Conservation Services' role to oversee the recovery of our threatened plants and animals and to raise awareness of their importance through its educational programmes run by the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo.

Mr. Speaker, some species are so threatened that they are on the verge of extinction and, therefore, absolute protection afforded by the current Act is necessary in order to ensure their survival with conservation efforts only implemented by experts.

However, the definition of what constitutes an offence under the current Act is very prohibitive. It restricts having in one's possession a protected species, parts of one, and transportation and actions that would constitute maintenance.

This blanket prohibition effectively stops positive interaction with certain species; for example, endangered plants which would greatly benefit from the assistance of the wider public in their recovery. It therefore has had the unintended consequence of

restricting the number of species that could be added as well as the recovery methods that can be employed.

Mr. Speaker, the low penalties for harming protected species has unfortunately done little to halt unnecessary killing or destruction and they are no longer in line with other environmental legislation. This is illustrated by the fact that despite an aggressive public relations campaign and signage prohibiting fishing of Eagle Rays on Flatts Bridge, the Department of Conservation Services continues to find the remains of Spotted Eagle Rays in the area.

Consequently, this Bill addresses these issues by adopting three levels, or categories, of protection that recognise the threats and measures needed to conserve these endangered plants and animals.

Category 1 is the most restrictive and is equivalent to the system protection afforded under the Act. Species in this category have such low population levels that only scientific or expert intervention can be undertaken to ensure survival. Category 1 protected species include the Cahow, the Spotted Eagle Ray, the Bermuda Skink, and the Green Turtle.

Category 2 includes species that are less vulnerable than Category 1, but which still need expert assistance to survive. Category 2 allows for a certain level of recovery by licenced researchers in specific habitats. Species included the Diamondback Terrapin (an aquatic—it is a land turtle), the Yellowwood (which is a native tree), and the Bermuda Killifish (an endemic fish found in most of Bermuda's ponds).

Category 3 is the least restrictive and provides practical but effective protection of certain species which are an integral part of everyday living without subjecting members of the general public to prosecution for performing actions that would otherwise fall under the blanket prohibition.

This prescription, Mr. Speaker, will help promote public interaction on an Island-wide scale. Examples of category 3 species include Bermuda Bedstraw (a type of grass), Bermuda Snowberry (a type of shrub or plant), and Bermuda Cedar.

Mr. Speaker, species for inclusion to the Act will continue to be added after examination of the best scientific information available using the internationally recognised International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria. Each species will be examined to establish whether they are critically endangered or vulnerable on a global scale. Once it has been determined that they should be protected under the Act, each new species will be assessed for the appropriate level of conservation best suited for our local level and categorised accordingly. This will be based on well-defined criteria assessing:

1. The level of expertise needed for each stage of recovery.
2. The best strategy for successful recovery of the species.

3. The level of involvement of the community in the preservation of the species.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment Bill also recognises that certain protected species benefit from active management. Therefore, planting and minor maintenance that will not harm their health can take place without unnecessary oversight.

In cases where a species has to be removed for health and safety reasons for essential services or other needs deemed important by the Minister, the Act would allow for the issuing of a special permit. This will allow for instances such as the transplanting of a tree or moving of a nest. These permits will be issued with the assistance of the Department of Conservation Services.

Mr. Speaker, in order to allow the creation of these levels of protection the definition of what constitutes an offence under the Act has been revised thus allowing certain actions to be undertaken for the lower levels of protection. As such, ownership and local transport of category 3 protected species will be allowed.

The amendments will revise the level of fines to bring them into line with similar legislation. This will better reflect the importance of each level of threatened species.

Consequently, category 3 species will remain at the current level of \$5,000 or six months imprisonment.

Category 2 will be increased to \$15,000 or one year imprisonment.

And Category 1 to \$25,000 or two years imprisonment.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments to the principal Act allows Bermuda to better protect its endangered plants and animals while greatly increasing the chances of successful recovery by including the public in the process.

With these brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Bill be read a second time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Weeks.

Are there any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. M. Pettingill, from Warwick West.

Mr. Pettingill has the floor.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, of course, we on this side are going to be in support of any move that endeavours to offer greater protection to our endangered species, our endemic animals and plants, and our native animals and plants.

But, Mr. Speaker, as with anything I think that the issue when you are dealing with, particularly, handing out heavy fines and imprisonment with regard to people transgressing these provisions . . . I have

occasion, Mr. Speaker, to visit the state of Vermont in the United States on a regular basis, and I note there on their nature walks they have a lot of postings with regard to the species in the area and really educating the public with regard to not just the native plants and fauna but also all of the animals. And I would think that in considering this that many, many people, unfortunately, in our country are probably not going to be aware of all of the wildlife and how precious it is and how some of it really needs to be protected.

It is a good idea—you take the Flatts situation for example, I do not believe this is there—where you have a type of board that is put up that tells the public when they are on their walks and so on exactly what the species are and what to look for and what the concern is and what is special about them. And also to indicate to them very specifically (this is for the fisherman so we do not have the skeletons and so on being left on the rocks) that there are pretty serious penalties that may be imposed on anybody that transgresses the law in relation to protecting these species.

I think it is amazing how people being given the right degree of notice will sit up and pay attention and are going to be very wary of the fact, *Hey, if I catch this particular Spotted, beautiful looking Eagle Ray that I can't just bash it in on the rocks and leave it around the place or use it for bait.* And it really is . . . like with so many things, it is about ensuring that our public is educated with regard to what needs to be protected.

I know that egotistically we might like to think that there are 30,000 people listening to this debate right now, but let's be real. The people that need to be made aware with regard to what needs to be protected are not necessarily listening, Mr. Speaker, with regard to what is going on in here. They are not necessarily reviewing all those laws and they do not know better.

We have a decreasing environment. It is all the more difficult to preserve because of the conflict between man and nature. And it is all the more imperative that, in addition to just having enforcement (which is what this Act is really about and giving indication as to what needs to be protected and what the penalties are going to be with regard to transgressions) that we ensure that people are made aware as exactly to what those species are.

Many people have heard that . . . how . . . the significance to Bermuda with regard to that bird . . . it was only . . . we discovered it in the 1950s . . . I would hazard a guess at 1957 or somewhere around there. But people thought that it was extinct and that it had [been] wiped out after the settlers had eaten the bird on the Island when they first came here. So it was rediscovered.

And so people know about it, they have heard about it, but very, very few Bermudians have probably ever seen one. They have probably never seen a Cahow in reality. They may have seen a picture of it,

they may not have. The same thing with the newts, and so on. I know I was horrified the first time I ever saw a newt. The cat had brought it home. I discovered what a tragedy that was that my cat had gone off and got this wonderful amphibian—that is endangered. We did not have the cat put down, but you know . . . we could not do that much more about it. You cannot educate a cat.

The Speaker: You did not kill the cat?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I did not. Sometimes parliamentarians are like cats; it is like herding cats trying to get somewhere with all of us up here sometimes.

But, you know, we have that to deal with as well in the fact that these species are suffering as a result of wild cats and wild chickens and dogs and everything else as well as the encroaching environment.

So, I think—just to end, I will not be much longer—that whilst entirely supportive of this, that the Minister and the Government would want to take on board perhaps the idea of let us do all we can to educate the public in relation to exactly what these various species are.

And I would suggest at the various nature locations that we post up boards—that we have pictures of the Cahow, pictures of the Spotted Eagle Ray, pictures of the newt—saying look out for these things and by the way they are protected species and you are subject to a serious fine if you decide to pick one up and hurt it or throw a rock at it or, you know, let your dog grab hold of it and this type of thing. We need to let the people know what they are as best as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Pettingill, the Honourable and Learned Member from Warwick West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. T. Lister, from Sandys South.

Mr. Lister has the floor.

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that we have moved ahead with this legislation here today. The idea of protecting the Bermudian species of various sorts is something that has been with us from the very start.

As I am sure you know, Mr. Speaker, as early as 1620 legislation was passed in the Bermuda Parliament (not in this building, of course) in the eastern end of the Island then. But legislation was passed protecting the turtles of Bermuda. And that legislation, I believe, (I may be wrong, but I believe) was some of the first legislation passed in the world to protect a particular species. And so, we have been at this for some time. We understand the value and we understand the importance of protecting the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I agree 100 per cent with the statements made by the last speaker as regard to informing the public. Very often people are—or not very often, maybe it should be more often, but there are times when people appear before the courts for illegal fishing. And sometimes those people are scoundrels. There was a case not long ago where a gentleman was warned that he was fishing and catching fish that should not be caught and he continued on and found himself in front of the courts. That is a scoundrel—no question about it.

But many times people fish and catch fish not knowing that this fish should not be caught. They are just out there fishing, just fishing . . . just enjoying themselves, having a nice afternoon. So it goes back to the points that the Honourable Member . . . actually the Honourable and Learned—Mr. Speaker, I will never understand that—why Mr. Pettingill and others like him have to be “Learned” and we, the rest of us, just have to be “Honourable.”

An Hon. Member: It is just what it is.

The Speaker: They know the law.

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Nonetheless, so be it. We will not go into that today.

The Speaker: There is a difference.

Mr. Terry E. Lister: One day, Mr. Speaker, maybe I will put down a motion to debate that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: But, nonetheless, I do agree that information is power. And so we have to get the information out and let people know what is protected, why it is protected, and that will only make our citizenry better people.

I do not believe that Bermudians will seek to ignore the law and go out of their way and bully their way through the environment, so to speak. But instead, I think that people will feel more informed and that they will be more willing to protect and not do the wrong thing, realising that it is a wrong thing.

When it comes to trees, for instance, Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is a Bermudian over five years old who does not know that you are supposed to protect cedars. And I do not think there is a Bermudian over five years old who would condone cedars being cut down unnecessarily.

From time to time we have had (to use my favourite word of the day) scoundrels throughout the Island who have gone about chopping down cedars at night, odd hours, and trucking around trying to sell them. And we had a chap up in Somerset who used to do that, but the Good Lord took him away. So we do not have to worry about that anymore.

An Hon. Member: A cedar tree fell on him.

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Someone said a cedar tree fell on him. Well, that very well might have been it. But, nonetheless, most people—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: No, they did not. They put him in a wooden box. Most people do appreciate—

The Speaker: He has gone to heaven.

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Most people do appreciate that cedars have to be protected. Now, as we go forward in this debate, we are broadening.

When this information is really understood and deciphered by Mr. Smith, Miss Brown and Miss Dill, there may be a debate between the three over the size of the penalties. We are talking about penalties that can go all the way up to \$25,000; which when things were really good was a lot of money. Today it is an absolute fortune. But I support the size of the penalties on the basis of really getting the message home, that this is important.

Some people would take the attitude of, *it is just a Skink; it is just a Cahow*. Well, we want them to look at it a little more differently and say it *is a Cahow*, it *is a turtle*, it *is what makes Bermuda Bermudian*.

All of us, my age and older, will remember the cicadas, yeah?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: I am hearing a “no” from the Minister.

Minister, be quiet. Don't say no. You have to say, yes, of course.

An Hon. Member: The singers.

Mr. Terry E. Lister: That is it, the singers. You know, on those nights when we were trying to sleep and a cicada got in your bedroom you were in trouble. You had to get up, turn on that light, and find it—you had to find it because you were not going to sleep.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Mr. Speaker, I left this country in 1970. I returned in 1980. I have not heard a cicada once. From 1980 to date—there may be a few somewhere—but I have not heard them. And so, on a personal level, I look and say there was something that we may have taken for granted and may have even disliked, but it was part of us that made us special. As a boy—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Yes, summers would have their challenges. As a boy my swimming hole was Harman's Bay. Well, swimming down at Harmon's Bay we had a great time. We did not realise until years later that it was private property. Back then people did not protect property rights, did they?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: You would walk across yards and all that sort of thing. And so there we swam. And, Mr. Speaker, I guess I should be ashamed to admit this, but as often as I could when I went home from swimming in Harman's Bay I took a seahorse with me.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Mm-mm. I definitely did.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: Yes, I did. I took a seahorse with me. I will admit it. What happened to it? Well, you know what happened to it. It died within a few hours. But I took a seahorse home because I could and I was fascinated by this seahorse in the water with me.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: The Deputy Premier tells me that was the last one.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Terry E. Lister: I was just about to confess that that was the last one, as I quite believe you are right. Because, again, returning in 1980 I have not seen a seahorse.

And, in fact, I became fascinated some years ago when—in fact, when I was Environment Minister—when I realised that other countries have seahorses of a very close species to ours. And I thought, well, could we import them . . . could we import them and set them into our waters and re-establish the seahorse? I do not know where that argument is. I do not know if it can be done. But every time a certain species disappears, the specialness of a place—in this case Bermuda—disappears a little bit as well.

And so, I would like to encourage ourselves as Members and the public to take this matter very seriously because . . . you know, the Tourism Minister out there was singing it—*Bermuda is another world*.

Well, we will not be able to sing the song anymore if we let all these things that make us another world disappear.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. T. Lister from Sandys South.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. N. Simons.

The Honourable Member Mr. N. Simons, Smith's South, has the floor.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As my colleague said, Mr. Pettingill, we on this side support the legislation and the principle of the legislation.

Having said that, there is more fine-tuning that can be done. But before I get to my comments proper, I want to respond to a couple of comments made earlier by the substantive Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the substantive Minister said habitats, our protected habitats, are under threat by invasive species and animals, by climate change, by pollution, but there was no mention of overdevelopment in this country. No mention of the encroachment of our marshes. There is no mention of the issues that we faced when we were debating the Tucker's Point where we have hundreds of caves, hundreds of protected habitats. What are we going to do to address those issues? And how are we going to ensure that those protected habitats remain protected and respected by the Ministers of the day and by our planning laws?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker—absolutely, fast-tracking planning will not help.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister, also mentioned cedars. As far as I know, culturally, we have protected the cedar trees, but cedars are not listed as protected species under the law, and I think it is time that we include cedars under the law as a protected species.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also go on to education. My colleagues, Mr. Pettingill and Mr. Lister, referred to education. And I think that is one of the primary means of getting the community on board in protecting our environment.

Right now we have a list of protected species in the legislation, be they fauna or plants. And then we have the protected environment, I mean, habitats. But where are they listed for the average man in the street? Where can they go and see what plant is protected, what animal is protected? I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we basically list these protected species in our feed stores, at the vet's office, at the nurseries—anywhere that there are people that are interested in the environment. They should also be listed in our schools, I mean, this should form part of our curriculum.

So I support Mr. Pettingill—

The Speaker: The Honourable Member.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —the Honourable Member, Mr. Mark Pettingill—

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —and Mr. Terry Lister in this endeavour.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, we are in support of this and I think that this Amendment that is before us today does not go far enough. I think it is just a filler, from an environmental point of view, and the House's point of view. If they were really, really serious about protecting our environment, protecting our habitats, then why do we not do something about protecting our caves, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, our caves are home to 70 per cent of our protected species. Are they listed? What type of protection are we providing for them? Can I go up and get a list or a map that would show where all the caves are? Can Bermuda—Mr. Joe Blow—go and find out where the caves are to ensure that they know that they are protected and that they have access to vital information and they are appreciative of the endangered species that house themselves in those habitats, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, you know, it is fine to protect a species, but if we look at our (as I said) our habitats that become threatened and you go to the peat marshes—and I go back to the caves—if you destroy them, a number of species, their houses, their lives have been compromised because their habitats have been destroyed.

Mr. Speaker, in many countries you have a list of protected species. And I think we need to make sure that our list is made available to everyone.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of Tucker's Point you can remember the debates that we had that went on for hours. We also touched upon Morgan's Point and the waste that is there. Again, we are talking about remediation, cleaning up our caves. And he has said he is providing licences for people to remediate some of the plants that have been compromised, some of the animals that have been compromised and, in some cases, sites or habitats that have been compromised.

Well, when you provide those licences you need to ensure that you have people who know what they are doing. I mean, license number or Category 1 under the legislation is the highest risk, the highest intellectual requirements to remediate the process. So if you have that then you need to get people who know what they are doing as far as the environment is concerned. You cannot have any Joe Blow contractor go up there and say, *I am going to fix this*, and they are not sensitive to the environmental issue, they are not sensitive to the environment of the species that is

protected that lives there. And so they just go through and do more damage even though their intentions may be well-founded.

So, again, when we issue licences, the licences should be graded based on the level of protection that is being remediated and not just give blanket licence for anybody to do what they want. And so I am suggesting that—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —my colleague says that is what is being proposed. Well, this did not come up in the legislation.

The Speaker: I thought that was in the next one.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: No, what they said—

The Speaker: I thought that was in the next Order, but go right ahead.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I will continue.

An Hon. Member: He has not read it.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The other issue, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Carry on.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —is the protection of our reefs. Obviously, Bermuda has one of the healthiest reef lines . . . our coral reefs are probably the healthiest in the world and they continue to be damaged by ships and other marine traffic. And, again, there is no substantive, punitive legislation, punitive fines that will deter this from happening.

So I know we cannot stop ships from accidentally going on our coral reefs. And it will happen. But what we can do is fine them enough that we raise funds to remediate any damage that is being done.

And so, let us get serious if we are serious about amending the law. Let us read and examine the issues and get it up to date, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, to me this is the opportune time to really, really bring the legislation up to date and ensure that we have done a thorough examination on how we can protect our endangered species, our protected species and our protected habitats.

The Honourable Member Lister spoke about the turtles and so I am going to pass that.

I think the other issue . . . and that is going to come up in the next legislation so I am not going to—

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The issue that we need to address is balloons in this country. We have to get rid of balloons because some of our endangered animals are—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I know—two minutes. Our endangered species—turtles—see it as a jellyfish and they eat it and they suffocate, they choke themselves to death. So, again, in the next legislation we need to address—

The Speaker: Do not anticipate, please.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —Right. We need to address—

The Speaker: That is called anticipation.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —balloons. So I will pass on that and continue.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: As I said, our marshes, our wetlands, they are the most sensitive habitats that we have in this country. There are a number of ferns there that you can find nowhere else in the world. As the technical officers will confirm, a lot of these ferns are on the protected species list and we need to work to ensure that they replenish themselves. And as a consequence, we have to be disciplined in regards to how our wetlands, how our marshes are managed.

Now, as I said earlier, I am sensitive to the Devonshire Marsh because I am there almost every weekend . And if you go down to Devonshire Marsh you see industrial sites going up continuously on the eastern side and on the western side.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know they may be developing on what are ground sites now—ground sites on a marshland. I accept that. But my concern is the water flow from these industrial sites—how they penetrate through the ground and they contaminate the ground water and contaminate the species that live there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Even up at Mills Creek, you are absolutely right. The same sensitivity—Mills Creek has the same issue.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: So, Mr. Speaker, again, we need to be really sensitive and more disciplined about allowing any further development to occur on our marshes. In particular, as my colleague says,

Devonshire Marsh . . . Paget Marsh. At Paget Marsh you could find pre-colonised palmetto forests—that is how they found—

[Phone ringing]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —Bermuda when they came in the 1600s in some parts of Paget Marsh—untouched.

The Speaker: Put that on vibrator, please.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: That is another one—some funny noise in this Chamber.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Carry on, Mr. Simons.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: So, Mr. Speaker, the other issue . . . and he spoke to the invasive species and animals.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to make an appeal to animal lovers who release their pets into the wild. They are . . . they become invasive animals and do such harm to our environment. People with these turtles, people with these cats, people who release parrots and parakeets—they do untold damage to our fruit trees, to endemic plants. So I appeal to people in this country—do not release your unwanted pets into the wild in this country because they [cause] catastrophic damage to our environment.

Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Lost your place?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —no, no . . . yes, yes, yes.

The Speaker: The Member has lost his place.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: The other issue that I want to address is how we address the development of protected species, protected habitats on private property. I know there is the ability for the Minister to negotiate with the private property owners in regards to remediating or protecting endemic species or protected species, but the issue that I am concerned about is that it is difficult to enforce the law on private properties. And if you have a property, an estate, you have land, these people will do what they want because there are not many people who will go out to the back of property to manage any endangered species, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I would like to address is migratory birds, migratory species. Again, they might not be listed on our local list of endangered species, but we are on a migratory path in this country and we need to be sure that we do not

provide any damage or harm to other protected species—in particular birds and even marine life that migrates through Bermuda—be it through the water or oceans or through the air, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said when I began, we in the OBA (in the Opposition) support this legislation, but the Minister and the Government could have done a more thorough job in bringing more substantive amendments to the legislation instead of doing this piecemeal, inadequate, piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Simons, I am obliged.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. C. Swan, from Southampton West Central.

Mr. Swan, you have the floor.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thought I would weigh in with a few words on this piece of legislation. Who could not support it in this day and age?

This Island is 20 square miles of, a lot of people would say, concrete. And we sit here to . . . well, we are entrusted with guarding what we have on this Island for future generations. So legislation like this has to be applauded and welcomed, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I too, I imagine, sympathise with the former Member who spoke, the Member who took the last seahorse that remained in Bermuda from Harmon's Bay. And I am probably guilty as well. I used to . . . well, in my day, swim off the railway pylons down on Somerset Bridge and jump off the Somerset Bridge and . . . in those days, I will call them beloved now because you do not see many anymore, the sea bottom was covered with Sea Puddings—

An Hon. Member: And mussels.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: —and mussels. There are a few—

The Speaker: You regret it, I am sure.

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: —but nowhere near as many as there used to be, Mr. Speaker. And that is to be lamented.

A Member, I believe, spoke from the other place who admitted to being a tree-hugger. Well, I am a bit of a tree-hugger, as well. I deplore, especially, the destruction of old trees. I have a neighbour who complains incessantly at the leaves that blow off a large tree at a property that I own and wants me to chop that tree down and I steadfastly refuse, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: *[Chuckles]*

Mr. Charles F. B. Swan: You know, man has been raking leaves, if they deemed it necessary, for centu-

ries, and in many cases some of these things — whether they be trees, fish, or what have you—were here long before any of us walked this earth. And to my mind they belong here more than we do. But anyway, I am a sea lover, Mr. Speaker.

And I do recall the Minister of Tourism—yes, he did say Bermuda is another world. Well, it is rapidly becoming less of another world. And the things that one would want to attract visitors that are natural, that an Island like this would be proud of in attracting visitors, are disappearing.

So it is important that we do all we can to protect them. And what I am really getting at here is the . . . it is okay to start protecting things now, you know, maybe it is a little too late because nature does not necessarily move at the speed of men or women. Nature moves at its own speed. And I would venture to say that any laws and education that we . . . it has to be a holistic sort of approach . . . any of these things must be broad enough to cover literally every non-human living thing on this Island because we could soon find ourselves with no greenery.

And in many cases, in some cases, we are the architects of our own misfortune, Mr. Speaker, and we have heard some of those talked about earlier. I believe the Member who just sat down touched on a few of those.

I believe laws need to come into place to also address the licensing of people to actually own or operate watercraft of any kind. And certainly, we have had a Bermuda Plan—a new Bermuda Plan—that seeks to preserve space, but with an increasing population that space becomes increasing small. And, as has been said, we have already seen instances where the intentions of these plans are breached.

The last thing I wanted to touch on, Mr. Speaker, was the ability to enforce these laws. We spend a lot of time debating legislation that is all well and good on paper, Mr. Speaker, but the resources need to be put in place to actually enforce them. And it is no good us talking about it and waxing lyrical about what good we are doing if on the ground at the time we do not follow through and enforce them.

So I do applaud the legislation, Mr. Speaker. I think it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to be a responsible individual. I think it is incumbent on the Government of the day to work in a way where all of its various Ministries—any that are involved or have a bearing on our environment—are brought into play with legislation that helps to protect the environment.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from Southampton West Central.

I am now going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. G. Blakeney, from Devonshire North Central. Minister Blakeney has the floor.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to commend the Minister and his predecessor as well, and the predecessor to him, which is me, and the predecessor to him, which is Neletha Butterfield, because this Government has been committed with every Minister given the responsibility of protecting the environment over the course of the years.

And, you know, one of the more recent very exciting initiatives has an international connotation—that being the Sargasso Sea.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of two of our renowned scientists—Dr. Philippe Rouja and Dr. Frederick Ming—having gone off to Washington D.C. to a convention and then having an overture made and coming back to Bermuda, they were able to express to the Minister the interest of an international group of advocates looking to protect the Sargasso Sea.

That sea provides habitat and spawning areas for a number of species—one of which is a very special eel which is a freshwater eel, but comes into salt water to spawn. And, of course, there have been those entrepreneurs based on the technologies that are available looking at that Sargasso Sea as a source of alternative fuel.

So the Rockefeller Foundation as well as renowned environmentalist and marine, I believe, expert Sylvia Earle along with a number of other non-governmental organisations and charities that have international reputations, decided that they would come together collaboratively and make an approach to Bermuda.

And I am very happy to say that there has been over \$2 million raised for this initiative. And they will have a presence in Bermuda to forge ahead with this very exciting initiative to protect the Sargasso Sea, which provides an incredible opportunity not just for Bermuda, but internationally, because of the kind of protection that various species that are protected here and in international waters need and are provided for.

So this Government's track record on the environment, I think, is commendable, notwithstanding comments to the contrary that it does not go far enough with this piece of legislation.

But as far as I am concerned, anything that improves and augments what we have already done in past years bodes well for the future—particularly for those species that are endemic to Bermuda such as the Skink and, of course, our endemic bird the Cahow.

And you will know that Nonsuch Island is a natural habitat for a number of protected species, Mr. Speaker. And there is a challenge. There is a challenge with predators that find their way onto that island—

An Hon. Member: Rats.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: —rats being one—and threaten the lives and the well-being of those protect-

ed species. So it is a very, very committed job I believe by . . . is it Jeffrey Madeiros?

An Hon. Member: Jeremy Madeiros.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Jeremy Madeiros who is doing a stellar job. And he succeeded Dr. David Wingate who was one of the fiercest local advocates when it came to environmental concerns and particularly protected species.

So the track record of the Government, I think, is very commendable. And looking at the legislation you will see, Mr. Speaker, that under clause 2 all the way through (a), (b), (c), (d), it talks to various concerns and the potential risk to habitats and to protected species if the proper protections and the assistance of diminishing or eliminating the potential for species to be endangered have been taken.

However, there is some balance because in certain areas where permits are not required, we have rules, regulations, and conditions that must be adhered to notwithstanding so that we can be assured that the requisite protections are indeed doing what they are intended to do. With that, if there are not any breaches, there are also the specified punitive remedies for offences.

So, I think it has been a very thorough look at what we need to do to help not only protect the species, but to make the general public aware of why and how we can do whatever we can that is humanly possible to ensure that we do have the kind of protections in place that will help. We are challenged by all kinds of things that threaten protected species in our environment, particularly with various developments and patented new things, threats to species in their natural habitats. We can help our species to enjoy a more productive and/or convenient lifestyle.

So those that would enjoy pleasure crafting on the water need to be cognisant of the fact that Styrofoam containers or plastics need to be secured and not just left to blow overboard if it is a windy day and go in the water and these kinds of things.

I have heard, I think the speaker before or the one before him, mentioned about balloons and those kinds of things. Even as far as the annual exhibition with regard to helping to protect species such as birds, there is a restriction on the kind of concessionaire containers that are allowed at the Botanical Gardens. So this Government is very conscientious with regard to the environment and what needs to be done to ensure the protection of those very delicate and endangered species that live in a very fast developing world, even here in Bermuda.

So I commend once again the Minister for bringing this piece of legislation. It may not go far enough in the minds of some, but it does go far enough to ensure that we are on the right path to protecting endangered species and those species that cannot protect themselves and need the kind of pro-

tections through the legislative process, to ensure that they do not become extinct over time.

So with that, again, to the Minister—well done—and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for my short contribution.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney, the Honourable Member from Devonshire North Central.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. K. Horton, from Southampton West.

Deputy Speaker, Mr. Horton, has the floor.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to weigh in briefly on this debate. I will not be long I can assure you.

Mr. Speaker, the first thing I think I want to say is that protection of the environment is a serious matter. Also, knowledge of the environment is, in my mind, a prerequisite to the protection of the environment.

I have heard several speakers speak to education—knowledge of the environment—and that is where really, once I saw the Bill, the first thing that came to my mind was the question of education. And I was happy to hear first the Honourable and Learned Member from the other side, Mr. Pettingill, speak to education and then several speakers on our side of the House have spoken to education.

I just want to kind of reinforce the fact that unless our people become more knowledgeable about the environmental matters that we are talking about, it will be more difficult for them to provide the kind of protection to the environment that is necessary.

So to that end, Mr. Speaker, I am certainly advocating very strongly that we see those who are knowledgeable of the environment participating, supporting, and assisting our teachers in our schools to make matters such as this an important part of education of our young people. Because, Mr. Speaker, the way that we will eventually get to the level of protection that we want to see is when our young people grow up understanding and appreciating the environment that they live in.

I can certainly tell you, I remember growing up as a young boy—this was not a good thing—but you know when Christmas was coming I remember chopping down a cedar tree branch to make it for a Christmas tree in my house. The Christmas tree was made from cedar—a beautiful cedar tree we thought. Of course, that was when there were a lot more cedar trees around then there are today.

But certainly, knowledge and information about the importance of these trees to our environment is important. And once we get to our young people in the schools, then it becomes a natural thing. And that is what we want it to be.

We want to see people protecting the environment naturally—not having to think about it, just automatically going about doing things which are not going to impact negatively on our ecosystems or on our animals that are in the environment.

So I ask that we give greater attention to this whole environment matter in our schools. I can tell you, I spent about—I was probably the shortest lived Environment Minister that there ever has been. I was Minister of the Environment for about four weeks. And I could tell you—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: —I did not sign anything when I was there, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter and desk thumping]

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you though that the four weeks I was there . . . I will tell you how excited I became about the environment. And when I sat down and spoke with some here today to the technical officers about what we were doing and just started to get a grip of really what Bermuda is and what we need to be doing—it is a fascinating study.

The environment is something that each and every one of us must become much more in tune with and so that is why it is important for us to get it into our schools—both in the primary schools, middle schools. When we do mathematics, the examples should be examples of cedar trees or lizards or—

An Hon. Member: Skinks.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: —Skinks. When we do English, it should be engrained as a part of the curriculum—it does not have to be separate, but it certainly can be a part. So that is how we learn. That is a natural way of learning, not by just saying I am going to sit down and learn about lizards, but let it be a part of other parts of the curriculum as well.

Mr. Speaker, also, as we look to protecting the environment it is important because (and I heard one Member speak to it) of our size. You know we have a small community and certainly in our community we have to be much more attentive—or we should be much more attentive—to development and overdevelopment than we may have been in the past. But we must take into consideration whenever we are going to dig and wherever we are going to dig we must always be looking at the consequences, the effects, that it is going to have on our ecosystems.

So I ask that as we move forward we continually keep this to the forefront when we think about development in our very, very small Island.

I think the other thing that is important, Mr. Speaker, is on the question of tourism. And I have

been to many places in the world—one place for instance, Costa Rica. You go into Costa Rica and go into the wetlands and you are able to see the way in which they have been able to maintain their ecosystems, the way they have been able to just protect the flora and the fauna, the birds. It is just amazing to see.

I am happy that in Bermuda right now we are giving it the attention it deserves. I think that in the Ministry of the Environment—and this is not the environment. I found it strange that this is not the environment, it seems like we are talking about the environment—but certainly the technical—

The Speaker: And it is.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Sorry?

The Speaker: I said, and it is.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Oh, it is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not thinking—

The Speaker: It just happens to be placed somewhere else.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: It just happens to be placed somewhere else, all right.

But, certainly, I take my hat off to those who are working in the Ministry, the technical officers, who give attention to these matters and certainly provide the kind of technical advice that is necessary in order to see us in our country continue to protect our environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. K. Horton, the Honourable Member from Southampton West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban, from Pembroke East.

Mr. Roban, you have the floor, sir.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am happy to weigh in on this particularly very important piece of legislation, the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011.

I, of course, as has already been done, commend the Minister for bringing this forward. But I must also commend the Minister, the predecessor Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Derrick Burgess, who began the work on this and basically has done most of the work to prepare this to get to this point, as Conservation Services was moved under Public Works during his period of time there and the work of that Ministry and the Department of Conservation Services brought this particular legislation to the fore.

I would like to also commend those persons in the Department because (from certainly my experience) I find them to be world-class. And they are because they are on the front line with all matters con-

cerning the environment in this country. They are acclaimed and renowned in their work globally—here in Bermuda.

We have superior expertise—whether it be at the Aquarium or in other areas—that some are within the Ministry of the Environment (but as this is a piece of legislation that is going to be chiefly the responsibility of Conservation Services, I will stick with them) who work to ensure the protection of this environment that we have here on these 22 square miles of Island. So I commend them because it is their expertise that has brought this particular legislation here to us.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that although I am pleased to hear that the Opposition is supporting the legislation, I have been quite puzzled by some of their commentary that I have heard so far. Namely, about the fact that this is not enough and that it should go further. Well, Mr. Speaker, legislation can evolve. We have a protected species regime in place which is, obviously, being effectively executed by the expertise that we have on Island.

Let me say, this is not just a job that the Government's departments do, but it is done in partnership. We are well aware that there a number of private advocacy groups out there that also have the environment as their priority and they participate along with us in this protection of the environment. And there is a lot of information sharing that goes on. So this is not an exclusive Governmental role here. And we know who they are, they can be commended for the work that they do.

We also have groups like BIOS that also are a partner on Island to much of the work that we do in this area. So there is a lot of partnership that has gone on. And BIOS has been around in Bermuda for well over a century or more. And so they clearly have been a partner in this role of protecting the environment that is in Bermuda.

This piece of legislation, the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011, is just another piece of what we have to constantly do to update, to advance, what we are doing in the protection of species. Again, I found slightly puzzling some of the comments from Members of the Opposition that I have heard so far only because this Act, I believe, is very clear as to what it accomplished to do.

The intent is to ultimately add additional species under protection. So this is not just a piece of legislation we are passing for its sake; it is actually a step to provide additional protection of species as we become more knowledgeable of our environment. And that is an ongoing process. We do not know everything about the environment of Bermuda yet, even though we have been studying it for many generations. There is more to know, to learn, but as we learn more, we make changes that can ensure [that] protection is where it needs to be. And this piece of legislation is a part of that path that we are constantly on.

And, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister has stated in his presentation, the intent is to add additional species in need of protection and recovery in the restoration where necessary. So this is a step to provide additional protection, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, as we become clearly more knowledgeable of our environment, we learn new strategies of providing protection. The existing Act, Mr. Speaker, did not provide the capacity to be more prescriptive in certain categories of species. So this [amending] Act is going to provide that capacity so that we create categories—critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable—depending on their threatened status. This is what this Act is doing—it is actually giving us more resources, more tools to provide the protection that is required.

So when I hear from the Honourable Members of the Opposition that not enough is being done, I am bewildered. I frankly think, perhaps, some of them may not have read the legislation to really know what it said or listened to the Minister. But this is clearly what the Act is doing. It is going to provide differentiation of certain categories of species.

The Speaker: It is creating levels 1, 2 and 3.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Yes.

The Speaker: That is what is in here.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Yes. It is in here. But I did not hear anyone speak to that (of those who I have heard so far).

The Speaker: They probably did not read it.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: So I am concerned because they play a role as well—the Honourable Members on the other side—in providing the public with information. But if they are not appropriately schooled or have taken time to abreast themselves, that is a deficit to the listening public. So those of us on this side have to carry up the rear a bit extra.

Because this Act—it is clear what it does. It is creating those categories so that we can prescribe and have the capacity to give very specific protection—higher protection for some species, less protection for others. And even venture into ensuring that if we find new species, we can categorise them appropriately. The existing Act did not provide for some of those activities. This will. And because we have available to us world-class expertise on Island who are not just good at what they do, but are passionate about the environment.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, in certainly another Ministry of which I was a part of, I had firsthand experience of that. And there was mention about the Tucker's Point matter, Mr. Speaker. And if I can just, perhaps, touch on that slightly.

An Hon. Member: Yes!

Mr. Walter H. Roban: That particular matter is an example of how collaboration and partnership and the attitude that we have on Island can provide the appropriate advice, direction and recommendation to protection.

Those Honourable Members who mentioned that, perhaps, did not mention that as a result of that particular exercise . . . and let me remind the public, Tucker's Point is almost totally . . . the area at Tucker's Point is one thing, but most of the land of concern that has been a part of the discussion was private land—had not been available to Bermudians [to] access publicly for almost a century. That particular exercise accomplished something very important—substantial acreage was turned over to the Government for protection, Mr. Speaker.

That is one of the accomplishments of that exercise. Areas that have very delicate habitat were given over or are being given over to the Bermuda people and the Government for protection for all time—areas that have caves that have yet to be fully explored.

And there is almost talk (I have heard from Members of the Opposition) that somehow we are not protecting our caves. Well, again, some Members in the Opposition are not just being very open in their disclosure in that the whole process of cave protection takes a considerable amount of effort and work and time.

And I can tell you (from my own personal experience as having had some responsibility in this area) the Members of Conservation Services and the Minister of the Environment—the team over there—this is a constant job of theirs because many of Bermuda's caves have yet to be fully explored. They may know where they are, but the exploration of them that is going to completely ensure that we know all the potential that they have, all the levels of necessary protection that they require, is still being done right now.

But that is a very arduous and very intensive task. It is not simple. I am sure it was going on when there was a previous administration, as well, and it continues. That protection is an ongoing task that Members of the Department of Conservation Services and the Ministry of the Environment continuously do.

And they have some very good people doing it—Bermudians, with the help of some people from overseas, of course. Because our cave environments are special, they are unique. There are already a number of species associated with them that are protected. Because that question came up, whether we are protecting them—yes, we are protecting them.

When discoveries are made, Mr. Speaker, they are immediately added to the list of recommended protected species. And there is a list which is constantly updated, which I am sure the Minister will at

some point in the future bring further updates to that list through an Order. I am almost certain that the Minister is going to do it because this is an ongoing job that has to be done. And this piece of legislation is affording not only for further additions to the list, Mr. Speaker, but the appropriate protection to be prescribed. It is very important, Mr. Speaker.

And so that is why I find myself slightly bewildered by some of the comments as if somehow this is not going on—this is an ongoing task. We will be making amendments to the protected species for years to come because, as we learn more about the environment, as more exploration is done, as we learn new techniques of investigation and research and we do more of this in Bermuda, we will learn more about how we can further protect them. As we dialogue with our colleagues internationally, we learn more about best practice. These are the things that are going to ensure that we will constantly make changes to this body of legislation as we go forward.

So when persons say we are not doing enough, well, that is as nebulous as the air that we breathe, frankly, because we are going to be always making steps to protect because it has to be done. One step will be succeeded by more steps later. More steps will come because more protection as we know more will be required, Mr. Speaker.

And as my honourable colleague who sits just in front of me spoke about, this Government has done an incredible amount of work in this area—as with things like devising conservation management plans, and with ensuring that the appropriate environmental impact surveys are done with all types of development. Certainly, the Tucker's Point development cannot even go forward without certain types of environmental impact surveys and surveys done of caves, surveys done of habitats, and all these things done before anything can happen down there.

So all of that is a part of what we do. And, frankly, we have the expertise right here in the Department of Conservation to do it all. Which is why legislation like this, Mr. Speaker, is utterly important, and that we continue to advance it in the way that the Minister has brought it to us today. Because as we . . . you know, there are going to be more developments of all types in Bermuda as we go along in years. These methods will need to be clearly known and understood and prescribed where necessary.

And might I also add, Mr. Speaker, there was the issue of education mentioned here. And I understand people's concern about education, as we all are, and I do not believe that is a point that anyone in this House will disagree with—the need for education. The only way people know and appreciate the environment is if you get out there and you put the information out there in front of them as early as you can.

And, again, this is not a process that the Government is exclusively involved with or responsible for. There are a number of groups that are involved with it.

We have been in partnership for generations on ensuring that information about the uniqueness of the Bermuda environment is out there for our public to appreciate. And I, frankly, believe that people in the main do appreciate the environment.

Of course, there are imperfections in how we conduct ourselves in behaviour. But, as we know, our environment, Mr. Speaker, is highly admired around the world for its beauty and for its uniqueness. And, frankly, how we have managed it up to this point is also admired.

Yes, perhaps our own feelings about overdevelopment, Mr. Speaker, are things that Bermudians are concerned about and how we manage that, of course. That is why we have plans that are revised every so often. The larger plan for the Island is revised. And you are going to see more plans come forth about aspects of our environment that are managed so that we can protect species within the larger scope.

And the Sargasso Sea initiative that the Honourable Minister mentioned (who was formerly the Environment [Minister] who frankly started the work on the Sargasso Sea project) that even takes Bermuda's scope of environmental protection even further—beyond the 22 square miles—it reaches globally.

And you know why it does? Because we are recognised as an Island, Mr. Speaker, that provides the highest level of priority of protection. As I think has been mentioned, we have been protecting turtles since the 1600s. And I believe it has already been stated that that is one of the oldest pieces of environmental protection legislation in the world. That came from Bermuda back in the 1600s.

So the will has always been there, the concern of the environment has always been there, and it continues. And it is exemplified in this piece of legislation—the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011—Mr. Speaker.

And I am quite certain that, as a result of this Act (and when it is passed), it is going to ensure that some of the things that are done on the ground will be even much more heavily embraced.

As I said, particularly concerning education, there are education officers attached to the Department of Conservation Services who work as volunteers and otherwise and even on the payroll at the Aquarium. These people go out to our schools; they are available to participate with teachers in providing information and assistance for their classes in Biology and Social Studies and other things.

And anybody who has been to the Aquarium certainly in recent years will see that that place has been transformed since we were children into a virtual local research hub for all things concerning the environment. Recently, the Madagascar exhibit was opened. Although it deals with an ecosystem of Madagascar, it merely exemplifies some of the changes that have happened at the Aquarium. But also it helps

us to appreciate the connectivity that we have globally with protecting species and the appreciation for the environment. Madagascar is another unique environment, ecosystem, just like Bermuda is. And the better education that we have about what is going on in other parts of the world, Mr. Speaker, merely assists us with doing what we have to do here in Bermuda.

And, again, this piece of legislation provides another tool for us to carry out those activities. So, Mr. Speaker, again, I am pleased that the Opposition has embraced this. I do take issue with their concern that it is not enough because there is never going to be enough; frankly, it is never going to be enough. We will be here 20 years from now passing more legislation to protect species. That is what we are going to be doing. I can predict it and I do not have a crystal ball, but I can predict it.

This legislation will be amended 10, 20 more times because as we learn more about our environment and what is here that is unique, we will have to make further changes as we go forward to provide protection. As we develop more around us, as the nature of development changes, additional protections are required.

So, Mr. Speaker, hats off to the Minister, the Honourable Michael Weeks; hats off to the Honourable Derrick Burgess who began this process when he was Public Works Minister. And I look forward to what will come out of this—which is additional protections, the prescriptive resources that will be put in place, and the overall process that we will be doing to work with others, because this is not about just the Government, this is also facilitating our work with others to provide these levels of protection.

So hats off to this and all those at the Department who will be doing the work, in the Ministry of the Environment with all the environmental groups out there that are passionate—we will be working with them as well. And we can ensure that Bermuda continues to be highly regarded for the protection it provides to its environment and all the species which are part of the Bermuda experience.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. H. Swan, from St. George's West.

Mr. Swan, you have the floor.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think today's debate on the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 has certainly reflected the amount of concern that many Members have on this particular issue.

I just want to say, a former Shadow Minister of the Environment who spoke today, the Honourable

Member, Mr. Simons, always impressed me as one who really walked the walk with regard to the environment. He certainly lives close to the animals. He lives close to the . . . and he practices that which he always came to the House and preached with regard to the environment. Not to say that others do not, but I say that, Mr. Speaker, because it is important that we do come forward with legislation as we have today, but you have to walk the walk sometimes when it comes to things of this nature. And there is an old saying that I like to pick on that, *If there is no land, there is nowhere for the species to live and breathe and sustain themselves.*

And I remember some of those debates where we were debating Tucker's Point and other developments where people who would herald the environment in instances such as this take a different approach when they are trying to defend the erosion of open spaces. And such is politics, we know, Mr. Speaker, which is why I had to single out the Honourable Member in this regard because he has been consistent with regard to the environment.

Let me say, any person that is travelling into Bermuda by air need only look out the window as they are making their grand approach to the Island to see the greatly diminished open spaces and the lack of open spaces that now exist in Bermuda.

And Honourable Members have talked about when they were they were young and how they used to maybe grab a seahorse or heard the singers sing and so forth. Well, those singers cannot survive on concrete that exists in a lot of those areas today that we used to play . . . sometimes run in the bushes and play house and so forth, and the like, growing up.

An Hon. Member: Play house in the bushes?

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I mean, you used to make little enclaves in the bushes when you were growing up and have fun as children. As children you used to enjoy the environment. And there are still areas in Bermuda today, Mr. Speaker, and I can think of the areas of Granaway off of . . . look southwest from Granaway Heights and you see one of the great forested areas that used to be called Cedar Hill, looking out over High Point, indeed. And I hope that area will always be . . . remain as such.

I recall areas such as Ferry Reach, Mr. Speaker, back in 2003, 2004 having to go to great pains to object (to no avail) to prevent the building of warehouses in what was a very heavily wooded area between the oil docks and the housing development of Ferry Reach. Now it is all concrete. So what species were impacted by that? And that has been very recent and under this same Government.

So we need to know the importance of walking the walk. And as we talk about areas such as Ferry Reach, let us put the marker down today that the area from Anchorage View Lane looking west, I hope

for centuries to come will remain as it is today. But it will only remain so by people standing up and pointing out that that is a future area for some developer looking today to make a way to put homes there tomorrow.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I stopped just on Thursday night travelling west along the Airport Road to catch a vista of . . . a silhouette, I may say, of the [*Spirit of*] *Bermuda* moored in the Ferry Reach area. And I took the photo and I posted it on Facebook because that [was a] photo of a sloop which reflects centuries gone past. The picture that I was able to capture looked the same way as it would have some 300 or 200 years ago when my great, great, great, great grandfather was building sloops himself, Mr. Speaker.

But those particular vistas are few and far between on these islands in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker. And I think it is important that we single out some of the persons that were mentioned. And the Honourable Member that spoke before me, Mr. Roban, certainly was an Environment Minister that took that role . . . as of very great importance and he poured his heart into it. And he did mention the work of BIOS and the work of Dr. Wingate and the work Mr. Jeremy Madeiros, as others have mentioned here today. And BIOS has been around (as the Honourable former Minister said) since 1903—a collaborative effort between Harvard and, I believe, New York University—that sits in that same area of Ferry Reach where once was a golf course, Mr. Speaker. So if persons say . . . what they have to say about golf courses, at least golf courses preserve open spaces.

The Speaker: Well, I know you are going to get to this.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, indeed, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Let us get to this.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: We cannot, Mr. Speaker, talk about the Protected Species Act without appreciating that the protected species need a protected environment in which to thrive. And whilst, Mr. Speaker, we are also mentioning the work of Mr. David Wingate and the work of BIOS, let us not overlook the work of others in the oceans, of Mr. Stevenson who is studying whales and Neil Burnie and Choy Aming who are studying Tiger Sharks—

An Hon. Member: Yes.

The Speaker: Try to bring it together, eh?

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —species in our midst that we take for granted.

An Hon. Member: That's right.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Because of studies that are going on and because of people's courage to go amongst [them] without trying to harm these species, they are now bringing to light their significance to the whole circle of life that we enjoy.

But we will not be able to enjoy this environment in the future. Future generations will not have the Bermuda that they deserve if we allow bricks and mortar to fully occupy this country. So I applaud the Government for coming with legislation to protect species, but we also need to walk that walk and make sure that those protected areas that we have today . . . and we all know, they are in our constituencies. We need to stand up, we need to identify, as the Honourable Member Mr. Simons asked for a list for caves, I am sure that someone knows that.

I know a gentleman, and I am going to call his name, Mr. Johnny Cann from Somerset—my Somerset colleagues here would know Johnny Cann. I used to go diving with Johnny. Johnny Cann would know every reef in the waters going from Daniel's Head all the way down to Southwest Breaker.

I think it is important for Government, if they have not already started, to get with people like Johnny Cann so that you can catalogue every reef, know how many lobsters are there and why they are there and where they moved to. Because we have persons—just simple country folk—in our midst that know our environment and know it well.

The Honourable Member mentioned also about the Sea Puddings and the stings that you would find down there at Somerset Bridge, and I am sure there are other areas. There were an abundance of mussels that used to be in those areas as well. But do you know what we need to do? We need to integrate the knowledge that some of our fishermen and some of the persons—even some of the scoundrels, as the Honourable Member Mr. Lister [said]. Some of the scoundrels are scoundrels because they know the ocean environment. And we need to pick their brain and utilise their knowledge and make them a part of protecting our species.

Whilst we are looking at alternatives to penalties and fines . . . you know, with this recession the average person would find it hard to pay a \$100 fine let alone \$25,000. Why not find a way to put in this legislation some community service which may be—

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of information.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: You yield?

The Honourable Member Mr. Swan is yielding to Minister Blakeney for a point of information.

POINT OF ORDER

[Information]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, just to let the Honourable Member know that a Fishing Council exists. So the stakeholders are indeed a part of the process with regard to consulting and advising and recommending all things marine related, particularly associated with their industry. The Marine Resources Board is another body that helps Government with our considerations when it comes to policy regarding their respective industries.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

You may carry on, Mr. Swan, Minister H. Swan.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate that from the Minister, and might I add that that leads me to one of the other points that I would like to make with regard to the Protected Species Act

This is just a personal pet peeve, and I appreciate the Ministry of Works and Engineering and all that it does—the Ministry of Public Works, and all that it does. But environmental protection is not best placed in the Ministry of Public Works, with all due respect.

It hurt me, as one who when I worked in the Government service came under Ag and Fish at one point in time ever so briefly, but the removal of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries was something that tore at the heart of many who were purely environmental friendly—like the Honourable Member, Mr. Simons, who I mentioned earlier. Not to say that I am taking up his case in this regard, but I know that there are others in the community that felt aggrieved by the removal of Ag and Fish.

There needs to be some type of separation or protection of this particular area which is separate from a ministry whose primary responsibilities are more towards the maintenance and, in some regard, looking out for the development of areas of the country. They are sort of working at cross purposes to themselves—not deliberately, but by the nature of their remit.

I would like at some point in time for persons to take a look at [this] going forward because we have seen a little bit of musical chairs with regard to realignment of Ministries to take that on board.

I appreciate the Minister pointing out to me about the Board. And I might ask . . . I will ask you, Mr. Speaker, I will just make that point that whether or not the appointment of persons in the industry, like fishermen and farmers, is it industry driven or is it Minister appointed? That is just a question I had with regard to that. It does not relate specifically to that, it just more ties in to what the Minister offered as a Point of Information.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, it is important that the Government walk the walk because we have seen instances . . . and I have spoken on the preservation of areas . . . and I listed and I declare my interest. I mean, Ferry Reach is in my constituency; it is an area that I have become very much acquainted with and am in love with as an area of open space. But I am sure in other persons' constituencies [there are] areas, like Spittal Pond, [that] might touch a chord with persons.

I am sure that up and down the Island in every one of the 36 constituencies, Members in those areas need to identify an area that they are prepared to stand up and fight for to make sure that we always can look a hundred years down the road and, with confidence, know that that area is still going to be open space.

And whilst we are on that, Mr. Speaker, just as I am winding up, it is—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes! I am wound up. Just as I am winding up . . . winding down (thank you for the help).

It is important as we urge Government to walk the walk, as it talks with regard to protected species, that when it looks at areas such as . . . recently, we talked about modifications to the Town Cut, St. George's and the channels. There was great concern that there was no environmental study associated with it as comprehensive as many would have thought was necessary. Those are the ways in which a Government can certainly let its legislation be in sync with what it comes in here and touts on the Floor of the House.

I know of some persons that have pointed out to me—just as recently as a couple of days ago over a little cup of tea—how concerned they were because they were not able to look at an environmental impact study which related to that—

The Speaker: No decision has been made.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: That is true.

The Speaker: So you must keep that in mind.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And I do keep that in mind. I am reminding Government of its responsibility to bring it forward with regard to that.

And, you know, the former Minister, Mr. Roban (who was the former Minister of Environment), reminded us of how decisions would change—how the Government's position was changed as it relates to Tucker's Point. But we also are reminded of how the Government's decision was changed with regard to [the] Botanical Gardens and Southlands and all of

that—and it was full-steam ahead in one way and it took the jockey to yank the reins [in] a little bit—

The Speaker: Well, do not forget it is [protected] species now we are talking about.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. And I just want to, in closing, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Yes, yes.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I just want to thank the Minister for bringing forth this legislation on protected species, but note that the *actions* of a Government will do far more good in protecting species than legislation could ever accomplish.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from St. George's West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Burgess.

Minister Burgess from Hamilton East, Acting Premier, has the floor.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about preservation of land and buildings, or wooded area that we have to preserve, we have to understand that we are only 21 square miles of land. And from time to time we can get these challenges because of Bermuda's development. We are not a population of 30,000 or 40,000 anymore; we are [a population of] 60,000. So you cannot continue to operate as if you have 40,000 or 50,000 people. When you have people, when your country is growing, then you need more. You have got to build up. Right?

Let us not put a bad rap on bricks and mortar because bricks and mortar . . . we probably will have to surround the country with them because of the erosion of the shoreline. So you need these bricks and this mortar, but we have done it already down the Causeway, down the Airport. So, Mr. Speaker, let Members not be unkind to bricks and mortar.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that has to be considered is the protection of the arable land and our farming industry. Mr. Speaker, at present we have wholesalers bringing in carrots, baby carrots, against the wishes and the advice of the farmers. The wholesalers are going to bring them for a dollar, right? These carrots carry what they call the carrot rust fly—something you cannot get rid of—and it thrives in our climate. But they are prepared to bring these in because they say they see a loophole in the legislation and they can bring it in. And they really do not care about the farming industry.

We are trying to protect the farming industry, the fish industry, all those industries. That is what we

must protect. Common sense must prevail. But it is not prevailing in that area because they want to make a buck bringing in baby carrots. And I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that annoys me. And it annoys the farmers. But, thank God, we have a Minister who has put an immediate embargo on bringing these fresh carrots in. But it takes seven days before it goes into effect. So they have got the carrots; they brought carrots in last week. And I guess they will bring some more on Sunday. Right?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: To the detriment of the farmers industry.

The Speaker: I know the Minister got that out, but we are talking about—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: This is protection. This is protection of our plants, our farming industry. They can say what they want, right, cousin Trevor Moniz should know better. We know better, right? You know, I like farming and I came up with some Portuguese farmers. As I told him before I speak more Portuguese than him.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: And he has been knighted.

But, Mr. Speaker, I make an appeal to those wholesalers—let common sense prevail and leave those baby carrots where they are because many countries do not bring in those baby carrots because of the carrot rust fly. And they not only attack carrots, they attack any vegetable from that family—parsley, parsnips, and whatever in the case may be. And I tell you, when you bring that in, you cannot get rid of it. You cannot get rid of it. And that is the advice that the farmers gave to these wholesalers and . . . anyhow, they are here. But hopefully—

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister, you got that out.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when . . . frogs should be protected species. Many years ago, Mr. Speaker, when I was—I am saying many years ago—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: —a couple years ago, Mr. Speaker . . . I know these guys around Frog Alley down at Harrisons Bay used to tell me they used to sell frogs to St. David's for \$5.00 for a five-gallon bucket because they would take them down to St. Da-

vid's in buckets. They will take them down to St. David's to kill centipedes because they had a lot of centipedes down at St. David's, but the frogs would clean them out. Now we do not see too many frogs—but there are still some centipedes down in St. David's. But I do not think there are any more frogs down [in] Frog Alley to sell them to them. And if they did it would be very, very expensive, Mr. Speaker. So . . . we will have to talk about that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you know we have to also praise conservation at the Aquarium, as you see in Harrington Sound. There is a protection in Harrington Sound of fish and mussels because once upon a time in Harrington Sound you could get a dredger and you towed it on your boat to get mussels—

An Hon. Member: And clams.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Right! And clams and all that stuff. Now I think you have to dive for them. You have got to be able to stay down there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, particularly in Harrington Sound. I knew of a couple of these old fellows (who have gone on to heaven now), and that was how they used to make their living, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, Mr. Trott and Mr. Darrell. But these fellows have gone on to heaven, which is great, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I always thought the cedar tree was protected. In fact, I remember some years ago I was building a house, and I really wanted to move it over and I was laying it out, but Planning would not allow it because there were some cedar trees there. But former Minister Neletha Butterfield told me the other night that they are not protected. And I said, "Yes, they are protected." She was right; they are not protected. Cedars are not protected. We think, at the present that we cannot cut down the cedar trees. We can! It is not protected by law. I should have known then.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: But right now the so-called Bermuda Cedar is extinct (you know, the large cedar tree). Now they have this hybrid cedar what they call "Darrell's Cedar"—another type of cedar, not the real Bermuda Cedar tree. And Randy Horton is right, the Honourable Member is right. I remember as a little boy there was a neighbour who used to pick that tree out in January for December for his Christmas tree. I thought it was illegal, but they knew the

law, they knew it. That is why they cut that cedar tree down.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is like the mangrove. The mangrove is protected in its area where it is naturally preserved. But if a mangrove tree is not grown there, you can take it down, a beautiful tree.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes. Huh?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I do not know what the bye is saying—

[Laughter]

The Speaker: In its habitat.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes.

The Speaker: I think that is what you were saying.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: What is that? The mangrove tree. So . . . it is all right, Mr. Speaker.

And then the singer, I remember the singer. It would make this noise particularly in the summertime up in the cedar tree. You do not hear them anymore. I do not know—they are gone.

You would know this, Mr. Speaker. I guess I was about three or four years old . . . Thursday afternoon weddings. They used to go out and pick ferns and decorate the church and decorate the hall with ferns.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: The mineral came with it, you know the fellas used to fight over; who's was going to get that bottle of strawberry mineral—they used was a run for the children.

An Hon. Member: Pineapple.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Pineapple, whatever. So you do not see ferns anymore.

An Hon. Member: Yes, you do.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Well, you have to look for them. Before you would just walk by them, they would hit you. Now, you have to look for them.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is necessary and I really want to praise the conservation team headed by my cousin, Drew Pettit. They do a great job. A great job with all those down Bailey's Bay.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, yes. I have got a lot of cousins, a lot of cousins. Best talent, cousin Cole, yes. So they do a great job, Mr. Speaker, and I know they will continue and this certainly will help them make the job go even better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess, Acting Premier.

I am going to take the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. T. Moniz, from Smith's West.

Mr. Moniz has the floor.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I know we are having a long day here as we wait for the Premier to fly back from London, so we can expect to see a lot of the silly season. It is a bit of a filibuster here.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I do not know, you know. The Honourable Member who spoke before me was talking about frogs, but I think he was talking about Cane Toads. I do not think he was talking about frogs at all. But the Cane Toad, of course, was introduced and is a pest. And the centipede he is talking about getting rid of is probably something that is native that we should be protecting—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: —so he had better go back to his books and start learning all over again.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: There is a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: First of all, that Honourable Member loves to be sarcastic and have this behaviour of a politician.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Not like you, right? Not like you.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: His utterance was heard last week on the radio what he and another Member said. I understand that. Right?

But, Mr. Speaker, when we were coming up as children, he was probably more fortunate than me, we knew it as "frogs." And I speak to it as I knew it when I was coming up. He can be as technical as he wants. I know that the people down in St. David's and

the people down in Frog Alley know what I am talking about. He probably does not know—because there aren't any frogs around here.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess, Acting Premier.

Carry on, Mr. Moniz.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Just because he is misled does not mean he should continue to mislead, of course. But I am just trying to set the record straight and the Cane Toad is not a protected species.

Now, what we are here about today is protected species. And, of course, we have heard a lot of talk around and about a very wide variety of things. But this enables the Minister to do certain things with respect to declaring protected species, and you have a variety of levels of protection—level 1, level 2, level 3.

Now, when the Minister is declaring a species to be protected there are requirements in the original legislation, the Protected Species Act 2003, to gain publicity for that. There needs to be, under section 4 of the original Act, a notice of intention to make an order under section 5 or section 6 of the Act which refers to protected species. And what happens is the Minister has to cause a copy of the notice to be deposited with the Director of Conservation Services for public inspection. They shall invite representations from the public and, in particular, from landowners whose property may be affected. And no order can be made until 30 days have elapsed from the publication of the notice.

There are exceptional circumstances where the notice can be dispensed with, but I am not aware of that ever having happened. And that is under section 4 of the main Act—the 2003 Act.

Now, under this Act we are creating a new section 8A. There is a section 8 in the original Act referring to licences that can be given for a variety of reasons—scientific research, conducting aquaculture programmes (some of which we have had) or a horticulture programme. Clause 6 of this Bill introduces a new section 8A in the main Act referring to permits, allowing permits for a number of reasons. And items (a), (b), and (c) are not of any particular concern. Subsection (a) is a relocation, (b) is restoration, and (c) is destruction where there is a risk to the health and safety of a human or to prevent destruction of a building or structure. Now that one could be a bit dubious in certain circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

But the one with which we really should be concerned is [(d)] the ability to issue a permit for dealing with these protected species where there is a necessity or . . . well, the desire, for “installation of utilities, trenching for underground cabling, erection of

fences and walls, and the establishment of moorings where such activities will impact a protected species or critical habitat.” That would require a permit to be issued by the Minister.

The thing that I think should concern all Bermudians is that there does not seem to be any requirement under either the main Act (the Protected Species Act 2003) or the amendment Act of 2011 for there to be any publicising of the application for a permit. If you are going to declare a species to be protected there is necessity to lodge it, to gazette it, to give 30 days' notice for someone to object. Under this system there seems to be absolutely no requirement for any form of publicity.

Now we all know that the first name that comes to mind for all of this, of course, is Tucker's Point, which I think has been mentioned before, where there are a variety of protected species on the property. And one suspects that in due course there may well be applications for permits to move protected species because, as it states under (d) of the proposed section 8A “installation of utilities, trenching for underground cabling, erection of fences and walls . . .”, et cetera.”

Now what we would like to see, obviously (and we will come to Committee on this in a while), is the Government insert the same requirements for the publication of an application for a permit as there would be for the Minister when he wants to make an order that a species be protected or otherwise, if it is not going to be protected.

The same thing . . . now this is analogous, of course, to Planning applications. We have heard the recent controversy [about] the Minister who resigned as a result of allowing certain Planning applications on appeal in a manner which was not a regular manner. The same situation may arise in this situation where you have people who may apply for a permit to move or destroy a protected species in order for them to develop their property.

And in this circumstance, we on this side believe that the Government should put in the same requirement—and we are not asking for any more—for gazetting and publishing of an application for a permit to override a protection order, as there is for the Minister when he makes an order.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Moniz, the Honourable and Learned Member from Smith's West.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Ms. D. Butterfield, Pembroke West Central.

Ms. Butterfield, you have the floor.

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to make a few comments on the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011. I have

heard much this afternoon in terms of “to conserve,” “to protect,” “to restore,” and also “to recover” for now, for tomorrow and for generations to come. But I really think that when we speak about this there are two key words and those are “enforcement” and “education.” And I did hear the part on education.

As the former Minister of the Environment, I am quite aware of what goes on down at the Aquarium, Museum and Zoo in terms of what the education officer does. So I am asking that somehow a survey be done for all the schools that attend there to find out exactly what is going on in conservation and what is also going on in the environment in particular.

I can recall when we did the Bermuda Marine Resources, and it was a guide to their use and conservation. So I am hoping that something like this will come out for the use and conservation of these protected species. And I am talking about the ones that we did in the oceans and the water. And now that we are on land, we are going to have to do the same kind of booklet that continues to show you which areas are protected, colour-coded as to where you can find some of these endangered species, as well, which will give us an excellent idea of what is going on.

I have talked to some of the education officers, and it is just like when someone writes a book. Everybody says you should read it. But we can never, hardly get our young people to read it and decipher it as to what each chapter is about. And so somehow we are going to have to look at these species that we are speaking about today and find an innovative way to reach, not just our young people, but we ourselves. Because then when you go to enforce it, the individual who has probably picked up a Skink, and did something with it, says, *Well, I didn't know anything about it.* And that is probably right. He does not know a thing about it because we are not out there educating the public as we should.

The other problem is that educators . . . just like we have a thirst for education, they also have to have the added thirst for the environment. And it is very important to want to tell our young people all about the environment, but you must have a thirst for it. You cannot have the same young people going down to the Aquarium and the same schools talking about the same things and it is not reaching the vast numbers.

So it has to be an all-out effort to find out what we can do with the information about this. And I think it is serious. If we are going to enforce it, we have to enforce it. But we are not going to be able to do . . . when someone gets a lawyer and says, *Well, I didn't know anything about this . . .* and we must get serious about how we are going to do that.

Now I can give an example because I have lived it and it still hangs on my wall today because the *Bermuda Sun* had written, “Hands-on Environment Minister.” And that was my time when I was swimming with the turtles. I have never done that before in my

life. I did not even know there were that many out there, Mr. Speaker.

As a matter of fact, I had to watch those young people from Turks and Caicos and Barbados and all different areas that came up when we had our conference on this—jumped over. Of course you know, Mr. Speaker, I am from the North Shore. There was no way I was flipping over in those things backwards, so I asked if I could dive in. Of course, I dove in head first and we had to catch a turtle.

You know, the story about the turtle and the hare? Thinking that turtles are very slow—but they are very fast in the water—I tried to catch one. I am telling you, it is a good thing I was a diver along the North Shore. My father taught me how to do all of that as a young person, holding your breath.

But it was still quite too fast for me and, of course, there is a way that you can beat . . . like we tried to beat the system. And so what I did, Mr. Speaker, was wait for that turtle to get to the net and I said “got him.” That was the easiest way to do that.

That picture still hangs in another place called C.A.R.E. Learning Centre. And when the children come and see it, they say, *Gee, are you in a fish tank or a swimming pool?* And I say, *No, it is right out there—Great Bay, or I think anyone from Somerset can help me here with [where] all the turtle grass is.* So that is where it was. And just to think that these young people did not know about that. And now you can see the turtles bobbing up their heads, bobbing out of the water, because now we are aware of these things. But at that time, those young people that saw that turtle were not aware of it.

I can remember, I think . . . I cannot remember the doctor down at Conservation Services. He said that they had just found a physically challenged turtle. And you might wonder what I mean, but one of his fins was smaller than the other one. We could have destroyed it, whatever, but they took care of that turtle. And I said to him . . . I do not even know if that person is here with us now. He is now the Director of Conservation Services. He could remember. We took that little turtle to West Pembroke Preschool to show the children how to take care of it and treat it. And at the same time you could explain to them about a physically challenged individual versus a physically challenged turtle. So they asked to name it, and of course they named it “Stella.”

I do not know where Stella is today, but we did a wonderful job—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: Yes. And maybe it has gone back into the ocean somewhere.

Just to show you that at that time we took things out to them and explained it to them and that is a very important thing.

But just having that picture there lets me know that we have got to do a little bit more education. It is good to preserve, it is good to protect, it is good recover, it is good to restore. But it is just as important to put it in the minds of our young people and even our adults.

I have a very special friend who does wonderful work in doing things. And I remember when Joanne (I cannot remember her last name) wrote the book *The Lizard*. And this educator took that book apart and just taught those young people all about this lizard. And it is amazing how they respect it. Because today if you find one in your house, you are going to want to go get some spray to kill it. But I say to my children even now, *Let it go*. Because my mother used to always say, *Leave it alone because if it doesn't get any food it would eventually die*. And sometimes these things protect us from cockroaches and all kinds of things.

My father used to be afraid (and I see the Acting Premier looking) scared of frogs. He would not get of his car if he had to stay there all night. But you would hear him tooting his horn because he did not want to do anything to it and somebody else would scream go get some salt—but even when you are young you say, *No, no, no. Don't do that*, because they also protect us from other things as well.

So I hope that with this here the Minister will look at making sure . . . it is okay to pass legislation, but we have got to make sure that we are educating everyone.

It was a wonderful book that we did on the marine environment—pictures of what the fish look like, what you should do, what you should not do, restrictions. And that was discussed, too, because I remember when you were only supposed to get two Rockfish, but I am sure they got more than two. Some were reported. Some will get away with it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: That is right . . . the Shadow Minister . . . it is so true.

And the way that the e-mail works today, here are these guys taking pictures in their big yachts and boats. They just show you the two they have got up front to take the picture, but in the back it is about six more. Had we been able to identify them and had we been able to even identify the boat . . . but then that is where the enforcement comes in. And too much of this goes on in this small Island and also in the ocean around us that we—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. D. Neletha I. Butterfield: The Shadow Minister is talking about his factions.

I know, as the former Minister of the Environment, when I got on that boat (I cannot remember the

name of the boat that the fishermen, the wardens had) . . . well, that would not serve them any purpose out there in this deep, wide ocean. So what we ended up [doing] under my time was to get them two new boats because it was important that they could go out there and enforce what they had to do. You know the challenges we have in spending money, but you have to make a case for it, and that was very important.

So that boat was able to do a lot of things. And then I remember the fishermen saying, *Oh my God, that Minister has gone and gotten GPS on us!* So those are the things that we do.

I applaud the Government for putting this in place. I knew it was coming because so many things we saw we did not see and we want our children to recognise and our grandchildren—those to come—to say these are some of the things that once were on this beautiful Island and now have come back.

So I want to make sure that this happens and also that a lovely booklet such as this for the fish could be the same booklet for those things that we need to protect on this our land and Island home.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, the Honourable Member, Ms. Butterfield, from Pembroke West Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Tucker, Hamilton South.

Mr. Tucker has the floor.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure and a privilege to rise today to speak to this Protected Species Amendment Act 2011. Mr. Speaker, I say that with a lot of heart. Contrary to what people believe. I do say with a lot of heart because as you read here on the first page it says under “Amends section 2” it says “‘conservation’ means the preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, wildlife and genetic diversity.”

Mr. Speaker, I speak to that because I had a great opportunity when I was young to go to Nonsuch Island. And this was when David Wingate was out there, and we came one day too late. And this was when we went down to the Biological Station and this is when the boat used to be able to go underneath the Causeway Bridge, and we went over to Nonsuch Island. And the turtles had just left the day before, so we just saw the remnants of the shells there.

But that very day put something in my life that has not left me, Mr. Speaker. Because just, I would say, maybe a year and half ago . . . and I am a member of the Bermuda Zoological Society, and I take advantage of the opportunities when they offer members the opportunity to go to various different spots. And just, like I said, about a year and half ago I had the opportunity to go out to Nonsuch Island once again as a member and I took my youngest son with me.

Because of the damage to the dock out there, you either got ferried across by the conservation officer or you had to swim. So the *Endurance* tied off and most of us swam across. And I was one of them with my son. We swam onto the Island and, once again, I took my son for the first time to Nonsuch Island. I had been on other occasions because I have some good friends in the environment ministry. When I used to work for Parks, I used to go out there. And that particular day we went out there we happened to see the Longtails in the cliffs and the wonderful works that were being done out there.

But, Mr. Speaker, what took me aback—because I knew some people out there—was the lack of funding that Nonsuch Island had received and it was not able to do various things. So, Mr. Speaker, when I got back I said, *You know what? Let me see what I can do for them.* And I called a very good friend of mine, my golfing buddy. He happens to sit in another place now. And I said to him, “Vince, do you think you would be interested in giving these guys some money for Nonsuch Island?” So he said, “I don’t know. I will have to have a look at it.”

I said, “No problem.” I made the necessary calls down to the Aquarium and I said, “Look, I want to take Mr. Vincent Ingham over there and have a look and see what we could do” (and this was just for the solar panels at this point) “to try to get the solar panels back up and things of that nature there.”

So we went over, and the particular day we could not go so we rescheduled. It happened to be when school was out last year, November 11. School was out and once again I took my son with me. We left from Tucker’s Town dock and we went out to Nonsuch Island. And we went and Vince was a little terrified of water, but that’s all right. It was a little rough this day. We went out, tied up, and Vince got a complete tour of the Island. He got a true blessing.

At the end of the tour, once we talked over what needed to be done out there and what was happening, Vince, when he was out on the point where the Longtails are, when he was looking out at the other side of Castle Road looking over the vegetation—Vince says, “You know what?”

The Speaker: I would . . . Mr.—

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: —Mr. Ingram says, “You know, there is going to be a recession and we might have to create some jobs., With some of your trained people we probably can help people to cut down casuarinas and do various different things and to help.”

When we were leaving and going on to the other side—the south-eastern side—of the Island, the Cahows were in there nesting. And the conservation officer, Jeremy, took the bird, went down into the nest, covered him over and Vince got to see these Cahows.

The Speaker: Did he write you a cheque?

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: It was unbelievable, and to hear them.

The Speaker: Did he write you the cheque?

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Huh?

The Speaker: Did he write the cheque?

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Oh, did they ever!

The Speaker: I think that is what you are trying to get to.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Oh, yes. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, he was excited to see that. And that was the selling point. And time has passed and talks have gone on, and just last year BELCO gave them \$50,000 up front. And if I am not mistaken, I believe they get \$10,000 every year.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Fifty? They get \$50,000 for the next ten or five years?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: For the next five years BELCO has given them, will give them, \$50,000 towards the preservation and the upkeep of Nonsuch Island because the important—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Pardon me?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Oh, this was before, this was before.

But what I am saying is that, Mr. Speaker, not too many people know that story. But I want that story to be told because of the fact that these things do take place, and it takes place because it was put in somebody’s heart. And it was put in my heart at a very young age when I went to Southampton Glebe.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: An excellent school.

An Hon. Member: Dalton Tucker.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: [Ms.] Dalton Tucker was my principal. Yes, she was.

But, Mr. Speaker, for that there and my son’s experiences, he now also keeps me very grounded to

the environment and the things that we do and how we do things.

Because also, Mr. Speaker, when I was going to school, that is when there was a big ban, or talks about where you were not allowed to rest soda cans down because Skinks used to go into soda cans—

An Hon. Member: And die.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: —and die. And it was only through early education and intervention . . . so now you continue on in this mindset—you cannot do this and you cannot do that in certain areas.

And also, Mr. Speaker, when you have the opportunity to live in the beautiful area of . . . with the constituency number—

The Speaker: The Honourable Member is speaking to the Protected Species Amendment Act.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Yes I am, most definitely. And that is why I brought up—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Mr. Speaker, and as I said on the first page “conservation means preservation.” So I was speaking about the preservation of Nonsuch Island and the upkeep that it takes to get to that point. And then I just also spoke about the Skinks, Mr. Speaker.

But now I am going to speak about the Spotted [Eagle] Rays. If you ever have the opportunity to come down to Harrington Sound very early in the morning just before the sun rises, and you be patient and quiet—

The Speaker: Is that 5:30 or 6:00?

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: Well, now you can probably do it around about . . . just before 7:00. But make sure you are early because they are creatures of habit. And they come across and they look ever so graceful when they swim across.

It so soothing to your soul, Mr. Speaker, I am telling you, this is one time you need to come out of the West End early, just to observe these creatures just relaxing. And they love to be very close to the sound, you know, Mr. Speaker. They are very close to the edge. So you can see them just gliding along like this here. But you had better move early in order to see them. And it is a true pleasure and delight. The only other time I have seen them . . . it was a perfectly calm day and I was coming out of church. And we just happened to walk down on the edge and we saw them, right on the water's edge down there. So it is truly a pleasure and a privilege to have the ability to observe these things.

If we do not protect them, no one would have the opportunity to observe them. But as the Honourable Member who just took her seat mentioned, we also have to educate people and make it as simple as possible so that they can just have the basic respect of these various creatures, elements, trees, so that they will then say, *Okay, you know what, I am going to try to make a difference.*

And those who do have the means—there are other areas in conservation, Mr. Speaker, that they can also donate [to]. They may not have pockets as deep as BELCO, but they can certainly make a small donation. Even just becoming a member is good enough to start.

Mr. Speaker, I would also just like to touch on the fact that when I went to the Cayman Islands with all the various things that they have going, conservation is a big part of the boating programmes when you go and swim with the stingrays out there. They always talk about conservation because they are protecting what they have—when they have that little sand dune and how the fishermen used to just feed them when they came in there. So now those stingrays are creatures of habit. They are used to being fed. They are not going to do any work—they just wait for the food!

But when the boat was going back, he stalled the boat and he dove for a few starfish, just to show us, to feel them and touch them. And then he threw them back into the water.

So education is always an important part. And if we get them young, Mr. Speaker, it makes all the difference. Because when you have that type of knowledge it teaches you peace, you have tranquillity, and you have less aggression. And that is something that we also can look towards with our young people. Because they say that if you have an animal to take care of and raise . . . you cannot not feed the animal, you cannot shout at the animal. You know what I mean? So it teaches you that bit about having animals, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the protection levels of this here being 1, 2 and 3, that is ever so important because categorising things and putting things in the right perspective makes you appreciate it a lot more. There has been this talk about why do this and why do that. But when we categorise things it helps to make it easier. It is easier to dispense information and it just makes common sense.

That is the most important thing about legislation, that at the end of the day it makes common sense, it is practical and it is user-friendly; all can understand it, even they who want to disobey the law. Once it is enacted they would understand the consequences of the law, which is ever so important, Mr. Speaker.

Now Mr. Speaker, as we talked about Bermuda Cedars, I can clearly, clearly remember being sent to get dry cedars. My mother used to use dry cedars for her Christmas trees. I clearly remember going out

to the tracks and cutting down a dry cedar tree that may have been there. And I am happy to know that that particular tree will be protected to the full extent that we would like, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would also just like to add that when it comes to licensing in the various different areas and officers and this and that, that there are things that need to be done and sometimes people need to be given permission to do it. And that is when we have the technical officers and we have the technical people that are trained in these areas.

I can honestly say that in this one particular area when it comes to nature, it is a natural love for the people that deal with it. That is why some of them do not like to go too far up on the ladder, because they do not want to get caught in the politics of it. They just prefer to remain down on the bottom and just do the science of it. And the information that they pass on is ever so vital and they do it for the love. And that is one of the things that is most important and you would really get a great grasp of.

I truly enjoyed my period of working in the Department of Parks, even though I was a carpenter down there. But it was truly an eye-opening experience when I was given the opportunity to even go down to Fisheries and install the lab down there, some cabinets. Just my time down there installing those labs in Fisheries and in the plant protection area of the Department of Agriculture down there gave me an opportunity to speak to people about various different things that go on. And a lot of people think that nothing really goes on; but a lot of science work does go on in those particular labs and especially down in the Department of Fisheries.

We have produced two young doctors out of that particular area that have come up and been trained down there. One of them is still based at the Department of Fisheries. Another one is down at the Aquarium working. But their love and their knowledge and their study have been used worldwide. So, Mr. Speaker, we should never underestimate the talent that we have in this country, what we are doing, and where we are going to end up. And we can only get this way by the diligence of that Department and the Ministers of the day to ensure that when they get information that they act and they accordingly in the best interests of Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Tucker, the Honourable Member from Hamilton South. I thought you were going to tell us about the Turtle Farm in Cayman.

Mr. Darius D. M. Tucker: I can, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member Minister, W. L. Furbert, from Hamilton West.

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today we are debating the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011. Mr. Speaker, I guess the question that some people may be asking, and it probably is an obvious question, is, Does protection of species really work? There is no doubt that it does work.

I recall years ago when in Harrington Sound the Government of the day had asked for commercial fishing to be stopped because the fishing in Harrington Sound was being overused. In fact, my wife's grandfather was the last official licenced fisherman in Harrington Sound. He was a gentleman who used to go for all those mussels.

There is a little beach below Harrington in My Lord's Bay Road, right at the very bottom. And we used to call it Mussel Shell Beach because he used to come in, get all his mussels put them in a big barrel and then boil them. He would then empty the shells right on the beach. As a matter of fact, if you go around the beach today the mussel shells are still there. So he was, like I said, the last official fisherman in that area.

If you look at Harrington Sound now, life is starting to come back. As a matter of fact, it has been coming back. Right below my particular property you see lobsters, you see a lot more mussels, you see . . . I call them . . . I do not quite know the correct term for them, but we used to call them Sea Pusses. Remember those?

An Hon. Member: Soft rocks.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, they were a long—

An Hon. Member: Sea puddings.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Sea Puddings. I thought we called it a different word, or maybe that is what Hamilton Parish called them. We called them . . . and I do not want to use it in Parliament . . . maybe it is not the correct word.

The Speaker: Well, you can find out the scientific name later.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, but those are quite abundant below my dock. And there are a lot more fish around there.

And talking about those—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes. If you want some, come below my dock and you can have them. You cannot take them out of the water, I guess. But you can put

them under water and take them up to Somerset, I guess, and put them up there.

But these rays, let me just tell you, I must admit there are a significant amount of rays in Harrington Sound. And I have been living at this property probably for 15 years, and the only reason why I do not go swimming in Harrington Sound is because of those rays. I remember I talked to David Saul once and I said, “David, I see these . . .” I am thinking of whip morays that are coming by . . . and you saw a guy had an accident. I think it was a couple of years ago over there in Australia and that is the only thing I am thinking about.

And David, said, “Wayne, there is no problem with these rays.”

The Speaker: You are talking about the stingray.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, if I was ever in the water and I saw one of those things come before me, I promise you, I will walk on the water like Peter!

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I will, I will. I was planning to just take off and leave those rays right where they are. But they are the most beautiful things as they come up . . . and I will confirm what the Honourable Member Darius Tucker says. In the early morning when Harrington Sound is like crystal clear and these rays . . . and even times when they are flapping their . . . I guess what they call . . . what is it, wings?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Wings.

And it is to shake off I guess these things that are attached to them. But they are the [most] beautiful sight that one can imagine. So I strongly support the protection of these rays.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, we need to make also . . . and I am not sure whether it is a law or policy, it has always confused me, about the fishing off Flatts Bridge. You see a sign that says “restricted.” But no one has ever confirmed with me whether that is—right off the bridge itself—whether it is law.

First of all, it is dangerous. But the amount of people in the summertime . . . and I had one of my constituents call me up and say, “Wayne, you have got to get these people off the bridge.” I called the police at the time and you will see policemen sitting right there at corner and will not tell these individuals to move. So, again, I would ask those who are responsible to check to see whether that is a law or a policy. I do not know whether it that is just something that says “restricted.” Restriction, meaning like we are restricting you, but it is not . . . No, it says “do not fish.” It says “do not fish or swim.”

An Hon. Member: It is prohibited.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, I do not know whether it is illegal. To be honest with you, I do not know whether it is illegal or not. But I think those types of things we ought to enforce more. I mean, those fishing rods off that bridge, with the current . . . and they may catch quite a bit of fish off of there. So we need to be very careful—particularly those who are fishing—because boats are going through Flatts Bridge.

But I think we need to tighten up the legislation to ensure that people clearly . . . and those who are monitoring our roads—not our roads, but the Police Department will enforce that particular position, particularly in the Flatts, maybe other bridges, maybe the Somerset Bridge. I am not sure whether . . . I know in Somerset Bridge they literally have a . . . there is a place out there where they can literally fish off. So I do not know whether it is restricted or not in other areas or just in Flatts. But I think that we need to do it.

So I support the Minister coming here today bringing . . . because I believe that everything in life has a purpose. No matter how small it is, it helps us in one way or the other through life’s cycle for protection.

And I know that when I was asking the technical officers, basically, *What is a species?* A species is just like a family. So in other words we are a higher species and for some reason we decide—

An Hon. Member: We think we are.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, yes. But, you know, we decide what other species are protected.

So it is important that as we remember and take into consideration, because things that we used to see when we were younger . . . I do not see many crabs running around in Warwick anymore. Remember when we used to come across, and those crabs used to be racing across the road? I do not know where . . . particularly now since they have the development up there, they have probably all disappeared. But South Shore . . . those crabs were out there. I have not seen a crab for so long. And to be honest with you, maybe it is just me, but I have not seen a crab. I do not see many . . . when I was younger we used to catch those lizards by the little loop—

The Speaker: Newts.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I do not see many lizards. It shows you that we did not realise what we were doing when we were younger. Catching all those bees in the bottles and looking at them and shaking them up and down and doing those types of things. We did not realise what we were doing as far as destroying our own environment at a young age.

So now that the country, the world, is more involved and more knowledgeable about the impact of losing certain species, like I said, I welcome the Minister bringing the further protection today.

I heard the Opposition saying that we have not gone far enough. But I think it is very important that the Opposition, if they are concerned about . . . at least if they are concerned about a specific species, don't come and say we have not done enough. Come and say that we should be protecting that particular species. You know, come and tell the Minister what the particular species—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, I am not sure whether a cave is a species. But those things that are in a cave are species. And those things that may be in a cave are already protected. But do not just come and say, *Protect . . . We need to go further*. Come and say we need to protect the ants or the cockroach, I do not know, but just do not say we need to go further.

Over time Government will, in its wisdom, through its technical officers and those who are very much concerned about the environment, recognise those species that we are losing.

So, today, Mr. Speaker, those are just a few words that I wanted to comment and give the Minister support.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Furbert, the Honourable Member from Hamilton West.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Lister, Sandys South Central.

Mr. Lister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to continue on with some of the points that the previous speaker brought to our attention—species that are missing, or very seldom seen.

I know for a fact, Mr. Speaker, honeybees are very, very difficult to find these days. You know as a youngster, Mr. Speaker, during the summer, specifically, I used enjoy going out. I would take a bottle with a little bit of water in it and catch a bee in it. And I would shake the bee until it would become stunned, you know, Mr. Speaker. And then I could take that bee and put him in my hand and he would just lay there and I could inspect all of the intricate parts of the bee. And what I would do, Mr. Speaker, following that I would put him in the sun. And what was so interesting was that I would see him first move a leg and then he would move his wings and eventually he would fly away. And I always found it very interesting to do, Mr. Speaker.

This past summer I was explaining that experience to my grandkids. And we went out to see if we

could find a honeybee. And it was very difficult to find any bees to have that experiment, Mr. Speaker.

That is one of the things that you really have to look at. People said to me—I mentioned it to someone yesterday or recently—and they said that the radio signals, which are in the air now, disrupt the bee's signal for being able to communicate. I do not know if that is true, but this is one of the things I would like the Government to take a look at and see if that is so, if that is really a fact.

The previous speaker, the Honourable Minister, spoke about crabs which have now almost gone from our environment. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, when you went along Horseshoe Bay going toward Church Bay and along the South Shore, particularly on a rainy night, the road would be full of crabs running back and forth scurrying all over the place trying to make themselves safe. You can ride up there now on a rainy night and not see any. There is not a night that you would go through there that you would see one of the land crabs.

Another thing that I used to enjoy in the summer was the cicada. We used to call them singers. In the summer and early spring you would hear them in the cedar trees making their noise which was like the summer's sound.

I had the opportunity maybe two years ago, or beyond that, to go . . . I was in Greece. And when I got off the plane and away where it was quiet in the countryside, I could hear this sound which I knew I had heard when I was a youngster, you know. And I took it right back to those cicadas. And we do not have them anymore. And I think the reason too is because Kiskadees and things of this nature—things that were brought into Bermuda—those Kiskadees eat them and have destroyed the whole area of these cicadas.

Mr. Speaker, there are many things that this environment had for many years which are now disappearing. And I think it is very timely that the Minister brings this Bill so that we can actually try to address some of these things. How can we preserve what is here? How we can preserve what is here, because a lot of these things are really part of the Bermuda environment.

I think you remember, Mr. Speaker, the cicadas, which were a summer sound. It was very, very familiar in the summer, all summer. Many young kids would go out and catch them in the trees. But I think we went to great care to let them go so that they could recycle themselves. We would play with them, but the environment had to be protected. So I think there are many things that were there that are no longer there, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to speak briefly about the environment and protecting our environment. And this is with people who have run fast food stores, Mr. Speaker. You will see up the street from a fast food store the containers from hamburgers and all these sort of box-

es with the sign of these stores on them—people would eat them, the product, and just drop the box.

People need to protect their environment, they have to protect themselves and protect the environment. I think what we should do is that the people who are [held] responsible for dropping this box are not only the person who drops the box, but [also] the person who sells the box.

The Speaker: Well, we will deal with that in the next Order.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: That is the next Order? Okay. Fine, fine, fine. Okay, fine. I will deal with that.

But I just want to show that we have a right to protect our environment.

The Minister brings this [Bill] today because he is concerned, and this Government is concerned, about the preservation of this environment and that the species that we knew as young people and the species that we have now are protected as we go forward.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lister, the Honourable Member from Sandys South Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. M. Bean.

Minister Bean, from Warwick South Central has the floor.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to colleagues again.

Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief but I thought it important that I add my two cents to the debate.

Mr. Speaker, when you pick up this Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 and you look at the lists, for my part, Mr. Speaker, only 10 per cent—only 10 per cent—of the species that have been listed do I actually recognise. Ten per cent! And it is really an educational experience for me just to go through this process. I never realised we had so many endemic species in our country, especially in those areas where the majority of us will never get an opportunity to explore—for instance, in our cave system.

So it just goes to show how important it is first to have the knowledge, an awareness of our environment, but also have the consciousness to be able to govern ourselves accordingly in order that it is protected.

Mr. Speaker, what that does bring to mind is the concept of sustainable development. I have heard—on the Opposition side—the need for us to curb brick and mortar and the fact that brick and mortar has encouraged the disappearance, or the endangerment, of many of our native and endemic species. And I agree. And that is the whole challenge of sustainable development—finding that balance. It is very

difficult. And as humans I do not think we will ever get it perfectly right because what is perfect for one person obviously is not perfect for the next.

Mr. Speaker, some Members mentioned that they have seen land crabs disappear. I totally agree. At one point South Shore was full of land crabs. Any fisherman knows that you need crabs to catch Hogfish.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: And if you cannot get crabs, you have got to get suck rocks. But crab is the preferred bait. And today anytime you go anywhere on South Shore you would be hard pressed to find a crab. And that tells me that there are some challenges. Something is out of balance, something is out of whack. But what else is missing?

Mr. Speaker, when I was younger I can recall being stung 30 times because while walking through the trees I bumped into a red bees' nest, or what I called in the day, wasp or doctor bees. Mr. Speaker, in the last 10 years I have only seen one doctor bee in Bermuda, and that was in St. David's. And not just in the Chapel of Ease area, it was on the eastern side of St. David's Cricket Club, the most easterly point in the country—I was able to see one doctor bee. So, again, that shows me that something is not in sync, something is out of whack.

Likewise, I have seen . . . and these are not native or protected species, but it speaks to the overall environmental health of the country. But dragonflies—I have not seen them much. They are starting to disappear. Even when it comes to our plants, when I was younger I used to love being able to go get a full bag of cherries. I am hard pressed to find a nice sweet cherry today, let alone loquats.

An Hon. Member: I will show you where I found one, Minister.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Of course, you might be fortunate enough, Mr. Speaker, to find a nice loquat tree that gives you that big bushel. And I know all of us like loquats. But today it is difficult to find—

An Hon. Member: Walking on the trails.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Well, maybe down the East End, but if you come up to the West End I could show you a lot of former loquat patches that no longer produce the yield that I was used to. So what that means is that my children are not going to be able to experience what I experienced.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes, and the bees, of course, it is all connected because the environment—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Okay, all right. Relax everybody.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it is difficult in saying that we experienced things that our children today are never going to experience. And, yes, Minister Furbert alluded to the fact that we did our part as young people when we used to go in the bush and we used to catch our bees or butterflies or moths and put them in a bottle. What we were thinking was scientific research as a youngster, actually could have been detrimental to our environment.

But I will tell you what, Mr. Speaker, I do not regret one moment of it. I do not regret one moment of catching those doctor bees or catching those honeybees. It is much better than today where children are caught up in front of a PS3. I would much rather you go into the bushes and get stung by a bee, right, than to sit up in front of a television. And I think all of us would agree.

Likewise, Mr. Speaker, two items that are protected in this Order are conch and Nassau Grouper. I bring that to mind because I do not think there is anyone in this Honourable House that would turn down a nice fresh conch salad.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Conch salad, yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: I certainly do. And I prefer a little mango and fresh pineapple with mine.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes.

And after that, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing better than a nice baked Nassau Grouper. But today, because of our farsightedness in terms of protecting our natural resources, today you will get burnt if you get caught harvesting a conch in this country. Likewise if you get caught with a Nassau Grouper, you will get punished.

Mr. Speaker, just the other day (and I do not have the scientific name) there were some people who were caught harvesting these sea snails. I do not know if they are sea whelks . . . in the Devonshire Bay area. And I am told that they make for fine escargot, fine escargot. The majority of Bermudians never even knew these things existed. We never knew it existed. But those who did saw it as an opportunity to harvest them and make a pretty penny in harvesting and selling them on the retail market.

The fact that they received a very high punitive fine was an opportunity to educate the public go-

ing forward that, *Hey, when you see that snail on the rocks down at Devonshire Bay, don't touch it! Leave it alone.* But until that occurred, I do not think anyone would have been conscious of the fact that that is a protected species.

So what that means to me is that we need to redouble our efforts in terms of education. You cannot protect what you do not know about. And the majority of our people—especially the younger generation—have no idea—have no idea—that that snail, that conch, that mussel, or whatever you find as a protected species, is actually protected. So in going forward, to be effective we need to continue the educational process so that our younger people can be aware of their environment.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave it at this. Overall, I think this is a major step—not major, but a very prudent step going forward in terms of protecting our environment. No one can say that our Government is not conscious of our environment. But I think all of us can agree that the environment is part of an overall concept of sustainable development. And that is going to be the greatest challenge going forward because while we do need to protect the birds and the bees, Opposition would agree, Mr. Speaker, we still need to house, feed and clothe our people. And so that is where the balance has to be found.

I think that this amending legislation is an excellent step forward in terms of protecting our environmental mandate in the overall concept of sustainable development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Bean from Warwick South Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Minister M. Scott, from Sandys North.

Minister Scott has the floor.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the item under consideration, the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011, represents a scheme of protection that is both wise and strategic. And as Minister Bean, who has just taken his seat, indicated when he said that it is prudent . . . I concur with him. These are prudent interventions into the pre-existing schemes of protection under the 2003 Act. And they are strategic, sir, and they are targeted.

One notes right away as one considers the amendment that the scheme of protection has a lot to do, or rotates around levels of protection, and gives categories of 1 to 3 of the levels of protection to be assigned, so that we both recover, protect, preserve either marine or terrestrial creatures. It is a timely intervention, having passed in 2003 the bricks and mortar legislation underpinning this important area, we find that it is now expedient to add a little more.

Mr. Speaker, as you contrast the 2003 parent Act with today's 2011 Act, even as one considers the interpretation we see that we are introducing further underpinning. We introduce a new concept of conservation. We introduce, as I indicated, levels of protection and then break it down to levels 1, 2, and 3. We have a licenced researcher who will become the technical cadre of officers to actually both monitor and carry out the protection. We have the new concept of recovery set out in the amendments that we have under consideration today.

So, I am very pleased to concur with the large number of speakers who have taken to their feet today on the amendment. Mr. Speaker, the amendments do demonstrate the Government's commitment to this particular field of endeavour whilst, as Minister Bean has just indicated, we have much to do, this is commitment to the protection of all things great and small.

Mr. Speaker, the real work began really in 2003 and we see there the whole concept of both recovery and protection. One need only consider very briefly the opening recital and preamble of that policy of 2003. It was to deal with conservation and restoration, with the protection and propagation of plants and animals.

Mr. Speaker, interestingly, listening to the debate and some observations made, one finds a most important underpinning of protection in the Protected Species Act 2003 (the parent Act) under the whole topic of protected species. And we had the ability to carry out the conservation all in accordance with the International Union for the Conservation of [Nature] Threatened Species.

Mr. Speaker, interestingly, too—and it answers some of the matters raised in this debate—under the parent Act of 2003 we find under the section dealing with critical habitat protection, that the Minister can publish, can declare a protected area (whether it is terrestrial or marine). The Minister can require a map to be created of the protected area for the items under the protected area to be published and detailed in the document of the map, and for it to be distributed so that the public understands.

But interestingly too, Mr. Speaker, a Minister of the day having this Act under his or her mandate is empowered to protect either terrestrial or marine habitats that are on private land. And so the Act in its inception, in its original policymaking, was also both strategic and wise. And it was obviously regarded as important now, or expedient, to add further value and protection with these amendments.

As we do so, Mr. Speaker, we commend the policymaking efforts of Minister Burgess and all former Ministers of the Environment. We commend Dr. Andrew Pettit, who is in the House, who gave the technical support. And, of course, I want to recognise as one of the lawyers in the House, the work of the drafting elements for these amendments, and Madam

Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Swain, is in the House and we thank you Madam Chief Parliamentary Council, and Miss Lauren Francis (who is a Parliamentary Counsel whose work has been actually pulling together these amendments). We want to recognise the Permanent Secretary who has become familiar now with these protected species amendments.

Mr. Speaker, but the real headline of these amendments today is the Order. And if you consider the Order just briefly, Mr. Speaker, if you just have a brief look at the Order of 2007 where there is the . . . it is rather like the playbill that lists all of the species in this country deemed to be added as a matter of prudence, as a matter of scientific research, all of the little entrances and exits of these little creatures and some of the larger creatures (if you are considering turtles) or if you are considering little ferns versus large cedar trees.

There the list occurs and there we find how we have determined in the Order who are the players, what are the players that are to be protected in our country. And it is an adequate, a sensible listing, Mr. Speaker, of either marine or plant life in our country which has been carved out for protection.

Interestingly, Mr. Speaker, we heard how this scheme and policy of protection reflects Bermuda's culture. And if you read the Order, and with your permission I will take . . . we note that it has within it ferns, it has a real panoply of protected items—mosses, reptiles, finfish, rays, sharks, birds, cave organisms. So that addresses the matter I have heard raised in this debate . . . copepods, they are all there.

But when you think about the argument made, that this is about a cultural preservation, when you have for example the fern called the Governor Laffan's Fern, and the Latin that will be read by scientists across the world who have an interest in this area, it makes reference to the *Diplazium laffanianum* and/or another example the Bermuda Shield Fern the *Goniopteris and Nephrodium bermudiana* and there are many references in the Order that have that Latin reference of the *bermudiana*.

Under the birds . . . do you ever remember hearing about the Chick-of-the-Village, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Yes, that one is in there. If you look at the bird section, we have the bird there with all of its glorious Latin of the Chick-of-the-Village. . . if I can find it I will draw Members' attention to it.

This is the culture that needs to be protected because these are internationally studied species. Internationally (for those who are interested) these are immediately recognised as having a connection with none other than our Island. And no wonder this is important work that we, for example, protect the White-eyed Verio or the Chick-of-the-Village, *Vireo griseus*

bermudianus is the Latin (in my poor enunciation of it), Mr. Speaker.

So the Order is comprehensive. The Order and scheme of the policy is to add to the list in the Order at the recommendation of our scientists and technical officers and at the discretion of the Minister whenever species move away from being threatened or endangered to being recovered sufficiently, Mr. Speaker, that they no longer need to be in a level of protection that is in the number 1 category.

What is also very neat about the levels of protection, Mr. Speaker, is the involvement and the potential involvement and possibility of involvement of people in the community. And that is specifically statutorily provided for in category 3 or level 3 protections, Mr. Speaker, where we get awareness built up because the community can become involved in the recovery exercise without the requirement or need for the specialist touch of a scientist.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are very well served by the commitment displayed by today's amendments setting out the protections for all things great and small in the area of species—whether they dwell in our marine environment or whether they dwell in the terrestrial environment.

Is it not interesting, Mr. Speaker, that . . . and I recall it being referenced by the overseas Minister, Mr. Bellingham, when he came and visited Bermuda recognising that some 70 per cent (it was a considerable, significant . . . I think it was 70 per cent) of the biodiversity of . . . is it of the world? I believe, is contained throughout the—

An Hon. Member: Of the UK.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Of the UK. Thank you.

Some 70 per cent of the UK's biodiversity resides across these nine overseas territories. And so this makes for, I am sure, an interesting study for scientists who have an interest in this area.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Do not distract the speaker, please. Carry on.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: And so, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join colleagues of the House in examining these amendments for their value. I believe that they bring deep value to their mandate and objective. I believe that the Order is comprehensive.

Dr. Pettit and his team are to be commended for establishing the list in the Order and they are even to be further commended for a revisit today with these amendments to ensure that the proper monitoring and the proper levels of protection are given further statutory power and strength so that we achieve many of the things that many Members of this House have recognised, today, in any event, that this is a worth-

while area of endeavour to protect marine and terrestrial creatures great and small.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Scott, the Honourable Member from Sandys North.

Any further speakers?

I recognise the Honourable Member, Ms. L. Foggo from St. David's, Government Whip.

Ms. Foggo, you have the floor.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think all of us know that mankind is the master manipulator of the environment. And what is not as readily recognised, and maybe even accepted, is that with all of the activity that we are the masters of, many of the impacts on the environment, whether designed to be or not, have been detrimental. Fortunately, in these modern times we have been able to witness many such impacts, and in so doing we have been able to introduce counter effects to try and remedy much of the ill effects that we, in our ignorance, have produced in the environment.

Some such effects are things like reforestation, though it is . . . I guess, husbandry, fishing farms, some of those things are not very welcomed, but it has allowed us, where you have had diminishing populations, to be able to build them back up so as to ensure survival of such species.

Mr. Speaker, because some of the species that once existed do not exist in the abundant numbers that once were, what it has done without us realising it is remove the opportunity for many of us to observe how such species behave in their natural environment. In so doing, it has prevented some of us from being able to introduce various methods that would be non-detrimental in terms of encouraging those species to be able to repopulate themselves.

I point that out because it does not so much affect those of us who are around to observe such species; the impact is on our younger kids who do not understand, perhaps, how organisms such as the skink, our honey bees, behave. And in not understanding that, they do not recognise both as young children, young adolescents, what behaviours are detrimental to organisms such as that. Other organisms, such as the frog and such as the crab, which were in great abundance when I was young . . . I do not believe (except for some few crabs on the beaches) that my grandsons, for instance, have ever witnessed a crab or many crabs running across the street. That is something that would be totally foreign to them.

So it is important, Mr. Speaker, that mankind be able to put measures in place that protect our local fauna and flora so that our children can grow up in an environment where they can appreciate how everything interacts to keep itself in balance. Even simple techniques like allowing the earth to lie fallow are important for plant species and farming techniques.

Many do not recognise that something as simple as that can have a very positive impact in the agricultural industry. But because of the fact that we have grown up in a society where we are using all sorts of artificial additives, we forgot to look, ahead of time, at what some of the detrimental effects might be and how that might end up creating imbalance within certain ecosystems.

But with much of the information that is available to us today, luckily, we are able to introduce counter effects that will hopefully allow for us to be able to restore where possible and maintain elsewhere the ecological balances that are so important in any country.

Mother Nature has, indeed, has always had checks and balances in place, Mr. Speaker, and as I pointed out before, being able to observe things in their natural environment will allow us to be able to put the proper checks and balances in place. And, certainly, when we had the situation of the cedar blight and where we had the introduction of the Kiskadee and anole, many of those things (the introduction of such species, that is) were done in order to try and rebalance ecosystems, but without the realisation of the what the detrimental effect would be when that, indeed, was done.

So, we were faced with new challenges. And we are seeing the impacts of some of those new challenges that did present themselves. So rather than constantly reacting to situations, I think it is important that we put legislation in place now. I hope this is just a first step that will allow us to be able to grab hold of the situation and will allow us to be able to make changes that will help the ecosystem to balance itself back out and will preserve some of the endemic species that we have here in Bermuda, even some of the natural species and some of the introduced species, so that our people will be knowledgeable of those species.

You can teach somebody about something that did once exist, but they do not have the same kind of appreciation for that thing when they have not experienced it for themselves. So it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we do employ measures that complement our ecosystem as opposed to measures that end up, though not intentional, being detrimental.

So, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is indeed a must. I guess I would like to leave just a quick parting shot, and that is that basically when things evolve to such a level that species begin to decline, it brings the human species closer to its own demise. Indeed, it has been stated by many that each species that becomes extinct mankind is one step closer to its own extinction. So I think it is important that we have legislation in place that is designed to maintain our ecosystems and to encourage them to flourish and develop as they were supposed to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Foggo, the Honourable Member from St. David's constituency, Government Whip, for your contribution.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Perinchief.

Minister Perinchief from Pembroke Central has the floor.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Bill, The Bermuda Protected Species Amendment Act 2011.

While many people may think that this Bill is something that is, if you like, esoteric, too remote, something that is not that important in the grand scheme of things, I, and certainly many others, believe that our ecosystem is extremely important to protect. The vulnerability of our ecosystem is demonstrated by those of us who have been around a bit longer than some others and we recognise and remember a bird such as the Kiskadee, and the Red Crab that we used to find in the mangrove swamps of Mills Creek, and at one time I can remember swimming—although it was less than pristine, at least it supported life—along Mills Creek, as far as what is now the . . . where HWP is. Back as far as that, the marine life, mullets, et cetera, young fingerlings of fish would actually propagate right there in that creek.

Over many years the spill-off from the old BELCO killed off many of these species. And there was also a particular form of mollusk that grew on the mangrove swamps and we would take them and crush them up and fish with them. They also died off as a result of the spillage from BELCO and the oil that came out of that site that virtually deadened Mills Creek for a period of time.

So it is important to talk about protected species. In looking at the schedule I really wondered why we only see the Queen Conch protected, and I wonder if that allows the ordinary Harbour Conch to be harvested. Because at one time (and I will say out of ignorance) I gathered a few conch—it was not the Queen Conch, the beautiful pink one, they were all Harbour Conchs—and me and my mates used to use them for horns.

The Speaker: The shell.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: We used the shell, you know, as a fish horn.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes. That is what the fisherman used.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: And you would hear the fishermen coming around—

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: —with shell of the conch, you know, blowing for people to come out and buy their wares.

The Speaker: Still happens. Still happens.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: We still have them, one or two, yes.

Many of these practices have been lost over time. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, as I go down memory lane, as some of us can, I do remember the summertime when we would go and gather in the lobsters, the young smaller lobster. Not the Spiny lobster —

The Speaker: Guinea chicks, they call it.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Guinea chick lobsters. See, Mr. Speaker, you know about this stuff.

The Speaker: I know something.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: We would gather Guinea chick lobsters by the dozen.

We had what was then an old olive oil can, a five gallon can. We would set that up on some stones with some cedar twigs and we would have some mussels and Guinea chick lobsters with a few potatoes that were reaped from somebody's garden. And we never had to go home during the summertime for lunch.

An Hon. Member: A cookout!

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: We literally had a cookout. And let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, you know, we would get a few . . . Anchovies sometimes. Nessim Anchovies... "Chovies" we would call them. And we never gutted them, you simply got some oil and boiled it up and threw them in there and got them real crisp and you ate them like French fries, like chips.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Yes.

So, you know, Mr. Speaker, many of these things have been lost to our more modern contemporaries. They will never know the benefits of eating cedar berries and going through . . . rambling through the bush getting wild limes and stuff like that. They just do not know all this stuff. So there is value in protecting the environment.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that we have noticed, I am sure, is the proliferation of other species. If you do not protect an endangered species other invasive species, either flora or fauna or fish life, creep in. And I speak of the Lionfish. Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the Lionfish ever had in this marine environ-

ment a predator, but certainly, certainly, there must have been a natural predator for the Lionfish which is now becoming so prolific that it is actually threatening to destroy all of the younger fish from the reef. And in actual fact, it is putting the coral reef in danger.

I just read the newspaper and found out that in some environments, I think the British Virgin Islands, certainly, they are not edible. They do carry in addition to the toxin in their spine, which in itself, once it is stripped away renders the flesh edible under normal circumstances, they have found that they carry another high level of . . . I do not know what you call it. The Honourable Member could probably give me the particular terminology. But they are now rendered dangerous to eat in any great numbers in the Caribbean region for some reason. I suppose we will now have to find out if they are actually dangerous to consumption here. But the point I make is that if we allow our endemic species of flora and fauna and marine mammals, et cetera, to disappear, invasive species very rapidly move in.

I was happy to see that the (I think) West Indian Mollusk . . . a fellow had about 50 of them down at Sinky Bay. And he was prosecuted and fined quite heavily for having these endangered species in his possession. That particular shell in other environments, in other countries, is made into quite decorative artefacts. I must confess, through ignorance again, I bought a particularly attractive black and white necklace made from this particular shell. I did not know what it was and I plead ignorance, of course—have to. But only to find that, you know, it was not on the schedule here, I do not know specifically, but, nevertheless, there are many species that we do not know are endangered and, through ignorance, I believe, we have been responsible for actually causing them to become extinct.

Mr. Speaker, thinking about the Bermuda Cedar, which actually suffered a blight for over 25 years and only recently came back, I think in the last decade has come back into proliferating again through man's intervention, being re-propagated. That is a success story. That is a success story that needs to be told, the Bermuda Cedar. I have been told that even that now has become hybridised as it grew again and has become even more hardy than it was initially, and certainly impervious to the particular bug that caused its demise.

Even that could have been protected and avoided, that blight, because being a bit, as you say, older than most, I believe that there was an entomologist who came to Bermuda and offered a solution to that particular scourge of the Bermuda Cedar, but he was pooh-poohed into oblivion. Nobody wanted to listen to the man. As a result, our endemic stock of cedars at one time died off.

Of course, we used to collect them for Christmas trees at one time. Mr. Speaker, you probably remember as a young boy walking along the wooded

land looking for a particularly well-shaped cedar bough or cedar tree to cut down and drag home for a Christmas tree. And our children will never, ever see that because the trees are protected now. But I have some particularly fine specimens of cedar tree as we drive around. And if we are aware and wish to pay attention to nature, you will see some quite well-shaped cedar trees.

One in particular near TCD, near the . . . Mr. Mapps, Signworks . . . a particularly fine specimen of cedar tree that I thought, if adorned with Christmas lights, would be a good example of what I speak—a well-formed Christmas tree. That is something that as a tradition we have lost, and that is the Bermuda Cedar seen as a decorative plant and as a Christmas tree.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much time I have.

An Hon. Member: Not much.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: I am not being timed? I think I should be.

An Hon. Member: A half hour.

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Well, Mr. Speaker, I see you—

The Speaker: I would tell you, but I am not going to encourage you.

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: I see you constantly looking at your time, Mr. Speaker, and I am just wondering if it is through boredom, or if you want to know how much longer I am going to speak.

The Speaker: If I were hearing something new, maybe.

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Yes, okay. I will say something new for you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you are anything . . . honest, sir. You are most extremely honest.

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne N. M. Perinchief: Mr. Speaker, I am taking your lead and I would imagine that it is time to do my thing and get off the stage. I just want to make sure that I have covered everything, Mr. Speaker. And I am sure that there are other speakers willing to and ready to pick up the slack and take my place.

So at this juncture, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Perinchief from Pembroke Central.

I have not heard anybody talk about the red birds or the bluebirds, but—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Because I do not really want you to encourage you to—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Z. De Silva, from Southampton East Central.

Minister De Silva, you have the floor.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, you know, I thought all bases had been covered, but you encouraged me to take to my feet.

The Speaker: Just because I have not heard about bluebirds?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The red bird and the bluebirds.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, Mr. Speaker, the red birds and the bluebirds, we want to protect them too.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for bringing this legislation before us today. I am sure that it is one of many to come with regard to our environment and, certainly, with the many different species that we have in our beautiful Island.

Mr. Speaker, I thought it only prudent that I touch base on the comments by the Honourable Mr. Cole Simons with regard to his weekly visits to Devonshire Marsh and the surrounding area. I am sure that during these visits he has certainly observed activities taking place in those areas. And let me say that he talked about a few things—development, encroachment of marshes. In particular, I think he was referring to that area, being that he talked about Devonshire Marsh first.

Mr. Speaker, let me state for the record that I am in total agreement with my friend, my learned friend, my Honourable and Learned friend, Mr. Cole Simons. I think as he does. He spends every weekend there, Mr. Speaker—I spend every day there. And I could not disagree with that Honourable Member. I believe that Devonshire Marsh should not be encroached on. And it should not be developed, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Too late now. Too late now.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So let me state for the record that I am in total agreement with the Honourable Member.

Now where we differ, Mr. Speaker, is when someone wishes to develop on industrial land. That is where we tend to have a little difference of opinion. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that in due time we will have that discussion. So, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Where some development has already taken place.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I think that is what you need to say.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: In fact, probably before that Honourable Member was born.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: No, that is not true.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, you are not that old, are you, Cole?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, Mr. Speaker, in fact, Mr. Speaker, some properties in that particular area were in existence before there was a Planning Department.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: That's true.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And the Honourable Member agrees.

Maybe he spent a few weekends there as a young child, and he certainly remembers that, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am in agreement with that Honourable Member, and I hope that the Honourable Member spends a bit of time—not all of his weekends down in Devonshire—but I hope he has occasion to head down to the East End of the Island, in particular, maybe around the Mid Ocean area, Mr. Speaker. You might recall that there have been several developments in that area, Mr. Speaker, that have not been very favourable to the environment. Maybe no one knows about it because they have not hit the headlines like other developments, Mr. Speaker. But, certainly, if the Honourable Member has not been spending time in those areas—because he is in Devonshire every weekend—maybe he can drift away down to other parts of the Island during his walkabouts or visits.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am certainly supportive of this Bill, and I would also like to encourage our environmental groups in this Island, Mr. Speaker, to carry the flag, and as we pass legislation in this House be aware of it and continue to fight for the good environ-

mental causes that this Government fights for, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I hope the message is clear about the tack this Government is taking with regard to environment and putting in controls and laws so that we continue to look after our country for the future of our children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. De Silva, the Honourable Member from Southampton East Central.

Are there any further speakers?

No further speakers. The Minister in charge, the Minister Weeks has a right to reply.

Minister Weeks, from Pembroke East Central, is going to reply.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hearing this hardy debate and these comments from all the Honourable Member on both sides of the Floor really is a testament to people's love of our environment. One thing that seems to be common is about education, so I just want to make a few points on that.

The Conservation Department has currently undertaken and will develop an education campaign. Now I, for one, really agree that education must start as young as possible. So I would definitely advocate that we have pictures and the like in our primary schools and in our high schools and middle schools because the earlier we learn about the protected species the better. Also, currently, the Department of Conservation Services, Mr. Speaker, has a full-protected species list with pictures already on our website, www.conservation.bm. So as you see, our department is well on the way in trying to educate everyone.

Also, our department is developing publications, Mr. Speaker. And we have also developed a board. So that shows that we are really serious about what we feel is good for Bermuda by aiding conservation. We even talked about the seahorses. Well, Bermuda still has a few seahorses even though they are rare.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael Weeks: The Department of Conservation Services, Mr. Speaker, has a species recovery plan for seahorses. And for those of us who take time to go visit the Aquarium, there are some seahorses on display there.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: You did that this afternoon? Now that is getting things done!

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Michael Weeks: Okay, Mr. Speaker, I am moving on. I just made some notes out there, but I was talking—

The Speaker: Yes, carry on, Minister.
I am listening, Minister.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, sir. One question I wrote down was, Where can we see a list of protected species? I said all plants and animals that are protected are listed with pictures on our Conservation website.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael Weeks: Yes, Cole?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael Weeks: I do not know anything about cages.

An Hon. Member: Caves.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Caves. It does not come under this Bill, but I will take it under advisement.

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: We cannot have questions across the floor like that. Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Okay, I would just like to let everyone know that the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo educates well over 6,000 children a year on protected species, so they are well on their way to doing what is necessary to be done. The main function of the Department of Conservation Services, or one of them, is to educate our children and the public.

An Hon. Member: Mr. Furbert does a wonderful job.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Mr. Furbert does a wonderful job. And Mr. Pettit does a wonderful job. And I was down there on . . . and Minister Derrick Burgess' cousin—

An Hon. Member: Oh, yes.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Yes, I can see the resemblance, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Hon. Michael Weeks: I went on tour down at the Aquarium yesterday and I saw the passion of the workers, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Pettit and his other colleagues gave me a tour . . . and the Aquarium is not what I remembered many years ago when I used to go there. It has really turned into a zoo. I saw the Madagascar, and they showed me all of the intricate workings behind the scenes, all these scientists and doctors. So conservation and protected species—we are well on our way to doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Somebody made another comment, quickly, about the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. That department has not been removed, Mr. Speaker, it has just been reorganised into two departments—the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Conservation Services. So the service and responsibilities still exist, and in many ways have been extended to better protect the environment, biodiversity, our ecology, and our environmental education, Mr. Speaker.

Another Member asked a question about giving notice for the impact on our protected species. At this point there will be no need to gazette the removal of a protected species impacted by development. All development, including walls, fences, et cetera, requires Planning permission. During this process, it would be advertised in the *Gazette*.

Before I move on, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that there is a policy to not fish or swim off of Flatts Bridge for health and safety reasons, but it is not law—although signs are posted there as such. It is not illegal to fish off most bridges unless in front of . . . yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael Weeks: Okay.

So having said those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill now be committed.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Will the Honourable Member from Southampton West, Mr. K. Horton, Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair of Committee.

House in Committee at 5:35 pm

[Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton, Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

PROTECTED SPECIES ADMENDMENT ACT 2011

The Chairman: Members, we are now in Committee for the [Protected Species Amendment Act 2011](#) presented by the Honourable Minister, Michael Weeks.

Minister Weeks, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to give a quick overview.

Mr. Chairman, this is a detailed change to Protected—

The Chairman: Okay. Minister, which clauses would you like to cover?

An Hon. Member: Like to move.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Oh, okay. Mr. Chairman, I would like to move . . . well, there are only eight clauses, I would like to move them all.

The Chairman: You would like to move all clauses?

Hon. Michael Weeks: One through eight, yes.

The Chairman: All right. Then we will move all clauses.

Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Now this is a detailed change to the Protected Species Act 2003. So clause 1, Mr. Chairman, is a standard opening clause which gives the title of the Bill: The Protected Species Amendment Act 2011.

Clause amends section 2 of the principal Act to add new definitions including “conservation,” “level of protection,” “licensed researcher,” and “recovery.”

Clause 3 makes a minor amendment to section 4 of the principal Act, which is consequential on new section 5A, inserted by clause 5.

Clause 4, Mr. Chairman, replaces section 5(1) of the principal Act to clarify the purpose of a protected species order.

Clause 5 inserts new section 5A to the principal Act. This introduces the concept of the three levels of protection—level 1, the highest level of protection; level 2, medium; and level 3, the lowest level of protection—recognising that not all protected species need the same level of protection. The significance of the three different levels of protection is set out in the Schedule inserted by clause 8.

After examining the best scientific information available, the Minister must categorise every protected species as level 1, 2 or 3, depending on the level of protection required. Any protected species and levels of protection will be set out in a new Protected Species Order to be made under section 5.

The attached draft Order, Mr. Chairman, although subject to the negative resolution procedure in accordance with section 12 of the Act, has been circulated to MPs for information. A notice will be published

in the *Gazette* for public comment on the classification of the species in accordance with that.

Mr. Chairman, clause 6 inserts section 8A into the principal Act, which provides for the Minister to issue permits to persons to carry out conservation and related activities which would otherwise be prohibited. Subsection (2) clarifies that a permit is not required for planting or routine maintenance of a protected species.

Clause 7 repeals and replaces section 9 of the principal Act [so as] to define what constitutes an offence under the new levels of protection and to increase the penalty for offences. In particular, those relating to level 1 and level 2 protected species.

Clause 8, Mr. Chairman, inserts the Schedule into the principal Act which sets out the significance of the three levels of protection which will be allocated to protect its species. In particular, the permitted level of community involvement in the conservation of a protected species.

Clause 9 of the Act, Mr. Chairman, provides for commencement.

And, if I may, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Yes, Minister.

Hon. Michael Weeks: We have a proposed amendment from the Opposition.

The Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Michael Weeks: And we have made it clear that we will take it under advisement.

The Chairman: Okay. Meaning?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael Weeks: Meaning—

The Chairman: You are not going to propose that amendment now?

Hon. Michael Weeks: No.

The Chairman: Meaning you will not, as the Government.

Hon. Michael Weeks: No, I will not.

The Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you.

The Chairman: Okay, fine.

Thank you, Minister. Thank you very much.

I now ask if there is any other Member who would like to speak to the Bill?

I recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Pettingill.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 6

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am obliged to the Honourable Minister for indicating that it was going to be taken under advisement. I would like to urge a little bit more so that we could probably get it done, if we saw the sensibility in it at this time.

Mr. Chairman, the [amendment] that I would move is that clause 6 be amended.

The Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Clause 6 is at page 2 with relation to permits that begins “The principal Act is amended by inserting after section 8 the following.” And then it addresses permits.

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: And this, of course, is the issuing of permits by the Minister, Mr. Chairman, you can see, in circumstances where it may be the case that there is a decision that is made to . . . and the one that jumps out at me particularly is 8A(1)([c]) which deals with the “destruction of a protected species or critical habitat where such protected species or habitat is immovable . . .” and so on and so forth.

Basically, what the particular permit section in the Protected Species [Amendment] Act 2011 is allowing for, Mr. Chairman, is that the Minister can, on application, allow for a permit to be done, which basically obviates what we are passing the Act here for.

I mean, the Act is about protecting species, and what we are saying is that in certain instances, which are set out in (a) through (d), it may be that the Minister decides—for whatever reasons within his purview—that it should be allowed that a protected species or critical habitat is impacted upon. And you will see that as it is set out from (a) to (d).

Well, with respect—

The Chairman: Otherwise prohibited.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Otherwise prohibited.

To put it in context for the listening public and Honourable Members, what happens is, it is otherwise prohibited, the Minister gets a look at it and says, *Well, I'm going to issue a permit to say that those rules are going to be obviated in relation to this—*

The Chairman: Based on?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Based on this . . . well, based on the application—not based on anything but on an application under this area that he be allowed to allow a permit with regard to those provisions, on such—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Sorry?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Yes, I know.

—on such conditions.

But the main aspect of it comes down to (d). I was going through them all, but I will move to (d). The “installation of utilities, trenching for underground cabling, erection of fences and walls, and the establishment of moorings where such activities will impact a protected species or critical habitat.”

So, basically, what we are saying is that you can come into the protected habitat and do construction—let’s call it what it is, all right?—trenching, underground cabling, erection of fences, walls, so on and so forth. That is a serious thing—especially in an Act where the whole ambit of the Act is to protect the Cahows, the newts, the fauna, and everything else that we want to have protected.

Now one hopes, of course, that a Minister is not just going to *carte blanche* say, *Oh, well, there's a permit, so I am going to allow it to be passed.* Because we all know that a Minister acting responsibly would not just along and do that because he had an application. He would review it all very thoroughly.

The Chairman: Absolutely.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: We would like to think that all Ministers would do that—

The Chairman: Absolutely.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —otherwise they would have to be resigning because they did not do their job properly. So I think we can all expect that that is going to be the case.

So, Mr. Chairman, what we are saying is, that being what is expected, of course, we really want to have the checks and balances for the sake of this going on for years and years and years. You know, when the Government changes there will be other Ministers. When the Ministers change—this can happen from time to time—you are dealing with different people. You need to have your checks and balances. That is what good laws are about.

The Chairman: What are the checks and balances?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: The checks and balances . . . thank you, Mr. Chairman, are ensuring that you have the public say, the public buy-in, the public understanding, the public’s ability to lodge objection. All right? To be heard in relation to it.

So you are not going to have a situation where somebody would say to the Minister, *I want to apply to build a wall through the middle of the area where the Cahows nest.* And the Minister would have the ability to look at it and say, *Cahow? Oh, okay. Go ahead.* You know . . . perhaps he does not like birds (silly, but, you know . . .), and he says, *Okay.*

What we are suggesting, which is sensible and good law, is that after clause 8A, which is the grounding of the permits in those particular sections. That we insert clause 8B, which would read: “8B (1) Where there is an application for a permit under section 8A, the Minister shall publish a notice in the *Gazette* setting out the details of the proposal.”

[For instance], somebody applies to the Minister and wants to build a wall or underground trenching through a protected species habitat, a notice goes in the *Gazette*. So everybody—all the environmentalists, all the people that are really going to want to have a say in the protection of that—is going to be there and be aware that it is going on, so it does not spring up by surprise in the RG on Monday morning, Mr. Chairman, when suddenly somebody is putting their trench through a protected area, and they say, *Whoa! Whoa! That can't be right.* They know in advance; so we can have the debate in advance. Right?

[Subsection] (2): “That the Minister shall cause a copy of the application under subsection (1) to be deposited with the director of conservation services for public inspection.”

Very sensible approach to go that way.

[Subsection] (3), Mr. Chairman: “The notice under subsection (1) shall invite representation from the public and in particular from landowners whose property may be infected [*sic*]—.

The Chairman: Affected.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I'm sorry, “affected.” “May be affected.”

I made that correction earlier when we inadvertently put “infected.” It should be “affected”—may be affected.

Again, another logical thing, because sometimes you will have . . . I notice on my property a lot, Mr. Chairman, the ducks come and nest on the lawn. You know, they do not know where they are allowed to trespass and so on, so some of those personal properties become protected habitats as well.

And [subsection (4): “No permit shall be issued under section 8A until 30 days have elapsed since the publication of the notice in subsection (1).”

And let us think about it. These species have been around for thousands of years, and we have been here building walls and trenches and the like, we can give them a break and extend 30 days in order that everybody can have the buy-in and look at it. Everybody makes submissions. The experts come along and say to the Minister, *Hold on, let's look at*

this carefully. We don't want to chuck these newts, these skinks, or birds (or whatever it might be) off of their habitat. We do not want to build a trench and put cabling across where the eagle rays are going swim because all kinds of problems might occur there.

The Chairman: So, the fact that this actually goes before Planning and the like, is not sufficient, you are saying?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: No, no.

[*Inaudible interjection*]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: No, no, Mr. Chairman, not at all. Because we are dealing . . . well, if that were the case, why bother having this at all?

We are dealing with the Protected Species [Amendment] Act, so we want to cover all the bases. And this is dealing under the guise of Planning . . . you are dealing with a particular clause that is addressing protected species.

[*Inaudible interjection*]

Mr. Mark Pettingill: It is the Government that brought that. See now . . . I hear the interpolation of find—

The Chairman: Honourable Member, stay focused.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Well, I mean, I have always—

The Chairman: Stay focused.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am always focused. I am focused on you.

The Chairman: Just stay focused.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: But I did not bring the Act, the Government did.

The Chairman: Right, right. Just stay focused.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I was all for the . . . I am all for supporting it; wanting to protect the species.

The Chairman: Sure.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am actually trying to . . . Mr. Chairman, I am also trying to protect the endangered Minister's species as well, like giving them a break so they don't get in trouble by just passing permits when they shouldn't. You know? So it gives them a little check and balance.

Actually, if I were the minister I would welcome this type of clause because I know that things are getting checked out before I sign off when I should not. So then there is no issue that erupts to my sur-

prise, that that goes on. So I would embrace this clause, if I were a minister of any government. Nobody is trying to make anybody look bad; this is a sensible clause.

I would like to hear . . . the Honourable Minister said, *We will take it under advisement*. Why not get on, we are here to work.

What is the objection for inserting this clause?

The Chairman: So, Honourable Member, then, are you making the amendment? Are you wanting to make the amendment?

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am making the amendment. I am moving—

The Chairman: You are moving—

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Mr. Chairman. I am moving that this amendment be inserted into the Act—

The Chairman: Okay. All right.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: —in clause 6, [insert] 8B after 8A.

The Chairman: Right.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: A good amendment. It does not really . . . we do not need to trouble a lot of people with going through advisement and all the rest of it. Let us just get the job done. We are here to work; you know, do not put off until tomorrow what you can do today. It is not a typo, it is more important than that.

But here is the interesting thing. I would like to hear from Honourable Members on the other side as to what their reason is for saying, *No*. If they are going to say no and vote against it en masse . . . you brought the Bill; let us hear what your explanation would be to saying no to a clause that, (a) is protecting the species, and (b) is protecting ministers from getting into trouble where they should not because it is allowing for the public—who they represent—to have a say.

So I gather if we are going to vote it down, this clause here—a sensible, logical, legal clause protecting a Minister—the Government's logic is going to be, *They don't want the people to have a say in this—*

The Chairman: Let us wait and . . . let us not assume that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I am just being a little clairvoyant.

The Chairman: Right.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: I heard the interpolation. I am being clairvoyant; but let us see.

The Chairman: Let us not assume that.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So thank you, Mr. Minister.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Members, we have now an amendment to [clause] 6, of which, according to the amendment by the Honourable and Learned Member who just took his seat, would be [inserting] 8B.

Do all Members have the amendment [inserting] 8B? Do all Members have that? Do all Members have sight of this additional amendment?

Now that all have sight of it, is there any other Honourable Member who would care to speak to this amendment?

I recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Michael Scott.

Hon. Michael Scott: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Pettingill, was inviting reasons for the Ministers adopting the stance that they would take it under advisement. I mean, I have read the amendment. It is just the kind of amendment that you take under advisement. It involves so many levels of bureaucracy—added bureaucracy—to involve this layer of process. That is a good reason for you not to make the amendment on the Floor of the House.

Plainly, in a modern Bermuda, with telecommunications and construction going on as it does, the amendments are anticipating these kinds of elements about trenching and building through areas that may well involve or contain species which would otherwise always want to be protected.

I understand the reason for its presence in these amendments and to add a layer of bureaucracy certainly requires the Minister to take it under advisement. It is not the kind of amendment that we should vote on and draft in the House, as it were, from the seat of our pants . . . just looking at it.

Thank you.

The Chairman: All right, all right. Thank you, Minister.

Any other Minister care to speak?

I recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Trevor Moniz.

Mr. Moniz, you have the floor.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I am obliged, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, the concern that we on this side of the House have is that whereas the granting of a protection order requires all sorts of publicity, there then becomes this huge loophole in the Act which is created by this amendment today saying that the Minister can go around it and give a licence to disregard the protection order without any publicity.

So the difficulty here is that, you know, under the cover of night the Minister could give a licence. There are two things which are not required of the Minister here: There is no requirement in this amend-

ment legislation for him to consult anyone. You know, if he is going to make a protection order or change a protection order he has all sorts of people he has to consult, experts, et cetera. But if he is going to give a licence to ignore a protection order, he does not have to consult anyone. And, surely, that is not a good thing.

The second part of that is if he is asked, in an application, to grant a licence to ignore a protection order, there is no publicity. Whereas if he is going to make a protection order or to get rid of a protection order, there is a requirement that if you publish in the *Gazette* that it sit there for 30 days, that the public be alerted that this order is going to be made, all sorts of publicity is required.

Now, why, if that is a good thing for a protection order to be made or to be unmade, why isn't a good thing on the application for a licence to ignore a protection order?

You know, I have spoke to the technical officers today and I am informed that they anticipate that there are going to be a lot of applications for these permits to ignore protection orders. So the difficulty here is that you have a situation where the Minister makes something and then the Minister takes it away. He makes it with great publicity in the light of public scrutiny, but he takes it away—or could take it away—under cover of darkness in a smoke-filled room at the back of some Government office, signing an order on the day before he resigns from the Ministry and disappears; and signs orders, perhaps to fellow Ministers, et cetera, with no public scrutiny, no requirement to *Gazette* either the application for the permit or the fact that a permit is even being given.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: So it does not meet the requirements of good governance.

It does meet the requirements of zero tolerance that the Premier has announced. It does not meet any of the requirements that this Government has pledged itself to meet. So if the Government is going to match those pledges which it has made to the Bermudian public, then it should support this amendment today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you. Thank you, Honourable Member.

Is there any other Honourable Member care to speak?

I recognise now the Honourable Member, Mr. Walter Lister.

Mr. Lister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member refers to this being done in a smoke-filled

room. I think those days are gone and they are gone with that Government.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: That was once a standard practice.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Chairman: All right. Thank you.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Lots of legislation came during that manner.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: But what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that the legislation . . . this piece of . . . the legislation which the Minister brings today has been over—

[Gavel]

The Chairman: Can we have some order, please?

Hon. Walter M. Lister: He has been advised by his civil servants and he has also put his own initiative into it in the interest of the country. Now, 50 people could come with 50 ideas. But we have decided that this is in the best interest of the people of Bermuda. We respect the efforts of the Opposition, but we are going with what we have got.

Thanks.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Any other Honourable Member care to speak? I recognise now the Member, Mr. Cole Simons.

Mr. Simons, you have the floor.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer to permits, 8A—

The Chairman: Thank you for referring to the Order. I did not have to ask you to really stay and look at what the clauses are saying. Thank you for that, Mr. Simons.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: My pleasure, my pleasure.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned during my general debate, my concern is about finding qualified people or contractors to do the remediation process in the event that there are, you know, violations in regard to the legislation and habitats and endangered species. Because we need to ensure that those people who actually . . . those contractors who remediate or who are moving the endangered species do so with

technical knowledge and not just go in with our bulldozers and move it along and do more damage than was there before.

So my question is, would we have a list of qualified contractors who would be able to be recommended to address these challenges as far as remediation and protection? That is my first question.

The Chairman: Remember, Mr. Simons, what we really need to come to grips with now is the amendment that was made by Mr. [Pettingill].

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Oh, sorry. Sorry.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I will wait. I will wait.

The Chairman: Right. Thank you. We—

An Hon. Member: The Opposition was confused.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: We are all going to be confused if we do not be quiet and listen.

Is there any other Member who would care to speak to the amendment that was made by the Honourable Member Mr. Pettingill?

I do recognise to my right the Honourable Minister Zane De Silva.

Minister De Silva, you have the floor.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that I appreciate the proposal by the Member opposite. He is in the profession and is entitled to make some suggestions. But you know what, Mr. Chairman? I have a lot of confidence in my Minister. I have a lot of confidence in the technical officers that advise him. And, you know, this is 2011. This is not 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 when all the decisions [were made in] not a smoke-filled room, but down at the Dinghy Club!

These decisions are being made here in the [hearing] of the public of Bermuda. Our people are taking note of the decisions that we are making in this House. So, Mr. Chairman, I am in full support of the amendments of the Bill as it stands, and I am sorry—

The Chairman: So you are rejecting what the—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Certainly rejecting, Mr. Chairman.

Like I said, we have professional and technical officers that advise our Minister, and I suspect that they done their job in a very good manner.

Thank you.

The Chairman: All right. Thank you. Thank you, Honourable Member.

Any other . . . I do recognise the Honourable Member who brought the additional amendment, the Honourable Member, Mr. Pettingill has the floor.

Mr. Mark Pettingill: So let us call it what it is. This is why we have all the checks and balances that we do. We are the ones up here that pass the laws and we take on the technical advisements, and we do. Nobody was casting any aspersion—certainly not me—on the Honourable Minister, because he stood up and said he had already seen it and perhaps he would take it under advisement, which means at least he was turning some thought to it, sensibly. I think so.

So it is not really fair to come along and say have faith in the way that that is done and let us just push it through. This is something . . . we are up here . . . you know, we all got elected to do a job up here. And the job is to legislate. And every now and then we cannot go scurrying off to the advisors in the world. Some of these things are sensible. And it does not cast a disparaging view on a technical officer. It is a technical job.

It is difficult, but sometimes we all look at things and we check them out and say, *Well, hold on a second. We have other Acts that call for checks and balances of ministers.* That is what the public demands. They want to see checks and balances. They want to see transparency. They want to know that their land, Bermuda, is being used for the preservation of species and for everything else. Okay? That is why we have things like appeal tribunals, and why we have things gazetted because everybody can have their say in it. That is a type of thing . . . it is not . . . that is the way that good systems work.

Now, the Government Members brought this Protected Species [Amendment] Act, which we said we supported on the basis of it being in the interest of the public, in the interest of our country, in the interest of protected species and preservation of our lands and our animals, and we all supported that. So what we are saying quite sensibly is, having done that, let us all join hands on this one and sing *Kumbaya*, because there is nothing wrong with having a clause like you do in other Acts that clearly indicates that you are going to gazette something to let the public know what is going on before you do it.

I ask, again, what is the problem with that? It is certainly not taking things too far; it is a check and a balance that you would think any Minister would embrace. At the end of the day, when he grants the licence, if he says it is okay, he is able to turn around amidst public outcry (if there is any) and say, *Hold on. We followed the Act. We gazetted it. You had a chance to object.* Some of this is sounding familiar, I know, as the penny drops, Mr. Chairman, because these provisions are in other Acts requiring public scrutiny. This is just good law.

Let me say it again. I have said it in this House before that when Members on that side have embraced some of the amendments that I personally have put through or that we have put through in the Opposition as being good law, they are able to look at it and say, *Yes, this makes sense. Yes, this is a good thing.* Let us show the public we are not going to fight over every single “i” we are going to dot and every single “t” [we are going to cross]. We are going to look at stuff and say, *We’re going to take that on board. It’s a good idea. Let’s pass a law.*

But, again, I make the inquiry, Mr. Chairman: How can you possibly stand there and say that you are not going to embrace a clause which is saying let’s add all the public transparency that we can to have a check and balance on a minister granting a permit for construction to take place on a protected species site? when that is the reason that you brought the Act in the first place—to protect the species. So let us do all we can.

You do not want to get in a position where you have got a minister that just falls into error—which can happen, they are human. Or a minister that makes a mistake, or a minister who does not care about the environment—heaven forbid. Who knows? I am sure that is not here, I know that, but it could be in a future government, that just does not care. So let us safeguard and ring-fence those valid concerns and look at this amendment, see it for what it is, and say there’s a great idea to add to a good Bermudian Act that Bermudian Parliament put together, brought before the House in front of the public to hear, and said, *What a grand idea. We’re going to ensure that it all works with the checks and balances that it should.*

As I say, the only reason, *the only reason*, that you could say no to this proposed amendment is that you do not want to have transparency and public checks on a minister that is in the position of allowing a permit to be granted for construction to take place on a protected species site. That is the only reason.

I know that you—and I look across at my Honourable friends and Members on the other side—you would not want to do that. So why would you not embrace this? The only reason would be is that we want to play politics because I happened to put the amendment forth and I am not sitting on that side. That does not make any sense. That is not good governance. That is not transparency. That is not *pro bono publico*, as we say, in the interest of the public. That is none of those things that we need to be embracing on any level.

And if you want to talk in your Throne Speech saying, *Let’s rise up together*, or *Stand up together*, I am talking about standing up together. Stand up together with me on this and let us pass good law. Come on!

Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable Member, Mr. Pettingill.

You make a good argument, Mr. Pettingill. I think the Honourable Minister has listened and has indicated that he will take it under advisement. And, in order to move forward, unless there is another Member who would care to speak, I would like to put it to the [vote].

All those in favour of the amendment to [clause] 6 in the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011, by adding 8B, as articulated by the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Pettingill, all those in favour, say Aye. All those against, say Nay.

AYES AND NAYS.

The Chairman: Sounds like the Nays have it, and so Mr. Pettingill’s amendment was defeated.

[Motion failed: Proposed amendment to clause 6 of the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 not passed]

The Chairman: We will now go back to any other clause that any Member would like to speak to.

I recognise the Honourable Cole Simons.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I now refer you to [clause] 6, [new section] 8A(1)(d).

The Chairman: Six?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: [New section] 8A(1)(d) “installation of utilities, trenching for underground cabling, erection of fences and walls, and the establishment of moorings . . .”

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: And then I would like to take you over to page 4 to the fine of \$5,000. My concern is this: In some situations the fine is inconsequential when it comes to the level of damage done. Recently, I had the opportunity to walk along the South Shore and as you know on our coastal area in the South Shore Road, that is a habitat for our Longtails. At one of our recent developments, I saw a road being built from the top of the cliff right down to the bottom of the cliff on the South Shore Road.

[ongoing crosstalk]

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Chairman, I did not see any Planning permission, and the excuse was that they want to reinforce the wall. They built a six-foot reinforcement at the bottom of the cliff base.

Mr. Chairman, this here has nothing, as far as the penalty is concerned, the \$5,000 penalty for an infraction—

[Gavel]

The Chairman: Can we have [order]?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: —of that size is inconsequential. Because when you build a road that defaces a cliff and there is no Planning permission, I would pay the \$5,000 to do what I have to do and go with that \$5,000 as a cost of—

The Chairman: So are you suggesting it should be \$100,000?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: I am suggesting that in some situations, from a major project point of view, that penalty should be higher because they can build in that \$5,000 in the cost of doing business. To this day I cannot believe, when I was walking along South Shore, that I saw this road that started 30 feet up, coming down the side of the cliff, destroying some of the habitat for the Longtails, going right down to the beach.

An Hon. Member: Which cliff?

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Over at Grand Atlantic Resort.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Chairman: All right. Carry on, Minister.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: That is where it was.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: Speak to the Chair. Speak to the Chair.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: And to me, that is not good enough, Mr. Chairman.

So we need to ensure that when these developments take place, when the remediation process takes place, we to ensure that there is proper enforcement and proper monitoring because the damage that was done by that road is irreparable.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Yes, please take your seat, Honourable Member.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: Mr. Chairman, you have allowed a lot of leeway and I understand—

The Chairman: Yes, yes.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: —that you want Members to be able to contribute, but we are in the Committee stage.

The Chairman: I understand.

Hon. Dame Jennifer Smith: In the House stage, that Member is well aware that it can range far and wide; but in the Committee stage he must speak specifically to the clause and not be wandering far afield and bringing in other matters.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: Thank you. Thank you, Honourable Member. Thank you.

Carry on, Mr. Simons.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Mr. Chairman, as I said to you we were referring to [clause 7, new section] 9(3) which talks about the scale of the penalty.

The Chairman: Right.

An Hon. Member: It is not. You are going all over the place.

Mr. Nelson H. Cole Simons: Okay. So what I am suggesting is that this fine is insufficient based on the size and magnitude of the development.

The Chairman: Absolutely. I heard that.

Is there any other Member who would care to speak?

No others Members would care to speak, so we will now look at clauses 1 through 9.

All those Members in favour of clauses 1 through 9, please, say Aye. All those against, say Nay.

AYES.

The Chairman: Well, it looks like the Ayes have it, so the Bill has been passed, and we will pass back to the House.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 9 passed]

An Hon. Member: Are you going to move the preamble?

The Chairman: Yes, please. Just move the preamble.

An Hon. Member: Mr. Chairman, I move the preamble, and I move that the Bill be reported to the House.

The Chairman: Thank you. The Bill will be reported to the House.

[Motion carried: The Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 was considered by a Committee of the whole House, approved without amendment, and will be reported to the House]

House resumed at 6:14 pm

[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT ON BILL

PROTECTED SPECIES AMENDMENT ACT 2011

The Speaker: Is there any objection as reported by the Committee?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Will now move to Order No. 2, second reading of the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011, in the name of the Minister of Public Works, the Honourable Minister, Mr. M. Weeks, from Pembroke East Central.

Minister Weeks has the floor.

SECOND READING

WASTE AND LITTER CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Bill entitled Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011 be now read the second time and committed.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as you may be aware, the growing problem of litter and illegal dumping impacts not only on the public health and safety of residents, but it also impacts on the beauty of this tourist resort Island, thereby tarnishing the image of Bermuda which results in considerable clean-up costs for the Government and the private sector alike.

Several factors contribute to the littering problem including public apathy, improper refuse set-out

practices by the public, the perception that littering provides employment for others, and fly tipping by unscrupulous truck owners.

The existing Waste and Litter Control Act 1987 provides a mechanism for prosecuting littering and illegal dumping offences. However, the process for prosecuting these offences which requires a hearing at Magistrates Court and adherence of strict rules of evidence results in very few successful prosecutions. When prosecutions are successful, substantial fines are rarely issued in spite of a maximum fine limit of \$1,000.

Mr. Speaker, with the current challenges of enforcement it is unlikely that a significant increase in prosecutions will be achieved. It is also unlikely that increasing the maximum fine alone would provide any additional deterrent, given that magistrates have discretion to fine up to the maximum limit, but frequently do not. Simply stated, if the problem of littering and illegal dumping is to be taken seriously, then the existing Waste and Litter Control Act 1987 must be amended.

So, Mr. Speaker, not only are Bermuda's residents breaking the law with respect to their improper waste handling habits, but they are also negatively impacting their community by contributing to the proliferating of vermin in the form of rats and feral chickens that feed off of improperly handled waste materials that scatter them along roadsides where they become litter. This resulting litter, Mr. Speaker, is a blot on the landscape of our beautiful Island leaving a negative impression on visitors to the Island while serving as a further public nuisance in the form of breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects.

Mr. Speaker, the clean-up costs to the Government, to the private sector and non-Governmental organisations (or NGOs), like the KBB [Keep Bermuda Beautiful], are substantial. Further, costs to reduce the resulting vermin and mosquitoes make this a problem well worth reducing through enhanced legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have first-hand experience with this situation. I must confess, as a member of the . . . actually, I assisted the group "Stand Up Bermuda" (and I must confess too, I am a regular KBBer), but the group "Stand Up Bermuda" came up to St. Monica's Road and we walked around for a couple of hours, you know, with the KBB pickup up litter along St. Monica's Road and the surrounding area.

More recently we went up to Friswells Hill United and the CAPS Team of the Bermuda Police Service in the Friswells Hill neighbourhood . . . and I am saying that to say that the amount of litter that was picked up in those two areas in a very short time was incredible, all kinds of stuff. So I have seen the proliferation of litter along our roadsides, and I am quite disappointed as a Bermudian—some litter thrown from passing motor vehicles, some as a result of improperly set out household garbage, and some left by

commercial vehicle drivers who continually dump their refuse on our beautiful railway trails, for example.

So my hat is off to the KBB who provide garbage collection bags, water and gloves for those who wish to participate in keeping Bermuda beautiful.

Notwithstanding, Mr. Speaker, research conducted by KBB shows that Bermuda's roadsides are rife with litter. KBB and its team of volunteers are kept busy conducting not only their two Island-wide clean-ups in the spring and fall, but also monthly clean-ups around the Island. In some instances, heavy equipment is brought in to remove tons of bulky waste items that have been carelessly and continuously dumped at the same site.

In one clean-up last year alone a total of 15 tons of illegally dumped material was removed from just one site over the course of a Saturday morning. This is totally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Mm-mm-mm.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Many of the larger dumped items contained addressed correspondence, such as mail, utility bills, or receipts with serial numbers on household appliances, such as fridges, stoves, and washing machines. However, in the past our Ministry has not been able to prosecute waste owners or their illegal dumpsters based on that same level of evidence. Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions, such as England, Wales, and Cape Town in South Africa have created a cradle-to-grave ownership of waste items, i.e., if waste items are registered or addressed to you and are found outside of a mandated waste disposal area, you retain ownership and are therefore responsible.

With the amendments to this legislation we have created the same level of ownership of items by removing the circumstantial nature of evidence in the form of written correspondence and serial numbers. We also have included evidence obtained through the use of recorder devices at dumping hot-spots across the Island. In addition, reckless littering from motor vehicles, vessels, trucks, cabs, or cargo loads, shall be ticketable offences.

Mr. Speaker, further, to safeguard members of the public from unscrupulous truckers a waste handler's licence number will be issued and must be shown to both customer and at waste disposal sites, thus safeguarding against fly tipping.

With these brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Bill be read a second time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. S. Crockwell, from Pembroke West.

Mr. Crockwell has the floor.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we support this amendment Act before the House today. We certainly agree that it does not make sense having legislation that is unable to be effectively implemented. And, I think, all of us . . . we just heard the Honourable Minister give statistics in terms of the amount of waste that is recovered by Keep Bermuda Beautiful, and that is astounding when we hear of the proliferation of litter and we ascertain just how much trash is being deposited in our public spaces. And that is truly, Mr. Speaker, an indictment on our community that we do not respect our environment, that we would jeopardise all of us by depositing trash and other waste in the community.

I agree, you know, I live on Fisherman's Hill. And my daughter, who is nine years old, [and I] get together at least once a month and we will go walking in the immediate community and take a very large industrial bag. Not the ones that you can get at the average grocery store, we will get a large industrial bag. And we will put our gloves on and we will go, and as we are walking and enjoying a day out we collect trash. And to my astonishment, Mr. Speaker, the first day that we embarked on this I could not get to the bottom of Fisherman's Hill before that industrial-size trash bag was overflowing.

I could not believe the amount of bottles, the amount of trash that was deposited on the side of the road on that one hill. And then we went back a month later and we filled another bag—could not even go beyond Fisherman's Hill. I was astounded, absolutely astounded, *absolutely astounded!*

And, you know, there was some work being done right there on the hill. Some of the fauna was being cut away. I do not know whether it was the workman, or who, but for there to be that much garbage being deposited on the side of the road, speaks to the lack of respect that we have for our own environment—for *our* own environment, Mr. Speaker.

I take it as throwing trash in your own backyard, although it may not be your personal . . . when you are throwing trash in public spaces, when you are throwing trash maybe on someone else's property. In my view that is as if we are throwing trash in our own backyard. Because we must all, each citizen in this country, must take their responsibility in assuring that we keep Bermuda clean.

Now, what I did recognise was that if we all . . . there were some people who walk the streets on a regular basis and they do so with a little trash bag and they have their gloves on, and whilst they are out getting some exercise, they will pick up some trash. I think if all of us took that approach to keep our community clean . . . yes, first of all, we must ensure that people are dissuaded from throwing litter and throwing trash on our streets and in our public places and in our trees. But we all should take the responsibility of cleaning up our neighbourhoods, Mr. Speaker, and

turning them into something that can be enjoyable. Go out for a walk with your family. Take a bag and collect the trash and try and keep our community as clean as possible.

So we support the intent of this legislation. We certainly support the penalties that have been put in this Act. In some cases they are quite stringent. And we see certainly imprisonment in some cases when you have subsequent offences for two years and then when you are dealing with the reckless littering, we see the possibility of being incarcerated for three years. Although that may seem to be in some cases excessive, we certainly would expect the police to use their discretion. I know the police do have powers of being able to caution and so we hope that these types of punitive measures would be used in the most severe cases.

But we do support the fact that it is imperative that there are deterrents because this is a serious problem. It is ridiculous when you look over a wall and see someone has thrown a couch—a couch over the wall!—and who knows what damage that may have done. We just debated the protected species . . . throwing that couch over a wall into, you know, the natural area possibly for a protracted period of time can have a deleterious impact on the environment.

So this is something that we support 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Also, looking at the new provision for uncovered loads . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, just yesterday I was driving behind a truck, an intermediary truck that had a load of screenings that was uncovered and there were rocks flying everywhere. I had to make sure I was a substantial distance behind the truck, and I was saying to myself, you know, I really wanted a police officer to see this because it was dangerous, Mr. Speaker. It can cause an accident. It can cause damage to property.

And so when I see, yet again, that there is an increase in the fines for this . . . my father has been a truck driver all of my life. And he adhered to this very stringently. Whenever he had any load . . . it takes some time . . . you have to make sure that the tarp holds and is properly covering your load, but you take the time. You tie it up because, number one, you do not want to cause and potential harm or injury to those using the road.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we have gone through this particular amendment Act, we support it 100 per cent. We support the fact that if there was some difficulty with the original principal Act that made convictions more challenging, because of the level required in terms of the evidence, then allowing the circumstantial evidence to bring about a conviction we think is a step in the right direction, if it will bring these offenders to justice and if it will cause deterrents to what we think is an unnecessary blight in our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Crockwell, the Honourable and Learned Member from Pembroke West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban, from Pembroke East.

Mr. Roban, you have the floor.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am definitely pleased to give a comment on this legislation. It is another piece of legislation which is necessary, which, perhaps unfortunately, we have had to bring in this form in these amendments. Any delay is not because one has been slow. I can assure Honourable Members that, certainly the Government, and if I can specifically say that the Honourable former Public Works Minister, the Honourable Derrick V. Burgess, has worked tirelessly on this prior to it coming to this point, and saw this as a necessity to bring an update to a regime which, frankly, was not serving our country well.

I commend the current Minister, the Honourable Michael Weeks, for ensuring that it has been effectively delivered to this House because these amendments are necessary.

The question of litter is not a recent question for our country. And as we continue to try and do things and build the appropriate actions and relationships and efforts to deal with it, I do believe that we are somewhat successful, but, again, work must be done.

And I must congratulate and also credit people in the Waste Management division of the Public Works Department, Ms. Gordon, Mr. Hunt, and their team who are passionate about this issue. Certainly, as a constituency MP I have had the benefit of their resources and their expertise to deal with issues in my own district around keeping certain key public areas clean.

Most importantly, which I think must be noted is very much a priority of this department, is not about the punitive part of what we are trying to accomplish, but about the education and the helping to change behaviour and trying to get people to act differently, to be responsible around how we use spaces, particularly spaces that might not have the benefit of a lot of green space as a feature, but are heavily used by the public and have a tendency to perhaps collect debris from a variety of activities.

That department is quite proactive about trying to get people to change their own behaviours, to work with them in dealing with issues of managing waste. Let's face it; we are very much a material society. We are not farming and fishing where it is, you know, farm to plate type of environment. Those days are pretty much gone for Bermuda. Now it is package to plate. You know, it is supermarket to plate. That is the reality of the modern Bermuda. Perhaps 30, 40 years ago there was a lot more farm to plate going on. There was not a lot of waste debris in the process of living.

I think we have all been through it, you know. I find in my own work in the kitchen. Generally there is a lot of packaging. It is a part of what we deal with day to day. Everything is packaged. So even if it is something that is supposed to be sustainable and energy saving and complementary to our living, it is in a package and there is some plastic, or there is some apparatus that it is attached to and that has to be disposed of. That is a reality of how we live now.

So the problems we have is a by-product of this Bermuda that we live in, and this world we live in. We live in the Western world. This is a developed society and that is an ingredient that is a part of our normal living—packaging. So what we find is that everywhere you go, [there] on the street are wrappers for candy bars and cans from soda, drinks, water—even water which is a sustenance of life—packaging for water all over the streets.

These are the hazards and the by-product of how we live. So this is what we are dealing with and, unfortunately, as . . . and I commend the Honourable and Learned Member who just spoke because I think he expressed a feeling that everybody who has any sense of concern about pollution or litter, and anything that has a blight on our country . . . well, how it impacts us. That is the frustration that many of us feel.

Certainly, in my district where I am, which is a developed area, it is not perhaps the pristine rolling countryside of places like in Paget and Smith's Parish and other parts of the Island, even in the west or in some parts of the east. Right?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Yes, I live in Smith's. That's right.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: The rolling green countryside where there is more green space. You know, where I represent is fairly developed as the . . . it is right next to the district of the Honourable Minister, Mr. Weeks. We share . . . you might as well say we are neighbours because we share districts that, basically, are the same neighbourhood and they are built up, they are developed. Like in many part of the Island, you know, we find debris all over the place because that is a by-product of the living—of this high urban living and well-developed living that we in Bermuda have become accustomed.

So it is a challenge and a struggle to keep a sense of pristineness and cleanliness sometimes in some areas—not all areas. But I must say that I believe that in general, as even many of us travel and go to different parts of the world, I would argue (and I am prepared to stand on this) that Bermuda is a fairly clean place compared to even some other island jurisdictions that I have visited, which have perhaps

even more greener and are more tropical than we are. You know, the responsibility around litter in some of these other jurisdictions is lower and the public awareness is lower than Bermuda.

In fact, if I can just digress slightly, Mr. Speaker, but it is still on the issue of litter. Many years ago when I was young and disengaged and had nothing to care about in reference to many things that I do now, I went to Brazil and had a good time—hung out in Rio and had a real good time. I was down on Copacabana Beach—

An Hon. Member: By yourself?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I dare not say anything else, in case I might incriminate myself, about who I was with and who I was doing it with!

[Laughter]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: All I will tell you is that I was on vacation down in Brazil, and I was on the Copacabana Beach having the time of my life. So I decided to go down to Ipanema Beach, which was a real famous beach where, you know, the girl from Ipanema—tall, slender, young and lovely—you know, looking for that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Loving the music too. But guess what, when I got there, you know—

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: —you had this image of Brazil, you know, being this tropical place. Right?

[Gavel]

The Speaker: The speaker would like to hear, if I am missing it, please.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Carry on.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you. I think it is a good story, Mr. Speaker, so I am going to tell you.

An Hon. Member: He is enjoying it.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I am enjoying it, because I had a great time.

But, Mr. Speaker, Ipanema Beach was one of the most litter-ridden beaches I have ever been on anywhere in the world! I could not believe it. In fact, I was scared to walk on the beach.

The Speaker: That was in Rio, I am sure.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: That was in Rio de Janeiro, right, in a place that thrives on an image of pristine-ness and, you know, a certain allure and certain exotic-ness. And it made me appreciate how the attention that we in Bermuda give to our own beaches . . . because I could not believe it. That I went to this beach which has an international image—

The Speaker: Well, we are not talking about human litter. We are talking about—

[Laughter]

The Speaker: —we are talking about the other type of litter.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Yes, but I am talking about litter, Mr. Speaker. I am not talking about human litter. I am talking about trash—bottles, cans—stuff that pollutes our environment in the same way.

The Speaker: All right.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: I am just trying to bring a comparison to another country that I went to that had a very famous beach that none of us would think would be [rife] with litter at the time, to a beach in Bermuda, which I think we do a great job. And I was shocked to see this at this beach which has such an image. I confess I was afraid to walk on the beach without my shoes because there were glass pieces, all types of stuff all over the place. So I eventually left the beach real quick because I just could not stay there. It was just too filthy from the standpoint of litter and waste.

So I say that to say that I think that we do a pretty good job on what we do here, but we still have a challenge, Mr. Speaker. And the challenge is to maintain, is to keep our areas that are sensitive, that are a part of our identity as our pristine environment, clean.

Unfortunately, some of our citizens are, essentially—

[Gavel]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: —some of our—

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Madam Premier, you are almost there.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I will forgive. Believe me, I will forgive.

[Laughter]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: And I will yield, too, so that the Premier can go to her seat, if you do not mind, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member is yielding for Madam Premier.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Carry on, Honourable Member, Mr. Roban.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, Members want to hear more of my story, but I will stop there. Any more might incriminate me!

[Laughter]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: So, Mr. Speaker, I will go on to say just . . . I touched on that story just to show the comparison that I think we as a country should be proud of what we do and the awareness that we have built up over time.

Certainly, we have all been exposed to the KBB campaigns over the years—passionately, yearly, Keep Bermuda Beautiful. And I happen to believe that we do a pretty good job as a country trying to infuse that understanding in our children and in society generally.

But I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill, this Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act [2011] has been brought because, unfortunately, our society has become more material, more used to a disposable type of lifestyle. And so it is easy to throw the wrapper, to dispose of the couch over the wall, to drop things on the beach. Because when we go to the beach now it is not just stuff wrapped up in tinfoil and in little plastic containers, people got all . . . you can buy stuff on the beach and sometimes people just throw their wrapper on the actual beach itself, and with little care or awareness sometimes of what they are doing because it is easy to dispose of. And that is how things are created now—to easily discard. And we are suffering the result of that unfortunate development in our lifestyle as we stand now, Mr. Speaker.

So the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act [2011] is a necessity. And the amendments being brought by the Honourable Minister are important for a number of reasons, which the Minister has touched on, but I would just like to go and touch on them lightly myself.

Perhaps the most essential thing is public health and safety, Mr. Speaker. The proliferation of litter is a health and safety issue for a variety of reasons. Anything that brings risk to the health and safety of our community we have to act on. Certain types of waste are poisonous—batteries, certain other types of plastics, if digested by animals or children, or even getting into the workings of machinery on our road-

sides and other ways can be of risk. Or they certainly put contaminants into the natural environment which contaminate those environments for everyone and their usage. So that is important.

I have already touched on the beauty that Bermuda is. And our previous legislation was also focused on this. There are qualities that people come here to see and experience. Part of that, other than our beautiful people, and the environment . . . even the built-up environment that we have created which is attractive in itself, is a natural environment. And that natural environment is admired by many around the world, but if we cannot maintain that, if we do not continue to insist on strong framework for dealing with litter and the continued accumulation of litter in the environment, the costs, Mr. Speaker, to clean up and maintaining a framework against litter is expensive. It is expensive to the Government. It is expensive for all those . . . and it is a cost to all those who participate.

Even though there are many Bermudians and other residents who willingly participate in activities annually to deal with litter, Mr. Speaker, that is work! It is an effort—an effort that really should not have to be employed. You know, people diving and the diving community seems to be very active in this, annually participating in the clean-up every year, pulling up bikes and other heavy metal appliances which in themselves contaminate the marine environment. And this is not stuff that has come in from just the currents off the Gulf Stream. This is stuff that somebody, locally, has just thrown off the waterside. Every year you see the pictures in the media. I just think it is reprehensible.

And it is unfortunate that there are citizens, despite all the efforts of the Government, KBB, all the other environmental organisations who are passionate in trying to preserve the look of our country and the somewhat pristine environment that we have, that we are still confronted regularly with the accumulation of these sorts of things, sometimes in the same area. It is almost as if they are waiting for you to go behind them to chuck, *Oh, I see that you cleaned it up.*

Mr. Speaker, you know, it is unfortunate. So, the private sector and public sector are confronted with serious costs around this effort. And, Mr. Speaker, you know, the actual amendments that are being brought are to try and have a much more enforceable framework, of which has not been effective up to this point. The Government clearly accepts that. And we have had to advance the framework that we are going to enforce and these are so that, essentially, more effective policing can be done.

Sometimes being more specific with how you categorise certain types of things helps you to have a more prescriptive approach in dealing with it, which is why the reckless littering by motor vehicles and illegal dumping are all being much more detailed and dealt with. Finding ways to deal with these things is what the Act is seeking to achieve and [to] provide a mech-

anism for more effectively prosecuting different types of littering offences. I mean, this is important now.

As I said earlier on in my speech, we are becoming, or are already, a very disposable society. Our lifestyles . . . seemingly we accumulate packaging with everything that we use—food, appliances, even going to the dry cleaners. I mean, there is the plastic on your clothes that you take from the dry cleaners that has got to be disposed of. You know, there are all these little pieces and parts that we get as a part of our regular movement that can potentially or eventually ends up as waste. Almost as soon as you grab them you have to be disposing of them.

So all of the build-up of all these things in our environment is bound to have an impact, but we have to find ways to manage and enforce against the mishandling of these materials, Mr. Speaker. And this Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act [2011] is the step towards doing that.

Clearly, the fine at present is \$1,000. The maximum fine at present is \$1,000 which is looking to be increased. I think that is an important message as well. The challenges of the existing system, Mr. Speaker, are unlikely to achieve what we need to unless we make these changes. And we are looking to find ways to better educate our population to deal with reckless littering which seems to have, unfortunately, if not on the increase, there seems to be more signs of it in places that we do not want it.

Certainly, giving park rangers and the police, Mr. Speaker, tools that ensure that they can ticket people right on the spot as they discover, putting in a framework of surveillance, Mr. Speaker, so that some of the hot spots which have become known places for disposal can be better monitored and action can be taken based on any evidence collected and, hopefully, Mr. Speaker, these steps which I believe form a framework give us more tools.

But as I stated earlier, I do believe that the department itself has the team there now that is so passionate about this issue of education and behaviour. I mean, I heard Ms. Gordon (and I am not trying to single her out) on the radio a couple of weeks ago, passionately talking about the things they are doing to help people with being more sustainable around waste, composting, and E-Waste. I believe that tomorrow is E-Waste Day. So there you go, it is an effort to ensure that we as a community are better at managing our waste.

Waste is a reality of how we live. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, we are not the farming and fishing . . . where the only waste was primarily organic. It is now a different type of waste that we are struggling with. We have to be responsible and, certainly, even . . . and because of the different complexity of the waste we need to ensure that people are appropriately licenced and appropriately qualified to handle it.

Certainly, my experience within the Ministry (which Minister Weeks now presides over) . . . I did

give exposure to what we are doing in this area. I must again commend the department for how it is handling a lot of the by-product of the waste and recycling that we are attempting to do on-Island. And they are very, I believe, reasonably effective and certainly are keen to do more which I am sure the Minister will endeavour to see happen as time goes on to do more around this effort of handling waste and managing waste so that we as a . . . and our environment is not negatively impacted.

So, Mr. Speaker, I applaud this legislation. I applaud the effort that it is seeking to bring in place to infuse a framework that can better enforce all the forms of littering that seem to go on. Yes, the effective policing of our vehicles that move around that carry different aggregate and materials so that that does not become itself litter in the environment is important. And I am sure that the authorities like the police will be given guidance as to how they should exercise their discretion in all cases so that people who are driving trucks will not be afflicted with over-policing in this area, but it will be effective.

A part of what can be done, as well, is education. Because I am sure some of our truckers and people who move things around the Island may need a little bit of education around what this Act is going to put in place and how they should manage their materials as they ship them across the Island.

Certainly, the providers of that material as well, I am sure, will be happy to assist with making sure that trucks that come to their places to pick up things are properly covered and properly handled so that we can bring down some of the by-products of their moving about the loose cement and rubble and debris that the Honourable Member who formerly took his seat talked about. So that things like what happened to him can be on the decrease, and he will not feel a sense of hazard to his vehicle or himself as he is driving behind these sorts of vehicles. I am sure that our truckers will take on this sort of change of approach if they need to change their own habits around this.

But, as I said, I am happy with the changes that are being proposed. They are necessary. We as a country, as I said before, I think we do a really good job compared to some other jurisdictions that I have been to and I have seen, but vigilance is essential in this area because as we continue to be a consumer-based, material, waste-producing society, we have to manage effectively the by-products of that lifestyle, and educate our children and change our behaviours in any way we can to ensure that Bermuda remains the beautiful well-managed, place that it has come to be.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Butler.

Mr. D. Butler from Warwick North East has the floor.

Hon. Dale D. Butler: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Members.

I would like to thank the Minister and his Ministry for moving in this direction based on feedback that has been [received] from the public on what we have all seen, and also commend the Opposition for immediately agreeing without hesitation this evening to show their support.

Let me go on to thank KBB, and along with them the numerous charities and individual schools. Members of Parliament even organise activities to keep Bermuda clean. Bermudians used to take it seriously. That is why we gained the worldwide reputation for being so clean. And we know where the litter is in the country, as has already been mentioned some unbelievable reports of couches and unable to even go 10 feet without having to pick up a sack and bag. We know where it is, and we seem to take a little bit too much pride in telling our guests.

We just have to continue to organise these activities and to educate to ensure that it remains at the high level that we have a reputation for. We do not have to inform them that there are areas that we view with concern. We have seen a change, a drastic change in our culture over the past 20 years, even outside of one's own home where people just freely allow waste to exist without taking individual responsibility to keep their own neighbourhood clean.

In the area of Warwick that I represent, Mr. Speaker, we have had a few clean-ups. And I personally have taken an interest in Warwick Long Bay and a couple of the other little bays along there where cigarette butts and a lot of plastic seem to wash in. And every now and then you can find items of interest, not only driftwood, but other items of interest. So, in other words, we all play a part in attempting to keep paradise a paradise in keeping it clean.

But what is happening, Mr. Speaker, is that people are getting a bit tired. You continuously, year after year, try to find more motivating activities to keep the Island clean. They are getting more and more tired because the clean-ups that we have had in our area, the very next day you go back and you have a proliferation of litter—beer bottles, candy wrappers and other things.

So the Minister is moving in the direction of additional, increasing fines, but we will need Bermudians to, first of all, understand that this is a serious matter, but also our courts to understand. Because you cannot indicate that there should be a maximum fine. It is a fine not exceeding \$1,000. I think people are concerned—not exceeding \$25,000, not exceeding \$5,000—that we rarely hear of a fine being \$5,000, or even close to it. So they get a \$250 fine,

they say, *Well, it's just a slap on the hand*. So we would need the support of those who enforce the law when it comes to issuing these penalties.

The Honourable Member, Mr. Walter Roban (who just took his seat), stressed the importance of education. And now we have at our fingertips Channel 2, the Government channel. Our schools really place a lot of emphasis on the importance of keeping Bermudians informed.

Now this whole question of serial numbers and computers and refrigerators, there are people from some cultures who view that as a hobby. That is a hobby. I know that personally because our company—I state my interest of MEF and the houses that we have—there are certain cultures that take these computers that people throw away and they can do a good job at repairing them. Our dilemma is that they leave it for the company to dispose of them and that becomes a cost issue for us. And we do it legally by taking it to the dump, but it becomes a cost issue. You can imagine if other firms or individuals decided not to do that, that is how they end up in the trees and we find them. And our young people, it is very discouraging to them to find it.

Now, the Honourable Mr. Walter Roban talked about Brazil and his travels in Brazil. I will not go there. I never saw any litter on a single beach in Brazil because my eyes were—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dale D. Butler: I never looked down.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dale D. Butler: No, I never looked down. There was nothing to look down for.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Hon. Dale D. Butler: Yes, I was in the Amazon. There was nothing to look down . . . but he was looking down. I held my head high.

But I will tell a story about my journeys in Cuba. There is practically no waste in Cuba, Mr. Speaker. The reason . . . well, a couple of reasons: People do not have the economic finance to purchase disposable goods and they do not import goods to the volume—

An Hon. Member: Tall and short.

Hon. Dale D. Butler: Tall and short—to the volume that we import in this country with the amount of packaging that things come with.

In Cuba they recycle a lot. Again, something that Bermudians used to do. I once had to spend almost 4, 5 days just to find a small box to bring back a couple of delicate souvenirs. They were gone. I

walked into a number of shops . . . they take cardboard and they turn it into an artistic industry. I believe we have people in our midst who could perhaps show Bermudians how they can do things.

I walked into one store and I was about to buy two or three roosters. I know we have a feral chicken problem, but these were incredible dead artefacts, and they were made out of cardboard. When I lifted it up I thought it looked like metal. I purchased a couple of locks, those old-fashioned heavyweight locks that looked original, made out of cardboard.

So they have built into their culture a way of being able to use waste to benefit them. They make money from it which sustains them in their everyday living. We just take it for granted.

If you ever follow a trash truck around the city of Hamilton it is absolutely amazing what those gentlemen do with a tremendous amount of pride. I would like to salute the gentlemen who collect our waste on a regular basis who, unfortunately, had to bring to our attention some of the ill things that people were doing that put them at jeopardy—dead animals, faeces and things like that, totally unheard of in our culture.

But they do a fine job in the City of Hamilton, and I am sure throughout the rest of Bermuda, in ensuring that our waste is collected, because we certainly notice it if their trucks break down even for a day.

Now this Bill, Mr. Speaker, the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011, which is seeking to bring about greater control for the safe disposal of waste, which has now even entered the realm of our airport. I was leaving the airport this week and I turned on the radio. A gentleman asked why there was a big, flashy, brand new gate. Very good question—most people are concerned about bigger issues, about the loss of life in Bermuda, about education in Bermuda, but this was an issue that had the potential of gaining life. And I said, *Good question!* I had seen it and wondered. At the level we are at, we automatically think security; but where they were they thought, *Uh-huh, what is this all about? They're trying to keep us out of our airport.*

I was able to contact the Ministry of Transportation and I got an excellent answer. If you do not mind, I can give it. I was told it was because of the illegal dumping that was taking place there. In spite of the notices, in spite of the warnings on the radio, it continued. It can put all of us at risk, paper flying up in the air when an airplane is taking off.

People were just going down there, looking around [seeing] no cameras, no this, that, and the other, and they dump it. The next day the workers who have left it very, very clean, come in and they have to deal with it. So what is the recourse? We have no choice but to put a gate now on our airport, unfortunately. We used to be able to drive in and drive out. Now, to protect ourselves we have to add to the expense of the Government.

Another area we can definitely do something about it is a question of a greater awareness of our own trash. You cannot burn it anymore. So, unfortunately, some people—in spite of the notices in the telephone book, the notices on the air and in the newspapers, the notices in our mailboxes we get about our own litter days—some people do not get it right, and it ends up out on the streets for a longer period of time. Too soon, and of course, the feral chickens (as we have mentioned) and the dogs get into it. It seems to me this is a degree of defiance, because even as an MP when you go and visit them and you ask them to cooperate, the level of cooperation is not there.

So now we move into the area of enforcement, and that means a raising of fines. Well, this has to become a priority, as simple as it may sound. Why? Because so much is at stake here, Mr. Speaker. Our environment is at stake if litter continues. We have already had excellent examples of waterways and what it is doing to our streets, our beaches, and our health. The last speaker (the Honourable Walter Roban) spoke brilliantly about the potential impact this could have on our health.

But in addition to that, it does have an impact on our tourism. We have to keep in front of us, Mr. Speaker, those things that the rest of the world takes great pride in and say *Yes, you go to Bermuda you definitely, a, b, c and d*. Well, if litter is one that they do not see, then we should continue to make that our priority for our own selves (to begin with) *our* own environment, and for the environment of our younger people, but also because of the impact that it has on the amount of finances spent and it is a priority amongst tourists and something that they look forward too.

All of that said, Mr. Speaker, we can increase the fines and penalties and things like that, and put up more gates, but it comes down to enforcement. We have to do a better job at that. I know we have had priorities in catching criminals, in particular with regard to the gun violence. But some of these things have been sort of . . . I guess because of time limits, et cetera, they have been, not ignored, [but] put on the side, as the police have to make different priorities. Obviously now, with Minister Perinchief (the Honourable Member) making more and more progress, I hope that the police will place much more emphasis on enforcing the law when it comes to litter as a whole.

It is very disturbing when you see the front page and you see a whole truckload dumped along our railway—our precious railway, which Bermudians are beginning to appreciate and take greater pride in. They are out there walking left, right and centre because they discovered these areas. We will need a greater degree of enforcement.

I once saw a truck leave from the squash club in Devonshire. By the time it reached the Devonshire Post Office to turn to go down to the incinerator, half

of its load was gone. That was in spite of the two or three bikes overtaking and trying to get the driver's attention, and cars and whatnot trying to get the driver's attention. He showed virtually no interest.

What I do now is I report them. I report the numbers to whatever Ministry. And more and more Bermudians, I would encourage to do the same if people refuse to follow and obey the law. And when it is brought to their attention . . . because you can [tie] a good Boy Scout knot and it can possibly come out. A rope breaks, and if you are beeped and asked to slow down because your load is coming off, why not do that? Park your car in a safe area—not a bus lay-by, but find a little lay-by somewhere and go back and pick up that litter.

Well, the fines will obviously gain our attention, but the enforcement from the police is critical and the enforcement elsewhere, where laws are taken into consideration and people are found innocent and guilty, will be more than critical.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Butler, the Honourable Member from Warwick North East.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, from Paget West.

Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin has the floor.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief. I think it is important to just allude to the reputation that Bermuda has been able to establish as a jurisdiction that is relatively pristine. I have heard other speakers speak to the fact that over time . . . especially, I think, the Honourable Member who just took his seat spoke to the last 20 or so years when the attitude towards ensuring that pristine environment seems to have slipped a little.

Clearly, we have the helping agencies such as KBB and the like, who still stand in the gap and with many of the companies, corporations and the like, assist in doing clean-up, both on the wayside, on the marine areas, [and] all sorts of litter clean-up.

But I think what is important to mention, and the Honourable Member who just took his seat spoke to the issue that I wanted to address, is the issue respecting the loss of a load from the back of a truck, because that load has perhaps not been effectively secured.

Now I do know that for the most part, our truckers do try to comply. But there are times when one might be a little bit over enthusiastic and you might find that especially with horticultural waste and the like, one might be just a little bit overloaded.

I know we passed legislation in the last session in terms of what the total weight of a fully loaded truck ought to be, but I think sometimes horticultural waste may not be quite as heavy as some of your

other types of waste. So you may be complying with the load factors with the weight of the entire cab and contents, but you might find that because it does not pack as well that you can lose a bit of a load.

I think that it is incumbent upon the drivers of the trucks to ensure that their various tarps and whatever they use to secure their loads have been properly strapped down to avoid the sort of thing that we are discussing here.

I wish to allude to some of those truckers who have spoken to me over the course of the past few weeks who would love to have that problem, who would love to have the problem of having to secure a load. Because we have had many, many truckers who have shown up at the quarry early mornings hoping for some kind of job, so that they can have something on the back of their truck which to secure, and they find that they are being turned away.

They are in strict competition with some of the larger vehicles that are able to carry four and five times the load of individual trucks. I have spoken to this before, but I think it is an issue that we want to ensure, that the truck drivers are in the position to say, *I have a load that I can secure*. If we keep this one-sided sort of competition, they are going to be left out of the loop. I think it is important to bring it up. I think it is important to say that for the most part, our truckers do want to comply with the terms and conditions and restrictions when it comes to litter. Nobody likes to see our country going the way of some of the areas that we have seen with some of our neighbours—and I will not be specific, but just worldwide.

I travel a reasonable amount, and I can tell you that I have seen some areas where I just have made the determination that I will not return, because you just get the feeling that it is just plain dirty. You do not want to have Bermuda falling into that trap.

I think that we need to show that we have a sensitivity [and] that there is an equitable load share. So then we would have five drivers worrying about making sure their load is tied off, and not five drivers in the yard while one truck goes down the street with five loads.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, the Honourable Member from Paget West.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. M. Scott, from Sandys North.

Minister Scott has the floor.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So the item that we are dealing with under these amendments, the intendments of the amendments under the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011, are targeted and aimed at greater controls for the safe disposal of litter.

In this eight clause set of amendments, Mr. Speaker, in making amendments to introduce better controls, we note that in the sections that are the subject of the amendments, the interpretation section takes up a necessary set of amendments, and we have introduced the concept of an approved recording device.

We next have the introduction, necessarily, of refined definitions of sewerage. This House is a place of disclosure, Mr. Speaker, so we are now faced with what Minister Burgess (the former Minister of Public Works) and now Minister Michael Weeks, adopting these imperatives, have had to grapple with. And we have found in our society that sewerage is being too often put into the stream, and if ever there was a level of unhealthy conditions or of compromising the health of those collectors and movers of waste . . . prohibition and control of these kinds of elements [is] being prescribed.

Mr. Speaker, then we note that the next element for consideration under the Bill is under the restriction of depositing of waste. Right away the scheme of the Act goes directly to amendments to section 3 of the parent Act, Mr. Speaker.

We find that there is this interesting area that I want to speak a little more about, of closing in on controlling the undesired disposal of waste by the introduction of the use of circumstantial evidence, which is set out in section 3, the reference to how you may use the trail that is left by malefactors or persons who would see our country become much more littered than we would like to otherwise see it, and correspondence in serial numbers.

And interestingly, the drafter of the Bill, Mr. Richardson (whom you will recall I spoke to during the earlier congratulations period of the House), who is here in the House and who constructed this Act at the request of Minister Burgess and now Minister Weeks, introduces this concept where evidence obtained from an approved recording device shall be admissible in evidence.

So we are going to use technology, surveillance assistance, to trap and to provide the product of these devices, whether video recorded or otherwise. We are going to use that sum product for use in courts. So we have a statutory provision for the admissibility of the trail that is left. [Clause] 3 gets to the very heart of the parent Act, Mr. Speaker, when dealing with the restrictions on the control of waste. That is the very heart of the Bill, in my respectful submission.

Those who would and who often seek to do wrong or commit crimes or to, for example, as contemplated by this Act, deposit illegally and/or dump waste, they do so by stealth or they do so under the cover of darkness. They do not do so in the glare of eyewitnesses.

So this introduces this very interesting and familiar concept to the lawyers in the House of the use of circumstantial evidence. So that when often faced

(as we often will be) with the absence of an eyewitness account, what is left by way of a trail of evidence can still be used, and be used as effectively as direct evidence, to capture, nab, or bring to book persons who have committed these offences of dumping.

So Mr. Speaker, circumstantial evidence, with your permission, if you would permit me to just have a very brief exposition on how circumstantial evidence works. Often scientific evidence is circumstantial evidence and it requires a jury or a judge (in this case a magistrate) to make a connection between the circumstances and the fact in issue.

An example might be fingerprint evidence. In those kinds of cases, Mr. Speaker, the jury is simply asked to make a connection between this evidence, the fingerprint evidence, that the accused handled some object tied to the crime and the commission of the crime itself.

So it is indirect evidence that is so closely associated with the facts to be proved, Mr. Speaker, that the fact to be proved may be inferred simply from the existence of the circumstantial evidence. So serial numbers and telltale signs of some connection between the rubbish found and an individual allows for there to be the tracing to some person to connect them to the offence, in this case, of dumping and disposal of waste.

Mr. Speaker, we then know that the policy maker (the Ministers in this case) wished to target under the legislation, reckless littering. That is, the kind of littering that the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Crockwell, discovered on Fisherman's Hill. We see it too often, just the constant littering into our highways and side lanes of trash and bottles. So this is where the fight has to be taken to dampen and to suppress these kinds of activities by residents and visitors alike.

Then there is the reckless littering and dumping from trucks. We have learned, sadly, of trucks dumping sand and construction waste along our railway trails, and it is here that I believe we will use the electronic and surveillance support, at spots that have become known as hotspots, or well-known areas for trucks to disgorge their loads. We will put technology there, because people are not often there to witness the trucks when they make the drop.

In terms, Mr. Speaker, the Act is a studied attack on the problem. Both Ministers are to be commended for their steely determination to come to grips with the issue. I want to commend Chambers and the Parliamentary draftsman, Mr. Richardson, for constructing the right legislative language to reveal and to put in place a set of amendments that addresses the Bermuda problem of waste.

I submit that he has done a very fine job, for this is an ongoing issue. And to the extent that we can use legislation to round on this problem, along with all of the efforts that we all make, all of the technical officers from the department who encourage us to get

on with picking up litter, and when we have done it we have found, as all of us have experienced, far too much litter, this Bill will go a great deal of the way to deter the unbridled waste and littering in our country.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with those observations of support, I commend the Minister. And I am happy to say that I support the amendments to the Waste and Litter Control Bill.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Scott, the Honourable and Learned Member from Sandys North.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. M. Lister, from Sandys South Central.

Mr. Lister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to register my support for this Bill, the littering and illegal dumping offences amendment.

Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as Chairman of the West End Development Corporation we have experienced over the years this illegal dumping in our property, on sort of . . . not a regular basis anymore, because we have moved to sort of address it.

But, because we have 248 acres which we are responsible for, there are some areas which are not trafficked very well and some of these drivers take the opportunity to have a load of trash at a specific time, and of course they dump it illegally in these areas.

More recently, Mr. Speaker, they even had the audacity to go in the yard and dump trash. So we have installed more recently a CC[TV] cameras, that is for seeing trucks and vehicles that are going in and taking the number of that vehicle. If we can trace back the truck to where the illegal dumping is, we can sort of follow through and try to get some recourse.

When the people go up there and illegally dump like this, Mr. Speaker, it takes time from our workers, who have other jobs to do in the dockyard like keeping the dockyard beautiful and keeping it clean. They are the ones who have to take their time to remove this waste and find a place for it.

As you know, not only do we have many locals up there, but a majority of tourists come to Dockyard. I do not see how a Bermudian could in good faith go up there and act in that capacity. He is acting against the tourist industry. He is acting against Bermuda and all those people who live here.

It is one of those things which are really stressful. It happens on a less frequent basis now, but it did at one time happen on a more frequent basis. I think the word has gone out that we do have CC[TV] cameras there now—

The Speaker: They have cameras.

Hon. Walter M. Lister:—and they are afraid to come up there to illegally dump because we stand in a good position of tracing that vehicle and thereby tracing the load back to where it originated. So we have tried to come to grips with this, but we still have the odd person who comes up there from time to time and tries to dump illegally.

Just one other point, Mr. Speaker, and that is to deal with the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011. That part of the Act, Mr. Speaker . . . for example, I see around these fast food places—such as people who sell hamburgers and people who sell pizzas who put them in boxes—around these facilities we are finding a lot of people walking away, and when they are finished with the container they just throw it away.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that box is not only the responsibility of that person who threw it there, but it is also the responsibility of that business that made a profit on it as well. So we have to find how we can link this trash back to the owner because they do have some responsibility. They make the money on it, and they figure that is it. They have no further responsibility.

That puts more strain and stress on our people who clean the roads and clean the highways and collect trash to try to keep Bermuda beautiful. I know some lanes which are less trafficked where you do not see a lot of people, people will drop these containers, Mr. Speaker. You can tell it is directly from these specific places because the name is on the box, and you know exactly from whence it came.

So I would like to encourage the Minister to look at this, to see if we can link the two together, because this would deter, not only the business, but also the person who drops the paper, or drops the box (whatever the case may be) to take a second thought before he drops it.

I know some areas, Mr. Speaker, where these places are, many of the residents go out from time to time and collect all of the trash and put it in the container. They should not have to do that, it is not their responsibility. They assume the responsibility because they want their neighbourhood to look clean and tidy, and I give them all the points for it. But the responsibility . . . and the culprits are two persons—the person who drops the litter and the person who has made money on that project. So I think if we look at those things we can tighten that little area up.

A number of years ago I was a member of the KBB. And they themselves have done an excellent job, Mr. Speaker, in trying to keep Bermuda beautiful over the years. I think that they are to be congratulated for the efforts that they put in. Much of it is voluntary. Volunteers do a lot of work and oftentimes we get a lot of work out of volunteers. Those people are committed, are dedicated to cleaning up Bermuda. I think that this Government gives a grant to those peo-

ple, and the monies that they do have they use wisely to help to keep Bermuda beautiful.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. W. M. Lister from Sandys South Central.

Any further speakers?

I recognise the Honourable Member Minister, D. Burgess, from Hamilton East.

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Waste. You know, Mr. Speaker, my time in W&E before I went in there, Public Works, I normally help out and participate in cleaning the streets. And during my time in that Ministry visited a few sites where illegal dumping occurred.

In fact, one site was down on Palmetto Road right across from Tynes Bay. They had to drive in, go right deep into the bush. And you see fridges, mattresses . . . everything you can think of in the bush.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Right. Well, it borders that . . . and in other places you see the illegal dumping.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with this Bill the Government intends to put cameras in certain areas where there this illegal dumping occurs. Because what happens, Mr. Speaker, when—whether it is waste from buildings or whatever—truckers get paid to take the fridges and stoves and whatever, to bring it away. And let me make it very clear, we do have some very, very good truckers.

Mr. Speaker, I think it was probably earlier this year that I made a Ministerial Statement about plastic bags and foam, and some countries have banned plastic bags, and some have put a tax on plastic bags.

When I mentioned that, there was some feedback locally. And I think there was only one person, one supermarket owner, that was really in favour of it without question, and that was the Lindo's down on Watlington Road. Some others were apprehensive, well, they were just a little cautious. They said more studies would have to occur because the figure would be a cost to . . . in fact, it was July this year, actually, that I did that Statement.

It would be a cost, as they said, to use anything different. Plastic bags, Mr. Speaker, and foam . . . a lot of the plastic and foam that wash up on our beach, most of it is from other places, meaning not Bermuda. Foam and plastic have a long life. In fact, they say in, I think, it is LA and San Francisco, 25 per cent of the litter that is picked up is plastic.

I must say it is good use for us in Bermuda, because we use it for energy; we burn it. We burn foam if people properly dispose of it. But when plastic and foam ends up in the water—particularly plastic—

and the fish nibble off of that and it gets into their system, a lot of times it can suffocate fish, turtles and whatever, and they die.

When the fish take the nibbles of these plastics, it can end up on our table, because you catch the fish and you eat the fish. So that is why you find that the environmentalists and KBB would ask people to properly dispose of plastics and foams, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, a plastic bottle . . . the question is how long does it take to degrade? A plastic bottle takes 450 years to degrade. Plastic bags they say 10 to 20 years. Mylar balloons take 50 years to degrade. Styrofoam cup, 50 years, and they break down into little pieces where the fish nibble off that and, again, we get it.

Many times us, the KBB and all those international companies, another group that helps out to clean, you get the marine cleanup . . . it is a lot of junk that is thrown in the bushes. I have seen on one occasion when I was out picking up trash with some of my folks and someone came across in a car and just pitched, right out of the window of the car. And I said *Oh man, this is some serious business.*

So Mr. Speaker, this Bill is very important. Some may ask, *Why didn't you go all the way, why didn't you include plastic?* Well, consultation is ongoing. I think if you went down to the recycling plant, and my cousin is here, Mrs. Gordon, she does a great job down there in even educating Bermuda about recycling.

We do not recycle enough in Bermuda. Some places are very serious about it, and there are laws on it, but we do not do it as much. We really did not want to enact law for everything that you are not doing. We would hope that good habits will prevail.

Mr. Speaker, it is almost like putting out trash. You will find our garbage collection would take place, let us say it would occur on Monday. They come around ten o'clock and take your trash out. Two o'clock that day, more trash is put out. You can imagine what happens in the summertime with the heat and everything else. This is an annoyance to us all [even though] we try to educate the public to put their trash out at a proper time, just before the trucks start to come around and collect it.

We did not include it in the legislation, but the Ministry is going to come up with a policy and we are hoping that the policy would work before you put legislation in. We are hoping it can change the attitudes of people when it comes to keeping Bermuda beautiful.

We see many times I think . . . the Honourable Member, Walter Lister, just talked about these restaurants that you can go buy pizza and chicken or whatever and you will see, particularly in these areas, the trash hanging around. We talked some time ago here about a bottle bill, a tin bill, meaning that you put a deposit on bottles.

You know when you were a little fellow, not many years ago, Mr. Speaker, when you wanted your

Christmas money, you go get a couple cases of empty mineral bottles, and you used to get sixpence a bottle; 12 shillings a case. Mr. Speaker, you remember those times. I am sure you have done a lot of this. Twelve shillings a case I am told—I was not here, but—

The Speaker: It is not well known, I can tell you that much.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, I am told about that, Mr. Speaker. The idea that we thought about was putting a tax on bottle bills—and when I say bottles, I mean tins also—so that if people keep this attitude about keeping our environment clean, then we will have some funding to pay people to go clean up.

Because I can tell you, the folks that come out and help to keep Bermuda beautiful, as much trash as we pick up, there is much to be picked up. We are not as tidy as we used to be. Then with the addition . . . I guess years ago when you were a young fellow there were no plastic bags, I do not imagine, or not to the extent that we have them now.

Everywhere where they put this law in place, where they put a tax on . . . if you go to the grocery shop and you want a plastic bag, you paid for it. Where they enacted that law, the use of plastic bags decreased tremendously.

So Mr. Speaker, I am pretty sure that once the technical officers within the Ministry of Public Works come up with a way to be accepted by one and all (because you really do not want to shove things down people's throats), I think you will see some change in that. Because Bermuda is not as clean and beautiful as it used to be, Mr. Speaker.

Let me call the guy's name . . . [President of] Lindo's, Giorgio Zanol. He was . . . welcomed [it] with open arms. Because it was in the paper there, and some were against it totally and some said, *Well, let's see. We'll wait and see.*

So Mr. Speaker, the behaviour creates law. Bad behaviour makes us enact law so we can get the behaviour in line. No one wants to do that all the time. You do not want to be overregulated where everything you do is regulated and there is a law against it. We are hoping and, again, we are pleading, that good habits will prevail so these types of laws will not have to be enacted to get Bermuda and everywhere else clean like it used to be, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Minister and all those within the Ministry. One of the best Permanent Secretaries we have, Randy Rochester, is here, who is leading that Ministry, Mr. Hunt, who has come back to help us out in Waste Management. We thank him for that because he did not have to, but he came back and is doing a great job. Mrs. Gordon from down in recycling; she is doing a great job. We have some good people in Public Works, Mr. Speaker, so I just want to recognise them.

All the others—our garbage collection people, are great folks who are working under some challenges, but doing a great job, and those at the recycling plant and all of us.

But that Ministry, I can tell you, they do their best to keep Bermuda in a very good standard.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.

Any further speakers?

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. D. P. Lister, from Sandys North Central.

Mr. Lister has the floor.

Hon. Dennis P. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to begin where the Honourable Deputy just ended, basically. He ended by recognising the team effort that is put in by those folks in the Ministry who have brought this piece of legislation, this amendment, to this floor today, and the commitment that they have in seeing to it that we address those things in a manner that it should be addressed.

But Mr. Speaker, the success of this comes from an even greater team effort. That greater team effort, Mr. Speaker, is from the buy-in that the community would[make], in that if the community would do what we would like for them to do, Mr. Speaker, we would not have a need for this amendment to be made.

So even though the Deputy Speaker said we bring amendments and legislation here as a result of bad behaviours, that does not mean that we have to actually enforce them if the people themselves recognise that their behaviour has been bad and they fix their own bad behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, that is where the key to this is, is that I think today this whole exercise, the earlier legislation and this legislation, are both legislation about educating our public, Mr. Speaker. Educating the public about why we need to correct some of the bad practices that we have taken, some of the bad habits that we have, because those bad habits have a long-term negative impact. But if we ourselves adjust our habits and adjust those practices, Mr. Speaker, we can have the best result that we are looking for.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker, part of this comes [back to] the whole education exercise of making the awareness of the community . . . the importance of why such amendment has to be made, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we have become a real throw-away society, Mr. Speaker. The days of keeping things and trying to repair and patch and keeping life extending into it does not exist today as it did yesterday because the cost of replacing seems so much cheaper than repairing sometimes on a lot of the things that you purchase today.

When you look at those large items that you find disposed where they should not be disposed—

whether it be couches, televisions, refrigerators, Mr. Speaker, things of that nature—it shows to the mind-set of where we as a society have gone, and it is not one of those areas that we should be proud of, Mr. Speaker. It is one of the areas that we must recognise that needs to be fixed and corrected.

And we, Mr. Speaker, each and every one of us, have the power in ourselves to correct it if we simply change our bad habits. Whether it is dropping that piece of paper on the roadside, throwing that candy wrapper or that wrapper from the food store that was made reference to earlier, whether it is just dropping that on the roadside, dropping it out the car window . . . we all know that is not the best practice, Mr. Speaker. It is a practice that we all need to change.

Mr. Speaker, when we think of the plastic items and items that come in plastic, there is a real concern there because as has been said earlier, it takes years before they are broken down.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to be close to the water shore, and I can see the number of plastic items that get washed up whenever we have hurricanes or high winds come across, and it is amazing . . . some of the items that you pick up along those shorelines. You can see they have a lot of age to them, just by being in the water so long, but they are still in their full context, so to speak. It has not broken down any, it just has a lot of growth over it, and you wonder how long it has been out in the water and how long will it be out there before it actually breaks down.

There on the other side of it, as the last speaker (Deputy Burgess) made reference to, when it starts to break down, it breaks into small particles and you have the fish eating those particles, Mr. Speaker. We have to be concerned about that because that plastic is getting into the fish, and what do we do? We eat the fish.

So it gets into our food chain, Mr. Speaker. In the long term, that has to have some impact down the road if we do not correct our practices. We know the stories of turtles that are drowning through suffocation from getting caught in these plastics and eating the plastics thinking they are food . . . there is a lot of history, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of documentation on those things. Again, it is human practices, Mr. Speaker, it is human practises that have created those things and it is practices that we ourselves, who participate in this, can correct.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is one of those things for which I have a phrase that I coined. You know when you are in church, Mr. Speaker, the pastor has a part in the church that he says we all can take part in, and that is the collection. So we all can reach in our purse and put something in the collection plates and equally participate in that.

Well this is one of those participatory exercises here, Mr. Speaker. If we all participate, if we all realise that every little thing that we do with regard to

how we dispose of what we have, has a long term impact that collectively is in the best interests of all of us going forward and in the generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, as I look at some of the clauses within this amendment, I see it will address those who put trash out at the wrong times. We have all lived in neighbourhoods where we see that happening, unfortunately. We drive by and we see the trash has been out there this morning, we come back and the trash truck has taken it all away, and then later on you drive back and there is a bag sitting there. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, that bag came afterwards. The individuals who left that bag there can clearly understand that they came late because, obviously, there would have been other bags there.

So that individual never comes back and picks that bag up, Mr. Speaker. It sits there until the dogs pull it apart and someone has to clean it up. . . In one of the neighbourhoods I lived in before, there were a few of us who actually used to go down and clean up and take the bag back and secure it somewhere until the right day, because we knew if we did not secure it, it was only going end up in the street and blowing all over the neighbourhood.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it should not be put on that other individual if we know we have done the wrong thing from the beginning. Just do not put the bag there if the time has passed. I see that the legislation addresses that, and I think it is a good thing that it is addressing that. It is what we need to do as part of the education campaign, to let the homeowner know that when you put your trash out you have a real responsibility, and if you ignore or abuse that responsibility, this legislation can actually address that, and will address that.

No one wants to find themselves in that position where they are ticketed for any offence, whether speed or whatever. We all get unnerved when we have to be ticketed for anything. So if we do not want to be ticketed, we need to understand that there is mechanism in this legislation that will ticket you if you do the wrong thing.

Putting your trash out at the wrong time, allowing it to become a nuisance in the neighbourhood because it is now blowing all over the place and torn up by the dogs and the feral chickens and et cetera—you are creating an offence, and it will be treated in that manner.

So it is all part of this education process, Mr. Speaker, that we have to make sure that we all understand and do what we have to do to prevent that.

Much has been said already, Mr. Speaker, about the loads being carried in trucks that are not properly covered. We all have seen that stuff falling out and blowing out of trucks as we are driving behind them. I can remember years ago you never really saw it, because it seemed like everybody had that piece of canvas tied up on the back of their truck, and when the need was there they pulled it out and covered it

over. Very few trucks I notice today even have that canvas tied up somewhere in the back of the truck that they used to have in days gone by. So those types of practises, Mr. Speaker, have to be brought back as a standard practise as to how they carry the loads that they have in their truck.

And Mr. Speaker, the other piece, in reference to the illegal dumping . . . You as the client, Mr. Speaker, or I as the client hire a truck to dispose of some goods for us, and those goods end up where they should not be, meaning that the trucker just made a quick hustle and took your stuff and dumped it around the corner rather than making the long run to the dump, is a reality of what happens in Bermuda.

One of the ministries I was in, there was an area that continually had stuff dumped in a specific location. And when we would regularly check and be able to find names and stuff to identify the owner of the stuff, and when we would contact the owner they would say, *Well, wait a minute, I paid so-and-so to take that away for me. I contracted a trucker, he came and collected it. My end of the business is done.* The trucker fell short, Mr. Speaker, by not living up to what he should do.

So this legislation addresses that type of trucker who has had a practice of taking a shortcut rather than doing the right thing. It is a game, Mr. Speaker. He does not have to get his knuckles rapped over this if he does the right thing.

It is part of the whole process here, Mr. Speaker. It gets back to what I said earlier. It is about education, and if everybody participating understands that there is no longer a free ride in this regard, that it will be addressed and there will be a means to take care of their shortcomings, then hopefully this legislation will be one that is taken to heart, where we do not have to enact the punishments by ticketing folks, because there will not be a need to ticket folks because they will start to do what we would expect and what we had hoped they would have done from the beginning anyhow. If that is what is achieved, then we have gone a long way, Mr. Speaker, in getting to where we really want to be.

So my message out there to the community, to those truckers and the community in general, is that this is for each of us to participate in, and if we participate correctly, we will achieve what we want to achieve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. D. Lister, from Sandys North Central.

Minister, let me take the Deputy Speaker first. I recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. K. Horton, the Deputy Speaker from Southampton West. You have the floor.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will be brief, as usual, in joining in this debate.

I would like first of all to thank the Minister for bringing forth this amendment that deals with waste and litter control in our community. The previous speaker, the Member who just took his seat, took a line of discussion that certainly I believe in, and would like to continue in.

I certainly believe very much in education. I believe very much in knowledge, in knowledge being power in terms of being able to do what is necessary to keep our country the beautiful country that it has been.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly can remember people coming to Bermuda, and certainly in my days when I was working with the Ministry of Tourism, and how we would go out and brag about how clean Bermuda is, and the fact that we are the cleanest place certainly in the Caribbean. I remember when we used to say that, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we were clean. Now we can say, probably, that we are still cleaner than many of the other countries. We are cleaner, but we are not as clean anymore as a result of some of the instances of waste and a lack of waste and litter control in our country.

Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Dennis Lister mentioned earlier, we are responsible for what we do. If there is trash in our community, than we have a responsibility for the trash in our community. If there is trash in our schoolyards, then our young people who are using those schoolyards have responsibility for that.

So we want to start out, I think, Mr. Speaker, with, first of all, our young people understanding and appreciating the value of disposing of waste in a positive manner, in using the waste bins that are provided by whatever institution you may be in, whether it is a school, or whether it is a business.

I think right from the beginning we can help our young people to understand and educate them in understanding the value of taking care and being responsible for the piece of trash you drop.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, and I can reflect back to when I was a school principal and how we emphasised about how important it was for the school to be clean. If I saw a piece of trash on the floor, I, as the principal, would pick it up. I would let students know the importance of, whoever you are, if you see something that is not right, trash out of place, straighten it out.

An Hon. Member: Lead by example.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Lead by example.

So what we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is start right from the beginning. If we are going to be successful, at the end of the day in being able to get to the point, we need to educate the public, as the Honourable Member who just took his seat said, and then

we do not have to prosecute people. We are talking right now about prevention. We are talking about preventing there being litter and trash dumped all over the way.

So we need to be educating right from the beginning where our young people are learning the value of distributing and getting rid of waste in the proper manner.

Mr. Speaker, I think also that it is important for . . . when we talk about our communities, and putting pressure on those in our communities. If we see neighbours around us who are not distributing or not getting rid of their trash in the way that they should . . . we live in that neighbourhood, then we need to let these people know. People in neighbourhoods have to really start taking charge of their own neighbourhoods and not leave it up to the Government to have to come along, and at the end of the day, have to prosecute.

Let us take care of our own neighbourhoods to ensure that waste is distributed . . . and you know what, our neighbours will appreciate it. Because if we put pressure on them and they do it in the right way, then at the end of the day there needs not to be getting to the point where there is prosecution. That is what we want to avoid.

The Government is not bringing this to the floor of the House to lead to prosecutions. All right? Why we are bringing it is to make our people aware that it is important for them to follow the letter of the law that we are bringing today in order that there will not be prosecutions. Certainly, that is where the whole education process comes in.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would reach out and ask, for instance, that organisations, businesses, develop (and many are developing) green teams. Every single business in our country should have a green team. Wherever you are, whether it is a law firm, whether it is a hotel, whether it is a school, wherever, there should be a green team in each organisation to be able to address and ensure and look at the best ways in which to get rid of our waste. And to be able to use what we use in our communities, making sure, Mr. Speaker, that we are not destroying the environment as we get rid of our waste.

It connects, you know, Mr. Speaker, with the previous legislation that we talked about. We talked about protecting species. Well, if we dump trash anywhere . . . for instance, I know not far from where I lived in Somerset, before I moved all the way down to where I am now, but when I was in Somerset, I lived right near the railroad right of way in White Hill that led right down to Somerset Bridge.

That was a dumping ground. It was amazing what we used to find. I used to take my children walking there.

An Hon. Member: It is cleaned up nice now.

Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton: Yes, it is cleaned up nice, and why? Because of the community, mainly, because the community made a decision supported by the Government and we cleaned it up.

I think that is what every community has to do. We are going to stop this nonsense. We are not going to live in a community and allow people to dump trash in our own communities.

So let people in our communities stand up. When you see people or trucks coming along and dumping in a way that they should not, let us report them. I do not care who they are. Let us report them. Let us make sure that those who do not take heed to the education and go ahead and break our law, that those people are brought to prosecution.

Again, it depends on the stand we take in our community. So much of what we do, so much of our quality of life depends on what we as a community do. We have to stop watching things happen and letting them go. We have to stop that in Bermuda. Where we just see it happen but let it go. It gets worse and worse. Stop it when it is happening. Let people know that you are not going to do it in my community. Not at all. Once we do that, Mr. Speaker, then of course the Government has much less to do. And the resources that the Government would use in order to take care of this could be used somewhere else.

So Mr. Speaker, I am encouraging businesses, I am encouraging schools, I am encouraging our entire communities to become aware of the importance of ensuring that we have in our country proper waste and litter control. Those entities will be very much supported by a Government who believes indeed that we need a clean, clean community.

We want to have people coming into Bermuda as visitors and leaving here saying, *That was the most beautiful and most clean place that we have ever been in.* It has been said before, and there is no reason why we cannot have it back that way again if we, the community and as individuals, take it upon ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a great move, in fact, with neighbourhood watches ensuring that there is not crime in our community. Well, the neighbourhood watch can even take on this aspect. This is something that the neighbourhood watches can take on and ensure that if we see something like this happening, we can add this to their portfolio. To make sure that they are not only are they looking out for crime and break-ins and things like that in our community, but also when we see people who are distributing waste in a negative way, it should be brought to their attention that they are doing wrong, and then we will make it right.

So Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would lean (as I more often than not do) I lean towards education as being the important process in ensuring that our young people, those working in our businesses and in our communities understand what it is that we are

talking about. Certainly, I understand that the Ministry will have, or they may be carrying on now, a public relations campaign to ensure that everyone is fully aware of this.

I want to make sure that businesses are listening. Every business should have a green team to ensure that waste in our country is gotten rid of in a positive way so that it does not negatively impact on our environment.

So Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank the Minister for bringing this forward. And I am sure that, together, as a community, we are indeed going to meet the challenge and beat it in terms of ensuring that waste and litter are distributed or are being gotten rid of in a very positive way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Horton, the Honourable Member from Southampton West, Deputy Speaker.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Z. De Silva.

Minister De Silva from Southampton East Central has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just took his seat (MP Horton) talked about education and gave a very good breakdown of how that education should be distributed amongst our people.

But I wanted to make sure, and I understand from the Minister that there is going to be a very effervescent—

An Hon. Member: Robust.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva:—robust advertising strategy, so that our people know what we are doing. I would just send out a little request to the police force to be a little lenient on some of our truckers with regard to covered loads, Mr. Speaker.

I declare my interest, Mr. Speaker. I have been in the business for a long time, and I know that no matter how much you preach to these guys, every so often you are going to catch somebody not covering up the load as they know they should.

I have tried a lot of different things to get them to make sure that they adhere to the law, but, Mr. Speaker, maybe this \$1,000 fine will certainly open up one's eyes and they will certainly try to adhere to it a little better than they have in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to concentrate, if I could, on the trucking because that does tend to dovetail into a lot of things that I have a lot of experience with. We have heard about trash being dumped in railway trails and in public areas, Vesey Street and whatnot, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you firsthand, believe it or not, a bit of property where a certain company that I am in-

involved with used to be a dump years ago. Some people, believe it or not, to this day still think it is a dump. Of course, this property borders Vesey Street as well, and it is not usual to find the odd fridge or stove dumped out there in the backyard, Mr. Speaker. So hopefully this will make people think a little bit more and those types of things will be something of the past.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, mentioned her concern about the truckers and the larger truckers that are taking work away. I agree with her.

The Speaker: All of which does not have anything to do with this.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, with a little bit of leniency given to the Honourable Member, I hope that—

The Speaker: Well, she got it in.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes. I hope that you will give me a chance to give the other side of the coin, Mr. Speaker.

She did have concerns that it was many of the smaller truckers that were being hurt and not having their trucks full. Going to the quarry and none of them have any work and watch a big truck roll out with a sizeable load of about four or five [small truck loads].

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say this. Years ago—you probably remember, Mr. Speaker, and as some of us may know our history here. Remember how we used to cut slate, Mr. Speaker—with that big saw, by hand? Now you have these machines, Mr. Speaker, they walk behind and they cut slate.

Mr. Speaker, water trucks—do you know that once upon a time water trucks were only 600 and 800 gallons. Now we have some water trucks that hold 2,000 gallons.

Mr. Speaker, you know, the good thing is, what I have noticed with some of the truckers that do not have the trucking business, they have been very creative.

And Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this. I am proud to say I know many truckers that used to work for a company that I am associated with who are now in their own business. They do not only own trucks, Mr. Speaker, they own Bobcats, they own backhoes, and they own all sorts of related equipment to the industry. But they have gotten creative. They have gotten very creative. In fact, some of those truckers have large backhoes, indeed, not just the smaller ones either.

They have done very well, they have gotten creative. The world has changed. Mr. Speaker, you remember before trucks and cars the people used to haul dirt around in wagons, horse-drawn wagons.

An Hon. Member: You were just a little boy.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I was just a little boy, yes, you are right. The Honourable, Mr. Lister, has certainly put me in my place.

An Hon. Member: He was not even born.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, he gave me a little credit, I guess. He said I was a little boy, but I do not think I was even around, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So I can see the point of my Honourable Member opposite when she draws that conclusion, but she cannot forget the other things, Mr. Speaker. Some of these trucks have cranes. They have gone into the crane business, and some truckers are going into the backhoe business and the Bobcat business.

Mr. Speaker, you would be aware that those same horse-drawn wagons used to haul trash around too, you know. Well, you have a few companies out there that have these big trash trucks. They haul bins to the hotels and they take the trash in big trucks now, Mr. Speaker. They do not use horse-drawn wagons anymore. In fact, a lot of these same truckers that the Honourable Member mentioned used to haul from the hotels and guest houses and businesses. But you know what, who does most of that now, Mr. Speaker? You have a couple of companies on the Island that basically dominate that business.

So you see, you have all the . . . I could talk about boats, Mr. Speaker. We no longer have the cruise ships, the small ones, anymore. They are becoming a thing of the past, you have megaships.

The Speaker: Well, do not forget we are talking about waste and litter.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am almost finished with my analogy.

Mr. Speaker, I will finish on these two notes. In fact, Deputy Premier, Mr. Burgess, mentioned Lindo's and Giorgio Zanol, I think, he mentioned. You know what, Mr. Speaker? I remember when Lindo's was a little matchbox shop. It is not like that anymore, is it, Mr. Speaker?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, yes, they had very good chouriço there . . . when I used to eat it, Mr. Speaker. You know, as Health Minister now I do not eat chouriço anymore, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Why?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I am trying to look after my heart.

But, Mr. Speaker, Lindo's is a prime example of how things have changed over the years. We no longer have too many . . . we still have the mom and pop shops, but the mom and pop shops are still around. We do not say to Lindo's and Marketplace and Miles and these people, when they expand and they grow, we have not said, *Hey listen, you shouldn't do that, because you are cutting the mom and pop shops out.* It is called competition; it is called progress, Mr. Speaker.

It is the same with the big concrete trucks. Now I remember when I was younger I learned to like them—where is MP Lister? I used to help my father mix concrete by hand. We had a little concrete mixer, and stayed there all day mixing concrete. Not anymore. You call a concrete truck. You know what he does? He delivers four yards of concrete and you are done. You can relax for the day.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, I think that is important when we talk about the economies of scale and what we are doing and how we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to congratulate the Minister. I think Bermuda is going to be a better place for it. I think there is going to be more to come.

The Speaker: Well, do not forget about me, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Pardon?

The Speaker: Do not forget about me.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, Mr. Speaker, yes. I would never forget about you, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, I would not.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to congratulate the Minister, and I look forward to our Bermudian people becoming a little bit more aware and looking out after our country a little bit better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister De Silva, the Honourable Member from Southampton East Central.

Are there any further speakers?

No further speakers?

The Minister in charge, Minister Weeks, is going to reply.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Quickly, I will say that it is all our responsibility to keep Bermuda beautiful, and I liked the comments by Honourable Members.

Earlier, the former Minister of Public Works spoke of his excellent team, and I would like to echo those sentiments. Just this week I went down to the depot at the airport, to Marsh Folly, and Mr. Hunt gave us an excellent tour. And the workers there are very proud of what they do, and I just have to take my hat off to them.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Bill be committed.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Would the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, from Paget West please take the Chair for Committee.

House in Committee at 8:13 pm

COMMITTEE ON BILL

[Hon. Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin, Chairman]

WASTE AND LITTER CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT 2011

The Chairman: We are in Committee of the [Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011](#).

The Chair recognises the Honourable Minister, Mr. Michael Weeks.

Mr. Weeks, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman, I move that, since there are only seven clauses, can I move them all at one time?

The Chairman: You may. No objection.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Okay.

Madam Chairman, this is a detailed and thorough change to the Waste and Litter Control Act 1987. [I will give a] clause by clause explanation.

Clause 1 is the citation. This is the standard opening clause which gives the title of the Bill.

Clause 2 amends section 2 of the principal Act. Clause 2 amends section 2 of the Act by adding the definition of, one, "approved recording device," two, "sewage," and three, it redefines the definition of "waste," so that it includes liquid waste.

Clause 3 inserts new sections 3(3) and 3(4) to the principal Act. New subsection (3) allows circumstantial evidence to be considered for the purpose of investigating and prosecuting offences to the Act. New

subsection (4) allows the inclusion of evidence obtained from an approved recording device.

Madam Chairman, clause 4 inserts new sections 4A and 4B to the principal Act. Clause 4A creates the offence of reckless littering, and 4B creates the offence of reckless littering from trucks.

Clause 5 inserts new section 8(7) to the principal Act. Clause 5 makes it mandatory for licences issued by the Ministry under section 8([7]) to include a waste handler's licence number and for waste handlers to produce, on demand, their licence to waste customers or to personnel at waste management disposal facilities.

Madam Chairman, clause 6 amends section 26 of the principal Act. Clause 6 repeals and replaces section 26, thereby adding new penalties.

Clause 7 amends Schedule 1 of the Traffic Offences (Penalties) Act 1976, setting out the penalties for the offence of driving with an uncovered load.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

The Minister has moved clauses 1 through 7.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak to the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011?

The Chair recognises the Honourable and Learned Member, Shawn Crockwell, representative from constituency 19.

Mr. Crockwell, you have the floor.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, again, we reiterate that we support this Bill and support the various clauses contained therein.

Just a few questions for the Minister, if he can potentially elucidate. One, Madam Chairman, is if the Minister can just define what "reckless littering" means. Of course, practicing law, reckless can have a variety of meanings and it goes beyond just the littering or disposing of items from a vehicle.

Specifically, the Act is speaking to reckless littering, which suggests that there is a further element of malice there. And I am not quite sure if the Minister can just expand on exactly what these two new sections, 4A and 4B, intend to catch.

Also, Madam Chairman, in clause 6 of the Amendment Act, again, we just want to make comment on the various penalties. We certainly do not object to the punitive nature of these penalties. And we certainly think that if individuals are not going to respect our environment and our communities by depositing trash in public places, and doing so in an irresponsible way, that they should find themselves before the courts and punished accordingly.

However, we want to ensure that individuals who are just possibly littering with paper, although, as we have heard today, we in this House do not con-

done that. But we see in 26(1)(b) that probation with 40 hours community service is an option for the first offence.

We certainly would like to see things like having these offenders actually be a part of KBB and those 40 community hours be used to pick up trash around the Island, and have them actually go out there and have the offenders become part of the solution. I am sure if we had them out there in a nice bright orange shirt or something, so people know why they are out there picking up trash, they may dislike that punishment more than anything else.

Also, Madam Chairman, there appears to me to be some form of typographical error at clause 6, and with your indulgence I would like to read it how it is written.

It says, "Section 26 of the principal Act is amended by repealed and replaced with the following." I am not quite sure what the drafters intended, but I would assume it was going to be *Section 26 of the principal Act is repealed and replaced with the following*. I would just like to bring that to the attention of the Minister.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Crockwell.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak to clauses 1 through 7 of the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011?

No other speakers?

Minister, you have the right to respond.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

For those two questions, quickly. Reckless littering—I can read a definition. Persons such as pedestrians and/or those persons operating watercraft are examples that could be served a ticket on the spot requiring a penalty to be paid to the Magistrates Court. So that just expands a little more than what the Act originally said. [UNVERIFIED]

Secondly, I did see the error, Madam Chairman. Let me read it how it should state. "Section 26 of the principal Act is amended by repealing and replacing with the following."

The Chairman: Thank you.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak to clauses 1 through 7?

The Chair recognises the Honourable and Learned, Shawn Crockwell.

Mr. Crockwell, you have the floor.

Mr. Shawn G. Crockwell: Yes, Madam Chairman, just a technical point . . . then I would assume we are going to be amending that clause here in Committee.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Yes, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Chair recognises the Honourable Dr. Grant Gibbons from constituency 22.

Dr. Gibbons, you have the floor.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I would just like to underscore the comment made by my honourable colleague Mr. Crockwell. The only place here in clause 6 that you see community service (which I guess, technically, could be picking up trash) is in this first subsection here.

I would like to ask the Minister why the Government has not made picking up trash or doing public service of that sort a feature of all these penalties. It would seem to me that would get the message across a lot faster than some of these fines. Because in many cases a magistrate may be reluctant to impose a fairly large fine, but making somebody do 50 or 100 hours of picking up trash would cover two bases here.

So I guess the question is: Why not extend this community service and make it more specific, make picking up garbage or trash or cleaning up the side of the road a feature of all of these penalties.

I think the Honourable Member, Mr. Horton, made a very good point when he spoke earlier in the House, and that was that Bermuda is not getting cleaner, it is getting dirtier. Clearly, the penalties we have had so far, with a lack of enforcement, have not gotten the message across.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Dr. Gibbons.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak to clauses 1 through 7 of the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011?

No further speakers?

Minister, you have the right to reply.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Madam Chairman, I think that in section 26(6)(b), where we talk about 40 hours of community service, I think that was implied, so I have no problem adding that if need be.

As a penalty, picking up trash should be a part of it, so I have no problem with that for the first offence.

The Chairman: So are you suggesting, Minister, that we are to amend 26(6)?

Hon. Michael Weeks: Not necessarily, no. I was just saying that in the Act already that the probation with 40 hours community service, one can assume that that means the community service is picking up trash.

The Chairman: Community service does not necessarily mean picking up trash. Community service could be any level of community service. So you

wanted to leave it open, I think . . . I just wanted to clarify what it is that you are saying.

The question was, because this is an offence relating to discarding of trash, should the penalty not be recovering of that trash discarded, so was the penalty to be more specific. But you are happy to leave it as just open ended community service?

Hon. Michael Weeks: I am leaving it, yes.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak to clauses 1 through 7 of the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011?

Minister, if you would like to move the Preamble.

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I move the Preamble. I move that the Bill be reported to the House.

The Chairman: Are there any objections to the Minister moving the Preamble and that the Bill be reported to the House?

No objections?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and approved, with a correction to a typographical error, and will be reported to the House.]

House resumed at 8:25 pm

[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT ON BILL

WASTE AND LITTER CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT 2011

The Speaker: Is there any objection to the Report of the Committee as printed?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: That brings us to Order No. 3, second reading, Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011 in the name of Madam Premier, the Minister of Finance.

I now recognise the Honourable and Learned Member from Devonshire North West, Madam Premier.

SECOND READING

BERMUDA AIRPORT (DUTY FREE SALES) AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011 be now read the second time and committed.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Carry on, Madam Premier.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, change and changing the way we do things is often the order of the day in this 21st century. What we are being asked to do tonight is to give consideration to the Bill entitled the Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011.

What this Bill does, Mr. Speaker, is provide for duty free sales of goods to arriving passengers at the L. F. Wade International Airport by amending the Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Act 1997, which is the principal Act.

Since 1997, Mr. Speaker, airline passengers leaving the Island have enjoyed the facility of being able to purchase goods at airport duty free shops. These goods are sold duty free provided they are immediately exported from Bermuda by the purchaser.

Under the proposed arrivals duty free sales scheme, both returning residents and our visitors will also be able to buy goods in an arrivals duty free shop after they pass through Immigration but before arriving at Customs Controls.

Now Honourable Members may certainly be aware that currently more than 50 countries around the world have arrivals duty free shops, including the UK. A number of other countries are actively considering implementing arrivals duty free.

Mr. Speaker, goods purchased by an arriving passenger from an arrivals duty free shop will be treated as though they were imported goods. So passengers will be obliged to declare their purchases on their customer traveller's declaration alongside any other goods they may have acquired abroad.

All arrivals duty free purchases will be subject to the existing duty free allowances as if those purchases had been imported by the purchaser in their accompanying baggage.

Passengers will be asked to pay the duty due on any imported goods or purchases from arrivals duty free shops in excess of their statutory allowances.

To assist Customs in monitoring arrivals duty free sales, all purchases will be distributed in clearly marked and sealed packages. And Mr. Speaker, the

range of goods available for purchase in an arrivals duty free shop will be similar to the range of goods currently in the duty free shops in both the US, pre-clearance, and International Departures area.

The law currently limits goods that can be sold duty free in regulated shops to cigarettes, cigars, snuff, spirits, tobacco, wines, and tobacco products.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, just as a reminder, Honourable Members should be aware that each arriving passenger is currently entitled to import, duty free, a litre of wine, a litre of spirits, 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, and half a kilogram of tobacco.

While it is currently lawful to sell both duty paid and duty free goods from a departures duty free shop, only duty free goods will be allowed to be sold from an arrivals duty free shop. Now, this condition is necessary, so arriving passengers must declare, in subject to any duty free allowances, and pay duty on all the goods carried with them, wherever purchased.

If arriving passengers were able to purchase duty paid goods, it would be necessary for separate declarations to be made in respective duty paid and duty free unpaid goods. In any event, the officers would have substantial difficulties in determining whether the correct duty had been paid.

Mr. Speaker, should arrivals duty free sales be approved by this House, we should stand to realise significant economic and other benefits. The experiences of other countries that allow arrivals duty free have certainly been positive, and Bermuda can reasonably expect to reap similar benefits.

Also, the experience internationally would seem to suggest that arrivals duty free has no appreciable impact on local retail sales. Rather, it has been found that duty free revenues have come mainly at the expense of duty free shops in foreign airports.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, Bermuda law currently allows the sale of duty free goods to passengers departing Bermuda. It does not contemplate the sale of duty free goods to passengers arriving in Bermuda.

So sales that could be made locally are currently being forced abroad. Certainly this translates into a competitive disadvantage for the Bermuda Airport and a reduction in the potential revenues that might be raised from arriving passengers.

By repatriating sales currently being transacted in airports abroad, such as JFK or Gatwick, Government will be able to collect revenue that is currently being spent overseas. The introduction of arrivals duty free sales will immediately enhance the non-aeronautical revenues of the Bermuda Airport through the leasing of the necessary commercial space at the Airport.

It is also expected that arrivals duty free sales will result in new sales and airport jobs at a time when the Government is seeking to stimulate the Bermuda economy, including the retail sector.

Allowing arrivals duty free sales, Mr. Speaker, will also increase passenger convenience by eliminating the need for passengers to hand carry their carton of cigarettes, rum or wine on board an aircraft. They will be able to purchase these items on arrival in Bermuda.

They have said, Mr. Speaker, considering what we were just debating, this has an environmental impact, as a positive knock-on effect of keeping CO2 emissions down by reducing baggage loads for aircraft.

Mr. Speaker, also to be considered are the increased security measures globally which restrict the amount and packaging of liquids, aerosols and gels allowed on flights. At present, international travellers transiting through other airports en route to Bermuda run the risk of having their duty free wines and spirits confiscated by security personnel. Given that we are not a transit airport point for airlines, that risk will be all but eliminated by purchasing duty free on arrival.

The passenger flow is certainly a perennial issue at the airport. Passengers tend to arrive in the customs baggage hall in waves as each flight arrives. It is hoped that the arrivals duty free sales will help also to mitigate pressure on Customs staff, as you have the different portion of the arriving passengers from the initial rush at Customs will hopefully be distracted and be attracted to going into the airport duty free shop for arrival airline passengers.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members should also note that the Bill provides mainly for amendments to the provisions of the principal Act governing the operation of airport duty free warehouses and not the provisions regarding regulated shops.

For the sake of clarity, I should explain that whereas the provisions of the main Act that relate to regulating shops are suitable and have been used to regulate departures duty free shops, these provisions are not suitable for regulating arrivals duty free shops. The special risk charging provisions and liabilities involved in arrivals duty free shops require a different legislative vehicle.

The airport duty free warehouse provisions of the main Act have been found to contain, with the necessary modifications, sufficient measures to regulate arrivals duty free shops, and the new purpose of the airport duty free warehouse is to become the sole purpose. So there is no need to retain separate provision for a storage warehouse servicing departures duty free shops.

Mr. Speaker, that is the principle of the Act that we have before us tonight and it is anticipated that the Bill will become even clearer when we are in Committee.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Cox, Madam Premier.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. E. Richards, from Devonshire East.

Mr. Richards, you have the floor sir.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am trying to keep an open mind on this. The Honourable Premier says we have to do new things, and I think that is a good thing, particularly in view of where we are as a country right now.

I am fascinated by this, although I must say I have a few questions. Just sort of as a general comment, I too have seen these arrivals duty free places in some of the airports that I have been in. I think anybody in this Chamber who has travelled to London will know that there is one as soon as you come out of Customs at Gatwick, so that is the one I am most familiar with.

I have to say that all the times I have been in London, I think I have only seen two people in that thing out of the last 20 years I have been travelling the Gatwick, as opposed to the exit duty free hall in Gatwick, which is usually crawling with people.

So that makes me wonder about this, seeing that there is a stark difference. Mind you, I could say that when the Bermuda flight gets into Gatwick, it is sort of 6:30 in the morning, so that might have something to do with it.

The Speaker: That is kind of early.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Yes, that might have something to do with it. But there are a lot of people that arrive at Gatwick at 6:30 in the morning, as anybody knows who gets there and sometimes there is a big line-up for Immigration.

So there can be a lot of people coming through that gateway at 6:30 in the morning, but I have seen precious few people in that exit duty free hall that you go through before you can come out to where you meet people picking you up. So I kind of wonder about that.

One thing that is different about this that is, I guess, strictly Bermudian, as the Honourable Premier mentioned, is that these duty free purchases will still be subject to your allowance to purchase stuff overseas.

Now, we have just curtailed that allowance from \$100 per person to \$100 per family. So we have just curtailed that, or we are going to curtail it in the next piece of legislation, actually, so let us assume that that is done. So we just curtailed that, and these duty free purchases will use up that allowance.

An Hon. Member: How?

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Somebody said how?

An Hon. Member: Yes. It is duty free.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Yes, but you use up your free allowance, as I understood the Honourable Premier, that these duty free purchases will not be over and above your duty free allowance. You could use up all your duty free allowance by buying stuff in this store. That is how I understand it, and I can stand corrected if I misunderstood the Honourable Member, but that is how I understood what she said.

So for local residents in particular, it kind of . . . it is sort of like the general marching his men up the hill and then marching them back down again, at the end of which virtually nothing has been achieved. I found that to be strange. If you want people to shop at this duty free facility, why place a limit on how much they can actually buy duty free?

In other words, it will eat into other things that they have bought while they were overseas. I find that to be strange and, in fact, I suspect it might limit the effectiveness of this facility that it is intended that we put there.

When I read the legislation, certain other questions occurred to me, not legal questions, but questions of process, and these questions need to be asked.

Obviously, these will be private sector vendors, and I think the people of Bermuda want to know how these vendors will be selected, what will be the selection process. Will that process be open and transparent to the public? Will it be done by open tender? Those sorts of questions we need to know and we need to have clarified right out of the gate, I think. So I would be grateful if the Honourable Premier can comment on that, on what the process is of selecting who is going to run this facility.

Also, it would be interesting to know exactly where this was going to be in our airport. I am presuming that it will be after you come through Immigration, but before you go out the door from Customs, because that would be the cheapest way anyway.

That is not the way it is in London. In London, it is after you pass through all formalities [that] you go through the duty free place and you walk out the door. In London, after you pass the duty free place there is no other official there. You just keep walking into the public domain.

I do not know where we are going to put this in our airport. It seems to me in the Customs hall where you collect your bags and you go and pay the money to the piper there, there is a fair amount of space there where you could put something like this, I would have thought.

But it would be interesting for Members and the public to know where this facility is going to go and sort of what the logistics are, like a flow chart, of how somebody would come through there—use it, make your declaration to Customs Officers and all that sort

of thing—how exactly that would work. I think it is something that is sort of a practicality that it would be useful to know. I presume Government has already figured this out, so it would be useful for us to know how that is going to work.

Of course, it is also interesting, and I think from a perspective of our responsibilities to the public it is also useful to know . . . there clearly will be some sort of cost to setting this up, what that cost is anticipated to be.

Also, I would be very interested to know, and I think the public will be interested to know, what the anticipated revenue would be. What does Government think they will get out of it? We are going through this trouble to have new legislation, to set up something new at the airport.

If we are going to support this—and I do not see any reason why we should not support it, but if we are going to support this we need to have some sort of input/output measure here. How much is it going to cost to do this and what we are going to get out of it? I think that is not an unreasonable request.

My last point here is that the things that we have in the duty free shops . . . which, of course, I do not shop duty free when I travel, Mr. Speaker, but anytime I am with my wife I end up in these places.

[Laughter]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: So, I guess, I have had a chance to look around these duty free places, in Bermuda in particular. When we are waiting to get on a flight we tend to look around these and see what is available.

Of course, the Honourable Premier said the objective would be to encourage returning Bermudians to purchase things in the arrivals duty free facility instead of the duty free halls in the large airports abroad.

My thought when I heard that was that in the . . . let us take Gatwick, which everybody is familiar with. I do not know how many shops are in the Gatwick duty free place, but it is a hall, a *lot* of them—a whole lot of them. You could spend hours shopping there and never go to the same place twice.

So I am saying all that to say that there is a huge selection of duty free items in big airports. What we are proposing here does not appear to be huge in any way, shape or form. If it is even the same size as our exit duty free shop, it is going to be tiny.

I guess my sense is that one of the issues that this facility is going to be up against would be the huge differential in selection that the shopper will have in overseas duty free halls versus what they will have in Bermuda.

It seems to me that most of the people who shop in arrivals duty free places shop there because they forgot to get something.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Yes. You would shop at this thing when you arrive at the airport and see, *Gee, I really wanted to buy something for Uncle John, but I forgot to get it*—wherever you were before. So as a last minute thing you go in this place and you buy it.

It is not a situation where the arrivals duty free place in Bermuda will compete for considered shopping by a customer, because if a customer has a list of things he wants to buy, he is going to buy it in the Customs hall abroad because he has such a big selection. The only thing he is going to buy in Bermuda would be something he forgot to get, unless, of course, he wanted to buy Black Rum or something like that, where you cannot get it abroad. I know you can get Black Rum abroad more than you used to be able to, but still that is a kind of uniquely Bermudian thing.

So those are the sort of issues that I see that arise from this. As I say, I am trying to keep an open mind here, and I do not see anything on principle that is objectionable, but I have questions as to how well it will work. I hope that the Honourable Premier can help us out in that respect.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Richards, the Honourable Member from Devonshire East.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. G. Blakeney.

Minister Blakeney from Devonshire North Central has the floor.

Minister?

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is really heart-warming in this Honourable Chamber to have so far 100 per cent batting average with regard to the Opposition agreeing and supporting the legislation that has been debated here today, not the least of which is this latest piece of legislation regarding the duty free shop on arrivals.

I think the Honourable Member that just took his seat will get the answers to his reasonable questions, but suffice it to say that in most instances I think common sense would prevail with regard to a sensitised and discerning traveller. Particularly coming to Bermuda, of course, I think with regard to the additional opportunity for an entrepreneur in operating a duty free shop at our local airport, it would provide that they engage creative ingenuity.

By that I mean although there may be wide selections abroad that would endear the traveller heading to Bermuda to part with their hard-earned dollars, there would be cause for them, once they got to Bermuda, to be looking for unique items.

So as the Member said, rum, there are crafts, there are arts stuff, and all kinds of stuff that could be very unique that they may not be able to get so easily

in the US. Notwithstanding the fact that most items around the world these days are made in places like China, it does not stop someone coming up with a patented idea that they can mass produce and have it shipped to Bermuda to sell (duty free) that is not available in other jurisdictions.

That is just one process, thinking out of the box, where it could make sense for an entrepreneur to engage a visitor, whether it be a local coming back home, or a visitor who is coming for the first time or on a repeated visit. Outside of that, I would think, and I probably would be loathe to suggest this if it is wrong, but it would seem to me that the duty allowance per family does not have a whole lot to do, if at all, with anything relative to duty free. So you come in and you have your \$100 allowance, duty free, but then you go and buy in the duty free shop whatever you have left in your pocket after coming off of one of your buying trips.

I do not think people are going to go away just to come back to Bermuda to enter the duty free shop to buy something to get it duty free. It just does not make sense. It is a convenience and it is an amenity, and an opportunity for someone to think out of the box and provide items, trinkets, or whatever, that are very unique that someone would want to get on their way in and not have to think about on their way out. It could be a gift or anything.

I think there is a bit of convoluting there with trying to mix the duty free allowance with the duty free ability to shop on arrival in Bermuda. Maybe we will get some clarity from our Honourable Premier and Finance Minister with regard to that, but that to me makes infinite sense.

If people are going away and now coming back, notwithstanding the fact that there is an increase in duty as a stopgap measure to encourage people to shop in Bermuda, it bodes well for that retailer who needs all the assistance that they can get during these challenging economic times.

I have heard time and again the Opposition say that this Government is not business friendly. Well, this is one huge contradiction to that thesis, because we are now doing something that is a tangible, that should manifest in more revenue for local retailers, and that is the intent. It is not a huge amount that has been adopted by the Honourable Finance Minister as an increase, but it is an amount to discourage. Because anything that is more than what existed before could be seen to be a bit prohibitive, and thus encourage someone to go and shop local, where they might find there is not a whole lot of difference, in these times, with the cost of shopping in Bermuda compared to the cost of shopping abroad.

The one advantage that Bermudians like to take into consideration is the fact that when you go abroad you have such a wide variety. A wide variety. I do not care how creative our retailers are, they would never be able to stockpile in their inventory the kind of

variety that would be available overseas. It would just be too much of an undertaking. We do not have the market size. We do not have the sheer numbers to support that kind of inventory.

So most retailers are very, very prudent with regard to their purchases and their buying habits; they have it down almost to a science, where what they buy is what they anticipate will move off the shelf rather quickly, because no one wants to have stock that does not move because there goes your cash flow.

So it would only make sense that the retailer in Bermuda, to survive in any climate, is extremely prudent, having learnt what the buying habits and the preferences of a very (I would think) educated consumer base in Bermuda is all about. They do not go out on a risk-taking buying venture just because something looks nice and they think they can get it for a good price, because Bermudians are very discerning with regard to their buying habits.

Number one, they want quality; number two, they want it for a good price. No matter what they have to pay for quality, as long as they believe they are getting value for money, they will find a way to purchase.

But now we are putting in place something that will make a Bermudian think a little more with regard to the kind of challenges that we have (at the retail level particularly) and with that taken into consideration, decide maybe I am going to part with some of my hard-earned dollars in Bermuda before going on that great trip.

Because, of course, to go on that trip, you are going to incur the added expenses of accommodation, transportation, the airfare, et cetera, et cetera. You have to eat while you are there as well. That is all a part of the excitement, and for those that can afford it, it is not a huge challenge.

But for that average person that may save for an entire year to take an annual vacation with the family or whatever to go, they may go for the experience of going and not necessarily to shop until you drop, which is the kind of mentality that a lot of Bermudians have, even when they are not necessarily going to shop. They end up shopping because they have the ability to access credit (if they have a good credit rating) and they will blow that credit card until there is no limit left.

So now we are helping people to be more wise in the kind of credit line that they have relative to their buying habits. So we are helping all the way around, I believe, with this particular piece of legislation.

I do commend the Premier for responding and being sensitive to the retail community in this country, because we are business friendly and we want to ensure that businesses not only stay in business but grow their business, because they inevitably are employers.

Thank God for the business community who have managed to survive, notwithstanding this very difficult time economically. But the Government is not in a position to be the do-all end-all in employing people, and when we do, we are always too big.

But God forbid if we did not have the kind of commitment to employing those people for those services provided by this Government where those people would be working right now in this climate. So now we are doing something that we believe is conducive to helping where help is needed, where help is wanted, and where help is warranted.

So again, to the technical staff, for drilling down, peeling off the layers and looking at how we approach this in assisting our retail community, congratulations. I think it is a great start. And who knows, that duty free arrival facility at the airport could grow beyond our expectations, because people apply their creative ingenuity once they see an opportunity, and it is a viable undertaking.

So let us hope for the best and let us also hope that people are more discerning with regard to their buying habits and their shopping habits, because there is maybe an anomaly or two with regard to purchasing online or having things come through mailboxes and that kind of thing.

So there are still options, and what we are trying to do is find that delicate balance where it is a win, win, win situation.

So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the time to add my small contribution.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister G. A. Blakeney from Devonshire North Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons, from Paget East.

Dr. Gibbons, you have the floor.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Like my Honourable Colleague, Mr. Richards, conceptually, I cannot see too many issues with this, but like him I was very curious about the economic benefits. Unfortunately, the last speaker did not shed very much light on any of that.

But I would like to pursue a couple of angles here. And as someone who has family interest in the retail trade, I would like to drill down a little bit here and just get a bit of a clear sense from the Honourable Member.

When the Premier, the Honourable Member, introduced this legislation, the Honourable Member talked about the significant economic and other benefits. Like Mr. Richards, I guess, I would be very curious to know how that is going to work for Government, and to try and maybe quantify what some of those benefits are.

I am sure that if Government is taking this step and going to the trouble of doing a duty free incoming, as opposed to just a duty free outgoing, they must have done some diligence and must have some sense of what the dollar amount is that Government was likely to get in a year from this.

Let me just break that down a little bit. Obviously, there is a rental value to Government from leasing the space at the airport. But like Mr. Richards, I was not quite sure—

The Speaker: The Honourable Member.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Like the Honourable Member, Mr. Richards, I was not quite sure whether the Government intends to use the existing retail space there, which is already available as duty free, and somehow work passengers through there. Or whether this was going to create another concession area (perhaps after Immigration), which would involve more rental space and perhaps more revenue to Government.

I am also very curious as to whether Government has done any diligence with respect to particularly these incoming duty frees. As Mr. Richards (the Honourable Member) said, if you look at Gatwick or Heathrow or any of the other airports, these incoming duty free are much, much smaller than the outgoing duty frees.

So clearly retailers are not stupid. They understand that they are not going to put a lot of effort into something which does not produce a lot of sales. So I am curious as to whether Government thinks it is going to get additional duty on these duty free purchases because people will buy more than the current allowance, which are one litre of spirits and one bottle of wine.

In other words, has the diligence suggested that visitors or locals coming back through the airport are likely to buy in this duty free shop, on average, more than their duty free allowance, which would obviously yield no addition revenue to Government whatsoever? In other words, are they going to buy more than one bottle of spirits and one bottle of wine?

I would be curious to know whether Government has explored that at all, just to get a sense of, as the Premier, the Honourable Member said, what the economic and other benefits are here.

I am also curious to try and get a sense as to whether Government feels that this is going to be primarily a purchase by visitors or primarily a purchase by locals. If it is by visitors, that is one thing, and I suspect that a lot of visitors are not going to linger in the duty free store. They are going to want to get through, get to their hotel, and get on with their vacation. So I am guessing now—and I would be curious to have the Honourable Member's feedback on this—I am guessing it is going to be primarily for local consumption.

Now, if it is for local consumption, I have a hard time believing that that is not going to impact sales in Bermuda, for the simple reason that locals are coming back and they are going to consume that beverage or those cigarettes or whatever else it may be, and not only will Government lose the revenue from those sales, but possibly other stores—grocery stores, liquor stores, whatever in the community—will also lose that revenue as well, although I am assuming that the vendor at the airport will probably gain some. So I am curious about whether diligence was done to explore some of these questions.

I am also interested to know, again like my honourable colleague Mr. Richards, whether this is going to be before the customs part or whether the duty free outgoing store will actually have a customs officer there who will then, if somebody buys more than one bottle of spirits, exact a duty on the spot. Will it be in addition to the other duty framework? I am just trying to understand the flow here, the logistics here, as my honourable colleague Mr. Richards said, as well.

I am also interested to know whether there will be an additional concession or concessions, or whether those have already been either put out to tender or whether the existing concessions there will get this incoming and outgoing business as well.

I think, Mr. Speaker, those are the basic questions I had. As I said, I do not think we are objecting to this. I think we are just simply trying to get a better understanding of what the benefit is that lays behind this.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dr. Gibbons, the Honourable Member from Paget East.

Any further speakers?

No further speakers.

Madam Premier is going to reply.

Madam Premier?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, some of the details will come up in Committee. But certainly I can assure Honourable Members of both sides that an RFP was put out. You had two expressions of interest, one by Bermuda Duty Free and one by Phoenix. Bermuda Duty Free was the one that got the award. They will also bear the cost of refitting. There is a draft of a plan, and it is that this will be an additional concession, and it will be between Immigration and Customs. It also is anticipated that the customs duty will be paid.

This is separate from the allowance people have and allotment in terms of duty free allowances, that certainly the \$100 is not going to be eating up their duty free. They have an entitlement to duty free, and we will see in the next Bill that that remains unchanged. People may choose. If they are allowed one

litre of liquor and they buy three, then obviously duty will be payable on that.

The cost in terms of the revenue from Government will be built in terms of the leasing, also in terms of the duty. Of course, with regard to the economic benefits, we are looking more at private sector involvement, clearly. They have done the numbers, and certainly saw this as something which was beneficial to them from a profit margin, as you are also going to be seeing some Bermudians hired. So the economic benefit is more widespread and expansive than just from a Government point of view.

But certainly, there is leasing and also there is the licence fee, which we will get to when we debate it in Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move that the Bill now be committed.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

Will the Honourable Member from Southampton West, the Deputy Speaker, Mr. K. Horton, please take the Chair of Committee.

House in Committee at 9:05 pm

[Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton, Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

BERMUDA AIRPORT (DUTY FREE SALES) AMENDMENT ACT 2011

The Chairman: Members, we are discussing the [Bermuda Airport \(Duty Free Sales\) Amendment Act 2011](#) in the name of the Honourable Premier, Madam Paula Cox.

Premier Cox, you have the floor.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You will note that there are 14 clauses, and I now propose to move all 14. Clearly, there will be the opportunity for questions. But it is a relatively slim-line Bill, and some of the questions will be interrelated. So it probably makes sense from an efficiency point of view to do it this way.

The Chairman: Thank you, Premier.

Are we all in agreement? Does anyone disagree with that?

Madam Premier, carry right on.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you.

Clause 1 is the citation. It is self-explanatory in terms of the name of the Bill, Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011.

Clause 2 amends section 1 of the principal Act. The principal Act, of course, is the original Act, which is a 1997 Act. It amends that by deleting the

word "Bermuda." Now, this is to facilitate the identification and location of the principal Act within Bermuda legislation under "Airport (Duty Free Sales)."

You know that, Mr. Chairman, if you were to Google and go under our Acts, as opposed to having "Bermuda" [in which case] you would come up with hundreds, this one, you are putting it to the core, "Airport." Simple issue, but just to note why.

The Chairman: Right.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: The subject matter is, obviously, airport duty free sales, so it makes it easy for Members when they are doing the search and the research to be able to locate it without having to scroll through. That is it. That is on clause 2.

Clauses 3(a) to 3(d) make various amendments to section 2 of the principal Act, and it is related to the amendment in clause 2.

Clause 3(d) changes the definition of "purchaser" to include an arriving passenger. Clearly, what we are doing, Mr. Chairman, is widening so it is not just for departing passengers. It is for arriving passengers. So what you do means you have got to now make amendments to your legislation.

Clause 3(e) introduces the definition, a definition of "collector." You will see what "collector" means—clearly, "collector of customs."

The Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: You then get to clause 4. What does clause 4 do? It amends section 3(1) of the principal Act—in other words, the 1997 Act—to cater for the duty free storage and sale of scheduled goods in both regulated shops and airport duty free warehouses. That is what we are doing in clause 4. It is talking about the duty free storage and sale of scheduled goods.

Mr. Chairman, I may have mentioned initially in the Committee of the whole House, this applies to alcohol and tobacco. But the wonderful benefit of legislation is that when you deal with Schedules, which we will get to later, you can always be more permissive and screen in additional goods. But at this time, it applies to tobacco and alcohol, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Clause 5 amends section 9(c) of the main Act, the principal Act, the 1997 Act, to delete [the word] "Bermuda." Again, this was in pursuance of the changes I initiated and referred to early on. Simple stuff, Mr. Chairman—that is clause 5.

We now go to clause 6. That amends section 21 of the principal Act to ensure that the provision caters for the airport duty free shops for departing passengers, to distinguish them from airport duty free warehouses for arriving passengers. That is what we

are doing in clause 6. So you will see that it is making the distinction so that you do not mix up the two different flows of passengers, the arrivals and the departures, in terms of what you are talking about in terms of the warehouses and the duty free shops. That is clause 6.

Now, clause 7, what are we doing? We are repealing and substituting section 35 of the principal Act. The new section 35 prohibits the storage of duty-paid goods in an airport duty free warehouse. So you are trying to make life less complex for those who are administering in terms of your collectorate. So you are not going to have duty paid commingled with duty free. That is what we are doing. We are substituting a new section 35, and this new section 35 forbids—not kosher to have the duty-paid goods mixed in an airport duty free warehouse.

You can imagine how that could lead to all sorts of conundrums if you did not have that distinction, Mr. Chairman. So that is that clause.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Now we move, next, to clause 8. Clause 8(a) amends section 39 of the principal Act to delete paragraph (d). Now, this is part and parcel of the amendment in clause 7, which prohibits the storage of duty-paid goods in an airport duty free warehouse. Clause 8(b) and 8(c) introduce new paragraphs [(f) and (g)] to permit a licensee under the Act to sell scheduled goods to arriving passengers and makes it mandatory that any scheduled goods sold to arriving passengers are given to those passengers in sealed packages. Compliance and also making it clear . . . makes it also easier, I suppose, for checking up and validation by your regulatory authorities in the customs collectorate.

Clause 9 inserts a new section 41A into the principal Act to ensure that licensees under the Act display their Airport Duty Free Warehouse Licence and notices on restrictions in respect of the sale of certain classes of scheduled goods in their duty free shops. That is clause 9 with its new section.

Clause 10, then, as you see, Mr. Chairman, is amending section 43 of the principal Act by deleting paragraph (f). Now, this is because the sale of goods other than scheduled goods shall not be allowed in duty free warehouses. That is clause 10.

Clause 11, Mr. Chairman, repeals and substitutes a new section 44 into the principal Act to add arriving passengers to the persons authorised to enter a duty free warehouse. Again, it is housekeeping as a result of the change that you are making to provide for duty free for arriving passengers. If you are going to do that, then you have to be consistent throughout in your legislation, so now you are making sure that you are including arriving passengers as being authorised to enter a duty free warehouse.

Now, under this new section 44(2), the proper officer may authorise the licensee of an airport duty free warehouse to admit arriving passengers only at certain times of the day. That is interesting.

Clause 12 is amending section 47 of the principal Act to insert a civil penalty for breach of section 39 of the principal Act. The level 4 amount equates to the maximum penalty of \$12,000 on the Standard Scale of Penalties in the Revenue Act. That is in terms of clause 12. You will see it is an extraordinary penalty, top level 4, if you do not comply—very important.

You will see with regard to clause 13, there are a number of subclauses there. Clause 13(a) to 13(d) makes various amendments to the Second Schedule to the principal Act in respect of the application of the Revenue Act. Now, clause 13(a) renames the existing Second Schedule “Part 1,” and that is because clause 13(e) introduces a new Part 2 to the Second Schedule. Clause 13(b) substitutes a new paragraph 2, which preserves the application of the Revenue Act sections 14, 16, 24, and [28], and that also eliminates a redundant reference to the already-repealed Revenue Act section 25.

Also clause (3) of that, 13[(c)] applies Revenue Act sections 14 and 16 so that these Revenue Act provisions relating to the entry of goods and declarations will apply to goods removed from an airport duty free warehouse.

Now, clause 13(c) eliminates a redundant reference to the already repealed Revenue Act section 63 and amends paragraph 3(8)(a) to apply Revenue Act section 65, as modified, to the sale and distribution of scheduled goods from an airport duty free warehouse as well as to regulated shops.

Clause 13(d) substitutes a new paragraph 5, which preserves the application of the Revenue Act sections 96 to 98A and sections 100 to 109. It eliminates an outdated reference to the section 99 of the Revenue Act, and it applies section 99A of the Revenue Act and the Revenue Act First Schedule so that the customer's trader record-keeping requirements will apply to the licensees of regulated shops and airport duty free warehouses.

So that takes us, Mr. Chairman, to 13, and we also have 13(e), which introduced a Part 2 to the Second Schedule to the principal Act. Paragraph 1 of the new Part 2 applies section 5A and Heading 98.02 of the Customs Tariff Act 1970 to the principal Act. Now, what is the effect, Mr. Chairman? The effect is that arriving passengers purchasing scheduled goods from an airport duty free warehouse will be entitled to their duty free allowance in respect of their purchases. Also, purchases in excess of the allowances will be dutiable at 35 per cent, except cigarettes, which will be dutiable at \$35 per carton of 200.

Paragraph 2 of the new Part 2 applies Customs Tariff Act section 7(1)(a) to both the licensee of the airport duty free warehouse and the purchaser so

that any outstanding duty may be recovered from either party.

We dealt with that portion of the clause 13. The final clause is clause 14, which makes amendments to the Government Fees Regulations 1976 to change certain fees charged and also makes an editorial change to section 84A(5)(b) of the Revenue Act 1898.

So, that is the provision. Because you are referring to the Revenue Act and some of the duty free, it makes it difficult for the listening public to get all of the nuances. But what we are really doing is amending the Act so that we are screening in this new provision and facility for arriving passengers. Also, you are making the distinction between the access to the airport duty free warehouse, and you are also making it clear that any duty free goods have to be in a sealed package. There is also a provision to be able to regulate the times of access. Also, it certainly gives you fees. Government is not going to make a lot of money on the licence fees unless someone has been very naughty, in which case you will see the extraordinary fee at level 4 of \$12,000 if people have been less than honest in terms of their dealings.

But those are the provisions of the Act, Mr. Chairman, and those are the clauses.

The Chairman: All right, Madam Premier. Thank you very much for your explanations of the clauses.

I would now like to ask if there is any other Member who would care to speak.

I recognise the Honourable Member Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin.

Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to clarify with respect to . . . The Premier in her responses spoke to the issue of scheduled goods. I note in the principal Act, the First Schedule indicates that scheduled goods include cigarettes, cigars, and snuff. I guess I just wanted to make sure, for the public's perception or understanding, that that is all that is going to be available, the cigarettes, cigars, snuff, spirits, tobacco, and wine.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Yes.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That is all that is going to be available in the duty free?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: At present, at present, tobacco and alcohol.

The Chairman: Yes. So, later on there may be other things. But right now it is just cigarettes and alcohol.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay. So there may be amendments to the Schedule in some future date to incorporate other things if it is deemed appropriate.

So right now, the RFP would have been for somebody to provide the service for the incoming duty free area for people arriving on a flight to be able to purchase cigarettes, cigars, and the specific five or six things that are on the First Schedule.

The Chairman: The Premier will be able to certainly clear that up for you.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I just wanted to make sure of that. Thank you.

The Chairman: Yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Chairman: Right. She did say it.

Is there any other Member?

No other Member cares to speak.

So, Honourable Premier, you have got the opportunity to wrap up.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Wrap it up.

Mr. Chairman, no, I think the Honourable Member, Mrs. Pat Gordon-Pamplin, asked . . . I said it went out as an RFP to bidders, and went through the proper process. Right now it is only contemplated to be alcohol and tobacco. I mean, who knows what the future holds.

The Chairman: Right.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: But with those comments, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move the Preamble, and that the Bill be reported to the House.

The Chairman: Thank you, Madam Premier.

Is there anyone that disagrees with reporting to the House?

Obviously, there is no disagreement.

We will now report to the House.

[Motion carried: The Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011 was considered by a Committee of the whole House, passed without amendment, and will be reported to the House.]

House resumed at 9:20 pm

[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT ON BILL

BERMUDA AIRPORT (DUTY FREE SALES) AMENDMENT ACT 2011

The Speaker: Is there any objection to the Report of the Committee as printed?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: We will move to Order No. 4, the Second Reading, Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011, in the name of Madam Premier, the Minister of Finance.

Madam Premier has the floor.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011 be now read the second time and committed.

The Speaker: Any objection?

Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Carry on, Madam Premier.

SECOND READING

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (NO. 3) ACT 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the primary purpose of this Bill is to increase the duty rate on accompanied personal goods declared by returning residents from 25 per cent to 35 per cent. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, is also intended to restrict travellers' allowances for returning residents to one person per household per trip for the five-month period ending on the 31st of March 2012.

The changes, Mr. Speaker, affect section 5A and Chapter 98 to the First Schedule of the Customs Tariff Act 1970, which I will refer to hereafter as the principal Act.

Honourable Members will be aware that these amendments took effect from the date on which this Bill was tabled in this Honourable House, which is the 4th of November. In accordance with the Provisional Collection of Customs Duties Act 1960, those changes will continue in force subject to agreement of this Honourable House.

Members will note that this Bill was talked about in a press conference of September 30th. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we indicated and I indicated that as a result, taking note of the continuing economic malaise, the Government wanted to implement several temporary emergency measures to assist businesses that had a pressing need for financial relief. The retail sector was particularly hard hit by the de-

cline in sales volume over the last several years, and discussions with industry leaders have certainly been bleak and sobering.

Given the pressure on the retail sector in this regard, in 2010 a payroll tax concession was established for retail stores for the months of January, February, and March, recognising this is a slower period for retail. Also, in February, we extended the Retail Shops (Temporary Customs Duty Relief for Capital Investments) Act 2008 by a further five-year period, expiring March 31st, 2016. This Act provides a zero rate of customs duty on imported capital goods intended for the renovation and refurbishment of retail shops. This exemption has been in effect since April 1st, 2008, and a number of properties have benefited.

The total value of goods, however, receiving exemption under this concession is approximately \$1.7 million, and it represents about \$420,000 in customs duty savings for those who took advantage of it. Now, with the prospect at the time in September of immediate layoffs in the mainly Bermudian retail sector, it was important that further remedial actions be taken to assist the retail sector. The following measures were announced for implementation:

- Payroll tax was set at a zero rate for the retail sector for a six-month period ending on 31st March 2012.
- Travellers' allowances for returning residents will be restricted to one person per household for a six-month period ending on 31st March 2012.
- The duty on accompanied goods declared by returning residents will be increased from 25 per cent to 35 per cent.

Now, included in this basket of rescue measures were amendments to the principal Act that are set out in the Bill we have before us. These measures are intended to discourage personal spending abroad and to help steer expenditure into the local retail sector, helping to boost sales and keep approximately 4,000 Bermudians employed in the local retail sector.

Now, whereas formerly, Bermuda residents returning to the Island by air or sea had been entitled to import accompanied personal goods to the value of \$100 without payment of duty, this allowance has now been restricted, so that where two or more members of the same household return to Bermuda on the same aircraft or boat, only one may claim the \$100 allowance.

Now, I should explain, Mr. Speaker, that "members of the same household" means persons living in the same residence, regardless of whether or not they are related, and also includes persons living in the same residence due to an employer/employee relationship, a house-sharing arrangement, or any other reason. The \$100 restriction is intended to be of limited duration and will end on 31st March 2012.

Also, I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that other duty free allowances available to arriving passengers are unaffected by this change. For example, each passenger is still entitled to import one litre of wine, one litre of spirits, 0.5 kilograms of tobacco, 50 cigars, and 200 cigarettes without payment of duty every time they arrive in Bermuda.

Now, with regard to the new 35 per cent duty rate for accompanied goods, while most accompanied goods are caught by the operated duty, zero-rated goods are unaffected by this change. So these goods, such as books, medicine, spectacles, hearing aids, medical appliances, are not affected by the duty increase. They will remain dutiable at zero percent. The duty for accompanied personal cigarettes will also remain unchanged at the rate of \$35 per carton of 200. Nor does the duty rate increase applicable to passengers . . . It does not affect importers of commercial goods. Goods imported for retail sale, or goods for use in a trade or industry remain dutiable at the applicable First Schedule duty rate.

There has been no change to the Customs Traveller Declaration Form. Arriving passengers will continue to make their customs declaration in accordance with the guidance on that form, and there will be no change in the currently available methods of paying duty. Arriving passengers will continue to have the option of paying import duty in excess of their allowances at either the customs cashier windows or online by ATM or by kiosk.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the substance of the Bill that we currently have before us. Really, the meat of it is the increase from 25 per cent to [35] per cent, and also the increase in terms of the restriction, I should say, (is more likely how I should say it) restriction per household for the period up until March 31, 2012. The other duty free allowances are still intact, but the main issue is that it was intended to help, I suppose, staunch the bleeding in terms of the retail sector and give people time to exhale and also stabilise in terms of the retail market. Certainly, I think it is important to note that . . . I will not say that it is solely due to this. It is pleasing to note that we have seen from the most recent quarter that there has been an additional spend in the local retail sector, and that has been helpful.

Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. E. Richards, from Devonshire East.

Mr. Richards, you have the floor.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting how this Bill came about. You will recall that the Government announced this increase, and the effective day was while this House was still not in session. I think that

clearly people in Government knew and know that you just cannot increase customs duty without coming to this Chamber. That, to me, was an indicator because I know that the Honourable Minister has a competent staff who know the law much better than probably a lot of us do.

So, I think that the reason that mistake was made was because there was an apparent panic that took place here to get this thing done. It was a panic. And the panic was instigated by the announcement of Citi Financial Retail Services and Willowbank, almost within a couple of days of each other, that 150 jobs were going to be lost in Bermuda. I think the Government felt that they had to do something immediately. In the rush to get this done, there was this error made in when this thing could be effectuated.

Then we had the sort of lame excuses that they had to recalibrate machines at the airport. Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, if this thing had been properly planned, they would have had months to recalibrate the machines at the airport. So I did not buy that for one nanosecond.

So there was definitely a kind of a panic when this announcement was made in Bermuda that these jobs would be lost. In fact, the Willowbank jobs were lost; the Citi jobs were not lost; they were just moved, moved out of Bermuda. So, this is not a result of a strategy, of a planned action. This is like when you are taken to the doctor, and the doctor takes the little rubber hammer and hits your knee, and it goes out like that. That is what this is. This is like a reflex action, right?

The Speaker: *[Laughter]*

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: That is what this is, not a plan, not a strategy, just a reaction.

The Speaker: Testing the reflexes.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Indeed. That is why we saw all these kind of errors and these funny excuses, which did not make any sense.

I guess the question is . . . The rationale for this that has been given at the time and today is that this is to help the retail sector. I am wondering, well, the retail sector up until recently has had 38 consecutive months of decline—38 consecutive months, over three years solid, of decline in the retail sector, retail sales. Now, one wonders how it has taken so long to do this, why it has taken so long to do? I mean, assuming that it is effective—we will get to the effectiveness in a second—assuming that it is effective, how come it has taken all this time to do this? Retailers have been squawking for years about what is going on there. Yet, we have this after all of this time.

So, again, it speaks to a certain reaction rather than a plan. You know, Mr. Speaker, in this time in our economic history, we need plans. We do not

need to be bouncing around like a pinball in a pinball machine. Right? We need a plan. And this clearly is not a plan.

The truth is that what the retail sector needs is more customers. That is what they need. They need more customers. They need more people in Bermuda shopping in shops.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: There is no question that the plight of the retail sector in Bermuda is directly linked to fewer people in Bermuda. There is no question about that. I would have been more impressed if the Government had come with a plan to increase the number of people in Bermuda, the number of shoppers in Bermuda, the number of shoppers with disposable income in Bermuda. I would have been impressed with that. I am not impressed with this, not at all.

Because, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where . . . the Honourable Member, Mr. Blakeney, explained it perfectly in the last piece of legislation that we had, that Bermudians go abroad to shop! They go abroad to shop. Why? It is because you have thousands of stores to choose from. If we had a Saks Fifth Avenue in Bermuda, my wife would not have to shop in New York! But she does because it is a Saks Fifth Avenue. There is a Bloomingdale's in New York. There are these shopping malls where you can go in there and shop for a week and not shop in the same place. Right? I am not a shopper; I do not know.

But the point is that with the magnet of the retail . . . the pull of the retail shops overseas—I am just using the States, but it is not just the States, obviously. But with that magnetic pull of the variety and the prices that you can get overseas, this effort here will be minimal at best—minimal!

I do not want to offend my female colleagues here, but, you know, there is a difference between the way women shop and the way men shop, a big difference. We men, we shop because we want to buy something. Women shop because it is sport! It is sport!

The Speaker: *[Laughter]*

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: It is sport! You know, they enjoy it. We shop because we want to buy something. We buy it; we go home. But, no. They will go all day shopping, right, because they enjoy it. They love it. It is a sport. It is like we play football; they shop.

The Speaker: I would not say a sport. But it is a woman thing.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Retail therapy then, you know? That is what it is called.

[Laughter]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: So when you put shopping in that context, then you realise how hopeless this is. It is hopeless! It is just not going to have any effect at all. Because when people go abroad, Bermudians go abroad to shop, they are looking and going there for the experience of shopping.

Now, as I say, I am just a fly on the wall because this is not something I do, but I have observed this. I think every man in this room knows that what I say here is true. So, this is not going to be effective. It is not going to be effective at somehow switching people's buying habits from overseas to Bermuda.

But there is another thing about this that I do not like, because we do recognise there is this weakness in the retail sector, and they are having a hard time. That is acknowledged. But there is a kind of . . . local shoppers, I think, a lot of people that I have talked to have felt penalised. You know, they have felt penalised or victimised by this. In other words, it is the sort of implication that it is their fault. You know, *It's Bermudians fault for shopping overseas. So we are going to punish you for shopping overseas by increasing the duty and by reducing your allowance.* As I say, this does not correspond with the facts, because the facts are that the retail sector is not weak because of lack of Bermudian shopping, or at least not on the market. It is weak because there are not enough shoppers. There are not enough shoppers with money. That is the reason the retail sector is weak.

An Hon. Member: That is the world over.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: So, you know, I think a lot of Bermudians are feeling hard-done by their Government. In other words, they are feeling that the Government has, by its actions, stated that, *This retail sector problem is your fault.* It has rubbed a lot of people the wrong way, I can tell you. No question that it has rubbed the people the wrong way. The truth is that it is not going to affect the way they shop anyway. You know, they can go to the States. They can buy the stuff at Wal-Mart or whatever. They can put it in Fed-Ex and ship it back to Bermuda. They do not have to bring it to the airport. They do not have to bring it through the airport.

The Speaker: It is temporary, until March 12th.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Okay. Temporary or permanent, it does not make any difference. It is not going to be effective.

The other thing is with the allowance on families or that sort of thing, what happens if I come back from Bermuda with my stuff on Monday and my wife comes back on Tuesday? Do the people at the airport know that she is my wife?

The Speaker: [Laughter]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: I do not know. This thing is not thought through, Mr. Speaker. It just is not thought through!

There is another thing. For certain things in Bermuda, the price differential . . . I do not want to be too hard on local retailers. I know they have a hard time. But the price differential for something is so huge that this duty does not matter! I can give you an example. We had something go wrong with our stove. We went to the local retailer and said, *You know, this element has to be . . .* They said, *Well, this element has to be replaced.* How much does it cost to get it replaced? Well, as they looked at it, they said, *This is part number so-and-so, and it can cost \$400 to replace this. And by the way, we do not have any, and it is going to take six weeks to get here.*

Well, fortunately, they gave me the part number.

The Speaker: And you flew out?

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: No! I went on my little trusty computer, went to www.amazon.com, put in the part number, I got it there, and I landed it here in Bermuda for \$129. But even if you put this thing up to 36 per cent, 35 per cent, it will make no difference because the price differential for some things, plus the time lag, the time element is so huge, it will not matter.

But that is the problem with this. Right? The problem is that we have a retail sector that keeps getting smaller and smaller because companies are going out of business. The ones that still exist have less and less volume. Because they are getting smaller and smaller, their ability to utilise any kind of economy of scale is less and less. Therefore, they become relatively less competitive than their foreign counterparts. So, again, this does not address that, because it misses the essential problem.

This is like if you have an infection, Mr. Speaker, that requires penicillin, and you take an aspirin for it. It just misses the point. The aspirin may ease the pain, but it is not going to cure the infection. The infection here is the lack of customers in Bermuda. Those customers and the difference between them and us Bermudians, the number of us Bermudians has not changed, has it? What has changed is the number of tourists in Bermuda and the number of expatriate workers in Bermuda. That is what has caused the decline of retail in Bermuda, and these measures that we see today will not affect that.

So, this is just going to make some people who are going to go up the States to do their Thanksgiving and Christmas shopping, as they do every year, it is just going to annoy them and it is not going to really help the people that we want to help, which is the retail sector.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Richards, the Honourable Member from Devonshire East.

I now recognise the Member, Minister De Silva, from Southampton East Central.

Minister?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you know what? The Progressive Labour Party Government, we can never win for losing no matter what we do. We bring this change here, Mr. Speaker, for the betterment of the country. And the reaction is, from the Honourable Member, Mr. Richards, we are moving too slow.

Mr. Speaker, four months ago, we are moving too quick. We are ramming things down their throat. We cannot win for losing, Mr. Speaker. No matter what we do, you know what? They are the party of *No*. Well, actually, I am trying to think now. Which party are we talking about here? This new party is like their old party, the party of *No*, Mr. Speaker. No matter what we come up with, it is the party of *No*.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member who just took his seat, Mr. Speaker, *We need more people. We need more customers. We need more people of high-net worth. We need more people that have money that can spend money in Bermuda.* This is the same Prince of Doom—what did we call him? Gloom and Doom Prince, Mr. Speaker, the same fellow that every time we try and do something, preaches gloom and doom. He wonders why people want to leave Bermuda and do not want to stay in this country, Mr. Speaker. Because every time we try to do something, it is gloom and doom.

Mr. Speaker, whilst we are at it, the Honourable Member said that he has seen this large quantity of people leaving, Mr. Speaker. I just got back from the Cayman Islands. Mr. Speaker, they have 35,000 people in the workforce, 20,000 work permits. In the last year and a half, 10,000 work permits have disappeared, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to point fingers at the government of Cayman, Mr. Speaker. We have a worldwide financial serious situation on our hands, and every country in the world is feeling it. And every country is trying to do what we are doing, Mr. Speaker, trying to think of different ways in which to help our people.

The Honourable Member Mr. Richards—

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: There is a point of order.

Take your seat, Minister.
Mr. Richards has a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He says, *Every country is feeling it*. This is pure nonsense. We have economic growth in China, Brazil, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, India, and Canada. So, his statement is patently untrue.

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, let me say this. Mr. Speaker, there are many countries . . . Sure, we have the BRIC countries that are expanding and growing, Mr. Speaker. But I will tell you what. He mentioned China. China has some issues right now, Mr. Speaker, and it will not be long before they may be added to the list of people that are in trouble, too.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, Mr. Richards, talked about hurting our Bermudians, and they are vexed. They are vexed because of this change, Mr. Speaker. Well, you know what, Mr. Speaker? I will place a little friendly bet that I spend more time with the people in this country out on the street than that Honourable Member does, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you what. I have had nothing but positive, positive feedback from people, Mr. Speaker.

You know what they tell me? *We understand that we have some challenging times. We know that you are going to have to make decisions as a Government to try and stimulate, generate, save, and make things better for people.* Mr. Speaker, that is the feedback I get, and I am on the street, Mr. Speaker. I am on the street.

Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Member fails to realise . . . I do not think he listened to the Premier. This change is going to try and assist businesses in this country to maintain 4,000 jobs in the retail sector—4,000, Mr. Speaker! Four thousand! I do not know if the Honourable Member got that, 4,000 families, Mr. Speaker. That is what this Government is attempting to do, is trying to assist people to maintain jobs, where all over the world, most countries are laying off people, getting rid of people. What we are trying to do is maintain, Mr. Speaker, 4,000 jobs in the retail sector.

This Government talks about our civil service. Our civil servants, Mr. Speaker, are the largest we have got. But guess what? All of those families are working, Mr. Speaker. All those people are working, taking home some money to their families. This will help 4,000 more—no different than when we assisted the Bank of Butterfield, 800 jobs there, Mr. Speaker. Tucker's Point, another 400 jobs, Mr. Speaker. We heard (what was it?) this is a reaction rather than a

plan? Mr. Speaker, we have been planning quite well, thank you very much. Our people of Bermuda have shown us by voting as they have done, Mr. Speaker. And they will vote again soon, Mr. Speaker, and the majority of our people know what we have been doing, and they know what we are doing.

This is not any reaction, Mr. Speaker. This is part of a plan. Just like any other person who runs a business, sometimes things change. You have to change course sometimes, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes you have to move a little quicker than others; sometimes you move a little slower. But, Mr. Speaker, this is a great move to try and assist our people in our country.

The Honourable Member also talked about his wife shopping at Saks Fifth Avenue. Mr. Speaker, I have been to Saks. A lot of our people, Mr. Speaker, do not shop at Saks. I can assure you of that.

The Speaker: *[Laughter]*

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: A lot of our people do not shop at Saks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I can tell you where they do shop.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That Honourable Member may shop at Saks, but a lot of our people do not.

The Honourable Member also gave an example of a part for his fridge, or stove, or something that broke down, how he got online and ordered it. So, his wife shops at Saks Fifth Avenue; he shops online. Who is supporting the local retailers? He said we need people, Mr. Speaker!

Talking out of both sides of your mouth. One minute you say, *We need people in our shops! We don't need to give reductions in prices. We don't have enough people.* Here he is, a Member of Parliament, telling everybody that his wife shops at Saks, goes to hundreds of stores all over the States.

[Laughter and desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, and then he shops online!

Mr. Speaker, I think I am going to stop on that note. We will let the people of Bermuda decide on who wants to support the retailers in this country.

The Speaker: Do not embellish it too much, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter and general uproar]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister De Silva, from Southampton East Central.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Roban, from Pembroke East.

Mr. Roban, you have the floor.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just some brief comments on this matter. This is clearly a measure, as other measures that this Government has done, to assist with some stimulation in areas of the economy that have experienced challenges. I note the comments from the Opposition, but the very sector that this is appealing to has expressed support for this measure, publicly. So it is clear as to those who need it and want it and are pleased with it. That should be, certainly, welcome.

Also, Mr. Speaker, this Government has done . . . Certainly, the Honourable Member who sat down just now passionately explained a number of efforts that we have made to assist in a variety of areas in this country during these times. But this Government also has provided relief for those retailers who wish to go about doing refurbishment to improve their infrastructure so that they could provide better services for the local population.

Yes, there is certainly truth to some of what has been said about the contraction of the economy, that there are less people spending, and that is the reality of the current economic situation. But it does not remove the need, irrespective of those factors, for the Government taking some constructive measures to assist business in dealing with their challenges so that they can position themselves better to service those consumers who certainly are interested in buying Bermuda, as that is the theme of the particular era or period that we are in right now, which is to buy Bermuda. I do believe that we all should get on board with that particular move.

I personally do very little shopping overseas. I buy most of what I wear here from local shops, via the occasional . . . I do not know, a pair of socks or a tie that I buy abroad is only because I cannot find it here. But 98 per cent of the time, I can find it here. Yes, I perhaps . . . I must empathise with the Honourable Member on the other side that our other halves are very adventurous when it comes to the shopping activities, and they look everywhere for what they want, here and abroad. That is just how it is.

But it is important that we focus on trying to do the best locally that we can to assist retailers. I happen to be of the view that our retailers need to, frankly, do more for themselves in sort of adapting to the Internet age and becoming more responsive to consumers in their own operations, you know, becoming [more like] the outlets that are online themselves, instead of complaining about the Bermudians who desire a choice. That is my view. I have said that numerous times; that they need to improve on their own methods of giving the consumer choice.

I applaud the Black Friday efforts locally. It shows that some of our retailers are beginning to

think, think about what they can do to appeal to consumers. They should do this more because a Black Friday can turn into—I do not know—some other sort of initiative.

Certainly, this Government has assisted retailers or tried to assist them with using the Internet for servicing the community. The Department of E-Commerce and E-Business has sponsored Internet (oh, I forget the name of it) Mondays, or online Mondays or something like that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Yes, e-Mondays where they—

An Hon. Member: Cyber Mondays.

Mr. Walter H. Roban: Cyber Mondays, where they will assist retailers locally, either start-ups or certainly established retailers, to get online and offer their products locally to local consumers.

So these are things that the Government has done to assist, including this measure here, including the effort to assist those established retailers with refurbishment of their physical plant so that they can have a more quality space to provide their products. So we have done things. But fundamentally, they should be helping themselves because it is their business, and do what they can to be more attractive and more marketable to consumers.

But, certainly, the Government in this Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Bill is doing what it can to provide them with the opportunity to provide local consumers with the choices they require. I applaud this Bill. I am sure that the Honourable and Learned Finance Minister and Premier has more up her sleeve, a sleeve which I am sure that she has purchased here in Bermuda, usually from a local designer. The Honourable Finance Minister is actually practising what she is trying to preach through this Bill by supporting local creativity, local sales, by encouraging designers with the fashion show some weeks ago, with encouraging the attraction to our local talent so that we can purchase locally during this time when we should be buying Bermuda. That is practising what we preach. This Bill is a part of that effort, for us to support our local retailers. More, I am sure, is to come.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roban, the Honourable Member from Pembroke East.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons, from Paget East.

Dr. Gibbons, you have the floor.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments. I have been listening to some Honourable Members on the other side. First of all, let me just say, as someone who was very actively involved in the retail business going back 10 or 12, 15 years, and someone whose, obviously, family is still very involved in the retail business, I think retailers, it would be fair to say, do appreciate Honourable Members who do spend money here and the Bermudians who do spend money in shops here. That would include Mr. and Mrs. Richards, the Honourable Member and his wife, who I have seen shopping in Bermuda.

The Speaker: At the Gibbons Company?

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: I think the degree of self-righteousness coming from the other side does not help very much here. For the Honourable Member, Mr. De Silva, who somehow has this sense that there are only a few people that shop overseas, I think he would be astonished at the number of both Bermudian women and men who are using both online, mail order, and who really relish those trips, particularly this time of year, to go and buy Christmas gifts. I think that is the point that my honourable colleague, Mr. Richards, was making, but more about that later.

Let me just say that, as someone who has been involved in retail and is sensitive to retail and tries to pay attention, I would say that Mr. Richards is absolutely right. Let me repeat that. The Honourable Member, Mr. Richards, is absolutely right. The issue now is as much about volume—it is as much about volume and the number of people that are shopping in Bermuda, and I am talking about residents now. The loss of many work permit holders has made a huge impact. You cannot have almost 40 months of continuous decline in the retail area without having a huge impact.

What we have noticed in some of our shops is, interestingly enough, the average sale has not declined, but the volume of sales has declined. That is attributable—and if you talk to retailers, they will say that is attributable to the fewer people that are here now, whether they be working in international business or in many of the businesses throughout Bermuda.

[Inaudible interjection]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: That is simply a matter of fact. Mr. Richards, the Honourable Member, is absolutely right on that. That is not to say that shifting more sales here from overseas would not help. But it does make a difference.

I am in Cayman quite a bit as well, Mr. Speaker. I will just say that one of the things that I find interesting is that Cayman has lost a lot of work permit holders. But they had the common sense to put the term limits on hold for two years because they under-

stood the damage it was creating for their economy. Unfortunately, the Government here has not had that common sense and does not seem to get it quite yet, in spite of what international business and a lot of other people are saying to them.

Now, I would like to comment a little bit on what I will call the numbers involved with this, because I was quite interested to try and get a better understanding of what (I will call) *the dollar impact* would be here. So, when, Mr. Speaker, you actually start to look at both the number of returning residents over the last few years, coming through the airport, and also the amount that is collected in duty at the airport, you get some very interesting numbers. What you find is that if you look over the last four to five years, you will find that—with the duty rate at 25 per cent at the airport, except for some electronics, where I think it was 33 per cent—in an average year, some \$70 million a year was collected in duty by Customs from returning residents.

Going back a few years, because I am taking this, actually, out of the most recent *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics*, so these are not my numbers, these are Government's numbers. So, some \$70 million a year, roughly, collected in duty at the airport, has nothing to do with the online sales or the courier purchases coming back. This is purely residents returning at the airport and paying duty on their returning purchases—so, \$70 million. And roughly, I am going to guess here. But in 2007, there were about 181,000 returning residents.

So, there are two aspects, Mr. Speaker, to what the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member the Premier, is doing here. One is, the Honourable Member is actually increasing the rate of duty at the airport by 40 per cent. That is going from 25 per cent to 35 per cent. That is almost doubling the rate of duty at the airport on returning residents. So, when you actually look at that and you take \$70 million, which is the average duty in a year, and you look at that on the basis of a 40 per cent increase, what that means is, that increase from 25 per cent to 30 per cent is going to give the Honourable Member, in round numbers, about an additional \$25 million to \$27 million a year.

Now, the Honourable Member did say when she introduced this that this was going to be for a five- or six-month period. So, if you take that roughly \$25 million to \$27 million in a year, and you look at it on the basis of what happened in the fourth quarter of 2010 and the first quarter of 2011, what you find is that there were some \$34 million collected at the airport in duty for that six-month period. That is Q4 2010, Q1 2011. That works out to an additional \$12 to \$13 million in additional duty that that Honourable Member can expect as a consequence of going from 25 per cent to 35 per cent.

I am taking these numbers and extrapolating directly out of the Department of Statistics' numbers.

So, an additional \$12 million to \$13 million of duty simply from going from 25 per cent to 35 per cent.

But there is the additional factor here, Mr. Speaker. That is removing the \$100 exemption for those coming back who are related. So, if you think about that—and I do not know what the answer is. Maybe the Honourable Member would know the answer to this. But when you think about people coming to the airport, is it 25 per cent of those coming back are coming back as either two or three members of an associated family or group? Or is it as much as 50 per cent? I do not know. But what is interesting is when you look at the roughly 85,000 returning residents in that six-month period, if it is 25 per cent coming back who are losing their exemption, that is an additional \$2 million a year. If it is 50 per cent coming back who are losing their exemption because they are part of a bigger group, that comes out to about \$4 million a year.

So when you add the two pieces together—and let us assume it is around 50 per cent; maybe that is a little rich; maybe it is under. I do not know. What you are looking at is, the Honourable Member is putting an additional tax on Bermuda residents of some \$16 million to \$17 million a year. So, that is an additional \$16 million to \$17 million a year of tax for that six-month period we are talking about. Now, the Honourable Member may have derived some other numbers. I have simply gone to the stats numbers and worked this out.

My point is that if the Honourable Member, as was at least reported, is saying that lifting the payroll tax for the retail sector for six months would result in a revenue shortfall of \$3 million to \$5 million, and the Honourable Member has given up \$420,000 in renovation duty so far, that works out to, let us say, \$3 million to \$5 million, maybe \$6 million. The Honourable Member did not need to raise that duty to 35 per cent. The Honourable Member could have probably raised it to 28–29 per cent and more than covered both the duty in the renovation and also in the payroll tax revenue.

So, the Honourable Member is actually coming out way ahead on this. I figure probably by about \$10 million. So, the dirty little secret here, Mr. Speaker—the dirty little secret is that the Honourable Member is collecting \$10 million additional in that six-month period beyond what the Honourable Member needed to cover that payroll tax lifting and also that renovation. Now, I consider that to be a stealth tax, Mr. Speaker. For those Bermudians coming back to the airport who all of a sudden find themselves paying 35 per cent as opposed to 25 per cent, I hope they remember which government it was that put that additional tax on. I hope they remember that in the future.

So, the fact of the matter is, quite frankly, I do not think this is going to have much of an impact in discouraging people from shopping abroad. Retailers

try very hard here, but the volume of business here is not sufficient to support—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Point of what?

The Speaker: There is a point of order.

Take your seat, Dr. Gibbons.

Minister De Silva, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Mr. Speaker, because in one breath the Honourable Member says that the people in Bermuda remember who took the tax up, and then the next minute he says just the opposite. So, you have got to make up your mind. He has got it to be one thing or the other.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Carry on, Dr. Gibbons.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that made absolutely no sense at all—which is par for the course with that Honourable Member, I am afraid.

[Inaudible interjection]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: So, the point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is, while this . . . And I think that Honourable Member who just spoke way oversold it. While I think retailers are going to be grateful for some help because after almost 40 months of continuous downturn in the retail industry, any little bit helps, and this payroll tax lifting will help. It is not going to save 4,000 jobs, as that Honourable Member, Mr. De Silva, seemed to imply a little while ago. It will give some relief here.

But the fact of the matter is, this increase in duty and this loss in exemption should not be hung completely on the retailers. Government is going to pick up, from my calculations, about \$10 million in additional revenue on this. I think that is excessive when you think about the number of Bermudians that depend on those shopping trips abroad and the rest of it.

I am saying this as a retailer, Mr. Speaker. I know it is tough in the retail business. I know it is tough to compete. We do our best. I think all retailers are having a very difficult time right now. But I do not think this increase in duty should be blamed on the retailers. This is a pure revenue-raising measure, as far as I can see.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Dr. Gibbons.

I am going to take the Minister G. Blakeney, from Devonshire North Central.

Minister Blakeney has the floor.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I find the thesis of the Honourable Member who just took his seat to be extremely interesting. If you are going to look from an historical perspective on retail in this country, the lion's share has been similar to what is reflected in Bermuda today. I did not hear any kind of perspective with regard to pricing and the kind of mark-up that some would suggest would be gouging. It is very, very interesting. Now he wants to side with the consumer as if he has got some epiphany of sensitivity to the pockets of Mr. and Mrs. Average Bermuda. That is disingenuous

So, on the one side he is going to talk out and speak to his sensitivity, and on the other side he is going to say, *Well, you know, Bermudians, the retailers this, the retailers that, and then the Bermudians this . . .* I mean, what is it? Nothing but pandering, nothing but pandering!

If there were truly honest brokers in this community, you know what? There would be more disposable income in Bermudians' pockets, because the cost of living would be reflected in the Consumer Price Index being more real relative to the GDP of the country. What it means is that, if there was a reality check and those that drive the economy as the merchant class were more of a real, honest broker in this community over the years, the cost would not be so inflated, notwithstanding we base our economy on a consumption tax.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Of course, you do not, because now you are going to get into a reality check. That is unfortunate. That is really unfortunate. Look at every single commodity in this country. One of the reasons why it became so popular for people to shop overseas in the first instance was not because of variety, because people for the most part—the majority of people in this country—could not afford to go away to shop. But then it became a necessity because people became aware, when they were able to afford to go and shop, what the reality was in their home country with the level of pricing surplus, in addition to the lending costs, that was considered by a lot of people in this country as gouging, as gouging.

An Hon. Member: You are countering your own argument.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: One of the reasons why they went was because of the high costs that were incurred for buying just the basic things.

You know what? There is something that I am often reminded about with regard to a quote, that greed and avarice have often been cloaked in the cap and gown of ambition. That is one of the reasons why in these times we have the challenges, financially, because it has been driven by a greed mentality. Now that the reality check has come to bear, everybody wants to point fingers. It is left to governments around the world to now try and bail out private sector entities.

We have bailed out the bank, and we have bailed out other people through guarantees, the Government. The same has happened with billions of dollars that the US Government has afforded for the very same people who still collect bonuses on Wall Street! In Europe a similar type thing has happened, a similar type thing! It is unfortunate, because, you know, if we do not come to grips with just being real with regard to some of these challenges that we have, and playing to the mentality of people and hoping that they are vulnerable to the degree of what they are feeling as far as pain is concerned, it is cruel. When the Government tries to address some of the challenges that we have, particularly affecting the everyday Bermudian, and you are going to pooh-pooh it at every given turn, it is just wrong. It is just wrong.

With all the criticism as to what was wrong with what is being done or attempted by the Government to help, you have not heard any ideas.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: You are the Government.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: No ideas. And here is someone interpolating—Mrs. Pat Gordon-Pamplin—that we are the Government.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: You are.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes. But yet they will say they have got all the ideas. We are using their ideas. I mean, it is unbelievable! Everything for political expediency will come out of the mouths of the Opposition to try and score those brownie points. They do not care, because it is *Win at all costs!* They changed their name. But they have still got the same political ideology. Do not be fooled by that! There are the same faces, in the same places, talking about the same things in the same ways. There is no difference! In French, I think it is called a *façade*, if you would use the analogy of a building. They are absolutely sitting in the same seats.

Now, they are choosing Shadow people that are not appointed or elected. Then they are claiming, *Well, you know, when we talked about the casino relief for cruise ships, you know, we, the Opposition, never agreed with it.* Well, you could not if you were not the Opposition at that time! So, what is it? It is in today's paper. It is in today's paper. They claimed that

they did not support it, blah-blah-blah, and at the same they are saying, *We are new*. It is incredible.

[Inaudible interjections and crosstalk]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: It is incredible. I supported it. Our Honourable Premier supported it. It is quite a few that did support it. But I just use that as an example of the contradiction. It is such a strange dichotomy, because we do not know who we are dealing with as an Opposition, because the old Opposition really has not disappeared yet. They are the Opposition and minority, but they still exist, and for a good reason.

The unfortunate thing is that they may make a very noble attempt to do the right thing for the right reasons based on what it is that they want to do in the interests of the country. But for those that bailed, some came over here because they saw it, not being green on the other side; they saw it being just right. So they choose to join the right party. Right?

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we bring these kinds of things forward and it is pooh-pooh'ed upon, it just really makes you step back and say, *What is it? What is it?* Then you say, *You know what? You cannot really explain it because a leopard never changes its spots.* That is why my Honourable Member Mr. De Silva refers to them as the Party of No, because it is *No, no, no*. But you know what it is? It is a literal interpretation of "opposition."

The Speaker: Minister, we are on Customs Tariff.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: That is what I am talking about.

The Speaker: *[Laughter]*

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I am addressing why they are opposing, and the rationale behind why they are opposing this Customs initiative.

The Speaker: Yes, yes.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: You see, it all ends. You have got to follow the bouncing ball, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: But, you know, I commend those that are thinking outside of the box in being sensitive to the retail community because these are challenging times for them. They do have some responsibility. They do have some responsibility, and they are trying as well.

We see today the Black Friday initiative. So they are trying. Hopefully, it is not *too little too late*. But this Government is pro-business and it is pro-people and it is pro-community. We are not anti-anything. We understand what the challenges are. When we hear, we listen. When we listen, we look at what we should do and can do to help address the situation.

With regard to retail, as we have heard, they have not jumped up and down screaming with regard to this particular initiative, because it is a step in the right direction. You have to be creative. You have to be innovative. This is what this country thrives on, especially in the international business sector. The intellectual capacity that we have in the country has to step up to the plate, across the whole spectrum of the economic strata in looking to do what each can to address this dilemma that we find ourselves in. We just cannot expect the consumer to take the full brunt every single time, and you cannot expect business either. We are depending on the business to do what is necessary, and we will be there to try and help so that they can maintain at least the status quo numbers with regard to those that are employed in the private sector until this thing turns around.

It is cyclical! But nobody can predict how soon or when it is going to actually turn around. Until then, we need to keep our noses above water. So we will continue to introduce initiatives and policies that help the process, at least for us to survive so that we can get to that stage when the turnaround begins.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, I do support my Finance Minister in what I think is something that goes far in the right direction regarding the Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011 *[sic]*.

Thank you.

The Speaker: You are on the wrong one.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Oh, was I?

[Laughter]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney.

Are there any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, from Paget West.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it just shows that, you know, when one stands to pontificate on the Floor of the House and has no clue about which they are speaking, we have to sit and we are pained to have to listen to that sort of presentation.

The Speaker: That was not exactly true. That was not exactly true.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of order, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But we are discussing the Customs Tariff Amendment Bill.

The Speaker: Take your seat.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: There is no greater . . . She is misleading the House. There is no greater pontificator in this Chamber than that Honourable Member. I knew exactly what I was talking about. I just had the wrong Bill on the desk when I referred to the name.

The Speaker: Yes, yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Absolutely.

The Speaker: The Minister is exactly right. I was going to have some fun with him.

Carry on, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I think the comedic impact was really quite poignant, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the fact that you were having fun with the Honourable Member.

However, let me just attempt to dispel a few of the things that we have heard this evening. The second speaker for Government, the Honourable Member Mr. Roban, actually had it quite right and made more sense than the other two people who spoke, combined. Because what he had attempted to bring to the attention of this Honourable House is an argument that was actually borne out by their Honourable Minister Bean in one of our last sessions, when he talked about being competitive, being competitive.

On the one hand, we have a Government suggesting that Members from this side of the House have no sensitivity respecting local employment and the retail sector. There is nothing that is further from the truth. They are suggesting, though, that it is quite all right to pay \$400 for something that you can land for \$120, because there is no onus being placed on the retailer to be competitive.

Mr. Speaker, that would presuppose that there is a never-ending supply of money in the pockets of consumers, that we, in order to support local business, will pay whatever they ask. Well, in a tight economic situation, people are going to look for the most economical means of doing things. The Honourable Member, Mr. De Silva, suggested that everybody

loves the Government, and the 35 per cent—everybody he talked to said this is wonderful. Well, he clearly moves in a different circle than I. Yes, I do admit that I shop abroad. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, that I used to go away to shop. But I do not do that anymore. I shop when I am away. There is a distinct difference.

So I can go to the US, but I am just as comfortable in Target as I am in Nordstrom's. There is no question about it. I buy more in Target than I buy in Nordstrom because that is where my pocketbook goes. But I can tell you that if we are suggesting—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I do have pretty shoes—there is no question—ones that I cannot buy locally. There is no question about that. No, these are not Target shoes.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I said I am more comfortable in Target for many of the things that I have to purchase.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, no, no, no, Ming Wang. Ming Wang.

Mr. Speaker, the consumer does have a definitive amount of money that he has to spend. When the tariff is put up by 35 per cent on the one hand, and then on the other hand we get advertisements by a Government agency suggesting that you can buy abroad and send it back via the post office, then what impact is that likely to have in terms of benefit to the local retail establishment, if that is the intent of this Bill?

It is the most counterproductive advertising campaign I have ever seen. It is like, *I am going to charge you 35 per cent to bring your goods into the airport. But Bermuda public, you can go away. You can shop away. Send it through the post office, and you pay 6 per cent on this, 7 per cent on that, 10 per cent on the other.* I think 12 per cent on clothing, or whatever the case might be.

So, we are suggesting on the one hand, just through . . . Because it is effectively misleading to say that we are so concerned about the retailers that we want to ensure that they get the best possible situation for their establishment. We want to be able to keep Bermudians employed. There is no question about that, Mr. Speaker. Every one of us recognises the hardship that is being experienced by people who are being laid off.

But what this 35 per cent is doing . . . I believe my honourable colleague, the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons, brought it out very, very clearly. If the

intent was a balancing act to say, *I am giving up somewhere in the order of \$3 million to retailers on a short-term basis. In order to be able to balance the books, I am going to raise money on the other hand to offset.* If that was the intent, then we do not have to be extortionists. If the intent on behalf of Government is to say that we want to find ways of raising additional revenue, then say so! But do not say that the intent—

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Madam the Honourable Member.

The Speaker: What is the point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am giving people a lot of latitude because I am going to get the chance to correct. But the Opposition have got their figures fatally wrong, fatally wrong.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.
Carry on.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Well, in the absence of specifics, Mr. Speaker, I will wait for the Premier's response to say how wrong we are.

But I can say that if we are going to bring in that much additional revenue through the airport by charging 35 per cent—and this is just purely based on an extrapolation of existing numbers from the Government's own statistics. So, if those numbers are incorrect, we are only going by what information we have been given by the Government.

However, that having been said, Mr. Speaker, I think we do not have an attitude of protectionism. We have one that would suggest that competition is the key. Bermudians will continue to be employed when there is a shared pain, when there is a shared experience by the retailers as well as by the employees. The employees rely on the retailers for their paycheque. They work, they work hard, and they work effectively. That is indisputable. The retailers, on the other hand, have to do their part as well.

We heard the Honourable Member, Mr. Blakeney, who was all over the place. I do not know if he knew what he was saying because he was saying on the one hand you have got to support the retailers and shop locally; but the retailers are gouging people, and if the retailers are gouging people, then what he is effectively suggesting is that people still have to shop there regardless.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of order, point of order.

The Speaker: There is a point of order.
Take your seat.

Minister Blakeney?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Completely out of context, misleading the House. I said "the history." And I talked in the perspective of the history of retail and the merchant class of this country over the years.

The Speaker: Well, that is what I understood. I understood that, Minister, yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: There is a much greater sensitivity now because there is a reality check. That was the point that I was trying to stress.

The Speaker: Yes, yes. I uphold the point of order. That is exactly what he said.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes? Thank you.
But as the Honourable Member was trying to stress that point, Mr. Speaker, he is also suggesting that we have got to pay whatever the cost is downtown. That is not . . . They actually ridiculed the Honourable Member, Mr. Richards, when he said that he was able to purchase a \$120 item that he would have had to pay \$400 for.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: A point of order.

The Speaker: Take your seat. There is a—

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: This exaggeration is just incredible. I gave credence to the retail sector for the Black Friday, which happened today, saying that they had a better sensitivity and they were working more cooperatively in concert with the Government initiative.

The Speaker: Yes, yes.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: What does she not get? Does she understand the King's English?

The Speaker: Minister, I uphold that point of order.
He did say they were being very creative.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker, that is why I said the Honourable Member was speaking all over the place. Because on the one hand he spoke about the creativity of Black Friday, but on the other hand he was ridiculing the Honourable Member for having shopped abroad for being able to buy something that cost \$120 instead of \$400.

The key is, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Point of order! Point of order! That was not me criticising—

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —that he is making—

The Speaker: There is another point of—

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: I did not criticise the Honourable Member for shopping overseas. That was another Member!

The Speaker: That was another Minister, yes.
Carry on, carry on.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It came from that side, from that side of the House. From that side of the House, there was criticism.

The Speaker: Well, it did come from this side of the House. But it did not come from that Minister.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And he confirmed it.

The Speaker: It came from another Minister.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He confirmed it by extrapolation, and I believe Hansard will be able to show it. Hansard will be able to show it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But, Mr. Speaker, I just believe that it is important to put to you the position that comes to us from many people. When we speak, when we talk to mothers who have three and four children, who are taking a trip and they buy their uniforms. They have got to buy . . . Four children, you have to have 20 school shirts, you have got to have 20 pairs of pants or skirts or a combination thereof so that their children, five days a week, require clean uniforms. There are some times when parents will say, *I can give you three shirts because I cannot afford five for each of you*, when there are multiple children.

But the stories that we hear on this side of the aisle are people saying that *I can spend a lot less buying my children's uniforms when I am travelling than I can if I have to buy them downtown*. Can we honestly penalise the mother whose income is already stretched when she is trying to make ends meet, and she has the opportunity—not necessarily leaving here to go specifically abroad to shop, but has the oppor-

tunity so to do while she is travelling to come back with her four children for whom these clothes are intended, and to say, *They are not entitled to any duty free*. She has got to pay the entire cost, other than her \$100 duty free allowance. It really is suggesting that we are being a little insensitive to the plight of somebody who is being almost forced—

The Speaker: Well, there are no specific cases. It is what is good for the entire community, economy.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: For the whole, for the whole. Mr. Speaker. I understand and I accept that wholeheartedly, wholeheartedly.

However, it is the individual cases that make up the whole. I can tell you about the people who have articulated their concerns about this additional cost—average, everyday people. I am not restricted. The Honourable Member might restrict himself to his own constituency; I happen to have a broader spectrum in terms of my circle of people. I honestly have the country as my constituency as a Member of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, all I will say is that when people express concerns, we have to listen. That is the only point that we are trying to make on this side. That is what we have to make on this side of the House. If somebody says that *I feel hard-done-by by this*, and we come to this Honourable House and say nothing, we would be derelict in our responsibility.

We are simply honour bound and duty-bound to point out to the Government that some of the challenges that we hear about, we have to bring them to their attention. That is exactly what it is that we have to do. And we will do it, and we will continue to do it. If the Government then says, *Irrespective of the challenges that people find themselves in, irrespective of the tight economic conditions that we have, irrespective of how you feel, I am still going to raise the rate of duty at the airport*, that is the Government's role so to do. If the Government ends up at the end of the day getting far more revenue than is required to offset the allowances that are being given on the other end with respect to payroll tax and the like, it is up to them. They will have to face the people of Bermuda and say, *I want to help to contribute to the coffers. In so doing, we are putting an extra charge at the airport*.

Now, we will wait to see what the numbers are. We will wait to see what the numbers are. The Premier has indicated—

The Speaker: The Minister already discounted that.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No. The Premier has said that she will give us the details. I am happy to listen—

The Speaker: The Minister said that it is not a revenue-raising matter.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That it was not intended to be a revenue-raising.

The Speaker: So you have to change tacks.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No. I am just suggesting that I am happy to listen to the numbers that the Premier will suggest that will come out of this. What is the Honourable Member anticipating by way of additional revenue with this particular movement?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I will take my seat when I am finished, Mr. De Silva. I listened to you. Albeit you talked nonsense, I listened.

The Speaker: I am listening. I am still listening.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If the Premier can help us with us being able to understand what is intended to be raised from this exercise, vis-à-vis what is intended to be relieved by way of tax relief that is . . . and it is going to be only for a six-month period of time. It is only for a six-month period of time. We will be appreciative to hear that because we heard one Member indicate that if we do not shop local, there is going to be 4,000 jobs in the retail sector that will be lost—that will be lost! Now, if that is not sensationalism, I do not know what is.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: A point of order, Mr. Speaker, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Certainly misleading the House, Mr. Speaker. I never said 4,000 jobs would be lost. I said we will be assisting 4,000 people that are employed in the retail sector.

The Speaker: I do uphold that point of order. That is true.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member said—and *Hansard* will show you—he said we would be saving 4,000 jobs in the retail sector—we will be saving 4,000 jobs in the retail sector by this particular movement. I do not think that that particular Member was speaking factually. As I said—and I will take my seat here. But I think the only person who made sense on that side was the Honourable Member

Walter Roban. I endorse his comment. I can say I do shop locally as well. I do not shop exclusively abroad.

As a matter of fact, you know, Mr. Speaker, there was a time when I enjoyed shopping. The Honourable Member, Mr. Richards, mentioned it earlier. He said it is almost a sport. I think that we go through phases in our lives, that we have . . . You know, when you grow up you have to go downtown because your parents did not have any money to take you, certainly not in my era. My trip was away to school when I was 11, and then you come back from there. I think I did not go again until I was maybe 16.

An Hon. Member: You did not learn very much.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I went to a better school than you did; trust me.

But, Mr. Speaker, I started to say that we actually have . . . When things are better in your economic circumstances, you make slightly different choices. So at a time when there is a little bit more revenue flowing, and you go away, you got enthusiastic about going away to shop. I have so gotten over that era. Because, Mr. Speaker, I recognise that, notwithstanding that I have the benefit and the privilege and the blessing of being a professionally qualified executive, I certainly still feel the financial pinch. I have responsibilities like other people.

So there are times when you have to re-evaluate your situation. I know for a fact, Mr. Speaker, that everybody who looks at their budget, everybody who looks at what their expendable income is tries to maximise what they have available and how they are able to stretch to make ends meet. For many families, Mr. Speaker, there is an awful lot of month left over at the end of the money. I think that we have to be sensitive. When we see people coming through the airport, and especially the likes of the mother . . . I am not talking about the casual shopper who does not care; they are going to go away regardless. But when we see the mother who makes that trip because that is the best she can do, we have to show a sensitivity, and that has got to be my point, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You must be talking about those who shop at Wal-Mart, like myself.

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And those who shop at Wal-Mart, Mr. Speaker, and Target. Target, I love Target. I love Target.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I did not say that. I said I do not leave home to go abroad to shop. But when I am away, I will shop. That is what I said.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, the Honourable Member from Paget West.

Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member Minister, M. Bean, from Warwick South Central.

Minister Bean has the floor.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to just add my minimum contribution because I know the hour is late. But everyone has had their spiel, and so now it is my turn.

Mr. Speaker, let me declare my interest. I am a person who does not like to shop, period. I prefer to put money in the hands of the wife or my sister or sister-in-law, give them my shoe sizes and clothing sizes, and just let them go.

But in terms of this legislation, I see, I understand what our Finance Minister's intentions are. This is a short-term measure. I am grateful that it is a short-term measure because, obviously, over the long term it is not sustainable. But the whole idea—and I think many of my colleagues have already spoken to it—is the fact that we are seeking through protectionism, through Government intervention, to protect jobs. I see the Opposition Member Mr. Richards shaking his head in agreement, or nodding the head, whatever.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: But, Mr. Speaker, I think Dr. Gibbons, the Honourable Member Dr. Gibbons, got his numbers a little wrong. He says that there is a 40 per cent increase in the customs duty, which will not bring in the forecasted tax revenues that he suggests. Why? Because we can expect, as a result of this customs duty increase, a decrease in overseas spending to the point that your overseas spending will actually outpace the tax revenues generated as the result of the increase.

For instance, let us say there was no overseas spending. Let us say these measures actually encouraged Bermudians not to shop overseas at all. What would that 35 per cent mean in terms of tax revenues? It would not mean a thing!

The Speaker: Well, Madam Premier, the Finance Minister, has said it is not a tax revenue matter.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: That is my point, Mr. Speaker.

But Dr. Gibbons was making the point, and the Honourable Member, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, was making the point . . . she actually questioned how much tax revenues we are going to be bringing in; how much are we going to be adding to our revenue base as a result of these measures. In fact, it has nothing to do with increasing our revenue base.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: And that is why his numbers are wrong.

The Speaker: You have got it now.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: That is why I say the Honourable Member, Dr. Gibbons', numbers are wrong. I understand the point that you were making, but obviously you agree that the overseas spending decrease will actually far outpace the revenues generated from the customs duties.

The other thing that is an irony is that, out of everyone in Bermuda, who stands to benefit the most from this protectionist stance, this interventionist stance to protect retailers? None other, Mr. Speaker, than Gibbons Company Ltd. That is who will benefit the most, the largest retailer in Bermuda. So, our Premier, in her wisdom, is seeking to protect the retail sector over the short term. Is there a real problem with it? No, there cannot be, because 4,000 people or 2,000 people unemployed or added to the unemployment list will just magnify the challenges that we face in this country today.

Mr. Speaker, let us say we reduced . . . Instead of increasing it to 35 per cent, let us say we reduced it to 10 per cent. What would that mean? What effect, if the Premier said, *We are going to reduce customs duty to 10 per cent*. What would that mean? What effect would it have? Well, it would increase overseas spending. But I doubt we would see lower or competitive prices in Bermuda. The question is, Why not? Why not? I am sure the Opposition Members would be scratching their heads to answer that question.

Today—today, this morning, Mr. Speaker, 4:30 in the morning, you had people four-deep in a line stretching from Phoenix around to KFC and from Cellular One and Brown & Company around to Gosling Brothers Ltd. (or if it is still Gosling's) on Front Street. Now, if that is not a sign of competition, then what is? The Government had no involvement with Black Friday. It was a market decision to say, *Listen. Let us lower our prices up to 40 per cent*. What was the reaction? You had people stacked up at 4:30 in the morning! That is quite unbelievable in this country, Mr. Speaker. It is quite unbelievable. I could not believe it until I saw on *Bernews*, four-deep there wrapped around the corner at 4:30 in the morning. No one is catching the early flight. No one is going fishing. They are going to shop at 4:30 in the morning.

So I can agree with those Members who say that, in the end, what is really going to boost our retail sector is the market itself by becoming more competitive.

Mr. Speaker, 4:30 you had hundreds of people shopping.

The Speaker: I thought you were one of them.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Pardon?

The Speaker: I thought you were one of them.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Never ever, Mr. Speaker. Never ever.

The Speaker: *[Laughter]*

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes, I was.

Mr. Speaker, did this morning increase retail sales? I am quite sure it did. But more than likely at reduced margins, obviously, because it was at a discount. But, nevertheless, I guarantee you those retailers made a profit. That is the dilemma that we are facing here. The retailers should not rely on prolonged Government protectionism, prolonged Government intervention. If you want to be successful in retail in Bermuda, you have to be more competitive. You have to offer better products and services at a lower price. In other words, it is the consumer that is key when it comes to business. It is not the Government.

So, while initially when this initiative was brought forth by the Premier, I had some concerns. I did because I understand that protectionism is only a stop-gap measure. It could only be short term. Eventually, if it was to be continued over a prolonged period, it would have an adverse effect. I am sure the Opposition will agree.

So, going forward, Mr. Speaker, I would expect that, while the Premier has basically presented a Christmas gift to Bermuda retailers, that they will have to step up to the plate themselves and understand that the pacifier, the umbilical cord which allows the protectionism which helps to drive consumers to their stores, eventually they are going to have to pull up the slack. They will have to find better products, more variety, at lower prices. That is the only way that they will be successful. Government cannot stay into the business of being protectionist for too long. We just cannot.

But I understand the wisdom of our Minister of Finance for bringing forth this legislation today. I cannot see why the Opposition would have so much of a problem, unless they are just trying to politicise it, unless they are trying to drive home the base fears of our people. Yet, this morning, it revealed that those fears have no place once the retailers come with the right price at the right time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I stand in full support of this legislation, with the consciousness that it is not going to last forever. In the meantime, I would encourage retailers to prepare themselves to be more competitive. You cannot force a consumer. All of us have agreed—all of us without hesitation—we shop abroad because we find more variety at lower prices. Retail needs to become more competitive.

So, after these six months maybe we can spend some time figuring out how we can encourage retailers to be more competitive. But do not blame the decrease in work permits of people leaving, because this morning showed that we have enough of a consumer base in this country for retailers to be successful. They are willing to spend.

So, let us put the politics aside. Understand that we are seeking to protect 4,000 retail jobs, lower-income-earning jobs. Is there a problem with that? No. If there is not a problem with it, then, please, Opposition, stand up, join us in a collaborative fashion, as you profess. Now is your opportunity to possess it. Do not just say it; just do it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: Yes, I am saying no. Understand that this is a short-term measure, so do not make it a political football. It is not necessary.

An Hon. Member: It is disingenuous.

Hon. Marc A. R. Bean: It is very disingenuous, and you are playing politricks with the people who are trying to protect 4,000 jobs. Bottom line.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I take my seat.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Bean, the Honourable Member from Warwick South Central.

Any further speakers?

No further speakers.

Madam Premier, the Minister in charge, is going to reply.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, firstly, let me say that women in Bermuda have been having to go to the wicket, particularly in these difficult times, and find ways to sustain their families. They have been having to run households, too many of them, as single parents. While many of us have had the opportunity to shop abroad, that has not always been an opportunity that has been afforded to some who were seeking to just survive. And they are struggling.

I think that what we have to do right here is to be clear as to the fact that there are people who are hurting, and what we are seeking to do is to try and stem the bleeding.

I think also, Mr. Speaker, so that we have to get it right, that this Government is concerned. Just like what you saw recently in terms of in the UK—the \$1 billion Autumn Budget Statement promise to the coalition, \$1 billion to create jobs for the unemployed—difficult times require difficult and stringent measures. But the manner and temper of this Government consistently . . . I took the time to detail it, even though it could have been seen as outside the strict framework of this legislation, to talk about the

continuum and the habit of this Government in terms of seeking to bolster and provide assistance.

I have not even touched on what we have done in terms of the hotel sector and the amount of revenue that we have forgone. So all this nonsense that we are hearing in some quarters is totally out of whack and totally incorrect and inaccurate. It is a misnomer, a misrepresentation, and a misstatement.

What we have done in terms of temporary relief that we have provided consistently . . . Yes, Mr. Speaker, I make no apology whatsoever. When one hears of people who are being made redundant, and you look at . . . Notwithstanding—notwithstanding the revenue that the Government is losing and has lost, you want to find ways to continue to try and assist, because the prospect of having a number of people being put out of work who are the lower socioeconomic bracket of our country just in the lead-up to Christmas is not what we want. It is not socially or economically acceptable. If it requires that you temper and change your template, then so you do. That is what is called being a reactive and responsive Government to the needs of the times. We will continue to do that as necessary, Mr. Speaker, and as thought fit.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Now, Mr. Speaker, retail figures and retail sales and retail sales index—we have about \$30 million that was spent in terms of overseas sales when you look from about the period of November to March last year. Retail sales index, in fact, notwithstanding our prognostications and projections, released today, confirm and corroborate.

So what are we looking at? If you take that and you look at what you would have gotten on 25 per cent duty and look at what you would get on 35 per cent, you are talking about a revenue of about [\$]7.5 [million] if it was at the lower rate, and you are looking at about [\$]10.5 [million] if it was at the higher rate. So you have a difference of \$3 million, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the payroll tax giveaway. What are we losing for two quarters? About [\$]8.5 [million]. This was never ever intended as a revenue-raising measure—never. This was seen as a way to seek to assist and preserve jobs.

Let me be very clear, Mr. Speaker. Now, the Ministry of Finance, the Minister of Finance, who is a lawyer, by the way, is quite clear that legislation is required for duty changes. However, for payroll tax changes to be effective from October could be dealt with administratively. It did not come to the House. For duty changes, you have this beautiful piece of legislation, not passed by us (I confess), that on the day of tabling it became effective, so for November the 4th.

But for somebody to slip and slide and suggest we did not know that it needed legislative change—total fabrication, total fabrication. But we did do and we did send a message that the pay—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: I have my release, you know, Mr. Speaker, clear, clear, clear as to the fact of the payroll tax change October the 1st.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are my comments in rebuttal. At this stage, I move that the Bill be committed.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.
Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Will the Honourable Member, Mr. K. Horton, the Deputy Speaker, from Southampton West, please take the Chair of Committee.

House in Committee at 10:58 pm

[Hon. K. H. Randolph Horton, Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (NO. 3) ACT 2011

The Chairman: All right, Members, we are now debating the [Customs Tariff Amendment \(No. 3\) Act 2011](#), with the Honourable Premier, Minister Paula Cox, in charge.

Madam Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, there are four clauses, and I propose to move all four clauses. That is the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011.

Clause 1, obviously, is always the self-explanatory name of the Bill, which is known as the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011.

Clause 2, Mr. Chairman, is really the meat of the Bill. That amends section 5A of the Customs Tariff Act 1970, the “Duty free allowance,” by inserting new sections 5(1A) to 5(1C).

Clause 2 [new section 5A](1A) provides that “where two or more members of the same household return to Bermuda on the same aircraft or boat, only one may claim the \$100 allowance . . .” set out in section 5A(1)(d), for “accompanied goods . . . for . . . personal or household use or as souvenirs or gifts . . .”

Clause 2 [new section 5A](1B) clarifies the meaning of the expression “members in the same household” for the purposes of the new section 5A(1)(1A).

Clause 2 [new section 5A](1C) provides, “For the avoidance of any doubt” or ambiguity that “this restriction . . . does not affect the allowances in the

other paragraphs of subsection (1).” That is, for accompanied baggage, alcoholic beverages, tobacco and bona fide baggage falling within sections 5A(1)(f) or 5A(1)(g).

Clause 3 amends the First Schedule of the Customs Tariff Act 1970, to increase from 25 per cent to 35 per cent the duty payable on accompanied personal goods.

Clause 4 clearly deals with the commencement date. It provides for commencement on the date that this Bill was tabled in the House of Assembly in accordance with the Provisional Collection of Customs Duties Act 1960.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Madam Premier, for your explanations.

I now ask if there is any other Member who would like to speak.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Bob Richards.

Mr. Richards, you have the floor.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think we have beaten this one to death. I have one question for the Honourable Premier.

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Much has been made of the fact that this increase is temporary, that the 35 per cent increase and the allowance decrease will come to an end on March 31st, I think.

Now, my question is—

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Actually, point of clarification.

The Chairman: There is a point of order?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: And order, but I mean clarification.

The Chairman: Point of clarification?

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. Paula A. Cox: You have never heard me say that the 35 per cent is temporary. I said the personal allowance is temporary, as I read even in my Statement.

The Chairman: All right.

Do you have that clear, Mr. Richards?

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Yes, I have that. That was not made clear before. Just to reiterate, the 35 per cent is not temporary or necessarily temporary, and the allowance decrease is temporary.

The Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: Okay. Thank you. That answers my question.

The Chairman: Yes. Okay.

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: It was not clear before.

The Chairman: Do you have it straight now?

Mr. Everard T. (Bob) Richards: We have it straight now. I hope the public does, too.

The Chairman: Great. Fantastic.

Does any other Member care to speak?

I recognise now Dr. Gibbons.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just so it is clear, I think the issue is if the 35 per cent is not temporary, then there is no provision for that, but why is there not a sunset clause in this particular legislation for the personal allowance? I would expect that to be in there, that particular piece would end on the 31st of March. Or is the Honourable Member going to come back and essentially re-amend this tariff?

The Chairman: The Honourable Member, Premier, will certainly respond to that.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Chairman, in my comments in the whole House, I said the travellers' allowance for returning residents would be restricted to one person per household for a six-month period ending on 31st March 2012. The comment on the other was, the duty on accompanied goods declared by returning residents will be increased from 25 per cent to 35 per cent. So I wanted to first set the stage that that is what I said.

With regard to the comment raised by the Honourable Member Dr. Gibbons, because we are going to get into the budget period, that is when I will do the changes.

The Chairman: Sure.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: But I am letting the people know that the \$100 . . . Some have said that it should go completely, and others may say that it should be increased. But that will be dealt with in the budget. Similarly with regard to the issues of the payroll tax and all the rest of it, that is dealt with and will be dealt with at budget time, which will certainly be prior to the end of February and prior to the end of March.

The Chairman: Understood, understood.
Is that clear?

[No audible response]

The Chairman: Absolutely.
Members, we all seem to be clear on the Bill so far.
Madam Premier, would you like to move the Preamble?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: I would indeed like to move the Preamble and that the Bill be reported to the House.

The Chairman: Thank you, Madam Premier. I am sure there are no objections to that.

[Desk thumping]

The Chairman: We will move to the House.

[Motion carried: The Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011 was considered by a Committee of the whole House, passed without amendment, and will be reported to the House.]

House resumed at 11:04 pm

[Hon. Stanley Lowe, Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT ON BILL

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (NO. 3) ACT 2011

The Speaker: Is there any objection to the Report of the Committee as printed?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: It was indicated by the Acting Whip that we would only do Orders 1 through 4.

And Government Orders 5 through 8, are they being carried over?

Madam Premier has indicated that they are to be carried over. The further Orders on the paper are being carried over.

There are no further Orders before the House, Madam Premier.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 14

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I would like to move that Standing Order 14 be suspended to enable me to present the following Bill: the Insurance Amendment Act 2011.

The Speaker: Oh, we want to do that first and not the Third Reading?

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Yes.

The Speaker: All right. Okay.
Any objection on the suspension of Standing Order 14?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: Standing Order 14 suspended.]

The Speaker: Carry on, Madam Premier.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, I know that my Bills have only just gone through, but since I am on my feet, may I now take the opportunity to move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011 be now read the third time by its title only?

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

The Speaker: Carry on, Madam Premier.

THIRD READING

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (No. 3) ACT 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I move that that Bill do now pass.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 3) Act 2011 read a third time and passed.]

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I also under the suspension of Standing Order 21 would ask that you allow me to move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

THIRD READING

BERMUDA AIRPORT (DUTY FREE SALES) AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Mr. Speaker, I move that that Bill do now pass.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The Bermuda Airport (Duty Free Sales) Amendment Act 2011 read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Minister, Mr. W. Furbert, from Hamilton West.
Minister Furbert?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 14

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I would like to move that the Standing Order 14 be suspended to enable me to present the following Bill.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: Standing Order 14 suspended.]

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

INVESTMENT FUNDS AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Investment Funds Amendment Act 2011.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Standing Order 14 be suspended to enable me to present the following Bill.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

COMPANIES AMENDMENT (No. 2) ACT 2011

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Companies Amendment Act (No. 2) Act 2011.

The Speaker: No leave of the House is required. There are two Bills from the Honourable Minister. All right. We will get it sorted out.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Minister M. Weeks, from Pembroke East Central.
Minister Weeks, you have the floor.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

The Speaker: Carry on.

THIRD READING

PROTECTED SPECIES AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Michael Weeks: I move that this Bill do now pass.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The Protected Species Amendment Act 2011 read a third time and passed.]

Hon. Michael Weeks: Mr. Speaker, another one?

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

The Speaker: Carry on, Minister.

THIRD READING

WASTE AND LITTER CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT 2011

Hon. Michael Weeks: I move that that Bill do now pass.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The Waste and Litter Control Amendment Act 2011 read a third time and passed.]

Hon. Michael Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Madam Premier, there are no further matters before the House.

Hon. Paula A. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: Any objection?
Agreed to.

[Gavel]

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. M. Pettingill, from Warwick West.

Mr. Pettingill, you have the floor.

HERITAGE WHARF

Mr. Mark Pettingill: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is late and I know that Members had a late sitting last week. So I do not want to force something that makes us drag on as long as it did over the airport issues and the tax and so on, which was a bit of a surprise.

But I have to raise this in good conscience, Mr. Speaker, because it is out there and people are asking questions about it. Some might think it is a symbol or a reflection of the times that the Government is going through. I speak of the Heritage Wharf. It has become known as the Heritage Wharf, but let us call it the Heritage Wharf Affair.

Let us talk some facts, so we do not have any issues with regard to that. Let us just talk the facts. This was a project that was budgeted for \$39 million

and approved. It cost \$60 million. Now, that is a matter that is under investigation, as we understand it, by the Auditor General. Hopefully, she is safe and is not going to be arrested or anything for what she is doing.

But that particular wharf, which cost the taxpayers all that money, is now two years old—two years of operation with regard to the cruise ship industry. Now, if you go down and have a look—and I would invite Honourable Members to do that—I do not mean to indulge in hyperbole here, just the facts. The thruster wall, which is the big bone of contention, looks like a dockyard museum relic that, if you got off a ship or a boat and you looked at it, people would be asking, *Does that go back to Victorian times? What is the history of that?*

Well, I say that because it is just falling apart. It looks like a relic, and it does not take an engineer or anybody with any type of know-how in engineering or whatever to say, *That looks like it is a bit of a mess.* This large piece of metal that is flapping around, even on a calm day—if you are down there—I gather, by the weight or something, is creaking in the breeze. Nobody with any sensibility could look at it and say, *Well, that must be safe and functioning and okay.* It simply cannot be the case that that is a fact.

Now, that wall alone, or that thruster wall is designed (I am sure the public is aware of this) to minimise the impact of the propulsion from large cruise ships on the shoreline, so that is a good thing. We have these thruster walls all over the world, where you have big cruise ships come into places. That is what they are there to do, which is a good thing. This one, after two years, has clearly had some serious damage.

Now, the reasoning for that would be that we have had a hurricane that impacted on that and caused some damage to that particular structure. Okay. But we are a hurricane place. And other places are as well, Mr. Speaker. You have to design these types of things to weather the storm, as it were. This particular construction has not weathered any storm.

Now, you know, we may not have to worry about it because all the cruise ships are leaving like the Spanish armada after Sir Francis Drake dealt with them. So it might be the Government's explanation, *Well, we are not going to have to worry about that, first of all because we are not going to have as many cruise ships that are going to impact on it anyway.* But hope springs eternal, Mr. Speaker. In the hope that one day we have cruise ships coming back to our shores as fast as they seem to be leaving our shores, we are going to have the right facility to deal with them.

So, I think these are the fair facts to ask the questions on. It was stated some time ago by the Ministry that a solution intended to resolve the issue is occurring as a priority. When I was down there the other day, this thing is still flapping in the breeze, and

it is December. We heard these statements coming about in July.

Now, what has transpired since that time, Mr. Speaker, is we have heard certain things being done. We know that there is a report, and the report has not been made public. The contents of the report and what the findings are within that report that we know exists have not been made public.

This seems to be a recurring theme with regard to how things, unfortunately, are done. But I have some questions. Who is paying for that mess down there that looks like an antique relic? Because as a guess-timate, anybody is going to look at it and say, *Well, if it cost \$4.1 million just to build that segment of it, which now is so decrepit, it is going to cost a few million to fix it back up.*

Now, when you have those types of construction projects—and I think many people would be aware of this, Mr. Speaker—you have things called “performance bonds.” We have not heard a lot about any performance bond with regard to that. In other words, it is like, where is the insurance as it applies to problems that may occur, as they do with construction jobs, so that the taxpayer does not have to pick up the bill if there is a proven problem that establishes negligence or bad workmanship or any number of things that did not meet the performance standard that was required? There is a lot of silence on that. We do not know, and no one seems to want to say.

I think it is now imperative that this Government, particularly as there has been so much ire raised around the whole cruise ship issue as of late . . . This ties in as a little bit of a sidebar, if you will, with regard to that industry, something that we put in place with a view to those ships coming here to bring tourists to our shores. So it is not something that should be just swept away. It is something that, with that type of money that was spent on it, with a \$21 million over-run on the whole project, you have got a part of your project that cost millions that is falling apart that badly, and you have a report that you have had commissioned. Somebody knows the facts here.

The Government has looked for the facts, Mr. Speaker, and it is time to release them to the public. If there a problem, time to own up to it. If there is a solution, time to set it out and say, *This is what it is.* If someone has got it wrong, point the finger and say, *This is what happened.* If someone has got it wrong, point the finger and say, *We are going to sue them, as the Government, in order to protect you, the taxpayer. We are not going to go quiet on it. We are going to let you know what has gone on at Heritage Wharf, and we are going to let you know now because we actually know what has gone on.*

That much we know. The Government must know what has gone on because they did the contract. They paid the people’s money for the building of it. They were aware that there were problems when it started to fall apart, Mr. Speaker. They commissioned

an engineering report, which means they commissioned professionals for money, I would think, to come down and look at it and specifically say, *This is what has gone wrong and what needs to be done.* They must have gone on from that to get an estimate as to what it is going to cost to have it done. They must have had their lawyers say, *There is a breach of contract here or There is a performance bond that we can have put in place or have called upon in order to cover the costs.*

They must know all of these things, and they must give the public answers to those questions now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Pettingill, the Honourable and Learned Member from Warwick West.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. D. Burgess, Minister Burgess from Hamilton East. Minister?

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said last week (I think it was last week, or whenever it was) about the thruster wall. It has no bearing on the dock for the cruise ships. The dock is safe. The ships are parking there. In fact, when I made the statement earlier this year about the thruster wall, it was built to a category one hurricane, and the investigation is going on to find out why.

But let me say as I said in the House during that time, the insurance companies have been notified of a potential claim. Once the information is available, it certainly will be made known to this House. What I will do, I will check with the Minister who is responsible now. I am sure he will check. If you want an up to date, I am sure he will bring it to the House next week.

As far as a performance bond, you cannot get a performance bond in Bermuda. There is no such thing. What they do now in Bermuda, they would, for example, they will retain. It is a retention of up to 5 per cent. What they do now, just say if the project cost \$10 million, they will take 10 per cent until 5 per cent is achieved. That is how they do it. No performance bond. We cannot get one in Bermuda.

So, as many times as it was said in here, nobody understands it. So, Mr. Speaker, there is no evidence, there is no intention to suppress any reports. Once the reports are available, they will be made known to the public.

Every time they get up, they want to insinuate that we are trying to hide something. What is there to hide? We do not have time to hide any reports.

An Hon. Member: Why don’t you release the reports?

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Come on. Grant Gibbons, I know his attitude toward this Government. Every time he thinks something is done by this Government, he has suspicion. I understand that. That is

the way he was brought up, right? That is the way he understands. That is the way he thinks about us anyhow. I understand it. It is very clear. The history speaks for itself, and he speaks to the history every time he gets up. He does not trust anybody on this side, regardless of what it is. I understand it. Jim Woolridge said it right.

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker: What is the point of order?
Minister, take your seat.

POINT OF ORDER
[Impugning improper motives]

Dr. the Hon. E. Grant Gibbons: The Honourable Member is impugning improper motives.

The Speaker: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, Jim Woolridge said it right when he said that *They do not mind you having a job as long as they remain in charge*. And we are not going to get any permission from you, Grant Gibbons, to do anything. Do you understand that?

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.
Any further speakers?
There are not.
I did not see you jump up.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. H. Swan, from St. George's West.
Mr. Swan, you have the floor.

ST. GEORGE'S GOLF CLUB

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on an important topic with regards to tourism as it relates specifically to that beautiful town and community of St. George's. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that for quite some time I have been rather concerned about the closure of the St. George's Golf Club. In fact, I had made the suggestion several years ago for the St. George's Golf Club to be reopened and maintained. I was somewhat disappointed that when the Club Med Hotel was imploded, that we woke up one day and saw that the demolition crew proceeded down the hill and removed the golf clubhouse, to the chagrin of many, many persons. Notwithstanding, Government did maintain the golf course to a level where for two years it had three full-time employees there, where the grounds were still

maintained. But the level of the course maintenance was not such that you could enjoy a round of golf because the blades of the mowers were not set low enough to keep the course at a playable level.

Attempts to open the golf course earlier than what had been envisioned did not materialise initially. But a group came together with a similar plan to the original one, and it was opened. But, Mr. Speaker, the condition of the course in this new state is deplorable, unacceptable. I would venture to say that the amount of rounds maintained had to be negligible.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, yes. I am not blaming the Government. In fact, I made the point that—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: But I had to make it known, because we have a new Tourism Minister, and golf is a very important part of the tourism product that we need to be promoting. The golf course in St. George's, which to my—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, if you do not mind.

The Speaker: Point of information?
Minister Burgess is going to give a point of information, give some information.

POINT OF INFORMATION

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And thank you, the Honourable Member, Mr. Swan.

We promised the people of St. George's on that golf course that we will maintain it and keep it looking very neat, and we were doing that, right?

There was a group that came by that wanted to run the golf course and had the support of the Member, which was fine. It was leased out to them by Mr. Bazarian, since which—because I was down there (I think it was) yesterday or the day before, looking at the deplorable state. He is absolutely right when he describes that. They have not lived up to what they proposed to do. And it is deplorable.

But this Government lived up to the words of promise that we gave to the people of St. George's. We knew—*Hey, does he want to run it? Fine*. Running the golf course, as the Honourable Kim would know better than I, is no child's business. It is an expensive venture, and you have got to keep on top of it. Not very easy; very expensive.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.
Carry on, Mr. Swan.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. I appreciate the clarification that the Minister provided.

The Speaker: Intervention.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Indeed, once the golf course was closed, that end of the bargain was kept by the Government. The Government needs to accept the fact that the golf club should not have been closed in the first place. And, indeed, one of the biggest mistakes that I find difficult to comprehend—as I know most developments build golf courses, as the Honourable Member would know and other Honourable Members would know that play golf—that they usually open golf courses first in order to attract people to the development, particularly when they are going to build condominiums and other buildings to attract persons to the development. So, it is sort of like putting the cart before the horse.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you, Minister Swan.

The Speaker: There is a point of order. Minister Burgess has a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, the golf course was closed because the plan was to reconstruct the golf course and turn it around. So you cannot leave it open. That was the intent of the developers. That is why it was closed. Mr. Swan knows just as well as I do that it was to be a whole revamp of the whole golf course, which was needed. So, that is the reason it was done.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Carry on, Mr. Swan.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Well, the plan, the conceptual plan called for a golf course redevelopment. There was no actual plan to scale for that. That is part of the problem. We closed the golf course before we saw any plan to scale and before we had any money. As a consequence, the town has been left to suffer without an important amenity.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker: Minister Burgess has a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, that Honourable Member knows quite well that that golf

course was losing lots of money. You could not keep it open. You could not maintain it. The number of rounds that were required to sustain, just to break even, they were not reaching that. The prudent thing to do was to close it. That is what they had to do. I mean, what, do you leave it open and lose a whole lot of money? If you had lost a lot of money, they would be saying, *You should have closed it*. You closed it; now they are saying, *You should have kept it open*.

What do you want? Come on, Kim.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Burgess.

Carry on, Mr. Swan.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

No, you would never hear this Honourable Member telling you to close a golf course which was part of the reason why people came to this country. I can recall—my memory is pretty good when it comes to this matter of the golf course—at the time when the golf course was closed, the Government had invested some good monies to upgrade the golf course, made some upgrades to the clubhouse and the course itself. In fact, the manager that was there, that is still with the Government at Port Royal doing a good job, had made the turnaround and did not have the opportunity—we did not have the opportunity, because I was getting back involved, if you can recall. And we were looking to realise some greater interest in the golf course.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this. Public golf—public golf has proven to be a very important product for our country. For the Government to use diminished rounds or loss as a reason to eliminate it, shows us that the Government needs some assistance in reaching the right conclusions for the benefit of our country, Mr. Speaker, with regards to how we are going to encourage people to come to the Island. Because the absence of the golf course in the town of St. George's has made it even more difficult to encourage people to come to the town.

So, you know, the Government is making decisions and saying, *Listen. I have closed the course, or I have given it away to a private entity who has seen necessary for it to be closed for three years*. That has not proven to be in the best interests of us promoting our tourism product as a whole.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I have been entertaining—

The Speaker: There is a point of order. The Speaker must entertain it.

Minister De Silva, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER*[Misleading]*

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, I did try to give the Honourable Member some leeway. He saw me stand up, and I sat back down. But he just continued on. He went off on the wrong track, misleading, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I declare my interests. I was on the Government Board of Trustees for the golf courses for a few years. I can speak to that golf course in particular. Now, it is okay for the Honourable Member to talk about we need golf and a golf product in Bermuda. But, Mr. Speaker, St. George's Golf Club was losing in the area of \$600,000 per year when it closed—\$600,000, Mr. Speaker. Now, I understand the Honourable Member wants and needs . . . And he is right. If we could have a golf course—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, for Bermuda. If we could have a golf course in St. George's, Mr. Speaker, it would enhance our product. But . . . but, Mr. Speaker—

An Hon. Member: He is giving a speech, Mr. Speaker!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It is a speech, Mr. Speaker, and it needs clarification. Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: You have said the course—yes. Yes, on a point of order, we cannot have a wide-ranging speech.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But it is important, Mr. Speaker. For the Honourable Member to say that St. George's is suffering because of the closure of the course is incorrect. It is incorrect, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Carry on, Mr. Swan.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: That was not a point of order. It is not incorrect to say that St. George's is suffering in part because of the closure of the course. A lot of persons probably did not appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the importance of an amenity such as a golf course to a community, a regional part of—

The Speaker: Well, the Minister said that. The Minister said it was losing money and they were not prepared to keep it going.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Well, the country is losing money. Have we closed the country down, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: Pretty much.

An Hon. Member: That is very true, very true.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker, the point that I have been speaking to is the importance of an amenity such as a golf course to that community, that it was short-sighted for the Government to use the fact that it was losing money as the reason for it not to be operating again.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order.

The Speaker: There is a point of order.
Minister Burgess.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, the Government invested a lot of money in that course to bring the greens up. Because one of the impediments of the course was the salt spray, we got the proper grass that salt spray would not harm, right? Even though we put that investment there, it continued to lose.

To prove the point that the Government is right, when this new group took it over to do what they thought they could do better—which is fine, and, for me, I was hoping that it would be a success—they found out the same thing. They were not getting the numbers.

So it showed you, when the Government made the decision, this private group who came in, it only tells us that the decision was right. The course needed to be revamped, and that is the plan of the investor. Hopefully, one day he will get it going.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Carry on.

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker, I did not want to go down this path for so long. But I tell you what. I have run golf courses, and I ran a successful one there. I let no one go away thinking that . . . St. George's Golf Club was designed by one of the world's most leading golf architects, the same one that designed Port Royal, Robert Trent Jones, Sr., done by the same person that redesigned Port Royal the second time, more recently, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you this much, Mr. Speaker, that with no proper budget it is impossible to operate any golf course to any quality. That is probably the reason.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to that same area and the Park Hyatt, certainly, the whole community and Bermuda have been waiting for that project to be delivered. I do recall that in November of this year, which some three years passed when we came to this House for that special sitting in September of 2008 . . . I would like for the new Minister, the Honourable Mr. Wayne Furbert, to maybe in a Ministerial Statement at some point in time update us on what is taking place, how matters are progressing, because it is very important, Mr. Speaker. There have been a great deal of concessions that have been handed out with regard to this project, and I think it is only fitting that we be updated.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to that important community, much has been said about the George Hotel and Marina in which the Corporation of St. George's and a private developer have been working together to realise a marina. I believe the project is still ongoing. I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that that certainly holds a great deal of potential. As you would know, Mr. Speaker, St. George's is a well-known seaport throughout the world. The development of a marina and a hotel on the waterfront could go a long way to provide some of the product that is needed to help tourism be rejuvenated in that community.

I am sure that anything that the Government can do to help this move along would be greatly appreciated, Mr. Speaker. It is my feeling that when it comes to the rejuvenation of tourism in this country, communities need to regionally promote themselves. That is one of the reasons why I am on my feet advocating the importance of the golf course for that community. Because we in the community of St. George's need to take the bull by the horns, as some are already doing, and promote ourselves independently of Government, so that we can be a part of what Government does nationally for tourism.

So, whilst I cannot accept the argument that is being made to justify decisions to close a golf course in St. George's, I take it upon myself, knowing what is required to manage and operate a successful golf course, know that we can make it happen in that regard if we task the right person and assist with providing the right resources to make it happen.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Any further speakers?

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mrs. L. Jackson, from Pembroke South West.

Mrs. Jackson has the floor.

SENIOR ABUSE REGISTER ACT

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, again the country has been faced with a case of senior abuse. It seems to show that the abuser has not been punished sufficiently. I am talking about the case of one of our (I would call) national heroes, George Welch, who had a caregiver that swindled him out of—

The Speaker: Is that matter concluded?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Yes.

The Speaker: Does the person have a right to—

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: It is concluded, reported in the papers.

The Speaker: I know, but I—

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: It is concluded. It is finished.

The Speaker: All right. All right. I just want to be absolutely sure.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I am sure, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

The Speaker: Carry on, Mrs. Jackson.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: According to his relatives, he probably was swindled out of close to about \$100,000. But they could account for \$32,000 that was swindled from his account. But not only that, Mr. Speaker, this woman moved him out of his house, put him downstairs in a basement apartment. She put her family in his house, where she actually bought furniture, took his furniture, watches, jewellery, and basically just took everything that the man had.

For this, she received an eight-month jail sentence and was asked to pay back \$32,000. Now, I think what really got to the public—and I am going to read some of their blogs, of which there were many—was the fact that the judge only ordered her to pay back \$6,000.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Well, I do not think . . . Let us be a little careful because we do not want to criticise the court.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: No, we are not criticising the court. But I am going to . . . Just to give you an idea of what the public thinks about this, I just want to read a few of the things that have been said.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I think that the public is absolutely right in most of what they have said. And that is that the abuser has not received ample punishment. It appears that because the senior is dead, no action should be taken to cover the abuse. It doesn't seem to matter.

[Inaudible interjection and crosstalk]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Now, this elder worked long and hard for his money. Again, I just want the public to know that the Government benches, again, are being absolutely—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: There is a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: You know, Mr. Speaker, this Government is very much concerned, and we are passionate about the care of the elderly. The Honourable Member Mrs. Jackson—I love her dearly—should not say those type of things. You know, this case has been through the courts and gone through the law.

Now, if you want to criticise the judge, I suggest you write a letter to the Chief Justice. I do not think there is anything that we can do about that judgment. We are not the Privy Council, you know.

Mrs. Jackson, I think it is horrible that the lady is only to pay \$6,000 instead of \$32,000. But I am not the court. I do not know what happened down there. Right?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Is this a point?

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: You have got to sit down in your chair because I am still on my feet, sweetheart.

So, Mr. Speaker, we cannot be held responsible for what happens in the court.

The Speaker: Yes, yes, yes.
Thank you.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: The whole point of this . . . the reason why I am bringing this forward is because the Senior Abuse Register Act 2008—that I spoke about just last week—is a flimsy document which only allows for three years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine. We talked about this.

In this particular case and in other cases . . . there have been many cases of senior abuse that have not had anybody prosecuted for. All I am saying

to you is that this is a prime example of why this Senior Abuse Register Act 2008 needs to be enforced. But beyond that, it needs to be strengthened.

Now, I just wanted to let you know—

The Speaker: See, it is perfectly all right to say that. Yes.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Yes, of course it is.

Now, this is what the public is saying, what the people are saying—

The Speaker: Let us leave the court, however.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: They are saying that this elder worked long and hard for his money. All of the perpetrators' assets should be confiscated—jewellery, furniture, the car that he also bought for her should be sold. The victim's family should be compensated completely. She should be made to pay back all of the money, with interest. She should be made to pay back with interest. She is not being held responsible. The jail time was not adequate. It is a criminal offence.

The Speaker: Well, I think we are reflecting on the court when we do things like that.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Well—

The Speaker: And we should not.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: All right. Well, then I will go on.

The Speaker: But if you say that the Register is not strong enough, you are perfectly right to say it. But we should not be reflecting on the court.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: All right. Well, I will not reflect on the court.

Someone is saying—which I think is absolutely true—that if her family lived in his apartment, for how many months she did not have to play rent anyplace at that point? Nor did she have to pay the utility bills, which he was paying out of his money. All I am saying is that this is a very, very sad case.

Now, there is another case which had two sisters who actually stole a half a million dollars, \$500,000.

The Speaker: Is that matter not still before the court?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: I am just saying, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: If that matter is before the courts, we should not be talking about it at all.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: It is not before the court, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: I think it is. So we cannot talk about those kind of . . . if it is before the courts.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Well, Mr. Speaker, then, may I say this. There are many cases of senior abuse. They cannot always be swept under the carpet.

The Speaker: Yes, yes.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: They cannot always be, *Let's not talk about it. Nobody wants to know about it.* They cannot be delayed, court cases which are delayed for . . . This particular one that I am talking about now has been delayed for something like nine months. Meanwhile, the senior who has been abused, who has had the money stolen from him—

The Speaker: No. We cannot talk about that. I am sorry. That matter is before the courts. You cannot talk about it. Sorry.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: All right. We will not talk about it. We will say that any senior who is being abused certainly does not have the help that they should have.

In fact, if I can just point out to you, Mr. Speaker, some of the things in the Senior Abuse Act that Government might consider, and that is the fact that if they are going to do (and they said in their Throne Speech that they were going to do something about the Senior Abuse Act) . . . what they could take into account, that this particular Act does not seem to do anything about or say anything or speak to the fact that seniors who are abused in a home, there is nothing there. The Act only appears to cover institutional care. So that is a problem.

The other point that I wanted to make before I get into the things that can be changed is the fact that, probably going forward, we might do better just going to the Criminal Code. There is something there that is helpful, and I will be talking about that in a moment.

But back to the Abuse Act . . . The perpetrators, again, of abuse seem to be limited, [when considering the Abuse Act], only to care workers and volunteers. So, of course, the case that we cannot talk about would not have included this lady. Do you see what I am saying, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: I am trying to follow you.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: In other words, this Abuse Act is not strong enough, really.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes, you can say it needs to be strengthened, yes.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Definitely.

The fines for abuse compared to other types of legislated abuse, such as grievous bodily harm, sexual assault . . . all of these are things that happen to elders. But are the abusers of elderly getting off better than or worse, really, than other abusers? In other words, what I am saying is that people who commit abuse on anybody else seem to be getting far more jail time, fines, and certainly they are not getting leniency because they are poor. In other words, you do not have to pay back a fine because you plead poverty, which is something that I find very, very strange.

I have to close with the fact that I have listened today to various Bills on litter, on pets, on everything else. Hours have been spent. At least five hours, I think, were spent on the Bills that went through today. Yet, we cannot get this Government to do something about this Senior Abuse Act. Obviously, their priorities are completely different from what the people of this country want them to do. I have to say that the people who wrote the blogs on so many of the sites all were very, very disgusted with what is happening, why people are getting off so lightly who commit crimes against seniors.

I implore this Government to do something about this Senior Abuse Act. Would you ever consider having any kind of consultation with this side of the House when you do—if you ever do—decide to do something about the Senior Abuse Act? I have said this before, and I will say it again: Dale Butler, when he was the Minister—

The Speaker: The Honourable Member, yes.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: The Honourable Member Dale Butler, when he was the Minister—and he was the one who actually did this, and I congratulate him on that.

An Hon. Member: I thought you said it was no good?

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: It is not good enough. At the time that it was done . . . We have to make changes.

I do not think that anybody should object to this. As I said, the priorities seem to be a little strange on the other side, what is important to them.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Jackson, the Honourable Member from Pembroke South West.

I am going to take the Honourable Member, Mr. W. Lister, from Sandys South Central.

Mr. Lister?

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESS TOWARD PROMOTING TOURISM IN BERMUDA

Hon. Walter M. Lister: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The lead story in Monday's daily was a terrible assessment as to what and how Bermuda really is, when this lead story talked about crime in Bermuda. Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Minister who works hard to get tourists into this country and spends money to get tourists in this country, and tourists seeing stories like that in the lead story of our daily newspaper think twice about coming to Bermuda.

So, it appears to me that there is something afoot to stop tourists from coming by putting that sort of information in the public domain. The Honourable Minister came on Tuesday and made a point about his . . . I am not telling the paper what to write, but be considerate about stories that you put in the paper and how they are worded so that people around the world understand the real concept of what is going on in Bermuda.

That story, Mr. Speaker, could be taken . . . It was taken purely out of context. I want to congratulate the Minister for doing so—I think the Minister Wayne Perinchief did a similar thing on the facts of the story this morning in his Statement to this House. I think he was absolutely correct.

But the second day in a row, Mr. Speaker—I do not know if you saw it, but there was a lead story about the West End Development Corporation. They had a visitor come to Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, and went to the Malabar building, and it was on the front page, looking a very derelict Dockyard. You know for a fact that is not true.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Walter M. Lister: We do have a derelict building in Dockyard, but I am going to tell the story about it. We have had many derelict buildings in Dockyard, and over the years, we have invested money to make them accessible and also invite people in to do business. We have invested lots of money in these, Mr. Speaker. As you know, the Clocktower itself and many adjacent buildings, we have invested money in it. We have invested money in the structure underneath, the infrastructure, to make it a workable and viable place.

The building to which they refer is a Malabar building, Mr. Speaker. First of all, let me say this. We are a development company. Many people come to Dockyard and ask us, could they develop this building or assist us in developing that building? We have many plans before us on a constant basis. The building to which they refer, Mr. Speaker . . . and they were urging us to do something. We are doing something about it. We are in discussions with a firm or a company of people to do something about it. To put that building there to look like we are doing nothing in

Dockyard, it gives a false picture as to what we are really about and what we are doing in Dockyard.

We are just a phone call away, Mr. Speaker. They could have very well contacted someone in the Dockyard, either the general manager or me, and we would have explained: That specific property is now being discussed as to how we are going to develop that property. It looks like we do not do anything in Dockyard, with a picture like that—on the front page—of the building. And it is not true. We work hard. Anybody who has been in Dockyard 10 years ago and, up until recent, seen the progress that we have made . . . We do not have a lot of money in Dockyard to do a lot of things. But what we try to do, we try to use the money wisely and as it is needed. We do not have the money right away to do all the projects. But that is a project we have in focus, and it is our intention to develop it.

To come out and say that about Dockyard, I think is a bit misleading. For example, tourists never see that building. They have to go out of their way to get to that building because, under normal circumstances, tourists do not see that building. Many people go to Dockyard and do not see that building. But in spite of it, we have taken into consideration that that building is one of the properties which we would like to develop in the not-too-distant future. It is an historic building.

You know, because someone came from some overseas place, saw it, and that made the headlines? I could not go to any country and see a building that I do not like, and that makes the front page of a story. It is misleading, and it is not true.

All I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we want the media to help the Minister of Tourism by giving Bermuda a fair shake. We are not perfect. When we should be criticised, I think they should. But the point about it, Mr. Speaker, is that that does not convey the actual facts of what Dockyard is about. I am happy to say that we do a lot of work up in Dockyard. We have made big strides up there. But to do all the work we do, and then someone comes along and tries to put you on the front page, giving you a black eye like that, it could distract from what we are trying to do.

But we are not going to allow the media to distract us from what we are trying to do in that specific area. There are many areas we have to work on, but that is one way, I think, of distraction, but we are not going to go for the distraction.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. W. M. Lister, from Sandys South Central.

I now recognise the Honourable Member Minister, G. Blakeney, from Warwick—it is getting late—Devonshire North Central.

Minister Blakeney, you have the floor.

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THOSE IN NEED

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to address briefly the concerns of the Honourable Member, Mrs. Jackson, with regard to seniors. As she did correctly quote in the Throne Speech there is mention of the Government taking bold steps, and not the least of which will be steps in looking to protect seniors who are, in their twilight years, most vulnerable. We do have those on occasions. But I am happy to say that that is not the flavour of the day where it is happening to such a degree that it is a calamity. But even just one abuse is something that is totally unacceptable.

We as a Government have been very responsive in various ways with regard to our seniors, whether it be increasing pensions or assistance, where required, through the Department of Financial Assistance, and of course, through the Department of Health with the kind of provisions that have been made for seniors who are in need of special care.

Notwithstanding that, yes, there always needs to be more done when there are instances that would suggest people would take advantage of those that are most vulnerable. But that does not only apply to seniors. Children as well suffer incredible abuse. We have that challenge within our Ministry of ensuring that the well-being, the safety, the security of children is looked after as well.

On the other end of the spectrum, the same applies for seniors. So, we will be looking very stringently at ways that we can improve, through policy and legislation, the protection of seniors. It is something that is very, very concerning. My mother passed at 92 years old, bless her soul. I think there are a number of Members here who have had moms or grand-moms who have lived to very senior ages.

So, you know, it does not take much for anyone to understand that everyone, I think, in this Honourable House is very concerned about situations as has been reported on, especially when there is criminal involvement. The matters that were brought to the attention through the Honourable Member Mrs. Jackson's contribution just recently are matters that were criminal matters. There are laws in place to address those matters, whether it be punitive or otherwise, that ran the full course of the law.

We can, of course, probably look at how we can increase penalties so as to discourage that kind of behaviour. But that kind of behaviour goes on everywhere. It does not make it right. But it is people that are doing it. It is people. We should, when we are bringing up these matters, implore our people to be more compassionate, more understanding, more sensitive to those that are the most vulnerable in our community, not just, you know, talk about all of the things that are going wrong. People need to be fixed, that would prey upon a senior or a child. That is where we need to be putting a lot of focus as well.

The Government is not abusing people; people are abusing people. It is a sad state of affairs. It seems as if the world over we are becoming less sensitive and less compassionate as people. Sometimes the examples displayed here with some of the behaviour is indicative of that insensitivity. So we are all a part of it. We are all a part of it. To just come here and continuously bring up these situations as if the Government did not care about it, or the inference is that we are guilty in some way for the actions of those people that would be totally inappropriately preying upon seniors, or children, for that matter, is not right. It is not right.

So, I can—

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Take your seat, Minister.

Mrs. Jackson, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Certainly, at no point did I ever say that Government was responsible for senior abuse—that is physically or mentally or any other way. My whole point that obviously he missed was that legislation needs to be strengthened and that Government is the obvious body to do this. Period.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Jackson.

Yes, she did say that. Carry on, Minister.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: Yes, and she says that all the time. But there is always that hidden inference and insinuation.

The Speaker: You are drawing the inference.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: That is where the disingenuousness lies. That is what concerns me.

That is what really concerns me. To be as fierce an advocate and to bring the concerns to the House is one thing; but then to take the stretch, as if often the case with that Honourable Member, I feel is not right.

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Improper motive]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: He continues to malign me.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Louise A. Jackson: This stuff—it is improper motive. I certainly have not done that. If this is how he

interprets it, then he is obviously mentally incapable of understanding what anyone says.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Jackson.

Hon. Glenn A. Blakeney: See, you know, I will not even engage that because, Mrs. Jackson, I have too much respect for you. So you do not have to hit the low road. It is not necessary. You know, the number of times you have been in this Honourable House and attacked our Health Ministers, whomever they might be, has been totally out of order. You have accused them of all kinds of things. And you have accused the Government of all kinds of things. You cannot deny that.

All I am trying to say is that it is not right because you know in your heart of hearts that this Government cares about its people! And the people know. That is why there have been three incumbent election victories! What do you not get?

But I will not infer that there is anything wrong with you mentally, because I am too respectful of you for that, Mrs. Jackson, Honourable Member. So I would just implore you, if you are going to work with us, stop denigrating us and really work with us. Okay?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister Blakeney, the Honourable Member from Devonshire North Central.

The House stands adjourned until Friday next at 10:00 am, Friday next at 10:00 am.

[Gavel]

[At 12:06 am (Saturday, 26 November 2011), the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 2 December 2011.]

2011/12 SESSION
BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
NOVEMBER 2011

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