



**2021/2022 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA SENATE
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
November - December 2021**

*Sittings 1 through 5 of the 2021/2022 Session
(pages 1–112 and INDEX)*

**Sen. The Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, MBE, JP
President**

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BERMUDA SENATE**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
VIRTUAL SITTING
5 NOVEMBER 2021
1:02 PM***Sitting Number 1 of the 2021/2022 Session*

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

The President: Good afternoon, Senators.
The Senate is in session.
Shall we pray?

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES*[Minutes of 6 October 2021]*

The President: Senator Michelle Simmons, Vice President, you have the floor.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President. Good afternoon to everyone.

The President: Good afternoon.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, the 6th of October 2021 be taken as read.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.
Senator Simmons.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Minutes of Wednesday, the 6th of October 2021 be confirmed.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.
The Minutes are confirmed.

[Minutes of 6 October 2021 confirmed]

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons, Vice President.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: You are welcome.

MESSAGES

The Clerk: No messages, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Mr. Somner.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: There are none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President: There are none.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The President: There is a notice of motion by Senator the Honourable Dr. E. G. V. Peets, Government Leader in the Senate.
You have the floor.

MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNOR

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Madam President, I give notice that at the next day of meeting I will move that the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor:

“May it please Your Excellency:

Senate has the honour to thank Your Excellency for the most gracious ¹[Speech](#) with which Your Excellency was pleased to open the present session of Parliament.”

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: There are none.

¹ “Social Renewal & Economic Recovery *Working together to move Bermuda beyond the pandemic.*”

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: There are none.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The President: There are none.

MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: There are none.

ADJOURNMENT

The President: Minister Peets, it is over to you.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Thank you, Madam President, and welcome to all Senators. I expect you all enjoyed the Throne Speech earlier today. We certainly look forward to a new parliamentary session as we endeavour to do the business of the Government for the benefit of our people.

Madam President, I move that at its rising, the Senate adjourn to Wednesday, November 17, 2021.

The President: Yes. Thank you, Minister Peets.

We will not entertain any matters on the adjournment.

So, I want to thank all Senators for their attendance today. And we will meet, as indicated, on November the 17th. Have a great weekend and stay safe. Thank you, Senators, for your attention today. Thank you all.

Some Hon. Senators: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, everyone.

[At 1:07 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 17 November 2021.]

BERMUDA SENATE
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT IN
IN CHAMBERS
17 NOVEMBER 2021
10:03 AM

Sitting Number 2 of the 2021/2022 Session

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

The President: Good morning, Senators. The Senate is in session.

And good morning to the listening audience.
Shall we pray?

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

[Minutes of the 5th of November 2021]

The President: The Minutes of the 5th of November 2021.

Senator Michelle Simmons, Vice President, you have the floor.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Good morning, Madam President and fellow Senators.

Madam President, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Friday, the 5th of November 2021, be taken as read.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Senator Simmons.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Minutes of Friday, the 5th of November 2021, be confirmed.

The President: Is there any objection to the confirmation of the Minutes?

No.

The Minutes are confirmed.

[Minutes of 5 November 2021 confirmed]

The President: Thank you, Senator Simmons.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you.

MESSAGES

The Clerk: There are no messages, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Mr. Somner.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: There are none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA'S RESPONSE TO
COVID-19: THE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT
ADMINISTRATION**

The President: Senators, I wish to announce that in accordance with the provisions of section 13 of the Audit Act 1990, a Public Interest Report by the Auditor General on the Government of Bermuda's Response to COVID-19: The Unemployment Benefit Administration dated October [2021], has been produced by the Office of the Auditor General and submitted to the Honourable House of Assembly, and that the said report is hereby tabled in the Senate for the information of Senators.

Senators, you may access a copy of the report on your tablets or at the parliamentary website.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The President: We have a notice of motion, and that would be in the name of the Junior Minister of Health, Senator Ariana Hodgson, on the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021.

You have the floor.

**PUBLIC HEALTH (COVID-19) EMERGENCY
EXTENSION (NO. 6) ORDER 2021**

Sen. Ariana Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the consideration of Senate the draft Order entitled Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Or-

der 2021, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Health under the provisions of section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949.

And I give notice that at a later point in this meeting I will move that the said draft Order be approved.

The President: Thank you. Senator Hodgson.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: We have a few.

The first one is the Bermuda National Youth Policy. That is in the name of Senator the Hon. Dr. E. G. V. Peets, Minister of Youth, Culture and Sport.

You have the floor.

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to fellow Senators.

Madam President, the 2020 Throne Speech committed Government to developing a [National Youth Policy](#) to support, empower and engage Bermuda's youth. Madam President, the development of the strategy included extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including youth representatives from a number of organisations. Today marks the launch of a policy aimed at providing an overarching, high-level position outlining the goals that we wish to uphold as country in respect to our youth. Madam President, the policy is now available for download at www.youthpolicy.bm.

Madam President, the vision of the policy is "to develop and empower Bermuda's youth," and its mission is to form a unified approach to tackle issues faced by Bermuda's young people and provide them with the support to have a positive and productive future. Together they set the direction of travel for the way that the Government will approach our youth and foster their engagement in issues that affect them.

Specifically, the policy aligns the policy goals and objectives we intend to pursue alongside community, government and private partners to achieve and engage an active youth whose voices are heard and [to] help mould the future of our country.

Madam President, the National Youth Policy sets out eight specific goals for Bermuda's young people, which are to:

1. keep young people safe and protected from harm;
2. achieve full potential in learning, development and education;
3. minimise antisocial behaviour;

4. increase employment and entrepreneurship opportunities;
5. engage youth in sport, culture and recreation;
6. support young people to be active and healthy;
7. enable participation in civic engagement; and
8. encourage diversity and inclusion.

I hope you will agree that these goals and the objectives outlined in the policy itself cover the full breadth of issues that are fundamental to the continued development of Bermuda's youth and that achievement of these goals will ensure that we create a better future together.

Madam President, the next step in the process is to establish a working group that will drive implementation and ensure the activities take place to achieve the objectives and the goals of this policy. The working group will be made up of organisations and individuals from across our community and government who have the authority and the ability to take action and to make the policy goals a reality.

Madam President, we wanted of course to title this a *working group* because that is exactly what we expect the group to do, and that is to get to work. The National Youth Policy Working Group will also be mandated to report annually on their progress.

Expressions of interest if you would like to participate in the working group are being accepted now through December 17 by going online to <https://forms.gov.bm/youth-policy-working-group>. The final composition of the working group will be decided in February 2022, and the group will commence construction of a detailed plan of actions as well as deliverables.

Madam President, Bermuda's future belongs to our young people, and we look forward to the working group's progress and the fulfilment of the policy vision and mission through implementation of these eight goals. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

The second Statement is the Ministry of Labour: Throne Speech Initiatives 2021, and that is in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister for Labour.

You have the floor.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR: THRONE SPEECH INITIATIVES 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, as stated in the 2021 Speech from the Throne and in line with Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan, the [Ministry of Labour](#) will focus its efforts on introducing a digitised immigration application process and the implementation of the Youth Employment Strategy.

Digitised Immigration Application Processes

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the Government will implement a digitised immigration application process that directly aligns with the core immigration reform strategic priority to leverage technology to improve operations, leading to greater levels of efficiency, process consistency and sustainability. The Department of Immigration is tasked with optimising core processes and modernising existing systems, including a rigorous process-reengineering review on the services offered by the department with the goals to

- eliminate the excessive use of paper;
- reduce the volume of data entry;
- increase turnaround times;
- provide analytical and performance data;
- improve customer and stakeholder communications;
- provide a platform for auditing and quality management; and
- eliminate the submission of incomplete applications.

The Ministry of Labour will enhance Bermuda's competitive edge by introducing a digitised immigration application process to improve the delivery of services and ensure that the existing manual immigration process does not hinder the specialised talent required to grow Bermuda's economy further.

Youth Employment Strategy

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the November 2020 Labour Force Survey Report placed the youth unemployment rate for persons 16 to 26 years of age at over 32 per cent. To put this in perspective, one in three young persons of working age is unemployed. The Youth Employment Strategy is meant to meet the identified needs of unemployed persons between the ages of 18 through 26 and guide unemployed Bermudian youth to employment or to return to the workforce.

This Government is committed to developing a resilient workforce that provides a sustainable and stable community by supporting training and helping to facilitate employment for all young people. To that end, the Department of Workforce Development is working to implement a Youth Employment Strategy which aims to prepare Bermuda's youth for the world of work, positioning them to prepare for and take advantage of job opportunities. The strategy aims to:

- facilitate access to training and employment opportunities for Bermuda's youth;
- encourage Bermuda's youth to take advantage of available training opportunities;
- provide career guidance and resources for Bermuda's youth;

- support access to work experience opportunities such as internships, training and apprenticeships;
- motivate Bermuda's youth to develop the highest level of proficiency in their chosen field;
- promote training and employment opportunities locally before resorting to overseas recruitment; and
- ensure that qualified and competent young people are provided opportunities for development and growth to support promotion within their chosen careers.

Young people's economic success is rooted in their ability to secure a sustainable livelihood through productive work. Participating in Bermuda's workforce will empower and enable our young people to contribute to Bermuda's growth and prosperity.

Conclusion

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the people of Bermuda have entrusted this Government to lead, and the initiatives featured in the Speech from the Throne will form part of the Labour Ministry's priorities over the next year. Over the last 18 months, it has become clear that we cannot continue to do things in the way we have always done them. We must continue working together and using lessons learned from our past as well as the current crisis if we are to ensure the future well-being of Bermuda. Through our National Economic Recovery Plan, the Government will take decisive action to restore consumer and business confidence and to stimulate our economy, creating a clear path to growth and employment. The policies highlighted today aid Bermuda in minimising the adverse effects of the global pandemic.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.

The third Statement is the St. George's Marina Development, and this is in the name of the Senator Owen Darrell, Junior Minister for Public Works.

You have the floor, Senator Darrell.

ST. GEORGE'S MARINA DEVELOPMENT

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, this morning I would like to provide Senate colleagues with an update on the [St. George's Marina Development](#) Project.

Madam President, during the convening of Parliament, Senators would have heard mentioned in the Speech from the Throne that the Legislature will consider in due course a strategic plan for the Town of St. George's, which will include consultation with all relevant stakeholders and will represent the best means by which to raise the fortunes of the Old Town

in the wake of the renewal opportunity presented by the new St. Regis Hotel and the St. George's Club that is currently undergoing renovations.

Madam President, a key component of this revitalisation in the Town of St. George's for the residents and visitors alike will be the development of a new marina on Ordnance Island. This new development is being undertaken by private developers, the St. George's Marina Development Limited (which I will refer to as the Developer) in conjunction with the Corporation of St. George's [the Corporation] in a private-public partnership. With the upgrades to the Ordnance Island dock, Ordnance Island will now have the ability to berth yachts up to the superyacht class as well as cruise ships. The arrangement will see the Corporation leasing land to the Developer for 21 years less a day, and a sharing of the gross proceeds of the marina revenue. The new marina will boast the following:

- i. improved and designated dock areas for visiting yachts;
- ii. a newly replaced and repaired dock on the south side of Ordnance Island;
- iii. 650 linear feet of visiting dockage for smaller yachts;
- iv. 10 stern-to-berths for superyachts with mooring systems;
- v. marina reception, lounge, food & beverage and Internet café;
- vi. duty-free fuel dock; and
- vii. the installation of sewage pumping services.

Madam President, in order for these infrastructure developments to fully function, the wharf at Ordnance Island, constructed many decades ago, needs to be replaced. With the assistance of the Department of Works and Engineering, the Corporation of St. George's engaged the services of structural engineers, Brunel Ltd., who performed an initial inspection of the wharf in March 2021. Brunel estimated the refurbishment costs would be \$2.2 million. However, after a more detailed survey was performed, it was determined that the piles were so deteriorated that they could not be reused as originally hoped, with the replacement cost estimate increasing to \$2.7 million.

Madam President, to ensure this project comes to fruition the Ministry of Public works has committed \$1.5 million to the refurbishment of the wharf for this fiscal year. Additional funding will be sourced from the Corporation of St. George's, who have the ability to make up the difference using the UNESCO World Heritage Fund which is to be used to develop and promote the World Heritage Site. With funding secured, the replacement of the wharf is now poised to take place.

Madam President, work on the new wharf is slated to take place in February of 2022 following the tendering process. The work is estimated to take some four months to complete, with the wharf ready in May of 2022. In addition to the wharf upgrades, the marina infrastructure undertaken by St. George's Ma-

rina Development Limited is currently underway and is slated to be completed in conjunction with the wharf. These works include internal renovations of the former terminal building on Ordnance Island and a Welcome Centre complete with shower and laundry facilities. The space will be redesigned for an improved décor and to create an outdoor lounge area.

Madam President, with the opening of the St. Regis Hotel in May, the planned re-opening of the St. George's Club in the second quarter of 2022 and the new marina scheduled for completion in May of next year, these developments are expected to provide a further economic boost to our historic town and be of great benefit to all Bermudians and residents alike.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell. You have a second Statement, Steps Taken to Launch the PMO to Support Implementation of [Bermuda's] Economic Recovery Plan. You can proceed when you are ready.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning again, Madam President.

The President: Good morning.

STEPS TAKEN TO LAUNCH THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE [PMO] TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

Sen. Owen Darrell: I rise today to inform this Senate of the progress made toward the implementation of Bermuda's [Economic Recovery Plan](#) (known as the ERP).

Madam President, Members of this Senate will recall the tabling of Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan by the Minister of Finance in March of this year and the subsequent debate on its contents. As a reminder, the Government undertook a three-phased approach to the development of the Economic Recovery Plan. Preparatory work in phase 1 involved identifying the objectives and the guiding principles and a preliminary list of initiatives, and was undertaken in July through September of 2020. Phase 2 involved the development of economic models, prioritisation of initiatives and an implementation plan, and took place from October 2020 to February 2021. Phase 3 involved the development of a *blueprint* ERP with a detailed plan for effective and efficient implementation with appropriate Cabinet oversight.

When the plan was tabled in this Senate in March, implementation was already underway across government. Despite the pandemic, ministries and government agencies continued to refine and implement initiatives to support the economic recovery under their areas of responsibility.

Madam President, as Her Excellency the Governor shared in the Speech from the Throne two

Fridays ago, "Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan has 31 priority projects in 7 broad categories: Economic Diversification; Financial Markets; Infrastructure Investment; Expanding the Residential Population; Labour Market & Social Development; Healthcare Reform; and Regulatory Reform." Senators and the public can remain informed about the progress of Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan by visiting gov.bm/economicrecovery on the government portal. The website was updated on Friday to provide the current status of all 31 priority initiatives.

During phase 2, these 31 initiatives were independently confirmed as the projects that will best create economic growth in the short-to-medium term while meeting the objective of increasing jobs, diversifying our economy, and enhancing Bermuda's infrastructure for the future.

Madam President, please allow me to share some updates with the Senate in advance of the new webpage which is now up and running. Out of the 31 priority projects contained in the ERP, 9 of the 31 projects are already substantially complete. Other projects such as upgrading Bermuda's water and waste treatment infrastructure, which incorporates replacing the plant and equipment at Tynes Bay, have progressed. This is a high-priority infrastructure project for the Government, given that the existing plant has now exceeded its useful life. As a result, a cross-ministry team is already on an accelerated path to replace key assets and key components within the plant in the short term with the ultimate goal of a fully refurbished and repurposed facility within the next three to four years.

Madam President, another project that has progressed is to complete the shoreside facility to process fish caught in Bermuda. A business plan for a Fisheries Development Centre is being completed under a steering committee led by the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Fishermen's Association of Bermuda. The plan will consider how such a facility will benefit the public; create opportunities to show a return on Government's investment and offer additional options and cooperative business benefits to participating fishers. The plan will meet the current and future needs of the fishing industry, put fishers at the centre to best control their industry, take into consideration current economic conditions, as well as consider short-to-long-term fisheries development factors. The consultation thus far has moved the facility's planning from Marginal Wharf to a location in the west end of the Island.

Madam President, Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan states, "Complete work to establish the Uptown Development Authority in North East Hamilton, whose mission will be to implement the North East Hamilton Development Plan and drive residential development projects in the area." Work on residential developments in Bermuda's Economic Empowerment

Zones to increase the supply of quality, affordable residential accommodation, driving down rental costs, has also progressed. Guidelines for submitting applications for approved residential schemes within the economic empowerment zones have been developed by the BEDC, with information for EEZ stakeholders, potential investors and the general public, to be published later this month. Importantly, every approved scheme will create new jobs for Bermudians.

Madam President, one of the 31 priority projects reads as follows: "Use BEDC resources to create an online SME marketplace that will allow entrepreneurs easy access to sell their goods and services online without having to deal with costly individual setups, large monthly fees and merchant account complexities." This initiative is substantially complete, and on November 29, for eMonday, the online marketplace at www.bybermuda.bm will launch. The platform, aptly named byBermuda, is a local online marketplace where people come together to sell and buy unique Bermudian products and experiences.

Madam President, as the world grapples with the impact of climate change, renewable energy will become an increasingly important part of the global economy. An initiative in Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan states, "Develop an energy regulatory sandbox that will encourage developers of new renewable energy technology to test their products in Bermuda, giving Bermudians access to new technology." Madam President, a policy for creating an energy regulatory sandbox has already been produced. During this session, the Senate will consider a Bill to facilitate renewable energy technology developers testing their products in Bermuda. Additionally, the Government is currently in discussions with a company that will likely be the first applicant for a sandbox licence.

Madam President, legislation allowing Bermuda to become a hub for submarine communication cables is now in effect, with a plan for implementation developed by the Regulatory Authority in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Bermuda Business Development Agency. This progress fulfils the objective stated in the plan to "introduce and establish sub-sea communications sector in Bermuda, supporting plans to develop a sub-sea telecommunications protection zone." The Regulatory Authority of Bermuda is currently fielding enquiries for companies wishing to enter this space.

And, Madam President, in the area of health care, Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan states, "Work with pharmacists, hospitals and physicians to reduce the costs of medications." Legislation to pave the way for the establishment of a National Drug Formulary was passed by the Legislature in the last session to achieve this objective. The Bermuda Health Council, using recommendations from the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, will regulate the prices at which common, essential medications, along with

associated products and devices used in medical treatments, are sold to the public, thereby reducing the largest out-of-pocket health expenditure for a large segment of our community.

Madam President, coordination of implementation across the 31 diverse initiatives contained in Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan is being led by a team within the Cabinet Office reporting to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Development. The successful execution of these initiatives will ensure the Island is appropriately prepared to recover economically and socially as we move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Strong quality assurance, governance and monitoring processes are essential to this effort. The plan always intended that these functions would be undertaken by resources operating separately from those engaged in the day-to-day running of government.

Madam President, against this backdrop and with the assistance of BermudaFirst, the Government engaged with the Big Four consulting firms to determine the best way forward. Based on these collaborative discussions, KPMG was identified as the resource to launch the PMO [Project Management Office]. The initial contract valued at \$144,000 plus expenses was agreed in September and provides a lead consultant with extensive experience in economic recovery. At the conclusion of the KPMG engagement, the consultants will deliver a Project Management Plan complete with resource requirements, key milestones and timelines, actions and enablers required to progress the 31 initiatives not yet complete, and a risk management regime to identify, prioritise, monitor and, where possible, mitigate risks. Upon delivery of the project management plan, further resource decisions concerning the PMO will be determined.

Madam President, as was stated in another place when the plan was debated, the PMO will be staffed by government and external resources with specific expertise. This may include a variety of consulting resources from a number of firms on an as-needed basis. The degree of support and expertise will inevitably vary based on the project, with all initiatives subject to milestones and deliverables. As evidenced by the progress made to date, which the public can view at gov.bm/economicrecovery, ownership of each of the 31 initiatives has been assumed by the respective Ministry or government agency as outlined in the ERP. Public officers are focused on finalising policies and implementing action plans. These steps are central to the project's success, a mechanism has been put in place to track progress, and the PMO will update the new webpage every month.

Madam President, while the future remains deeply uncertain, given public health conditions and the state of the global economy, Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan provides a blueprint for a successful recovery. Effective implementation is necessary to ensure Bermuda forges ahead a new path to growth,

employment and greater equity. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.
Moving on.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

CRUISE SHIPS (CASINOS) AMENDMENT ACT 2021

The President: The following Public Bill has been received from the Honourable House of Assembly and is now read for the first time: Its title is the Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: Senators, we will now entertain questions for the Statements which have been given this morning, the first one being in the name of Minister Peets, who spoke on Bermuda's National Youth Policy.

Would any Senator care to ask any questions?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning.

QUESTION 1: NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you.

I would like to know specifically what age group the policy targets? And I have a second question if I am okay to add it.

The President: You may.

QUESTION 2: NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you. I would also like to know if there is any plan in the policy to involve parents and educators in the initiative so there is consistency of messaging and collaborative support for youth.

Thank you, Madam President

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions? I see two hands.

Senator Smith.

Sen. Ben Smith: Yes. Good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning.

QUESTION 1: NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Sen. Ben Smith: First I would just like to thank the Minister. This is obviously an initiative that everyone in Bermuda would want to support, to see that we can do everything we can to support our youth and move them in a positive direction.

My question with the excitement of trying to implement this is, one, I think it would be just good for the public if you could repeat the dates and the timeline for getting the information; and the second part, do you have a thought in mind of when we would start to implement maybe the first initiative? Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Smith.

I believe that Senator Jones . . . I beg your pardon; I was just making sure. Senator Jones, do you have questions to put to the Minister?

QUESTION 1: NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Sen. Marcus Jones: Yes, thank you, Madam President. Good morning to my fellow Senators, and good morning to the listening audience.

Like my predecessor, I do want to thank the Minister for bringing forth this initiative. I think it is something that bodes well for targeting a certain demographic within our community, that being the youth who need the targeted attention in order to bring about some good outcomes within this age group.

Sort of tagging on behind my fellow Senator, Senator Tucker, who asked about parents being involved as part of the working group, my thought was also, Will the Minister also consider including young people of that age bracket, from 18 to 26, to be part of that working group? It is one thing for a group to be planning for a certain category of people to bring about some good outcomes. But I think it would be highly effective if that age group which was actually targeted could be a part of the working group to add their perspective, to add their experiences. And I think that could bode well to bringing about a very good and effective working group.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Jones.

Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President. And I too would like to thank Minister Peets for bringing his Statement this morning.

I just have a question about the working group. Since there is an appeal going to members of the public, I think it would be very helpful if the Minister could share some of the skills that he is looking for [of] those who would be encouraged to participate in the working group. Also, I trust that the working group will be heavily weighted toward having young people driving this initiative. There might be a temptation to get a number of more senior people involved, but the power of youth when they work together for a common goal—it is incredible.

So my question really is, What skill sets are being sought? And what is the balance that the Minister is hoping to get in the working group in terms of ages? Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

No other questions?

Then over to Minister Peets.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Thank you. We certainly appreciate [the considerable] interest in this particular youth policy that we are getting. So I am certainly encouraged by the questions today. So thank you, Senators, for your comments.

In reverse order, Madam President, regarding the skill sets. Of course this is titled the *working group*. So they are not a committee. This is not (what is another word we can use?) a group. This is a working group. So one of the major, major key skill sets is that we need individuals who are going to get busy getting the work done. The last thing we need of course is a policy that sits on a shelf and really just collects dust and we are not really getting any work done.

So we are certainly looking for individuals who are passionate, who definitely have a background working with this particular population, who have an invested interest in this population. But of course, [we need] individuals who are dedicated to actually ensuring that the eight policy goals actually come into fruition.

So we are certainly going to need those types of individuals involved in the working group. We certainly are encouraging as many youth organisations to get online, register their interests to participate in the working group by perhaps selecting a designated individual to do that. We certainly want to recognise and make sure that the working group is properly represented by the population which we are trying to address. But having said that, of course, we certainly need individuals on the working group who are employed in a position where the decisions that are being

made by the working group can be easily implemented, as well.

So regarding parental involvement, if there are any parent groups out there who are interested in getting involved, we can certainly entertain their applications as well. We certainly would like full representation from the Youth Parliament, so hopefully they will get involved in the working group as well.

I think it was also worthwhile indicating some of the dates and how people can actually get involved. So just for redundancy—thank you, Senator Ben Smith, for your question—the expressions of interest for participating in the working group are currently being accepted. That particular window is open until December 17. It is online.

If you go to <https://forms.gov.bm/youth-policy-working-group>, fill out the information and submit it, that will get to our team. And then we will begin to vet those applications.

As I mentioned in the Statement, the final composition of the working group will be decided in February of 2022 based on the information that we had submitted from applicants. Of course, if there is a slow up-take, we will do our best to recommunicate this information through whatever media that we need to, because we certainly want this working group to be a very good composition of individuals so that we can actually get the work done.

Once we get the working group composition decided, it is our plan to have the working group commence their work in detail starting in February of 2022. Hopefully we can stick to those dates and guidelines so that we can actually get to work very, very early in 2022.

I believe Senator Tucker also asked a question about the policy age. There was a slight amendment to the original [Cabinet Memorandum] cabinet memo for this particular policy. After consultation with the Minister Tinee Furbert from Seniors (and just give me a second; I will go ahead and get that). The ages are 14 to 24. So by definition, *youth* is designated in this particular policy to encompass that individual . . . 14 is what, late middle school? Or is that early high school?

[Inaudible interjections]

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Early high school through [age] 24. I will entertain any other further questions if there are any.

The President: Senators, were there any other questions?

Senator Ben Smith.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Ben Smith: Yes. Thank you, Madam President, just following on from the response that the Minister

just gave with that specific target area being 14 through 24.

Will there be any ability to expand that if the working group, once they start to look into the information, that potentially we need to start younger with some of our young people, specifically when we are trying to guide them so that they are going toward positive activities instead of negative activities? Sometimes you have to start earlier to make sure you are catching them. So just as a question of, Will there be the ability to change that later down the road if that is what comes out of the working group? Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Actually, originally the original composition for the group was envisioned to start at age 16 through 24. But after some dialogue, that was expanded down to 14. There are different developmental needs across age groups, starting from birth through preschool, and then of course in elementary school there are other developmental issues and considerations. So that particular comment is certainly noted. I can certainly take that under advisement and talk to the working group, as well as those at YSR [Youth, Sport & Recreation]. Perhaps there might need to be a separate policy just for that younger group to make sure that their needs are accurately represented as well. But by the Throne Speech, of course, we were asked to define what *youth* meant as it relates to a particular age group. And what was settled upon at the moment was age 14.

The President: Thank you.

Senator Robin Tucker, you had two questions. Do you have a supplemental?

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

My supplemental question . . . well, actually—

The President: Your third question. Go on.

QUESTION 3: NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Sen. Robin Tucker: My third question, thank you, would be, Are there plans to attract young people who are not normally involved in sports? So is there a plan to entice young people who are not normally involved in sports to get involved in sports and become members and participants in the Youth Policy?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Well, the Youth Policy of course is overarching. So it encompasses all of the categories that our youth may fall into. If they of course are involved in sports, the Youth Policy has some policy goals and some things to do to support those. One of the policy goals for those individuals

who are youths who are engaged in sport, at least from a competitive point of view, Madam President, is to ensure that these individuals are protected from harm as it relates to being safe as it relates to whatever activity they are being in.

But we certainly want to minimise their antisocial behaviour. So one of the policy goals is to make sure that they have a healthy lifestyle. So in the event that they are not actively competing in organised sport, we do understand that not only are their education and their mental well-being important, but part of that whole well-being is to ensure that they have a healthy lifestyle. So as the working group begins to flush out these policy goals, they will be able to do surveys, they will be able to get into the community, see what the exact needs are in these particular subgroups and begin to make recommendations to make improvements so that our entire youth population are being supported throughout the government as it relates to education, as it relates to any other part of government, that we are certainly supporting our youth.

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets. And thank you, Senators, for your questions.

We will now move on to the second Statement, which is in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, and that was the Throne Speech Initiatives for 2021.

Would any Senator care to ask questions?

I see Senator Marcus Jones. You have the opportunity to ask questions.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR: THRONE SPEECH INITIATIVES 2021

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

I have taken notes from these first two Statements that have been given and presented by Minister Peets and then here by Senator Hodgson. At the focus of the targeted demographic has been this youth age, 16 to 26. And, Madam President, I am a firm believer in policy being data driven. With that in mind, my question to the Junior Minister would be, Is there a mechanism in place to gather information from this age group, 16 to 26, either when they are employed in the summer by the government for summer jobs, even when they are preparing to go to university? Data in the form of finding out the date of graduation of these young people, their field of study, whether they intend on actually returning to Bermuda.

I think this is a very important question. Because just talking to my son, who now lives and works in the UK after just graduating, his contemporaries are not coming back home. They are actually staying in the UK and finding jobs. So as much as I think this initiative is going to be very good, I believe it is paramount that the Government gather the information and the data so that they know how to service and to

provide the tools for this age bracket to be able to excel within the labour force within the Island. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Jones. Do you have a second question or—

Sen. Marcus Jones: No. That is it.

The President: Thank you.

Senator Ben Smith, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR: THRONE SPEECH INITIATIVES 2021

Sen. Ben Smith: Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I am going to piggyback off of what Senator Jones just referred to when it comes to data and the importance of data. Because as I was listening to the Junior Minister going through the information in the Statement, there were the changes to the digitised immigration policy, which I think everyone is going to say that this will be helpful for the country to be able to move things in a direction where they are going to be more efficient, things are going to work better.

But as we were going through that, I also thought maybe we should be connecting some of these dots. So there is the workforce development portion that was discussed. There is the youth employment portion that was discussed. And now we are digitising what is happening from immigration.

So my question is, Will we be trying to put those pieces together? So if you are collecting the data on the education of our young people, the job needs of our young people at the same time that you are collecting the data on what jobs are available in the country, potentially you have work permit holders in certain areas. You know that the timeline is going to be three years. But you also know that you have people who are going to be graduating in certain positions or are taking further studies or being developed because of Workforce Development.

By having those data and the ability for the data to be able to be cross referenced between Workforce Development, between the Youth Employment Programme and what is happening in Immigration with all of the new technology, I think it would be important for us to know that this is something that we will be trying to do. Because if we collect those data, we will be making our decisions based off of the real information.

As we move forward and say, *Oh, we are going to close a specific category*, we are doing that because we know that we have 10 young people who are trained to do these jobs and now we are going to create that opportunity. We are doing it because we know it by the data that we have collected. So I am asking the Junior Minister if that is the process that we

are looking toward doing, not just digitising what is happening from the immigration policy, but also bringing in technology and collecting data in these other areas so that we can know that we are making the decisions based off of the information collected. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR: THRONE SPEECH INITIATIVES 2021

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

It is wonderful that we are focusing on our youth—i.e., the future of this country. My question is about the definition for *youth* in this particular Statement, because this Labour Force Survey Report embraces persons from the ages of 16 to 26 years. It notes that over 32 per cent of them were unemployed. My question is, If the compulsory school-leaving age is 18 years, as I believe it is, why are we including 16- and 17-year-olds in this unemployment survey? Because technically they should be in school even if it is not in a traditional school setting. But they should be in school. So I just wondered what the reasoning for that was.

Thank you.

The President: Would any other Senator . . .

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR: THRONE SPEECH INITIATIVES 2021

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

My question for the Junior Minister is, I am just curious to know what specific area of having a digitised application process . . . what specific area will roll out first? Is that going to impact work permits or personal services? What area of Immigration? And I am wondering about that because I for several years have been involved in work permit processes from a day job. And I know that the digitised work permit application process has been spoken about quite some time ago. So I am just wondering if that is going to be at the top of the list, or is it going to be sort of, all applications will be digitised?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Senator Hodgson, when you are ready.

[Pause]

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

To start by answering Senator Simmons's question about why 16- and 17-year-olds, I do want to highlight the fact that only those who are actively seeking employment are included in that rate. So while I cannot speak to the specifics of where they should be, we do take into account those who are actively looking at the time.

Regarding the data, of course any decision that we make starts with our goals. And finding and presenting the relevant data is of course the next step. While we have not necessarily done the greatest with monitoring the data over the years, that is definitely our aim going forward. A key feature of our strategy is of course data collection. And we look at data collection on skill sets, career interests and the like. It is also worth mentioning that Immigration and the Department of Workforce Development are linked under the Ministry. So we are looking to synergise that information-sharing. As we continue to look at the appropriate systems, that is at the forefront of our purpose.

In response to Senator Tucker's questions about the specific areas that we focus on in Immigration, we will begin with the PRC [Permanent Resident's Certificate] application. That will be digitised beginning in January.

So I hope those are suitable responses to the questions asked.

The President: Senator Simmons has a second question.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: It is a supplementary.

The President: A supplementary. All right.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Michelle Simmons: I hear that data are being collected. And just because it makes me a little unsettled to know that 16- and 17-year-olds are out there seeking, I assume, full-time employment, I wondered if Senator Hodgson could either now or at a later date give us a number for how many 16- and 17-year-olds are actually actively seeking employment? Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Simmons.

Senator Robin Tucker, do you have a second question?

Sen. Robin Tucker: No, Madam President. I have a supplementary question.

The President: A supplementary.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Robin Tucker: Just in response to Senator Hodgson's answer about beginning with the PRC ap-

plications, I am wondering when work permit digitised application processes will be available? As we know there are significant delays in immigration and responses to work permit applications. So if there is an opportunity, as what we are hearing about here with the digitisation process and resulting in increased turnaround times, I am sure the business community would be very happy to know—I certainly would be [happy] (again in my other role) to know—when we can expect that work permit application process to be digitised. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.
Senator Hodgson.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I will endeavour to find out how many 16- and 17-year-olds are currently seeking employment. I am actually interested myself to know.

Then regarding Senator Tucker's comments, there is no set date at this time, but obviously it is one of the things we have been working on. And I know that there are many industries who are of course looking forward to the day when these applications will be fully digital. So as soon as we know, I am sure you will know shortly thereafter.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson, and thank you, Senators, for your questions.

We will now move on to the third Statement that was given this morning, and that was from Senator Darrell, Junior Minister of Public Works, and relates to the St. George's Marina Development.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Yes, Senator Jones, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: ST. GEORGE'S MARINA DEVELOPMENT

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

I am sure that all of the East End is cheering and excited about this marina coming on board, and I am going to add my celebration as well.

I noticed on page 2 of the presentation that the Junior Minister presented this morning under "The New Marina will boast . . .," under the seventh bullet point it says, "the installation of sewage pumping services." The only question I would have in conjunction with that particular item—well, we all know that the Town of St. George's has had a major challenge with its sewage removal, which has in my understanding been a challenge that is going to be taken up by a private-public partnership between the hotel owners who are farther away from the square and the government itself.

I just wonder if the Junior Minister can address this for the Senators here and the listening au-

dience to see, What is the status of the developments of a refurbished or redeveloped sewage removal system within the town that will extend also to the new hotels that are there in St. George's? If he can, I would appreciate it.

Thanks.

The President: Thank you, Senator Jones.

Would any Senator care to ask a question?

Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: ST. GEORGE'S MARINA DEVELOPMENT

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

I cannot let an opportunity pass me by to ask a question about this Statement because it involves St. George's. Excitement is building in the Old Town because the marina seems as though it is closer to becoming a reality. Therefore, my question is regarding the second paragraph on page 1, where it says that, "the Legislature will consider in due course a Strategic Plan for the Town of St. George's." Just because we are excited, but also somewhat anxious, I wondered if the Junior Minister could give us any more of an idea of *when* that strategic plan will be advanced, even if it is a kind of timeline to give us a sense of its also becoming a reality. Because there have been lots of promises in the past, and sometimes they do not materialise. But I am delighted to see that the marina *is* going to happen, and we would just like to know a bit more about a timeline for the strategic plan.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Hearing none, then it is over to you, Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: For the first question, like I said, the question that Senator Jones asked, and I know he tried to connect them. But point 7 of this Statement specifically talked about the installation of sewage pumping services at the marina. But I will answer the question about sewage. The sewage treatment for St. George's is actually being developed by the Bermuda Land Development Company [BLDC]. They will be the ones putting forth a new sewage plant. So point 7 that you referred to is actually only about the pumping services at the marina. The entire infrastructure of St. George's will come under the Bermuda Land Development Company.

The [answer to the] second question, to Senator Simmons, I hope will come as good news to her.

The plan is going to engage a large number of stakeholders. I have been told by public officers that the early meetings will actually start in a matter of weeks. So I hope this will bring some joy to Members in this place who are from St. George's and everyone in the East End, as this is, as I said in the Statement, an exciting time for St. George's. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Supplemental, Madam President.

The President: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Marcus Jones: I thank the Junior Minister for giving the information with regard to the overall sewage waste removal work that is going to be done by the BLDC. Would he happen to have a timeline in which that will be completed? The only reason I ask that is because I know it has been an ongoing project. From the blueprint planning stage to actually being implemented it has been a couple of years now. I think that the residents of St. George's, as well as the owners of the hotel, would be interested to know a timeline in which this project will be completed.

Sen. Owen Darrell: I actually would say that this actually is the same question that I [answered] to Senator Simmons. In a course of weeks all stakeholders will be engaged, and I am sure the sewage [timeline] and a lot of matters will come up in the strategic plan. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

This completes questions on the third Statement, and we will now move on to the fourth Statement, which is also in the name of Senator Darrell. And that is the Steps Taken to Launch the PMO to Support Implementation of Bermuda's Economic Recovery Plan.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: STEPS TAKEN TO LAUNCH THE PMO TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

Actually, I have a couple of questions. My first question is, Given the 31 projects, I would like to know what the estimated number of full-time jobs is anticipated to be created. I certainly can appreciate that the number will not be down as accurately as we would like. But given the number of projects and the state-

ment that there will be jobs created, then I am just wondering whether the Junior Minister can just give some kind of estimate on the number of full-time jobs that are anticipated to be created.

QUESTION 2: STEPS TAKEN TO LAUNCH THE PMO TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

Sen. Robin Tucker: My second question relates to a sentence in the Statement on page 3, the second paragraph from the top, just the very last sentence, which says, "Every approved scheme will create jobs for Bermudians." So while I am taking that as a broad statement, I am just wondering whether there will be jobs that will require non-Bermudians to do because we do not have the expertise on the Island to carry them out?

The President: That is your second question. Do you have a third?

QUESTION 3: STEPS TAKEN TO LAUNCH THE PMO TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes, that is my second question. And my third question is very much related, I guess, which is, What area of the 31 initiatives is anticipated to create the largest number of jobs?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Senator Ben Smith, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: STEPS TAKEN TO LAUNCH THE PMO TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

Sen. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, my question is in regard to the changes in implementing a way to lower the cost of prescription drugs. Because I know that in a country with a significant population that has to take prescription drugs on an ongoing basis, a lot of people are going to be interested in knowing what that number is. So before the Government went down the path of making the changes, there would have been some dialogue on what the potential reduction in these costs would be. So I am wondering if the Junior Minister can give us an estimate in what the reduction in (as he put it) the drugs that are used quite often where bulk purchases potentially are going to reduce the cost? Has there been an initial look at what that reduction will be? And if he knows what that is, can he share that with us? Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this fourth Statement?

Hearing none, then it is over to you, Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. And I thank Senator Tucker and Senator Smith for their questions.

As I stated in the beginning of the Statement, right now it is not possible to provide the exact number of jobs. I will say this, that we do expect it to be significant. And the reason why we have not gotten to that point yet is because in the Statement I did outline that we are doing this in a three-phase process. We are only in phase 1 which, as I said in the bottom paragraph here, involves identifying objectives, the guiding principles and a preliminary list of initiatives. We are still kind of at the end of that phase.

Number two, the question specifically was—we talked about Bermudian jobs. And the question was if non-Bermudian jobs will be a part of this. What I will say is this, that Bermudians can expect to be given first choice.

And once I say that, I would also like to say to my fellow Bermudians listening, Madam President, that it is important that we are ready. It is important that when these opportunities are presented, we are ready to grasp them and run with them. So I hope this answers your question that Bermudians will get priority. They will be given first choice and we must be ready.

Third question, reduction in health care, I think. (I think that is where we went.) That actually is a very, very technical question. I am not passing the buck, but that is something that the Junior Minister responsible for Health could probably answer better than I can, and we can get that at a later time. That is a very technical question, but a good one. We will undertake to look into that at a future time.

Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Senator Robin Tucker, you have a supplementary.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President, and I thank the Junior Minister for his response.

I just want to clarify. He has not answered my third question, which was, What are the areas, the industries or the specific initiatives (I should say) that are anticipated to create the largest number of jobs?

And if I could go ahead now and ask my supplementary question?

The President: Yes, you can.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: I would like to know, How do we qualify *significant*? Is that 30 jobs or 30,000 jobs? How do we qualify that?

My second supplementary is, the Junior Minister implied that non-Bermudians will be hired, but that Bermudians will need to be ready. How and what is the plan to ensure that Bermudians understand what is required of them to position themselves to be ready? Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Sen. Owen Darrell: I guess I will answer that the same way I answered the first one. We are still in phase 1 so a lot of those specifics about jobs and how many and the greatest area will be answered in due time.

As always, and we say this: Where there are no Bermudians qualified for positions, obviously non-Bermudians will be brought in. There are many tech sectors, supporting services that are actually helping the Government now. You would see some of the press conferences that the Ministers are putting out; there are many different agencies and tech companies that actually see what is coming. And they are actively and have been actively for a while putting together projects that will assist with creating jobs. So again, as we move down the line with the different phases of this, many of these and the details will come to fruition.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell and all Senators who have put forward your questions.

We will now move back to our agenda.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The President: The first Order of the Day is Consideration of the Throne Speech with which Her Excellency the Governor was pleased to open the present Session of Parliament.

Senator the Dr. E. G. V. Peets, Government Leader in the Senate, you have the floor.

MOTION

THAT THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH BE TAKEN AS READ AND NOW BE TAKEN UNDER CONSIDERATION

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Madam President, I move that the Senate do now take under consideration the Throne Speech with which Her Excellency the Governor was pleased to open the present session of Parliament.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

The floor is yours, Minister Peets.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Thank you.

DEBATE ON THE 2021 THRONE SPEECH AND REPLY

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Madam President, the Throne Speech provided some very broad strokes as it relates to the Government's plans for the upcoming year. Madam President, Cabinet Ministers are in the process of sharing the details of the critical elements of the Government's work, as well as the Government's strategy for social renewal and economic recovery. Yesterday, last night, I was pleased to share the goals that we have for the National Sports Policy. I am looking forward to working with Youth, Sport & Recreation as well as our athletes and our sporting stakeholders as we design a platform for future sporting success.

Madam President, governing during this pandemic has not been easy. It has been particularly challenging. Its impact on our economy, as well as our education, as well as our recreational and competitive sports has been immense. And it may be years to come before we are able to really quantify and qualify exactly the nature and the magnitude of the impact that COVID-19 has had on us as a country.

To worsen matters from a governing point of view, some of the decisions regarding the \$185 million guarantee for Caroline Bay, the minimum guarantee revenue for payments to the new airport have been real difficult pills for the Government to swallow.

Madam President, I was of the view that back in 2017, as well as in 2020, those Throne Speeches were very bold and very, very ambitious. Madam President, I am of the view again that in the midst of what we have experienced in these last few years, particularly in these last 18 months, this particular Government has delivered and has done so in such a way that we have ensured that our people have not gone without support.

Madam President, going forward, our mission has not changed. There may have been interruptions, but we remain focused on the core of who we are and what we want to do. And economic recovery is at the core of our plan for Bermuda. This will promote social renewal and community development, something that I think we desperately need.

Madam President, I would describe this year's Throne Speech as practical as well as straightforward. Madam President, you will not find, for example, many grand new promises from the Government, but rather a steady focus on executing the commitments we have made to the people of Bermuda. Madam President, there is an attention, for example, to tourism, as well as with the BEDC, for example, regarding how tourism can work with the BEDC in doing its vital work as it relates to the Economic Recovery Plan.

Madam President, from a sporting point of view, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport recognises the value of sport to our country and continues to explore avenues that will promote Bermuda as a sporting jurisdiction. We are actively identifying ways that international sporting events can assist in bringing much-needed revenue to our Island. Madam President, we have active plans to attract more sporting events particularly for our amateur and collegiate athletes to our shores. It is my opinion that this will really enhance the development of our athletes by exposing them to quality international competition and open up more pathways for them to further their education through sports.

Madam President, in addition to the information I shared during my press conference last night, I am pleased to publicly announce today that one such event has been planned with the help of Bermuda Soccer International. Next year, the week after Cup Match, on August 3, the Bermuda Triangle Cup will take place on our shores. This is a preseason tournament for footballers, with quality international teams which are amateur and collegiate coming from the United States as well as from Europe.

But, Madam President, what really excites me about this particular tournament and what it actually means as it relates to a concept is that it will feature a seminar during that whole entire tournament—a seminar where coaches and scouts from top schools and top programmes and top academies will meet with athletes and their parents to talk about recruitment, to talk about scholarships, offering our students a concrete pathway for student athletes to be recruited and to continue with their education as well as sports overseas.

And, Madam President, we have plans to replicate that type of model across sports. So football, cricket, swimming, basketball, golf—these are events that we can plan for our collegiate as well as our amateur athletes so that these events take place on our shores, bringing economic development, but also providing an opportunity for our local athletes to compete at a high level.

Madam President, I was really pleased to dispatch an email to Dan [Hugo] and Flora [Duffy], particularly after their visit to Bermuda, as well as an email that I sent to them after our Throne Speech. One of the questions I put to Flora and Dan was, Given what we have indicated in our Throne Speech, given the fact that you are an elite athlete who has accomplished so much on the world stage, what is it that we can do as a country to begin to put things in place so that we can help other athletes replicate what you have accomplished on your own? And I am glad this morning, Madam President, that this Ministry, particularly myself, were very, very interested in pursuing that conversation not just with Flora, but with all of our other elite athletes who may be participating in and around this wonderful planet which we enjoy.

So, Madam President, if I may quote the Honourable Premier. He is recently quoted as saying, "The Throne Speech spoke to the imperative for change and how changes deferred are now an imperative for survival. We cannot stand still, as a Government or as a country. We must adapt, be bold, and collectively take ownership of building a better future for Bermuda. If we wish to see that better future, then our work for change must continue and be a unified effort amongst all Bermudians."

Madam President, these are some of the highlights as well as some of the goals that this Throne Speech focuses on. I am looking forward to working with this Honourable Chamber of Senators for the betterment of our country, going forward.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

Would any Senator care to speak?

Senator Ben Smith, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, you have the floor.

Sen. Ben Smith: Yes, good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning.

Sen. Ben Smith: So, Madam President, I was preparing for the Reply to the Throne Speech after listening to the Throne Speech that we attended and then having the opportunity to listen to not only the Reply to the Throne Speech, but the debate that happened in the House last Friday. Madam President, this last year-and-a-bit has changed the way that Bermuda operates. It changed the way that the way world operates. The problem is that Bermuda was not in a great place prior to this pandemic coming to our shores. So as I was thinking about what we were going to do, Madam President, it was [that] this Throne Speech is a plan that the Government is going to try to put in place to move the country forward and recover our economy and try to help the people in Bermuda who at this time need significant help.

The way the system of politics works is that it is our job to point out certain things within the plan of the Government that we think can work; at the same time, we are also going to point out things that we question whether it is the right decision, the right move. And we will also put forward potential suggestions for how we move forward. But that is what the job is.

So, Madam President, one of the things that you have to do as you are going into creating the plan as the Government has done, and creating what the Opposition would put forward, you have to take a snapshot of where the country is at present and then you have to look forward to where the country needs to be six months from now, a year from now, 10 years from now. What I have done is realised that this snap-

shot depends on your view, where you sit at the time that you are taking that snapshot, because the impact of the pandemic has been different to different people.

If you are someone who is invested heavily in the stock market, for instance, the stock market is flourishing. So you are actually doing okay. If you are somebody who worked in IB [international business] and you had the ability to continue to do your job, maybe not from your normal office space but from home, and continued to make your same salary, the view that you have of where we are and where we are going is different. But, Madam President, if you were working in hospitality or retail or [you are] someone who has been working in the health care industry, your view is significantly different of what has happened over the last 18-plus months.

So when we are looking at what we see as our snapshot, we have to take into consideration not just our own view, but the views of all of the different people who make up this country. Because sometimes when things are presented that are trying to help a certain section, there are portions of our population that do not understand why we are spending that time, energy and money in that area. That is because from their view, they do not see it.

One of the things that I think is important for us to do is to start to get the country to open their eyes to other views, not just our own personal view. Because, Madam President, we have discussed in the last sessions that we have an issue in Bermuda of personal responsibility and also our collective responsibility when it came to how we took care of the health of our population, how we dealt with each other, whether we abide by rules and regulations or whether we do not. So I say that to talk about, to me, the eyes that I have decided to start to look through [to see] the multiple views of how we move forward.

There are initiatives that the Government are putting forward that are positive. Just this morning you could see that the Opposition, the Independents and the Government Senators together were supportive of the direction that is being put forward. But, Madam President, sometimes when we are looking at the broad strokes, you realise that you cannot just look at the positive plan that has been put in place. You have to ask, *How is that going to be implemented?* The reason I bring that up is because in the past, politicians make statements that they are going to do certain things because they know that this is what the population wants to hear, or at least the largest voter base wants to hear because that is how politicians continue to move forward.

The problem, Madam President, is that the shift that has happened in the world is having an impact on this country that is significant, which means that we have to start to change the way that we have done things up until this point. We cannot just assume that we make a broad statement that we are going to fix certain things, and this is what we are going to do

and then not follow through with it. We have to make sure that there is accountability. From a political standpoint, accountability happens when you go to an election and the population decides whether they are going to vote for you or not vote for you. That is the right of the population to hold their representative to account.

Madam President, part of what has happened in Bermuda is actually something that has happened worldwide, but you are seeing those results in Bermuda. And that is that a portion of our population has started to switch off to what we are doing. I bring that up because here we are on a day like today where we have had the Throne Speech, we have had the Throne Speech Reply, and now it is our opportunity to be part of that debate. How many people are listening to exactly what we are putting forward? Not just the Opposition side, but the Government side also. Are we speaking to the population and what their needs are from what their perception is of what is happening around them?

Because, Madam President, when we say that we are going to lower the cost of health care, the population does not actually pay attention to that part. What they see is that their health insurance costs went up. When we talk about how we are going to reduce the cost of energy in Bermuda (and that is a debate that we have in the Senate Chamber), what the population sees is that their BELCO bill has gone up. We have talked about some great initiatives that are coming forward about job opportunities and training and changes that are going to be made within the government. But if you are somebody today who is unemployed and do not know how you are going to pay your bills, that is a different situation for you. If you are a senior who is struggling because the health costs are high and your pension does not cover what it used to cover . . . Madam President, the cost of food in Bermuda has gone up significantly since this pandemic has hit.

But you know what, Madam President? We were in the situation where we talked about what we were going to do to try to get our population to eat healthier, so we put in a sugar tax. And the concept was that you were going to use that money to help to offset the cost of healthy foods. I bring it up because that was the concept. In reality we just collected another tax and the money went into the pot. And now we are in trouble, so we need the money. But our population, when they go to the store they are having a hard time buying any of the foods that are available. So to talk about the healthy foods, which are expensive, that is the struggle.

Madam President, to me it is the idea that what we have to look at is the prevention, the prevention of the [poor] health in our population that leads to the higher cost of health insurance. Because everybody here knows the stats that tell us why we are

heading in this direction, and it is not getting better; it is going to get worse.

We have a low birth rate. We have an ageing population. We have a sick population. We are having a reduction in the number of people who are in our workforce. All of those things are not pointing [the] indicators toward a lower cost of health care; it is going to be a higher cost of health care. But that is the conversation that we need to start to have openly with our population—of what that is, how we are going to fix it—in general terms that the average person understands.

Because, Madam President, one of the problems that we have in Bermuda is a lot of our population do not even open their bills. They do not look at the details. They do not look at what they are paying for. So we are over-utilising a lot of the health system, which is causing the cost to go up. This is where I go back to our personal responsibility and the accountability.

Madam President, in the Throne Speech there is discussion about what we are going to do with education. And the main topic within this Throne Speech is going to be on the signature schools and what is happening with the signature schools. I have said it before: One of the problems that we have is that across the board we tend to talk about how bad the public education system is and what the impact is. There are a couple of Senators here who I know passionately speak to education and know that there are success stories within our public education system. But the truth is that everybody gets painted with the same brush when we make the negative comments.

To me, my suggestion is about the prevention plan. When we are assessing our children before they get to school, it is not as simple as doing an assessment; it is the follow-up of the assessment. It is making sure that this young child has the support that is needed. If they come close to needing support, we should be supporting them anyway, because with a low birth rate we cannot actually allow anybody to fall through the cracks.

The other side of the spectrum is that when it comes to the national security side, you have people who are in Westgate. And when they do the analysis and the assessment of the people who are there, you find out that there is a large portion of them who have learning disabilities, who have had childhood trauma. Well, those are things that we should be dealing with at the beginning. Because, yes, we need more support and more experts at that early stage so that we can make sure that our young people are on the path to success from birth to preschool to primary school so that we do not have students showing up to high school who are having issues with reading and writing and basic skills that are then leading them to feel that they are not part of our country, and [this is] why they are ending up in the negative position.

We can have all of our youth plans. We can have all of our policies in place. But it is the accountability side. And it is not just the accountability of government, politicians and the workers and the people whom we are going to put in place to try to implement these policies. There is a responsibility of the parents, because these children do not develop themselves. The behaviours of these children are not developed because they learned it from themselves; they are learning it from the actions of the people around them. The expectation cannot be that we allow our young people to grow up like weeds and we expect something different when they are older. It is just not going to work.

So not only do we have to come up with concepts and policies and working groups, as we have discussed today, to try to support them, but we have to have an expectation that the parents do their job.

But, Madam President, as you get to the point where we are discussing what happens when people start to move away from what is needed as a citizen of Bermuda, we realise that we have some issues that need enforcement. But over the last several years the funding of the police has been moving down. Well, if the police were funded at too high of a level and you could reduce that funding in a way that then would allow the police to continue to operate, I accept it. But, Madam President, if you drive on our roads at the moment you will see that the behaviour on our roads has become absolute chaos. People have completely lost the plot of how you behave on roads.

So in the Throne Speech we talk about we are going to implement CCTV and we are going to try to make some changes from a technology standpoint. But, Madam President, we need some old-fashioned police force happening. People see that there is going to be somebody telling you, *That can't happen. You cannot be overtaking on the inside and outside, driving through red lights, going at excessive speeds.* Because the result that we are seeing is a climbing death toll on our roads. But, Madam President, that death toll on the roads is actually not as high as it could be. Because most people in Bermuda will tell you that they have actually prevented the person from getting into the accident because they have driven defensively.

Madam President, back to the accountability. Those individuals have to be accountable for themselves. You cannot behave that way and then have the population have to deal with your 10 weeks in the hospital because you have broken your legs and everything. And now you cannot work, and now the government is going to have to come up with a way to support you. These are all of the behaviours. We are all connected. The decisions and the conversations that happen in this Chamber are not separated from the behaviour of our citizens. Together is how we can move things forward.

The Government can come up with the best plans. The Opposition can put forward suggestions to the Government. And all of that can be laid out. But then there has to be accountability on how those actions are going to be implemented. Because, Madam President, most when most people go to work they have certain tasks that they have to do. The boss is going to say, *These are the projects that we have to accomplish today, this week, this month, this year, because we have targets that we have to reach.* Then the management has to try to implement that plan, and then the workers do the job to make sure that it is accomplished.

But, Madam President, that has to happen across the board. We have to start to hold each other accountable for what we are doing or not doing instead of sitting and complaining that person "A" you know is not doing their job, and nothing changes. What we cannot do is expect that people are going to be hired to do a job—as Junior Minister Owen Darrell said in a comment just recently, *Bermudians have to be prepared.* It is fine for the Government to create 50 jobs. But we have to make sure that we, [Bermudians], are ready to do them at 100 per cent.

Madam President, this shift that has happened is a significant shift to the way businesses and the way countries operate. Not everybody is going to go back to working in the office. It is just a fact. Because what has happened is that the pandemic sent everybody home and they realised that they could operate [from home]. Not only could they operate from their home, but they could operate from different countries. Meetings are happening on Zoom calls and virtual calls. So this idea that we think that just because we are this beautiful country, which we are, that we just put our hand up and people are going to flock to our shores—because that is what we need. We have to understand that the last 18 months have shifted the way everyone operates, and now it is becoming even harder for us to attract those people to come to our shores, which means that we have to give 100 per cent as a population.

We have to put in the effort to change where we are, because, Madam President, the plans that have been put forward by the Government, some of them are really good. Some of them, it is going to take significant changes for them to be implemented.

But, Madam President, the same way that I am talking about the behaviour on the roads, the *state* of the roads, so we are talking about how we are going to invest in some infrastructure projects. Well, we are not taking care of our roads. We have not fixed our bridges. We are having a hard time cutting the grass on the side of the roads. So once again, I talked about the view. So if you are just Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda sitting at home or driving to and from work, and you are seeing the state of the roads, the behaviour on the roads, the fact that the grass and the trees are out in the road, what is making you think that things

are going to change? Because if we cannot do the basics and we are not holding the people accountable who are supposed to be doing the basics, what is actually going to change?

Because before we move forward in this new setup to attract more people to Bermuda, we have to pull our socks up. Our country's belly is exposed. We are not who we used to be. The country needs to wake up, and they cannot expect that we are just going to put plans forward and it is just going to happen with the snap of a finger. That is not how it works. The country, meaning all citizens, everybody together, needs to hold each other accountable. You need to have personal responsibility. We need to have community responsibility. Those changes with the plans can start to move us forward.

Madam President, technology is something that most of us will agree has given advancements. But if you look down the road, technology, particularly artificial intelligence, is going to have an impact on the workforce. Driverless cars, driverless trucks—that changes job ability. Because what happens is business looks for the most efficient version so that they can cut costs, make sure that they reach their timelines. That means our population needs to start to pay attention because if you are not giving 100 per cent, there will be someone trying to figure out a way how to replace you.

Madam President, as Amazon has been spreading all over the world and retail has been dying, you will see that in Bermuda, rather than our taking care of ourselves and trying to figure out a way to make retail in Bermuda flourish because it employs so many Bermudians, we are joining in. We are joining in with the industry that is flowing the money out of the country, and not supporting the locals in the country. Is this an indicator that we will quickly do the same thing with the other industries that start to move in that direction? Because that is the danger. We are having a hard time taking care of our people today. If we do not pay attention to what is happening in our country . . . these changes are happening quickly. The pandemic showed us that.

How are we going to change? The Government needs to make sure that they are not making decisions based on, *This is what I think the help is*. Finish the thought. Go all the way to the end. Make sure you have all of the data. Make sure you have all of the information so that when you make the decision, it is not having a negative impact on your population which you did not realise was going to happen. Because, Madam President, within the Throne Speech . . . usually what happens when you are in a situation like we are in now, you are going to try to do some kind of major project to try to get things moving. And the project that looks like it is the one moving forward will be the incinerator, understanding it could be about a \$100 million project.

Madam President, there are a couple of things in there. One, when you have a project, there is the process of finding out who is going to do the project, how many people are going to be employed by the project. And there are some early gains because, yes, the people who are participating in the project will be employed, they will be making money. But, Madam President, let's be honest, there is a small group of people who are actually going to make significant money off of that kind of project. That is just the reality of how it works when you do a major project like that. But after the project is over, it is not going to create a bunch of extra jobs. It is an incinerator. We have one now. When we move forward, if anything, it is going to be more efficient; maybe we will need [fewer workers].

But the second thought to me is, how do we maintain the things that we have in Bermuda? Because, Madam President, when you do not have a lot of money, you have to take care of what you have. It seems that Bermuda has gotten away with not taking care of and maintaining what they have. So what happens is that after a short amount of time you have to replace it. Now we are spending the money again. That is wasteful, and it does not actually help the population to move forward.

So the question is, after I believe it is about 25 years for that incinerator, what was the estimated lifespan of that facility? Were all of the maintenance marks hit? Because there were millions of dollars that were spent in the last five, six years on upgrading that facility. And now here we are, we are moving forward to . . . we are going to have to replace it. Well, Madam President, it is the same thing that happens in other parts of our country with facilities that are not maintained at the level that they are supposed to on a regular basis. And because of it, we have to spend millions of the taxpayers' dollars to replace them.

To me, it is all connected. We have to be preventing. So from health care, we have to do a better job of encouraging our population to get healthy from childhood all the way through, because that is how you can lower the overall cost of health care. We [need to] do the preventative measures for our young children so that we can make sure they are supported and developed in the right way. And listen, there are things within the education policy that are going to be moving in that direction. I am not hitting out at that. I am just saying we need to spend more of our time and focus and energy on how we are protecting the precious ones at the beginning so that we do not have to deal with the result at the end, which is the negative side of it.

Well, it is the same thing when it comes to our infrastructure. If we know that there are maintenance programmes that have to happen, we need to make sure we are holding people accountable that they are hitting those targets and doing what needs to be done. And when we have projects in Bermuda that are costly and you give a timeline that says, *This is what you*

need to do, who is following up to say, *This project was supposed to take a week and it has taken a month?* Because that is the part. Remember, that money that is being spent, that is not the government's money. That is not a politician's money. That is the people's money. And every time that we need to get more of that money it is going to come from taxes. And our population cannot afford anything else.

So, yes, the reality is bleak if you go into the details. But we cannot live there. We cannot be in the pessimistic world. We have to think positive and optimistic and how we are going to move forward. But moving forward with a plan needs to make sure that everyone is being held accountable for (1) the plan; (2) the implementation of the plan; and (3) once the plan is done, how we will maintain, so that 10 years from now we are not replacing things that if we had taken care of them we should not have to.

Madam President, I hope for our country that we can start to move forward in a direction that will see a better tomorrow, because the pandemic is not the only thing that has caused us to be where we are today. It has made the situation significantly worse. We have people who are out of work because hotels have closed. But, Madam President, if we go back over the last 10, 15, 20 years, lots of hotels have been closed. And the same way that we are looking at this Southampton Princess project and everybody is hopeful, Elbow Beach has been sitting and rotting for quite some time. And there are other facilities that are [in] the same [situation].

Our issue is that we are going to have to start to do things to move in that direction. But it is not going to happen easily, because the airlift is going in the wrong direction. And the Government can throw things [out] that there is a project that the OBA did [which] did not work out and that there are bills that have to get paid because certain targets were not met for the airport, for instance. Madam President, nobody knew we were going to have a pandemic that was going to wipe out air travel. And the truth is that we are limping along in a direction now that there is even less air travel, even though we are open.

What does it look like if we do not have flights on a regular basis? That impacts business. That impacts tourism. That impacts our day-to-day lives. Let us not just throw rocks at each other. We have to come up with a solution and then work together, collectively, collective responsibility for the Government, collective responsibility for our citizens, we together, Bermudians, non-Bermudians, elected officials, appointed officials, everybody. That is what it is going to take for us to move forward.

Plans, as the Minister of Sport laid out, can sit on a shelf. It is going to be our people who move us forward. And I thank the Minister for driving forward on initiatives for our youth, and I thank the Minister for driving forward initiatives on our sport. But it is going to be interesting to see how we are going to pay for

any of this stuff. Because as we tried to move forward to a balanced budget, and we realised that every time we cut something, something is getting left out. And if what we have been cutting out has meant that the police force is less funded, it is going to be a very difficult task for the Minister of Sport to try to get the initiatives that he wants to put forward on that plate, because everybody who wants something is going to have to have somebody else give up something.

There is hard work in front of us, but I know that if everybody here rolls up their sleeves we can move in that direction. Let us hope for a better Bermuda for all of us.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Richardson, you have the floor, Curtis Richardson.

Sen. Curtis Richardson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, and Leaders of the Senate and Members of the Senate, the Throne Speech is concise in its brief complexity and consistent with this Government's mandate to continue to provide the public with what they elected this Government to do. The Ministry of National Security recognises that we are in the digital age and technology is here to stay. But it is not built to last. Updates to such technological systems are an imperative necessity in order to continue to benefit from the conveniences that are provided through everyday use of our technology. The CCTV system is 10 years old and has shown to have reached its end of use.

Sen. Ben Smith: Point of order, Madam President.

The President: What is your point of order, Senator Ben Smith?

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Ben Smith: Madam President, during this part of the debate, we cannot read our speech. And at the moment, the Senator is reading. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Senator Richardson, you can, rather than read directly, just refer to your notes, please.

Sen. Curtis Richardson: Right. I will refer to my notes. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, the CCTV system has reached its useful lifespan. It has reached its end. CCTV was once coined *the Big Brother in the Sky*. This no doubt will continue to be an essential tool to be used in our law enforcement observation security forces. Madam President, CCTV is imperative and a

very important tool for our security forces. It is vital in its very purpose. I would say that the Ministry of National Security is aware that if anyone is questioning the replacement and upgrade of such a system, then they may be a little bit out of touch with the importance for its replacement and to provide a safer Bermuda. It is a tool with many benefits, Madam President. So I believe that the Ministry of National Security is on the right path in ensuring that the CCTV system is replaced with newer features to assist the law enforcement agencies on the Island.

Madam President, if you allow me to take a quote from the Throne Speech, a short quote?

The President: You can. You can make that quote.

Sen. Curtis Richardson: Right. Madam President, it stated in the Throne Speech that "Data is the new oil, and Bermuda must ensure that our cybersecurity defences are adequate to defend our island from dangerous online actors." Madam President, this quote speaks directly and wholesomely to the importance of the introduction of the new Cybersecurity Act, which the Ministry of National Security has outlined as well in the Throne Speech.

Madam President, Leaders of the Senate and other Members of the Senate, in addition to the National Security Ministry's progression through the Throne Speech, the management of the corrections facilities unfortunately are now tasked with a major setback in its maintenance of these facilities. One quote attached to the lack of industry standards review that was due to be held in 2014 when the One Bermuda Alliance was the Government, as a cause and reason of effect for this unfortunate position that the Government now is tasked, and the costs associated with such repairs and upgrades in its maintenance are extensive now. One might also ask, if the cost of building what is dissolute in its present state, Cross Island, to erect a temporary facility? I am wondering if one would question the cost of such a facility, which unfortunately is still sitting unused, if those costs could have been more appropriately used for its close-neighbouring correctional facility at the Westgate.

Now this Government, being a responsible and responsive government, is working with the Bermuda Police Association and the Department of Corrections to get these maintenance issues and matters rectified under the guidelines of what has been provided as being a priority basis. This will indicate a propitious outcome in the efforts that this Government is putting forward for the replacement and upgrades of these facilities that are essential to operational purposes.

Madam President, Leaders of the Senate and Members of Senate, I would like to thank the staff and members of the Department of Corrections, Customs, the Police Service, the Fire Service, the Ministry of

National Security and the Minister for all of their hard work that ensures a safer Bermuda for all Bermudians on a daily basis.

Madam President, if I could shift over to the Ministry of Transportation. Madam President and Members of the Senate, might I ask, What would you spend \$41 million on? I would like to ask Skyport that very question. As a matter of interest, I would love for the One Bermuda Alliance to tell the Bermuda public how they now feel about the memorandum that was put in place for the minimum revenue guarantee that has cost their neighbours and the Bermuda public just under \$41 million to date, just under \$41 million. I would like to know what they would do with \$41 million. If we were not giving Skyport so much money, then at the very least the roads would be paved and we may have new buses. Meanwhile, the Government continues to develop strategies in air, ground and sea modes of transportation to aid in the Economic Recovery Plan.

Madam President, unfortunately we are faced with those burdens that the MRG [minimum revenue guarantee] presents this country with. And the Ministry of Transportation is doing all that they can and will continue to do more to ensure that we can remain responsible in this obligation that unfortunately could be seen as very detrimental to our economy.

Just in closing, Madam President, Leaders of the Senate and Members of the Senate, I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Transportation; the Department of Public Transportation; the staff at Marine and Ports; all of the owners and the operators of the public service vehicles like the taxis, minibuses, limousines, community service vehicles; the members of staff at the Ministry, the Minister himself of Transportation for all of their hard work to ensure that the fellow citizens are met with the best quality in transportation service.

With that said, Madam President, I do appreciate the opportunity to speak really quickly on these matters on the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Transport, and I would like to encourage the public to have faith in the Government as we do our part in the Economic Recovery Plan.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Curtis Richardson. And as you have indicated, you are the Junior Minister for National Security and Transport. So thank you for your submission.

Would any Senator care to speak on the Throne Speech? Now is your opportunity.

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to give voice or to be able to speak my perspective on this year's Throne Speech, which in some ways gives the general public an idea of what the Government

intends to do. To use Minister Peets' words, it is very *broad strokes*.

I would like to start my comments today by just noting a quote that I saw on page 1, which is from British anthropologist Dame Mary Douglas. It says, "If you want to change the culture, you will have to start by changing the organization." Madam President, one of the top considerations for driving culture change is defining values and behaviours. So if I may, Madam President, I would also like to present another quote, which I think is quite apropos in this instance.

The President: You may.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you.

The quote is from former Vice Chairman of Deloitte, Jay Samit. And he said, "It's not incumbent on the world to conform to your vision of change. It is up to you to explain the future in terms that those living in the past and present can follow." So, Madam President, desired change, in order for it to happen successfully, the people who are most impacted by that change must understand what is required of them and how it affects them on a foundational level so that they can align themselves accordingly, and that is the way that we all win.

So, Madam President, I would like to say that in reading the Throne Speech, I did note some really good things. There is a refocus on the creation of [an] affordable and improved health care system for all of us; the introduction of the digitised immigration process; plans to get our young people working; and something near and dear to my heart, which are added protections for our seniors, our vulnerable and our children.

But, Madam President, while there are bright sparks, I think that there are also elements that lack the detail that is needed for the people of this country to know in a definitive way the changes that the Government intends to make that will (to use a quote if I may from page 1 of the Throne Speech?)—

The President: Yes.

Sen. Robin Tucker: —that will mitigate "the inevitable shocks that will accompany the period following the COVID-19 pandemic."

That statement in itself, Madam President, when I read it and when I certainly heard it, it gave me a cause to pause because that sounds very much like a red flag warning that the Government wants to let people know that we are on a cliff and we are in very, very, very difficult times, but yet even more difficult times are coming.

So, Madam President, if I may I would like to start with my thoughts on health care, which again I think that there is no person who is listening today who would disagree that every person, man, woman and child should have access to health care. But,

Madam President, my question is, While the Government is working to reform health care, what are we doing in the interim? What are we doing in the interim to stabilise the costs so that they do not escalate even further? Better yet, is there a way to reduce the costs? Because the system is broken; we all recognise that. But, Madam President, while we are trying to achieve an end, we need to be able to have some focus on what we are doing between point A and point B.

Now, Madam President, it was mentioned as one of the priorities that there is a focus or attention to increase the population. And in my view, Madam President, we cannot even have a conversation about improving the state of health care without increasing the population. These people, the working population, are not going to magically appear. We have to have immigration reform that leads us to increasing the working population in this country. So I look forward and am very hopeful that this will come to fruition quite quickly.

Now, Madam President, Senate [Opposition] Leader Smith mentioned the sugar tax. And I would also like to mention that as well. It is not a point that I would like to say a whole lot about, because Senator Smith mentioned it quite well. But I mention it in regard to again our steps toward preventative health [care]. That was how it was put to the community. It would be something that would help us make better and healthier choices. That is something that again, between our point A and our point B, to getting to making some changes in the short term to our health plan while we are waiting to get to more permanent and substantive changes.

So the sugar tax, again data driven—where are the data that it is working? Because I walk past Marketplace frequently. I walk past there mornings. I see people outside with their doughnuts and see people lined up at KFC and people lined up at all kinds of places. My observation; I do not have the data, and that is what I am asking for, [the data] to know, is it working? Because at the end of the day, we still have a population of obese people. We have people who are willing . . . I mean, I will put my hand up. I will go and spend five dollars for my chocolate. So is it having the intended consequence? We will not know that without the data. But if we focused on those types of things while we are working out the health reform, we can see some substantive changes.

Now, I do not know why we have not seen the data. The sugar tax, as far as I am aware, came into being in 2018—plenty of time to be able to collect some information as to the impact that it is having. We need to have targeted preventative care and methods and education, which is what the sugar tax monies were intended to fund (or be part of that fund), heightened education. We have social media and media and all of that. Let us put some of those things out there, incentivise the grocers. There was a mention some time ago, but we need to be targeted because we

have some critical, critical things that are going on with our hospitals with people who are experiencing all kinds of sicknesses. And we all know what those chronic illnesses are.

The drug formulary was also mentioned. That is another thing. We need to expedite the implementation of the drug formulary. I, like so many others, would like to know, when are we going to see the reduced costs for those common prescriptions? I can say that I am a little concerned, though, and I have mentioned it in this Senate Chamber before, that while there was a pledge in 2020 not to increase seniors' health care premiums, a year later there was one. So when will we be able to see that formulary coming into place?

So I would have liked to have seen, as it relates to health care, Madam President, more information and detail about the preventative steps that are being taken in the short term while health reform is being worked out.

Switching to the environment, I was very happy to note that there are measures that are being taken to create a framework to bring about balance to our marine environment and to promote sustainability in our waters. We only have one opportunity to mess up our environment. And we have to make sure that we take all of the steps necessary to ensure that we protect our marine environment, our entire environment. We all know that the whole world is going through climate change. So therefore, we all know that we are on the brink of a climate change disaster. So we have got to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and the like. So, Madam President, I was very happy to read [about] that in the Throne Speech, and I think that this is a very positive thing and a step toward where we are going.

The Youth Employment Strategy, we briefly talked about a bit of that earlier today. Again, I am very glad to see that steps are being taken to help our young people to become employed. In the context of the Youth Employment Strategy, I believe our ages were 18 to 26. So, I am very happy to hear that. The Labour Force Survey in 2020 did say that our rate of unemployment for that age group was 32 per cent, which we mentioned. But comparatively, it was less than 4 per cent for persons in both the 35-to-44 age groups and the 55-to-64 age groups. That is a significant difference. And certainly we need to be able to question why that is. Is it education? Is it social ills? Is it parenting? Are there things going on in the homes? What is it? Because that is a significant difference, and I think that it is a good step to putting the Youth Employment Strategy in place and certainly the things that were outlined earlier here today in terms of the eight initiatives to try to bring about some improvement there.

I do want to note, though, that one of the statements was that the inability for our youth to be employed, the lack of opportunity was something that

was given as a reason for it. I question whether it is lack of opportunity. I think, Madam President, that we need to have a holistic approach to include providing support for parents, because again, as was already mentioned here by Senator Smith, there is a level of accountability. So as parents, we all know or we should know what our children are doing. Therefore, I believe that we may be at a time where the Government may have to look at accountability measures for parents.

So some of our parents do not have the tools. And I am certainly not trying to disparage any parent or their parenting styles. I am simply saying that some parents do not have the tools in order to raise their children to become contributing, positive members of this community. And I believe that it is incumbent on us individually and us as a community, as well as part of Government's strategy, to ensure that there are resources in place in order to help parents who need it for the benefit of the children.

Seniors and our vulnerable population—[I am] very happy to see that there is going to be added protection in terms of protecting our seniors from financial abuse. I think this is a great thing. But I also think that we still have a very long way to go to support and provide for our seniors. I do not believe that we do enough for our seniors. I do not believe, and I have mentioned it in this Senate Chamber before, that our seniors should be bearing the financial burdens that they have to bear. We have all heard the stories about seniors having to choose between food and medicine. My personal opinion is that seniors have contributed enough by the time they reach their age of maturity. So I would have liked to have seen in the Throne Speech more about what we are doing for our seniors.

There was also a brief mention about our children, which was a bit surprising to me. In fact, the quote or (I should say) the statement that was mentioned about our children was not hardly as long as the quote that came before it. We have all heard the stories; it is no secret. We have heard stories about DCFS [Department of Child and Family Services] and other issues that are going on. So there is no need for me to go into that. But what I can say is that in [response to] the Throne Speech we need to be able to show how important our seniors, our children, our vulnerable populations are. And I would have liked to have seen more targeted, more defined, more committed statements about what we are doing [for] them.

Now, Madam President, I have a general comment, and it actually touches on a couple of areas in regard to education and employment. Part of our economic recovery depends on enhancing . . . part of it depends on enhancing our tourism product. Now, central to that is a quote, if I may, from page 8 from the Throne Speech, which says, "Bermuda must resolve to provide an experience that matches its price point. Our survival in tourism demands that we give visitors what they want and cannot find better deliv-

ered elsewhere.” There was once upon a time, Madam President, our tourism product—this would have been the absolute definition for where we were in terms of our tourism product and our service delivery.

So I say that, recognising the fact that our two signature schools, which will be coming online in September, do not have as part of their signatures tourism and hospitality. I fully recognise that the schools themselves, from what I understand, chose what their signatures should be. However, there has not been a whole lot of focus over the last decade-plus to encourage our Bermudian children. I know there have been initiatives, so if anybody is busting a gasket, I know that there have been some entities, Take Five Ltd. being one of them, who has partnered and has provided some training and all of that. So that is not what I am saying. I am meaning on a broad Island-wide level, a targeted focus.

So with that, and with the need to be able to [get to the situation] where we have Bermudians trained and focused and being back in that place of providing optimal service for our visitors, we cannot wait until Southampton Princess opens again. We have to do it now. There are so many industries that are operational. There are so many jobs that are operational in Bermuda that a lot of young people, a lot of the older people, do not have a clue about in the hospitality and tourism industry. Some people believe it is just about waiting tables and being a taxi driver and serving drinks. It is so much more than that. It is so much more vast than that. And we have to have those broad exposures in order to regenerate the interest that we had once upon a time. There is lots of money to be made in hospitality.

The President: Senator Tucker, if I may interrupt. It is now 12:30. I am just wondering if you need additional time, whether or not we would break for lunch and—

Sen. Robin Tucker: Five more minutes?

The President: Or you have got five more minutes. But certainly we will allow you to continue.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

So, yes. While there is no focus on hospitality and tourism in the signature schools, I would have liked to have seen and heard that there was some other focus in the meantime while that is being worked out. Because, Madam President, we have to grow our own resources. We have to do it. And I do not think anybody who is thinking about the future will disagree with that.

There was once upon a time (again) when some of my Senate colleagues probably were not born or were very, very young. But there was a time in our hospitality and tourism industry where we built relationships. It was not about servitude; it was about service. It was about when the individual, you know,

the visitor came back and we remembered their name, remembered what they liked to eat and their families and the whole nine [yards]. That in my opinion, Madam President, was our secret sauce to our hospitality industry. It was not so much about just the facility. It was about the people. And we must focus on us as our people because that is our key. You can go to any island and get similar . . . beautiful beaches everywhere, fabulous hotels everywhere.

So in conclusion, Madam President, I just want to finish up with a couple of things that I would have liked to have seen, just two things in particular. One, there was no mention of support for men. I personally have mentioned before in this Chamber that I think that there is an absolute need for that. We need a men's resources centre. We have one for women; we must have one for men. I would have liked to have seen some things targeted around men and their needs. Also, I would have liked to have seen more about mental health issues. I recently attended a virtual conference that spoke to even the prevalence of mental health issues and the impact of eating disorders on teenagers right now. It is happening right here in our wonderful Island.

So, Madam President, with those thoughts, I certainly did not expect to speak this long. But I am thankful, thankful for being able to provide my perspective.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

And as I had indicated, Senators, it is now 12:33, and we usually break for lunch. So I am seeking your indulgence. We will break for lunch and return at 2:15. Thank you.

Senate is adjourned for lunch. We will be back at 2:15. Thank you.

Proceedings suspended at 12:33 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:15 pm

(Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding)

DEBATE ON THE 2021 THRONE SPEECH AND REPLY

[Continuation of debate thereon]

The President: Good afternoon, Senators and the listening audience. Prior to lunch, we were considering the Throne Speech, which was delivered by Her Excellency, the Governor, and who was pleased to open the present Session of Parliament. This morning we had a number of Senators who spoke on the Throne Speech, and so we are continuing this afternoon. I will now ask, is there any Senator who wishes to speak?

Senator Michelle Simmons, Vice President, you have the floor.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Good afternoon, everyone.

The President: Good afternoon.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, my fellow Senators and the public who are listening to this debate, the Speech from the Throne is a very interesting long-standing tradition. It is meant to give us some insight into Government's plans for advancing their legislative agenda. For the past 21 months, the Government has had to attend to a health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and so, the resulting Throne Speech or Speech from the Throne this year contains less detail than we would have expected in order for us and members of the public to get a clear sense of what is coming, a clear sense of how Government is going to advance its agenda.

But let me state clearly before I go on, Madam President, that the Government's management of the pandemic has been commendable. And now, as we learn to live with COVID-19, we *must* have a renewed focus on doing the things that will put programmes in place to benefit all the citizens of this country. I do not think anyone will deny that Government has had to . . . everyone uses the word "pivot," these days. But they had to. It was out of necessity and now, they are getting back to their *original* agenda.

Madam President, may I read a quote?

The President: You certainly may.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: This quote is from Sir Ken Robinson, who is an international advisor, and let me say, it is not our dear Dr. Kenneth E. Robinson, who is deceased, but this is Sir Ken Robinson. He is an international advisor on education. He is a former professor of Arts Education in the UK. He, too, is deceased but this is his quote. I will read it: "Transforming education is not easy but the price of failure is more than we can afford, while the benefits of success are more than we can imagine." End of quote.

I do not think it will surprise any of you, or indeed, members of the public who know me, to know that I want to begin my comments on the Throne Speech with looking at education and education reform in particular.

Madam President, it is laudable that Government intends to press ahead with some necessary reform to public education, and I will certainly support the need for some reform of public education. One of the things I would like to urge the Government to do is to keep stakeholders well informed and to go to great lengths to make sure that parents, students, of course, all those who work in public education *know*

what is happening with regard to the reform of our public schools.

It was heartening to hear, I believe it was Senator Ben Smith, say this morning that too many people decry public education as having failed. Well, I know a lot of young people who have been educated in our public schools and they have excelled. I know a lot of people who have been educated in our public schools who have *struggled* to make advances. But they persisted, and they have gotten to where they wanted to be. So, public education has not failed all of our young people, but indeed, there is room for improving our public education system. As I understand it, *the* next step in education reform is going to be the introduction of signature programmes at the two existing senior schools, that is the Berkeley Institute and CedarBridge Academy, and that will be happening in 2022. Now notice, I do not refer to these schools as signature schools. I prefer to say that signature programmes are going to be introduced, because I believe that is what is happening. As I understand it, both senior schools have chosen special themes around which their signature programmes will be organised. And I need to read this part, Madam President, if that is okay.

The President: It is. Certainly, you can.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: According to the Speech from the Throne, CedarBridge Academy will focus on "Trades for Building Construction and Maintenance" as well as STEM courses, that is "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math." At the Berkeley Institute, the focus will be on "Finance & Insurance" as well as "Health and Social Care." Let me say that the understanding I have so far of what Government's reform intends, is that these two schools will be the first schools to offer signature programmes. And by saying they are the first, that means there are others that will follow. So, somewhere in the background, I assume there is some planning toward developing *other* schools which will offer signature programmes. We have had no information whatsoever on that, and I think that has kind of left the public in a bit of limbo, because some people, like my Senator Robin Tucker, some people are very concerned that there has been no mention of some important industries in Bermuda such as tourism, and maybe that is coming in future schools, which will be offering signature programmes. We just do not know. So, I appeal again to Government and the Ministry of Education in particular to keep the public informed. Give us *more* information than we need. Make sure that everyone understands what is intended so that we can be supportive.

I do have a few questions about the introduction of signature programmes in September. For example—and these are questions which I so far have not had any answers to—will all students be invited to engage in signature programmes? One of the reasons

I am asking is because in my research, there are signature schools overseas that require students to do some form of competency testing to demonstrate that they are appropriately ready to embark upon a signature programme. So, will there be certain standards set for students who wish to move into these signature programmes? Another question I have is—have schools confirmed that they have appropriately qualified and trained staff to teach these programmes? If the programmes are at a level above what is offered currently in our schools, then the training and the preparation of teachers to provide those programmes must be looked at. And then the other question I have is—how many signature schools or schools that offer signature programmes are being planned? What is the bigger picture? Because so far, we are just getting snippets of the overall plan.

Madam President, I understand that this week the public have been invited to see prototypes of the signature programmes, and I believe by going to the Ministry of Education's website members of the public can register to have a taste of the type of programme which is described as a senior programme. They call it prototyping. I have signed up, and I would encourage any member of the public who is interested in testing out the prototype to do the same thing. Just go to the Ministry of Education's website.

Madam President, also with regard to education, I wondered, what is happening with regard to Plan 2022? That was the strategic plan which was developed about four years ago and was the focus of many of the efforts to enhance public education. I cannot recall seeing any annual update since about 2019. So, I wondered, what was happening with regard to many of the initiatives in Plan 2022, especially since the public were heavily invested in that strategic plan and we would all like to have an update. I understand that other things have become priorities for Government in terms of education reform, but there were many, many strategies in that plan that still should have been embraced as part of the overall reform of public education.

And then before I leave education, Madam President, I just wanted to mention the Education Authority. The Minister of Education held a press conference last week, I believe, and he referred to work that has occurred toward planning for an Education Authority. But he did not give a target date for the commencement of such an authority. My questions are, will such an authority be established before the middle schools are abolished and the number of primary schools is reduced? And the reason I am asking *that* question is because I believe any reform of public education will benefit *greatly* from a reform of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education. So, I hope that we can hear a bit more about the timeline for implementing an Education Authority, and also, for how it will impact on education overall going forward.

Madam President, I crafted my comments today around three Es. I have just dealt with one of those, that is education. My next "E" is economic recovery. Madam President, we all know the success of Bermuda's economic recovery plan is *vital* to our survival, *vital* to our well-being, *vital* to the growth of this country. Unemployment has soared to new highs, and that has been mainly due to businesses either closing for short or extended periods of time. It has also been due to some businesses just shuttering their doors and saying, *We cannot go on any further*. This has affected all ages, from those approaching their senior years right down to the 18-year-olds. But it sounds as though from the data I have heard and in view of what Senator Hodgson presented this morning, our young people have borne the brunt of job losses. So, it is right that the Government should focus on getting our young people to work. It sounds as though there are many prongs to that plan, and, if I may just quote from the Throne Speech, Madam President?

The President: You certainly may.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Government has pledged to, I quote, "meet the identified needs of unemployed persons between the ages of 18 and 26." That is the end of the quote. And they intend to focus on training, training, training.

Madam President, while I agree and support this, I would just like to share that there should also be an emphasis on creating an environment for job creation, so that many jobs which have disappeared can be replaced with new jobs. I am happy that in the Speech from the Throne, Government is intending to advance legislation to modernise the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, which has been doing tremendous work in helping new businesses to get off the ground. But I think there is more that can be done with regard to ensuring that the environment in the country is conducive to job creation, because we do need to see more jobs created. Of course, any discussion of economic recovery must embrace tourism, because that was the main industry that employed the largest number of Bermudians, but that is not the case today. And so, every effort must be made to get tourism back on its feet. To do this, the Bermuda Tourism Authority must lead boldly. They are responsible for the revitalisation of tourism, and without any doubt I believe that this can be done. But we need to change our thinking with regard to how we go about doing this. And even though I am suggesting that we need to change our thinking about how we revitalise tourism, I am also saying that we should still look to some of the old ways to ensure that Bermudians are well represented throughout all levels in the Bermuda tourism industry. That is what visitors want to see. Visitors want to come to Bermuda and have a Bermuda experience, and I recall from years gone by how involved many Bermudian families were in the tourism industry.

I have heard of friendships that still go on to this day, friendships built between visitors and Bermudians who had encounters here on this Island. Our visitors want to have encounters with Bermudians. They want to have experiences in which Bermudians are involved, and as I said earlier from the history of people engaging with Bermudians and building lifelong friendships, I think that this will keep our visitors coming back again and again, and the repeat visitor is welcomed.

Sticking with the economy, Madam President, I would like to point out that one of the pledges Government made some time ago was that it was going to reduce or contain the cost of living in Bermuda. We do not hear very much about the pledge that was made a few years ago, but we are in such a predicament now, having had an economy negatively impacted for so long during the pandemic that we must not only seek to rebuild our economy, but we need to try to put some brakes on the runaway cost of living. We recognise that this is a *mammoth* task, because there are external factors such as the increase in the cost of everyday items that we must import. There are supply chain disruptions that we see all over the news every night. Those two factors alone are going to make it difficult, but not impossible to help contain the cost of living. Under this umbrella, we have food, we have housing, we have transportation, we have health care and Government taxes. And so, all of those items contribute to the cost of living and so, all of them need attention. All of them need attention from Government because Government needs to take the lead in helping to contain the cost of living in Bermuda.

Also, Madam President, as we get back on our feet after living through the worst of the pandemic—and I am the eternal optimist, I believe the worst is behind us, at least I pray it is—it is essential to revert to the work of the Wage Commission, again, not an easy task. But the Wage Commission did produce a report entitled “Recommendations for a Minimum Wage in Bermuda” in April 2021. So, in April of this year a report was submitted. What is happening on that front? As far as the Government’s legislative agenda is concerned, as I read through the Throne Speech, Madam President, I did not see any reference to pending legislation which will help to address the issue of a minimum wage, and I will say the other one, a living wage in Bermuda.

Under this umbrella of trying to keep in check the runaway cost of living, of course, we cannot talk about the cost of living without talking about health care, and the reform of health care. I am happy to see that Government has taken a step back and intends to engage with stakeholders again to make sure that as they develop an integrated health care model, that there is greater buy-in from all of those who are key stakeholders and key providers in the health care industry. Government has acknowledged, Madam President, that achieving affordable universal health care is a multi-year commitment, and I certainly endorse

that. This is not something that will happen overnight. If you do any research on countries that have introduced universal health care, it took years. And so, let’s not jump before we have a clear plan for universal health care that is affordable.

Madam President, I am still on economic things. And another commission that we have not heard very much about lately is the Tax Reform Commission. When the Tax Reform Amendment Act was passed by the Legislature in January of this year, the intention, I thought, was for a new commission to be appointed and provide recommendations that would go forward into the next budget cycle. So, I am asking because I have not heard, maybe it is happening, but has the Commission been established? And if so, will they be submitting something that will be included in the budget cycle?

Madam President, as I get close to the of my remarks, my third “E” is the environment. I want to share a few thoughts with regard to our natural environment, and I hope that those listening will understand the magnitude of this issue—the care of our natural environment. Over the past weekend, I found it intriguing to watch some of the sessions of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, referred to as COP26. Delegates wrestled with the extent to which they were prepared to go back to their respective countries and make changes to behaviours. It really was an interesting experience watching some of the sessions. Everyone there recognised that our environment is under serious threat. In fact, in my opinion, this is the greatest threat that the entire world is facing. But I found it very heartening, Madam President, that some of the independent small island states were at the table giving very, very strong representation. And I know that Minister Roban was there representing Bermuda.

Madam President, according to environmental scholars, the biggest threat to the earth is climate change. I will repeat that. *The biggest threat to the earth is climate change.* We have seen increased intensity of natural phenomena such as hurricanes, flooding, droughts, wildfires, all caused by climate change.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: There is no need for us to speculate as to why it’s happening. It’s happening because we are abusing our environment.

Madam President, I would just like to read a quote from NASA.

The President: You certainly may.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: NASA has confirmed that the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased from 280 parts per million to 400 parts per million in the last 150 years. And it is all caused, for the greater part, by the burning of fossil fuels, destruction of forests and other human activities, but the

prime culprits are fossil fuel burning and the cutting down of our trees. Even more shocking, sea levels have risen by one to four feet just since 2010, and that is caused largely by the shrinking Arctic ice caps. And they are shrinking because they are being affected by global warming, climate change.

I refer once again to COP26, where the voices of many indigenous people were heard. It was good to hear them around the table since their environments are the most severely impacted. Remember, Bermuda is a small island in the middle of the Atlantic.

Madam President, if there is any issue on which we need to work together, it is this: We all need to come together and plan how we are going to reduce our carbon footprint right here in Bermuda. We need to come together and decide how we are going to protect our environment. It is our one and only natural resource. In fact, as I thought about these remarks, I said that one of the things I would urge every single school on this island to do is to start, and I know many of them already have this, but they all need to have an environmental club in which our young people, our children and youth, are engaged in learning about the natural environment and what needs to be done to protect it for themselves and for future generations. Not only should they be discussing this, but our young people need to look at how they can be part of the solution by demanding policy changes by government and by businesses.

At COP26 voices of our young people were heard. They were angry because they have seen some of the consequences of the decisions that adults have made. Here in Bermuda, I think we need to make a more demonstrative commitment to renewable energy schemes. I know there has been a lot of talk, but how many commitments to moving forward have actually been made? Perhaps it is necessary for government to get even more involved in pushing and prodding to encourage the largest consumers of fossil fuels here in Bermuda to make changes. And we know where they are. But targets should be set for reducing our collective carbon footprint, and it needs to be done sooner rather than later. And I believe that if we get our young people involved, if we really listen and hear their voices, we will have to make change because it is their world that we are affecting.

And then, Madam President, we cannot talk about the environment without mentioning disposal of our waste. Tynes Bay has already been mentioned this morning in the debate. I wanted to share that I did some research on Tynes Bay which actually became operational in May 1994, so it has been around for 27 years. And I believe, according to what I read, that it has outlived its natural life. Therefore, it would have been appropriate to have a plan for the replacement of this facility some time ago. Unfortunately, we are working from a point of . . . well, we are behind the eight ball. And, Madam President, there is no doubt in my mind that the facility needs some serious attention

and Government must step up and provide for a new facility, if that is what is needed, or a drastically refurbished Tynes Bay so that we can continue to safely dispose of our waste and generate electricity and the concrete ash that has been used in building.

So, Madam President, the main message here is that all of us, every single person who resides in Bermuda, as well as the Government, we all need to commit to being good stewards of our environment, our natural environment. And I am going to end with the quote from Lady Bird Johnson, who said, . . . if I may read it, Madam President?

The President: You certainly may, Senator Simmons.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: The environment is where we all meet, where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share."

Since the environment is something that we all share, we all need to share responsibility for maintaining it and leaving it in a better state than when we found it.

So, Madam President, thank you for listening, and those are my three "Es": Education, the economy and the environment.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak at this time?

Senator Lindsay Simmons, you have the floor.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I want to thank Senator Robin Tucker and Senator Michelle Simmons for bringing up environment. As I am the Junior Minister of Home Affairs, I want to say that this Government is committed to the strongest level of environmental protection, sustainability and climate action.

Minister Walter Roban is 100 per cent committed to protecting our environment, from marine to even [doing] away with single-use plastic. And Madam President, April of this year the Government of Bermuda made our commitment clear to the aspiration of the Paris Agreement. As the Statement outlined, we will reduce the carbon footprint, protect our environment and our [fragile] ecosystem.

Madam President, if I could just read something from the Throne Speech?

The President: Yes, you may, Senator Simmons.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: As the Throne Speech outlined, "Bermuda is a treasure trove of environmental wealth, a critical habitat for marine biodiversity, . . ." It also states, Madam President, "As a small island vulnerable to the effects of climate change, Bermuda

must be a leader in the fight to save the planet for future generations.”

And you touched on that, Senator [Michelle] Simmons.

During this session, the Government will introduce a Marine Development Act which will include a marine spatial plan identifying the 20 per cent protected area of Bermuda’s EEZ. The Act will also create a framework to balance development and sustainability, providing an application process for the investment in fishing, offshore renewable energy and “blue tourism.”

Madam President, we have been a successful partner with the Waitt Foundation and the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences [BIOS] to develop a plan to balance the protection of our marine assets. The Deputy Premier, Walter Roban, has made sure that all departments under his Ministry are doing what they have to do to help save our environment.

I want to commend the Department of Home Affairs for going over and beyond. I sit in meetings with the Minister and he is 100 per cent getting us behind renewable energy and some of the things going to different places to make sure that we are using renewable energy to help with reducing our carbon footprint. So thank you to that Ministry.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, very much, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak at this time?

Is there no other Senator wanting to speak at this time?

Senator Darrell, are ready to . . .

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President.

The President: You have the floor.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I would like to remind the listening public as well as all my Senators the title, the topic, of this year’s Throne Speech, if I may?

The President: Yes, you certainly may.

Sen. Owen Darrell: *Social Renewal & Economic Recovery Working together to move Bermuda beyond the pandemic.*

Madam President, I would like to take a few moments to speak on the issue of working together. In the year that I have been in this place, Madam President, I have learned a lot. I learned a lot from you, thank you. I have learned a lot from my Senate colleagues. I have learned a lot from the Opposition Senators, and I have also learned a lot from the Independent Senators. So, I do want to applaud everyone who comes to this place on a Wednesday and also

the individuals who attend other places on Fridays, morning and afternoon, for the work that everyone is doing to move Bermuda beyond the pandemic. I must say that sometimes the different talking points and the different strategies get a little confusing, but I do think that all of us, elected or appointed, are working together to move Bermuda beyond the pandemic.

Madam President, before I dive into and applaud the Progressive Labour Party Government on this Throne Speech, I cannot and will not let the opportunity pass to show my Senate colleagues who wear red, [who are] part of the One Bermuda Alliance, that I was indeed listening to their contributions to this debate. And of course, I am also obligated to explain or remind them that some of their points may have been completely off base. And that is my opinion, Madam President.

Madam President, if I may start and speak on some of the points that the OBA Senate Leader gave in his contribution, I would like to give his contribution a title, Madam President. I would call it *the 41-minute doom-and-gloom speech*. Senator Smith started off in a pretty good space where I thought that he was crediting the Progressive Labour Party Government for finally, (and I quote) “changing the culture of the organisation.” In his words he used (I will paraphrase) *accountability and putting plans in place*. I think he went down that line.

Unfortunately, Madam President, in my opinion, his speech went downhill fast. And if I may paraphrase Senator Smith, he boldly said that *Bermuda was not in a great place prior to the pandemic*.

Oh, really?

Madam President, I wonder why.

Let me take the opportunity, Madam President, if I may to lay down a marker right now. Bermuda was in a bad place because previous Governments decided to burn money [by] bad, bad decision-making, and they left us debt, upon debt, upon debt. And I know that we politicians like to list things that we have done right and things that we have done wrong. But I am going to make it simple. I will lay my marker at the feet of three decisions made by a former Government in red: Morgan’s Point to the tune of \$200 million; an airport deal gone horribly wrong to the tune of \$41 million and rising; and how can we forget their boat race, the America’s Cup, Cross Island payment that we are still paying to WEDCO to the tune of almost \$5 million per year.

So, yes, I agree with Senator Smith. Bermuda was in a bad place long before this pandemic. And we have a Finance Minister who is literally working day and night to figure out a way out of this mess, this huge debt. It is not a good place. And then comes the pandemic.

Then Senator Smith discussed his version of accountability. Madam President, I will paraphrase again. The OBA Senate Leader said that the Progressive Labour Party should be held accountable, that

voters were switched off at the last election just over a year ago.

That is just not true, Madam President.

Sen. Ben Smith: Point of order, Madam President.

The President: Senator Smith, what is your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Ben Smith: My statement was not about the PLP Government. I was not putting the responsibility and accountability on them. It was overall accountability. So, if he is going to make mention of what I said, make sure that he does not paint it that I was pointing fingers at the PLP Government alone.

The President: Your point is taken.
Senator Darrell, you may—

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, thank you.

I will change that. He said that *accountability must be had that voters were switched off at the last election*.

I will put it this way, Madam President. I did not teach math in high school; however, it was clear that there was one segment of the community who were turned off at the last election because by the numbers that I have run, by the numbers that I have looked at post-election, almost every single constituency and every single candidate in the 2020 election who ran for the Progressive Labour Party actually increased their vote percentage. Flip it the other way, and almost every single candidate who ran for the One Bermuda Alliance lost vote percentage.

So I would say, Madam President, that the only individuals who were switched off at the last election were OBA voters. But that should not surprise us because we have heard time and time again in this place individuals from the other side come up with every excuse that they can find about why we took our vote count significantly higher than it was before October 1, 2020.

Then Senator Smith mentioned *planning down the line*. I will speak more about this topic in a moment. But I would agree with Senator Smith on one part, and I will say this, proper preparation prevents a poor performance. And as was mentioned by another Senator a moment ago, we have got a capital asset that is failing, and here we are scratching our heads trying to come up with all sorts of plans to ensure that we do not have to return [to taking] our waste to the landfill.

Now, I might be new on the scene, Madam President, but I am also a historian and I have been told that prior to 2012, around about December, there were plans in place to overhaul and renovate the Tynes Bay incinerator. We all know what happened.

Later that year there was a Government that took over and they felt that the plans that were in place were not good enough, or they would put them on a shelf and they would take the money that was put aside to renovate Tynes Bay and spend it elsewhere. I will repeat. Like a boat race, like an airport, and a bad Morgan's Point deal. And they talk about *planning*, when they left the plans to solve our waste problem sitting on the shelf?

So I do not accept that the Progressive Labour Party Government has failed to plan. I do not accept that at all. You can have all the plans in place, Madam President, but if you do not know how to execute and instead you want to throw money at shiny things instead of practical things, of course, to quote the Senator again, *we will find ourselves in a bad situation*.

Senator Smith started giving us some numbers. He reckoned that the project will cost \$100 million to fix Tynes Bay. He even asked, *Where are we going to find the money from?* [There was] \$200 million, \$41 million, \$20 million and rising, wasted. By my math we would have enough money to do Tynes Bay with money in the bank.

Madam President, I would like to speak on the contribution by Senator Robin Tucker. While far more congratulatory with the Government's plans, she also had some comments that grabbed my attention with a curious statement of her own. I will paraphrase again; I am sure if I get it wrong she will remind me.

She mentioned that Government may have been signalling difficult times ahead by also saying that times are going to get harder. But Madam President, I hate to break it to you or my good Senate colleague on the other side, but this is not new information. We have been screaming this reality for the last year and a half. We knew this when the Progressive Labour Party was elected in 2020. And we knew that we were elected to provide strong leadership, to make tough decisions, to see this country through the pandemic and the severe negative economic impact that it brought and that was still coming.

So she is absolutely right, but we are not hiding that. We have made that point over and over and over again. And just a suggestion to Senator Tucker, Madam President, if I may, that she pay very close attention to the countless ministerial briefings that the Government Ministers are [giving], almost daily, which go into great detail about [the] many initiatives laid out in this year's Throne Speech.

I am sure that the third Senator from that side will have many great things to say about the 2021 Throne Speech delivered by the Progressive Labour Party.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Sen. Owen Darrell: Absolutely. However, Madam President, if I can continue. Enough about what Sena-

tors from the other side have said. Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the Government team for this Throne Speech, and not only the Ministers but the entire Progressive Labour Party team, some who sit here and some who sit in another place, for showing Bermuda that this Government has put together a plan, and we intend to execute on that plan.

My former [school] principal will love this part. I learned many years ago from sitting in the Berkeley Institute Founder's Day ceremonies that it is important to recognise the heroes amongst you as well as the ones who have come before you. So, Madam President, I am going to take a few minutes and I am actually going to recognise the team of Progressive Labour Party Ministers who are working diligently to put plans in place and execute the plan.

On Founder's Day they just used to call their last names. So with no disrespect, Madam President, I would just like to recognise and thank Burt, Roban, Simmons, Ming, Hayward, Rabain, Scott, Burch, Furbert and Furbert again. (It is like one of them was a senior and one of them was a junior at Berkeley.)

[Crosstalk]

Sen. Owen Darrell: Dickinson, Peets and Wilson. Those are the Ministers who took time and laid out a plan of social renewal and economic recovery for this country. Those are the Ministers who are working together to move Bermuda beyond the pandemic.

However, those Ministers do not do it alone. They are supported by technical officers. And they are also supported by elected officials who sit in another place. And, yes, Madam President, if I may, I will call them by name as well.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Swan, Foggo, Burgess, Richardson, Campbell, Famous, Caines, Weeks, Adams, Simmons-Wade, Tyrell, Lister III, De Silva, Wade, Caesar, Simmons, and not to leave out my colleagues who sit in this place. Junior Ministers Hodgson, Simmons, Richardson.

Madam President, without everyone working together to move Bermuda beyond this pandemic we would not be as successful as we are beginning to realise.

As I said in a Ministerial Statement this morning, Madam President, 9 of the 31 initiatives in our Economic Recovery Plan have actually been completed. And this Government will continue to work day in and day out to execute on the other 22 so that the people of Bermuda can see the cost of living reduced, increased economic activity, and jobs.

Madam President, I would like to take the time now just to touch on a few topics that I found extremely intriguing in this year's Throne Speech. Just like

Senator Simmons, I am sure it will come as no surprise to anyone that the first one I decide to discuss or touch on or applaud is the topic of education. And I would like to give a story, and this story actually goes along the lines of something that Senator Smith said earlier. That the public perception of students that have gone to or currently are in public education must change.

It comes as no surprise that when I hear these types of comments in the community, I take them personally, as I did teach for 15 years. I currently have my children who are public education, and many of my closest friends are successes of public education. So I want to tell this story. I was at a place on Friday evening celebrating. There was a young man next to me who holds a pretty good position in our community, jobwise.

And someone said to him, *Hey, what school did you go [to]?*

The guy proudly said, *I went to CedarBridge Academy.*

And [the other] guy said, *Really? Well, you must have got some special lessons on the side because I haven't seen anybody as smart as you with a job like you [have] come out of that place.*

Needless to say, Madam President, I almost jumped out of my chair. And as I just said a moment ago, I take comments like that personally. And along the same vein of [what] I just [mentioned] a moment ago, I can tell you that classmates of mine who went to the Berkeley Institute, like Branch Pilot Mr. Chad Townsell, Dr. Ayesha Peets [and] Ms. Tenia Woolridge, some of us may know, are graduates of the Berkeley Institute, class of 1997. And I, for one, as well as their principal as well as their teachers cannot be more proud of the things that these individuals and others continue to do as examples of public education.

[Let me] talk about some of my former students, Natasha Simmons, who is a top nurse at the Bermuda Hospitals Board, a graduate of CedarBridge Academy. Mr. Tashon Talbot, Tiffany Austin—one went to CedarBridge and one went to Berkeley—hold managerial positions at the Bermuda Monetary Authority. Mr. Tamar Richards, a top actuary in Bermuda, graduate of CedarBridge Academy. Ms. Dejanee Hill-Edwards, in the insurance world, a graduate of the Berkeley Institute. Ms. Kimika Jackson, Ms. Shalini Johnson, and Ms. Alexa Lightbourne. There is no shortage of examples of individuals who are success stories of [Bermuda's] public education.

So, I do agree with Senator Simmons that we need to move away from that type of language. And I will finish off with the Education Minister's daughter, my daughter, my son, who we entrust the teachers in the public education system to give them the best education possible.

So I am happy to see in this Throne Speech, Madam President, that the Government is determined

to transform public education. And I smiled when Senator Simmons mentioned the prototyping that is actually happening now. And if I may just read a quote from an individual who is actually taking part in this prototyping, actually today. And I just asked, *So, tell me what you are doing.*

He said, *Basically, what is happening is they are breaking down the main areas: teaching; training; timetabling; tech advisory partnerships; and having different stakeholders, teachers, students, private companies participate in the prototyping with role-play activities to understand what the process would look like when the signature schools reform.*

And a major piece is having the stakeholders provide their feedback and their experience on how we can better the process. And there is no shortage of individuals who will come up to me and they will be excited to say, *Hey, I'm working on the Learning First team. You know I am part of the transformation of the public education system.*

So there is lots of excitement that is in the community about what this Government is doing to advance the transformation of public education. Again, to reiterate, this Government is committed to improving education outcomes.

Madam President, the next topic I would like to highlight out of this Throne Speech put together by the Government is health care.

I pride myself in getting into the community. Yes, I lost an election; but I made connections with individuals in Smith's South. One individual I went back to see on Saturday. And this individual said, *Senator Darrell, there is one thing that I have been screaming for for years and years, and that is affordable health care.*

And although some changes have been made, FutureCare and the support [for the] uninsured, the support [for the] pregnant women, obviously those changes come with a little bit of an increased cost. However, one of the fundamental plans, and it is laid out in our Throne Speech, of the Bermuda Economic Recovery, is actually to reduce the cost and to move to universal health care. And I am glad to see that the Progressive Labour Party has stated again that this is one of their priorities and that this will be accelerated very shortly.

And as I left the gentleman I went to see on Saturday, I assured him that this Government is focused on delivering affordable and essential health care for all.

Madam President, I would like to touch on the youth. And I agree that, although we have success stories, we are losing far too many youth to [a negative part of] society. As we heard from the Junior Minister earlier, whether it comes with youth unemployment . . . we heard a report tabled by the Minister earlier about the National Youth Policy. And I would like to applaud this Government for getting the youth involved because this National Youth Policy was actual-

ly put together by some of the brightest and most dedicated young people in this community. So that shows a commitment of this Government that the youth are important. And it also shows that there are intelligent and switched-on youth who are up to the task of assisting with the changes that this country needs.

Madam President, I would also like to applaud the work and applaud this Government as they look to improve the work of the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation. I have individuals who are very close to me, again, friends and family, that have benefited greatly in their entrepreneurial pursuits due to the work and the assistance of the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation. And I am glad to see that this Government won't just rest on its laurels and point at success stories. But, as it says, and I quote . . . may I, Madam President?

The President: You certainly may.

Sen. Owen Darrell: "The Government will advance legislation to modernise the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation . . ." And this would sit directly in line with Bermuda's Economic Recovery. And this is a breath of fresh air to individuals who have long grown tired of monotonous red tape that may hold their entrepreneurial dreams from progressing.

I am also happy to see the work of the Minister of Social Development and Seniors to see that the Government is actually going to advance amendments in the area of a senior abuse register Act. Also, to protect seniors—and this is a big one, it is huge. It is actually very low, it is very sad, but seniors who are victims of financial abuse. And a lot of times that comes from direct, close family members. So I am glad to see that also along with seniors that this Government is going to strengthen some of the protection on protecting children. Much has been said and Senator Tucker did speak on this earlier. Much has been said about the Department of Child and Family Services.

And I am glad to see . . . again, I will go back to execution. As I am the Junior Minister of Public Works, I have to point out again, as I mentioned earlier, and if I go back to the beginning on page 1, Madam President, of the Throne Speech, one of the opening lines was . . . and if I may quote?

The President: You certainly may.

Sen. Owen Darrell: "Changes that were deferred have now become imperative for survival. Changes that were resisted now transcend stubbornness, as resistance is negligent for future generations."

There is no greater example of this negligence of past Governments than where we find ourselves with the infrastructure failures of Tynes Bay. We can sit here and some may accuse me of pointing fingers; I am just bringing awareness. However, I am

happy to see that this Government . . . again, if I may quote, Madam President?

The President: Yes, you may.

Sen. Owen Darrell: [This Government] has come up with in “Bermuda’s Economic Recovery Plan, a cross-ministry project management team has been formed to accelerate the replacement of Tynes Bay and the upgrading of Bermuda’s waste management and water infrastructure.” So, again, we have plans and we are shown to be willing and able to swiftly execute those plans.

As I spoke earlier this morning, Madam President, other areas of interest for Public Works is the new marina. We also see with new hotel developments there are other infrastructure projects that will be happening very shortly. And I was actually told during the lunch break that some of these strategic plans will actually be starting before the end of this month.

I would like to touch on one last point and I think Senator Smith may have raised this again, but after 41 minutes I may have missed it. But it touches on the issue of national security. And I hate to do this, but I just want to bring awareness that in 2014 there was said to be a 20-year review of the Island’s prisons and the infrastructure. Madam President, this should come to no surprise to you, again, as what I have laid out before. This 20-year review in 2014 was not done. This is just another example of how the former One Bermuda Alliance Government decided that it was not important at the time to take care of maintenance and take care of necessary infrastructure improvements.

So I am glad to see that, again in the spirit and the vein of execution, this Progressive Labour Party Government has decided it is important to upgrade the CCTV system which will not only tackle bad behaviour on our roads, but it will also assist in helping the police to tackle violent crime.

So, Madam President, I would like to finish my contribution to this debate on a happier note. And that note is pointing out Bermudian excellence that we have seen come to the fore throughout this pandemic. And I am not bragging, but as my former principal does, I will never miss the opportunity to highlight my former students who are doing well. So as you would see in this Throne Speech, this Progressive Labour Party Government pointed out the hard work and the scholarships earned by Cyana Burgess, graduate of the Berkeley Institute (I may add). Also, the work of Ms. Andira Crichlow, graduate of the Berkeley Institute, as well as her brother. And this excellence has kept smiles on the faces and continued to give individuals in this community hope that working together we will continue to move Bermuda beyond the pandemic. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.
Would any other Senator care to speak?

I see the hand of Senator Jones. Marcus, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

I must say that over the last 30 to 35 minutes I have been entertained, if nothing else. And I have had to basically rip up my speech—

[Laughter]

Sen. Marcus Jones: —throw it in the dustpan of history and address, quite candidly and targeted, some of the misconceptions, some of the (shall we say) unsubstantiated claims made by the esteemed Government Senator Owen Darrell.

But before I get to Senator Darrell, let me first address Senator Richardson who raised the issue about the airport and the \$41 million that is now being spent on the minimum revenue guarantee. And just for the purpose of educating, and bringing a little bit of context not only to my colleagues here in the Senate but also to the listening audience, we have to go back in time and try not to be revisionists of history because one can easily fall into that trap, Madam President, when we delve and wade into the waters of politics. And so it is important that we straighten the record.

Madam President, you know, without me even going into too much detail that after 14 years of governing this country, the PLP Government had left the coffers fairly bare. And there is no point going back down that road, but just for the record, the OBA Government that came into power in 2012 had to be innovative, had to be creative, had to find ways not only on their first day on the job of covering the payroll of its civil servants, but also finding ways to keep the engine running. And we find throughout their time in office, from 2012 until 2017, they were able to not only pull Bermuda back from the brink financially, but they were also able to put projects in place that was able to stimulate the economy.

Some of those projects, Madam President, are still reaping benefits in this country. I would hate to see where Bermuda would have been without the stimulus of America’s Cup. I would hate to think where Bermuda would have been without the stimulus of new hotels. I would hate to think where Bermuda would be without an airport that was built in time, was built that offered many jobs and opportunities to Bermudians who otherwise would not have found work. Madam President, we must follow the facts. We must not change history; we must see it for what it is.

Now, we are made to understand that the Progressive Labour Party Government—

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, point of information.

The President: Do you accept a point of information?

Sen. Marcus Jones: No, I don't yield, Madam President. There were many things that the Senator raised that I could have raised . . . I just wanted him to say what he wanted to say. I thank you for allowing me to speak.

Madam President, now, as it comes to the airport, we are made to understand that this Progressive Labour Party Government was prepared to go into debt to build a new airport—go into debt when Bermuda was already over the red line of debt as it was. Even if there wasn't a new hotel, Madam President, this Government would have to pay minimum revenue guarantee whether we had a new airport or not.

I am glad to say, Madam President, we have a new airport. I am glad to say, Madam President, it is the envy of the world. I am glad to say, Madam President, it is a place where you feel good about coming into your country without putting the Government and this country into more debt to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. We were able to be creative. We were able to be innovative, and able to put a new airport in this country that we can all be proud of.

Madam President, I now switch over to Tynes Bay, again.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Point of clarification, Madam President.

The President: Do you accept a point of clarification?

Sen. Marcus Jones: I do not yield, Madam President.

The President: Carry on.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you very much.

Now, let's talk about Tynes Bay. Now, Tynes Bay, we were made to understand by this Throne Speech, is part of their Economic Recovery Plan. Now, less we forget, as much as this Government would like to say that there was nothing put towards that Tynes Bay [Treatment] Facility while the OBA was in power, I have done my research, Madam President. And I am happy to say that in 2014/15, the OBA Government injected \$12 million for brand-new equipment for the Tynes Bay [Treatment] Facility.

Now, that was six years ago, Madam President. And what did that do? That new equipment, in addition to the \$1 million that was used to build a custom-made facility to house that new equipment, succeeded in allowing us to be able to double the electricity output of that facility. So the idea that the facility has to be entirely replaced six years later rings hollow.

I recognise the fact that the Government is looking for projects to do. I get that. But we must ask the question: How much maintenance, how much taking care of that equipment has been invested into that \$12 million capital upgrade since 2014? I leave it to my fellow colleagues here in the Senate. I leave it to

the listening audience to pick the bones out of that one.

Now, Madam President, one would think that Senator Darrell is the Opposition. He spent the majority of his time picking and coming at the Opposition party rather than spend more time applauding and celebrating his own Government's Throne Speech. But be that as it may, Madam President, I will have to say this, when Ben Smith spoke about their being apathy within the community in regard to elections, let me give you some numbers that will shine some light and give proof that in fact we dealt with a country that had lost sight and lost interest in politics and elections.

In 2007, 76 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote. In 2012, 71 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote. In 2017, 72 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote.

Madam President, do you care to guess how many showed up in 2020 to vote? There was 55 per cent!

Well, you may ask, *Well, 55 per cent, has Bermuda ever been that low?* No, Madam President. One can pull lots of reasons from out of the sky of why there was so much voter apathy. One could claim, as I have heard on the doorsteps, as I have knocked on the doors of a constituency that I ran in, many of those excuses were that many of our people were afraid to come out to vote, because in the midst of a pandemic, in the midst of a time when Bermuda was at its height of a crisis, this Government called an election. It looked beyond the health and safety of its people and decided that the pursuit of power was far more important than the care and the health and the safety of its people. That is undeniable. When you knock on the doors, that is the answer that you get. So that is a little spiel about the electorate.

Madam President, the PLP Government over the last 22 years has been in power for 18 years. Eighteen years of those 22 years. The OBA Government has been in power for five years. I would say to you, most respectfully, Madam President, that if I was the Government in power for over 70 per cent of the time over the last 22 years, I would see far more improvement in my country than I have seen today.

Rather than go down the list of debt that is out of control, rather than go down the list of education that has taken a hard knock, rather than go down the list of all sorts of facilities that have been run down and not maintained, Madam President, let's suffice it to say that I suggest that the Senator to my left who just spoke before me practice a little bit of humility when discussing the affairs of this country when it was his party, it was his Government that has been in power for this amount of time and we are in the situation that we are today.

Now, Madam President, with those words of rebuttal to what I have heard for the last 40 minutes, allow me to now proceed to talk about this year's Throne Speech. Now, Madam President, throughout

the deliberations and throughout the speeches that we have heard today, and even in another place, very few of the speakers have begun their discourse without first referencing this pandemic crisis. It is not something that we like to talk about. It is not something that we are proud of or happy about. When we think about the many family members, friends and neighbours it is fair to say that most of us have been touched in the realm of deaths within our families, amongst our friends, we are all going through a national mourning for the people who we love that have come under this pandemic. It is undeniable.

We also realise that this pandemic has had an incredible negative impact upon our economy. Is it the only thing that has impacted this economy to put it where it is today? No. But it is the number one thing. That goes without saying.

So, when I listened to the Throne Speech that was read two weeks ago, I was very much interested to see what the Government had in place and planned to use (the word that I guess has been overused) to “pivot” from a position of crisis management to a position of (in their words) social renewal and economic recovery. And one of their planks, one of their building blocks for economic recovery planning, is to increase the residential population.

Now, Madam President, what I found in that Throne Speech as it relates to immigration was a sentence that talked about enhancing the digital ability and capacity of the Immigration Department. Now, Madam President, as much as I am very much happy that we are looking at a system that is going to allow the processing of permits to be far more efficient, I do not see that as a building block for actually bringing about the massive immigration reform that this country needs. After all, our first and initial stab at legislation for immigration in this country goes back, way back, into the 1940s.

And since that time, there have been amendments on amendments upon amendments that make the original legislation look like Swiss cheese. What this country needs is an overhaul of its immigration legislation. It needs bold leadership!

Now, many people on that side have, and quite rightly, complained that immigration in this country was used to hold down a certain sector of this country. No one can deny that. That is in fact true. But now that you are the Government, now that you hold all the cards in determining the pathway forward for immigration and increasing the residential population in this country, then you need to go ahead and do it. There is no one to stop you.

In this Westminster political system that we work in, the governing party holds all the chips. The Opposition party gets their opportunity to critique, but ultimately the right and privilege to govern a country rests on the shoulders of the party that has won the Government. So, no excuses. No hiding. It is out there clear for all this country to see that immigration reform

sits at the feet of this present government. What they are suggesting that could bring about monumental change within this immigration reform is simply superficial and window dressing.

Madam President, we have seen and heard with the actual Economic Recovery Plan that was rolled out back in March of 2021 that only up until a month ago has there been a subcontractor contracted to manage this project. So, nine months from its initial rollout, we then get a statement from the Government that KPMG has been recruited to manage this Economic Recovery Plan.

Nine months is a long time, Madam President. Many people have lost jobs. Many businesses have gone under. And we are waiting nine months to put a team together to get the job done. Not good enough; we got to do better.

This Government needs to be nimble. This Government needs to be quick. This Government needs to move at the speed of business in order for us to stay above water. And as the Opposition we are duty-bound to hold this Government's feet to the fire. We have to do it. People's lives are at stake. People's health is at stake. People's piece of mind is at stake, Madam President.

So, we find with this Economic Recovery Plan that KPMG has been recruited to manage the process. Do we not have enough people in the Ministry of Finance to do this? There are many talented people in this Ministry who I believe can do it. Or is it that we do not enough people? Madam President, we have the largest number of civil servants per capita than anywhere else in the world. You have got to be kidding me! A population of 64,000 has over 5,000 civil servants at its disposal. But yet this Government finds it important and necessary that, with this bloated civil service, they have to go outside and subcontract and find others to do the job. It is not just the Finance Ministry, Madam President, it is also in the legal fraternity.

This Government has to go outside of its Department of Public Prosecutions [DPP] to find a law firm to represent it, while we are paying hundreds of thousands of dollars, yes, [thousands and millions] of dollars to staff-up these ministries. That is fundamentally wrong. That is fundamentally mismanagement of the people's purse, Madam President.

Now, with this Economic Recovery Plan we are getting a sense that it needs the muscle of one of the top four financial services companies not only in Bermuda, but in the world. We say to ourselves, How can we do this job without incurring so much expense?

Now, on page 4 of the Throne Speech a statement was made in relation to the Government's Youth Employment Strategy in the Economic Recovery Plan. Madam President, may I quote it?

The President: You certainly may, Senator Jones.

Sen. Marcus Jones: “There is multi-generational trauma and dysfunction that manifests itself as the social dysfunction we see in our island. The root of these issues is a lack of opportunity, . . .”

I am going to repeat those last words. “The root of these issues is a lack of opportunity.”

I could not disagree more with this. Lack of opportunity is not the root cause of the social dysfunction that we see in this Island. The root cause of these issues is the breakdown of the family structure, Madam President.

Once upon a time this country was full of strong families. In fact, it was not a strange sight to see multi-generations under one roof, three generations under one roof! What did that give us? That allowed the generation that was above us to pass down the values and the legacies from one generation to the next. So grandchildren were able to live side-by-side with their grandparents and be able to draw from them their values, their sense of rightness. And for many in this country we know that we were once upon a time a God-fearing religious country. And with that comes an automatic respect for law and order. With that come strong family ties. With those strong community ties, along with a respect for law and order, there also comes a drive for a good work ethic. The dignity of work was passed down from one generation to the next.

The phrase *It takes a village to raise a child*, was not just a saying in Bermuda. It was practiced! It was something that we all . . . as I look around this room I don’t think there is anyone under 40.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Sen. Marcus Jones: I’m sorry. Let me rephrase that. There is a few of us who are under 40, and me not included. But the point I am trying to make is that as I look around this room, I can safely say that many of us, if not all of us, have experienced the benefits of multi-generational families who lived around us, neighbourhoods and communities that were well connected, who looked out for one another.

You know, I remember quite clearly as a young boy there was a lady in our neighbourhood who used to always watch out as I walked home from school. Her name was Islo Wade. And anyone from Somerset who comes from there knows Islo Wade. And she would see me walking up the hill from school, from West End Primary School, my alma mater. And she would let my mother know when [I] came home, *I just saw Marcus and Stephen go up to [your house] there. I was watching them.* And my mom always appreciated that.

And you know what made my heart so warm was later on when I had children of my own and my kids, as young as they were, would walk to school to West End Primary from my homestead, who would be standing on her steps looking out for my children?

Mrs. Islo Wade! And I would drive up and she would wave me down and she said, *Marcus, I just saw your children walking back home from school.* That is three generations that we experienced. We are missing that today.

So, Madam President, you can understand my passion. You can understand my “upsetment” (if that is a word)—

[Laughter]

Sen. Marcus Jones: —that the root of social dysfunction in this particular Throne Speech can be attributed to a lack of opportunity. Yes, lack of opportunity does play a part. But Madam President, I submit to you that that is not the root cause.

Madam President, we need a reformation in this country. There are some things that we are never going to be able to go back to. This age of social media, as good as it is, and I would not want to give it up for the world, but one thing it has done to some degree is replace the reach-out-and-touch dynamic within our community. We have resorted to reaching out and touching one another digitally when we do need to go back to the old-time way of making that direct, face-to-face touch, touching one another.

Now, education was raised in this Throne Speech and we read about the signature schools that this Government is looking to implement. I had the pleasure, Madam President, of sitting with one of my constituents in Pembroke West a couple of months ago, trying to determine and figure out why my people did not come out to vote. But that is another topic, Madam President. But I was able to sit with a gentleman who many of you in this room would know by his name and by his reputation, who is a giant in this country when it comes to education. His name is Mr. Mansfield Brock. I called him up. I said, *Mr. Brock, do you have a couple of minutes to spare me so that I can talk to you about education?*

He said, *Absolutely! Come on down, Mr. Jones.*

Well, two hours later I felt like I had been sitting at the feet of Socrates. I felt like I was so smart and intelligent just by spending two hours with Mr. Mansfield Brock. It was a revelation, Madam President. It was an awe-inspiring, almost [an] epiphany as I sat in the presence of Mr. Mansfield Brock. And he schooled me up on education.

For those of you in the listening audience, and even those in this room who may not know about the reputation of Mr. Mansfield “Jimmy” Brock, he was once the principal of the Sandys Secondary School there in Somerset. He was also the former Permanent Secretary of Education. He was one of the founding chief executives of the Bermuda College. So he comes with a breath of knowledge and expertise. I will also say this about Mr. Brock, about his personal in-

vestment in education. All three of his children are in the top of their field in their industries.

We remember Arlene Brock, was the first Ombudsman of this country. We know that his younger daughter, Michelle Jackson, is a Senior VP at BF&M who is very well respected in that industry. Now, their son, I am a little bit more familiar with because he was a contemporary of mine in Warwick Academy. His name is Dr. Malcolm Brock. He is and was, still is actually, the Director of Cancer Research at Johns Hopkins. He is also a specialist in thoracic surgery there at Johns Hopkins. And may I submit to you, Madam President, he is probably one of the top three on the planet in that field. From a little Island of 64,000, this young man has scaled to the heights of medicine.

Where did that come from? It came from an environment that nurtured and propelled education within the home. It always goes back to the family, Madam President. From the family structure that engenders a society that is healthy and wholesome. It also is important and critical for the education of anybody. I was fortunate enough to have it in my home. And Mr. Mansfield Brock is an example, a fine model of what education can do.

Now, quite candidly, in the two hours that I was there with Mr. Brock, one of the most important things he told me was, he said, *Before you can find solutions for education, you need a philosophy of education.*

I said, *Okay. Lay it on me, Mr. Brock.*

He said, *You need a philosophy. You need to value the teachers. You need to value the students. You need to value all the stakeholders who involve themselves with the rearing of education of students.* He said, *Our expectations need to be high, not only from the students' performance, but the performance of the teachers.*

I did a little bit of digging and found out that under his tutelage, as the Permanent Secretary of Education back there in the 1970s, the grades for the public school kids were not good. Under his tutelage he raised the level of the core subjects, of the grades of the children at that time. And what did he do? He forced the teachers to be accountable. He caused the parents to get more involved, and it produced good results, Madam President.

Allow me to quote a couple of words that he said, because I believe they are rich and they are worth this discourse when talking about education for this country. I quote his words, "I cannot think of a more difficult job in any society than teaching that produces mastery learning, efficacious teaching. If I am right and efficacious teaching is one of the most important jobs in a commercial economy such as Bermuda's that creates a large number of new jobs, which for the most part demand post-secondary levels of education and training, then that is a sufficient reason for compensating our teachers adequately. I do

not believe that there is any reason teachers in Bermuda should be paid less than doctors or lawyers or accountants or underwriters or actuaries. Larger countries such as the USA, Canada, the UK, the EU and Australia, which create large numbers of jobs which do not require post-secondary levels of education in their factories and farms and fisheries and forests, can get away with underpaying their teachers. Bermuda can't."

Madam President, on page 8 of the Throne Speech the Government states, and may I quote, "In keeping with its core function, the Bermuda Tourism Authority will deliver enhanced sales and marketing abroad." Agreed. I think everybody would agree with that.

What is troubling is a statement that was made further down on that page. And I quote. "Whilst the execution of any tourism campaign and marketing strategy is the purview of the BTA, leadership in tourism policy must come from the Government of Bermuda, who commits tens of millions of taxpayer funds to the organisation, a commitment which demands a far greater return than has been realised in the years since the creation of the Authority."

Let me ask you this question, Madam President. Is there anyone in the Cabinet, is there anyone who sits around that table—and I ask this respectfully—who would have more expertise, who would have more experience within the industry of tourism than what you would find at the Bermuda Tourism Authority?

You would be hard-pressed to find it. Madam President, that is not being negative; that is just a fact. I would not expect anyone around the table of the Cabinet to be able to go up to King Edward Memorial Hospital and administer a surgery in the operating room. I would not expect them to do it. Would they be looked down on for not being able to do it? Absolutely not! That is not their expertise. So, Madam President, to ask and demand that the job for providing policy for tourism be in the hands of Government . . . and Madam President, if you look at the Tourism Ministry today, there are literally only five staff members in the Ministry of Tourism. Four of those staff members deal with the inspections of the hotels and other properties, and then the other person who tends to be leading that group is in charge of policy and administration. They are fine professionals within their field, but they are not equipped or able to actually lead a country by providing guidance for tourism policy. It is just not there.

Ever since this PLP Government has become the Government, it looks like they have tried to do their best to dismantle this Bermuda Tourism Authority. Now, we know that the industry has taken many hits over the last 20 years. And for the longest time tourism was a political football. What the OBA decided to do in their wisdom was to create this Authority, give it its independence, give it its autonomous privilege to

be able to make those executive top-line decisions to steer tourism out of the depths of the sphere that they found it in. And Madam President, in the five to six years that they have been there we have seen measurable improvements and upgrades in the arrival numbers, money spent by the tourists, a growing cruise business in this country under the guidance of this autonomous Bermuda Tourism Authority.

Now this Government that has tried its best to get involved, not only by infusing its Members of Parliament on the board and wanting to effect the hiring and the day-to-day operations of this Authority, we find that many of the professionals who were in that particular Authority are now leaving. It is a stampede leaving that Authority. Why? Because they see the writing on the wall. This Government wants to take back a successful Authority, a successful entity that has brought about major changes, major improvements in this industry.

One of the things that I was happy to see was this Government's intent to expand the boundaries of the Economic Empowerment Zone. Good move. I would say let's consider enhancing and enlarging the Economic Empowerment Zone in the East End and West End. They need some assistance and some help as well. How about extending the benefits and privileges that are extended to those who live in this Economic Empowerment Zone to those persons who own their business that have found it necessary for them to leave a commercial building which has lots of overhead expenses and go into their homes to run their business?

It is often said, and it is true, small businesses are the engine of any economy. Of all the business sizes that let go of employees during times of depression, or in this situation a crisis like a pandemic, it is small businesses that hang onto their employees the longest. The bigger businesses . . . oops! I'm wrong there. Our government doesn't let go of people; they keep as many as they can. But the small businesses do their best to hang onto their staff, Madam President.

Senator Michelle Simmons raised the issue of the newly constituted Tax Reform Commission. I am really hopeful that this newly appointed Tax Reform Commission team will do all they can in light of what this pandemic has done to our economy. My sincere hope is that they get on board to the job at hand, the assignment that they have been given, and come up with a reform to our tax structure that is going to assist and bring relief to many who are hardest hit, and be able to bring about a tax system that is going to be able to assist as many businesses in our economy as possible.

Madam President, may I ask how much time I have?

The President: You have 10 more minutes. You will finish at 4:15.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Ten more minutes. Thank you, Madam President.

There are three things, Madam President, and as I am losing my voice I am going to bring this to an end.

[Laughter]

Sen. Marcus Jones: I have hollered and screamed, yelled and shouted. Now it is time to bring it down a notch. It is not a bedtime story, Madam President.

The President: It hasn't been.

Sen. Marcus Jones: There were three things that I have observed when I read and listened to this Throne Speech. And may I also add, Madam President, that in 2018 the size of the Throne Speech that was produced by this Government was 17 pages. Here we are in the year 2021 and the size of that Throne Speech was 12 pages. I do not know if that is an indication of weariness on behalf of the Government, a lack of creativity, a lack of innovation, a lack of ideas . . . I don't know. But I would think, Madam President, having been through and in fact still in the midst of a pandemic, that this Government would have a Throne Speech that would be full of answers, full of solutions, full of hope, full of optimism—full of solutions.

There were three main observations that I had when reading this Throne Speech, Madam President.

1. This Government's eagerness to grow an already bloated civil service while outsourcing much of its work. You do not have to look any further than the Ministry of Finance and within the Legal Department.
2. This Government's lip service to an important building block for economic recovery; namely, immigration reform, while providing superficial improvements in the processing of work permits and the like by digitisation.
3. This Government's hesitancy to allow or taking back independent bodies of professionals, education and tourism, respectively, whose autonomy is paramount in producing the best outcomes at a time in history when a global pandemic requires a paradigm shift in the way we think, the way we live, and the way we do business.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Would any other Senator care to speak at this time?

No. Then I would just like to say to those listening in the audience, this has been a very healthy debate by all Senators today. And many of you have covered the areas of health care and education that I probably would have, and I just want to thank each

one of you for your comments. At this time, I think, certainly those of the listening public will be enriched and knowledgeable and proud of the Senators in this Chamber during this debate that you have given today.

I would just like to reiterate the words of the Governor when in her closing remarks she said this, "I wish to close by paying tribute to the charitable groups that have been feeding and caring for the people of Bermuda during their hours of need; and paying tribute to the dedicated women and men across Bermuda's public services for everything that they are doing to respond to the pandemic."

[Inaudible interjections]

The President: I beg your pardon. Do you want me to repeat what I've said?

[Inaudible interjections]

The President: I am sorry about people not being able to hear what I said. I did indicate that this has been a healthy debate and all in Bermuda who have heard you today would be very proud of all that you have said. You have touched on all areas of this Throne Speech. And I think they are certainly proud of you and they are very much more informed by this Senate.

I have indicated that there were areas that I would have liked to have spoken to, but they have been covered by you all, and covered quite diligently, and it won't be necessary for me to repeat any of the areas in health care, education and so much more. So I will not do that this afternoon because I too am very proud of each one of you and all that you have said today.

However, I would like to reiterate the comments that have been made by the Governor in her closing remarks. She [stated]: "I wish to close by paying tribute to the charitable groups that have been feeding and caring for the people of Bermuda during their hours of need; and paying tribute to the dedicated women and men across Bermuda's public services for everything that they are doing to respond to the pandemic."

And I must say they are continuing to respond and we are all very proud of that.

With that, I will hand over to Minister Peets for his closing comments.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Thank you, Madam President. Thank you to the Government Senators, Opposition Senators and Independent Senators for your robust and thoughtful and careful deliberation and discussion today.

Madam President, I move that the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor:

"May it please Your Excellency:

The Senate has the honour to thank Your Excellency for the most gracious speech with which Your Excellency was pleased to open the present session of Parliament."

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.
Is there any objection to that motion?
There is no objection.
A suitable message will be sent.
Thank you all very much.

[Motion carried: Message of thanks to be sent to Her Excellency the Governor.]

The President: We will now move on, continuing with our Orders of the Day, and the next Order is the consideration of the draft Order entitled the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021. And that is in the name of Senator Hodgson, the Junior Minister of Health.

Senator Hodgson, you have the floor.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 71(2)

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that Standing Order 71(2) be suspended so that Senate may now proceed with consideration of the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.
Carry on, Senator Hodgson.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 71(2) suspended.]

DRAFT ORDER

PUBLIC HEALTH (COVID-19) EMERGENCY EXTENSION (NO. 6) ORDER 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Senate do now take under consideration the draft Order entitled the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021.

Madam President, I am pleased to invite this Honourable Chamber to consider the Order entitled [Public Health \(COVID-19\) Emergency Extension \(No. 6\) Order 2021](#).

Madam President, Senators will be aware that the current Health Emergency Order is scheduled to lapse on 29 November 2021. The Emergency Order, which has been in place since 30 June 2020, following the state of emergency put in place on 1 April 2020 was made pursuant to section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949 and declared that a public health

emergency exists in Bermuda due to a communicable disease that poses a threat to the Island.

We live on a very small Island, and as we know from previous outbreaks, the coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19 spreads quickly and negatively impacts the whole community. We can slow the spread of the virus by following basic public health advice of wearing a mask to cover our nose and mouth, as well as physically distancing, downloading the WeHealth Bermuda app and avoiding the three Cs of closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings.

Also, Madam President, we are fortunate in that the COVID-19 vaccine is available to any resident who wants it. As a reminder, this includes booster vaccines for those who are 50 and older, as well as for health care workers, essential and critical service workers, those with chronic conditions between the ages of 12 and 49, and pregnant women. To receive a booster, you must have had your second dose at least six months prior. To make an appointment for a first, second or booster jab, go to gov.bm.

As has been said many times, vaccines save lives. The two-dose Pfizer vaccine has been shown to be 95 per cent effective in randomised trials. Even with the highly transmittable Delta variant, the vaccine's effectiveness remains high. What does this mean? It means that while you as a fully vaccinated person can still test positive and still contract COVID-19, you are less likely to get severely ill. You are less likely to end up in the hospital, and you are less likely to die. Our own data have shown this to be true.

Madam President, this does not mean that there is zero risk involved. Even if fully vaccinated, your own personal health is a key factor in determining whether you will get ill with COVID-19, and, if you do, whether you are predisposed to becoming ill enough to be hospitalised or to die.

Madam President, it is clear we must all learn how to live with COVID-19 because it will be with us for a long time, both locally and globally. As Health Minister Kim Wilson stated last week, success in dealing with COVID-19 requires a community effort. It is a community effort because this is one of the few situations where an individual's decision to adhere to public health measures or not impacts us all. In this pandemic individual decisions can, and do, have Island-wide consequences.

This is not the same as choosing not to wear a helmet or choosing not to use your seatbelt where the person you are most likely to harm is yourself. Failure to follow public health measures has a far greater impact as the virus spreads quickly throughout our Island home, affecting families, schools, businesses and more.

Madam President, the Minister of Health consulted with the Chief Medical Officer and determined that a communicable disease of the first category, namely COVID-19, and its variants of concern contin-

ues to pose a severe threat to public health in Bermuda. To control and contain the spread of infection, public health measures such as those provided for in regulations made under section 107B of the Public Health Act 1949 will continue to be relevant and necessary beyond 29 November 2021.

This Order before us now will extend the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Order 2021 made under section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949 and empower the Governor to continue the provision of the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Powers Regulation 2021, which imposed extraordinary measures necessary in the interest of public health to prevent, control and suppress COVID-19.

Madam President, Honourable Senators will be aware that the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 5) Order 2021 was made under the affirmative resolution procedure effective 30 September 2021 for 60 days, expiring on 29 November 2021. However, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage on globally, and a public health emergency continues to exist on our Island.

Therefore, in accordance with section 107A(3) and (4) of the Public Health Act 1949, I bring to this Chamber the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021 to seek approval for the extension of the public health emergency for a further 60 days ending on 28 January 2022.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Order?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I just want to say that the Opposition is in support of the extension to this particular [Order]. I do want to say, though, that one good thing about where we are presently is that this is not our first time at the rodeo. And we have a better idea what we need to do to best protect ourselves during this pandemic period.

We are obviously heading into a holiday period, which means that most likely there will be increases in social gatherings and the whole nine [yards]. I do hope that people will do as the Junior Minister has just encouraged us to do to make sure we do all of the mask-wearing and the social distancing and so on. But the reality is there are some people who will not follow the rules. So therefore, unfortunately, there may be another wave coming just because of the period that we are entering. So this extension carries us through the Christmas holidays, and we think that it is absolutely necessary.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Would any Senator care to speak on this?

Hearing none, then it is over to you, Senator Hodgson.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President, and I would also like to thank Senator R. Tucker for her comments as well in support of this extension.

Madam President, I move that the said draft Order be approved and that the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor:

“May it please Your Excellency:

“The Senate, having had under consideration the draft Order entitled the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Health under the provisions of section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949, has the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Senate has approved the said draft Order.”

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.

Is there any objection to the message being sent?

No.

[Motion carried: The Draft Order entitled Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021 was approved.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson. A suitable message will be sent.

And thank you, Senators, for your support.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: We will now move on to the third item, which is the Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021, and that is in the name of Senator Owen Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Carry on, Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I am pleased to invite the Senate to take under consideration the Bill entitled the Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021.

Madam President, Senators will no doubt be aware of the impact of the global pandemic on various sectors of the economy, of which tourism, and the cruise ship sector in particular, is one. In consultation with the Ministry of Transport and the Bermuda Gambling Commission the Cabinet was invited—

The President: Senator Darrell, I am sorry to interrupt. But you needed to move the second reading a second time. I had omitted that—Standing Order 25; I beg your pardon. Do you have the wording for that? I am sorry to have interrupted. But it is important that we follow the procedure.

[Pause]

Sen. Owen Darrell: Sorry, Madam President. I did not have that in front of me.

The President: I am sorry, too, because I should have stopped us. This was a decision that was made today that we would deal with this.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

STANDING ORDER 25

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that the provisions of Standing Order 25 be granted so that the Senate may be now proceed with the second reading of the public Bill entitled the Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Do carry on, Senator Darrell.

[Motion carried: Leave granted for the Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021 to be read a second time on the same day as its first reading.]

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I now move that the Bill entitled Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection. Carry on.

BILL

SECOND READING

CRUISE SHIPS (CASINOS) AMENDMENT ACT 2021

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I am pleased to invite the Senate to take under consideration the Bill entitled the Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021.

Madam President, Senators will no doubt be aware of the impact of the global pandemic on various sectors of the economy, of which tourism, and the cruise ship sector in particular, is one. In consultation with the Ministry of Transport and the Bermuda Gambling Commission the Cabinet was invited to approve

these amendments to the principal Act to mitigate some of the economic effects of COVID-19 on both the cruise ship industry and our home jurisdiction.

The aim is to permanently enlarge the period of time a licence to operate a casino on a cruise ship remains valid for vessels making 15 or more voyages to Bermuda to 12 months, and to provide the Bermuda Gaming Commission with the discretion to change the statutory casino opening hours on a case-by-case basis in response to requests from cruise lines.

Madam President, Senators will be aware that COVID-19 has had an overall devastating effect on the cruise ship industry. The recently announced additional 19 voyages to the Island in the latter part of our summer months signals that the industry is a significant component of our tourism industry and economy. Casinos on board cruise ships are an added amenity for passengers. Licences will be valid for 12 months from the date of issue for vessels making 15 or more voyages to Bermuda, and for each voyage [for] vessels making 14 or fewer voyages to Bermuda.

Madam President, Senators will also recall that the Gaming (Transfer of Functions) Act 2021 transferred the responsibility for the licensing of cruise ship casinos from the Minister responsible for lotteries to the Bermuda Gaming Commission [the Commission] as of 1 August 2021. Currently, the statutory framework governing cruise ship casino operations prescribes limited [operating] hours for a casino on board a vessel while it is berthed in Bermuda. Inserting into legislation the discretionary power of the Commission to be able to consider a request to change casino operating hours provides added flexibility.

Senators will be aware that the request was made of the Commission by a cruise partner, and it was noted that the legislation did not give the authority for the requests, although supported, to be entertained.

The Bill before this Senate addresses the issue and provides the necessary discretion to the Commission. Gaming in the on board casino could be an added activity choice for guests awaiting results of COVID-19 tests conducted upon arrival in Bermuda. Currently, the option of cruise ships is to remain out at sea during the time COVID-19 test samples are collected from passengers, transported to land for testing and results are relayed, thus permitting some guest amenities to remain available.

Madam President, as I commend this Bill for consideration of Senators, the principle which it sets out is one which will form a critical part of economic recovery for Bermuda—flexibility and speed to market. We will need to listen to our stakeholders and act quickly to ensure that jobs are preserved, new revenue streams are realised and economic activity is encouraged.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator Jones, Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

The operative word in this particular amendment Bill of 2021 for cruise ships as it relates to casinos is “flexibility.” It is very important that we be able to [accommodate] our cruise ship partners’ request for additional hours. The Junior Minister has outlined the reasons why. We are 100 per cent behind those reasons, and we believe it is important for us to be able to pass this amendment so that we can accommodate our partners so that we can maintain our competitiveness within the cruise ship business.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Jones.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Hearing none, then it is over to you, Senator Darrell.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

CRUISE SHIPS (CASINOS) AMENDMENT ACT 2021

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?

No objection.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill entitled the Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021 do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Cruise Ships (Casinos) Amendment Act 2021 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Owen Darrell, Junior Minister for the Cabinet Office.

We now move on with our agenda.

MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: Would any Senator care to speak?
Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to get through this in the time that I have. Madam President, it brings me great sadness to have to ask that the Senate send condolences to the family of Mr. Leonard William Holder. Many would know Mr. Holder as the husband of the late Ms. Patricia Holder, one-time administrator at the Berkeley Institute, very popular. I would just like condolences to be sent to his daughter, Ms. Lisa Latham; as well as his son, Mr. Scott Holder; and all of their family and friends. Again, in particular, his grandchildren, Nia, Nuri and Sahai.

Also, Madam President, I would like the Senate to send condolences to the family of Mr. Jahtino Richardson-Martin, aged 23 years old, a former student of mine, who was an amazing football player for the Dandy Town Hornets, and unfortunately lost his life too soon in a bike accident about a week ago.

And two more young men, I would like the Senate to send condolences to their families, Mr. Micah Nathaniel Davis, aged 22, another former student of mine who lost his life in a violent attack; as well as 27-year-old, again a former student of mine, Mr. Ayinde Eve, who lost his life in the same incident.

But before I finish, Madam President, I would like to send condolences to a very special lady in my life, and that is the family of Mrs. Carol Marie Tannock. Ms. Tannock passed away on 24 October. You may know Ms. Tannock was the mother of Mr. Patrick Tannock, Mark Tannock, Anthony Tannock, Theresa Tannock and Cheri Adcock, who are all heavyweights in their own right in this community. [Ms. Tannock] was the wife of the late Davis Tannock, who was a stalwart of the Progressive Labour Party.

But more importantly, Madam President, Ms. Tannock actually raised me from the age of birth to I think two and a half years old. She was my babysitter (as they called it then). My mom met her as she taught her children at the Port Royal. Ms. Tannock took great care of me. And I got to know her more as I grew up. Every time I would go into her place of em-

ployment after, as I grew up, she would say, *You know, Owen, I'm so proud of you.* Her children to this day call me "Owie."

And to bring this full circle, about 40 years after she was watching me as a baby, some of you may recall a motion to adjourn, my maiden speech a year ago, I gave thanks. And I gave thanks to this lady, Ms. Tannock, as she was the individual who actually was my proposer as I ran for office—unsuccessfully, but she did propose me for election. And I had the opportunity a year ago to go to her house and sit down. And she was so happy that I came by. Again, she told me how proud she was of me. I was really sad to hear a year after that that she passed away peacefully. But I just wanted to take this opportunity to highlight Ms. Tannock, to tell her children, *Thank you for allowing me to be part of [your] family.* And may she rest in peace.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Senator Simmons, you have indicated you would like to speak. You have the floor.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to associate myself with the comments that Senator Darrell has made with regard to Ms. Tannock, and also Mr. Leonard Holder.

On a happier note, I would like to send congratulations from the Senate to Roger Parris, who recently received the Public Service Excellence Award, Madam President, for his dedicated service as a horticulturist in the Department of Parks. Mr. Parris oversees the workmen and workwomen at the Botanical Gardens, the Arboretum, Government House, Tulo Valley Nursery. I know him quite well.

If you start a conversation with Roger at any time, he always steers it around to the Skills Development Programme, which was his brainchild. His passion is the work he does with the young men and women in that programme. He has mentored many young people, taken some over to England where he has a special connection. And he has helped those who needed a bit of extra guidance and support in order to make their lives more productive. I have seen some of the results of his programme, some of the young people who have turned their lives around. But it would not have happened if it were not for his mentoring and his care and his love. He certainly deserves the award he received.

Madam President, I would like to congratulate a young lady whose name has come up in the Senate [and] all over Bermuda recently—i.e., Flora Duffy. I called her *Our Golden Olympian* because she successfully defended her World Triathlon Championship Series title on February 5 in Abu Dhabi. It was not an easy race. Right now because she is the *Golden Olympian*, everyone wants to be the first to say they

dethroned her. So she headed off a very strong challenge, but in the end emerged victorious. That is determination. So, congratulations to Flora Duffy for another victory!

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

Would any Senator care to speak?

Senator [Lindsay] Simmons.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to give condolences to Nikita Hewey's family, especially her mom, Barbara; her sister, Karen; her brother Zico; and the rest of the Hewey family. She is going to be a great miss. She was full of life and always had a smile on her face.

Madam President, I would also like to give condolences to [the family of] Mr. Coulbert Bean. I had the pleasure of teaching his daughter at Dellwood, Katherine. I want to send condolences to his loving wife, Tammy, whom I have met; his daughter, Tamara; and the rest of the Bean family.

And last but not least, Madam President, it actually breaks my heart to give the condolences to Morissa Moniz's family. Tragically, she lost her life last week. Condolences to her mom and dad, Mr. and Mrs. Moniz; and also her sister, Brittney; and the rest of her friends and family. No one should have to bury their daughter like this. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

I would just like for this Chamber to extend condolences to the family of the late Mrs. Betty Gilbert from Somerset. She was truly a matriarch of Somerset, and more specifically of Cooks Hill Road where I reside. She was truly an inspiration to her neighbours, to her community. She has left to mourn five girls and two boys who did yeoman's work in taking care of their mother. Whenever I would drive with her, she would talk about her children, how much they took good care of her, how proud she was of them. Many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would know her from the PLP. She was a stalwart in the Somerset area. In fact, many an election campaign quarters would be in her home in her living room for years. She was well known as a cook and a baker. She was the main chef at the Allen Camp that was held every summer at Darrell's Island.

She will be a great miss. She was an incredibly wonderful, godly woman who made an impact in the years that she lived. And her loss will be felt by

people all over the Island. And I would like for condolences to be extended to her family.

On the congratulations side of the ledger, I would like to extend congratulations to the Concacaf Under-20 [Men's] football team, who really showed themselves to be highly skilled. They did this country proud. Although they were not able to make it as a qualifier to the next round, they really proved themselves to be a force to be reckoned with that bodes well for Bermuda football, at least in the men's section. It bodes well for our future accomplishments. And I will state my own personal connection to that Under-20 Concacaf football team. My nephew, Stefan Jones, was able to score as a super-sub in the first game, the last-minute, to win the first game. He then scored again in the second game. But unfortunately, they were unsuccessful in the third match that they played. But kudos to this great team! And I expect much more from them in the coming years. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Would any other Senator . . .

Senator Curtis Richardson, you have the floor.

Sen. Curtis Richardson: Thank you, Madam President.

I will take up just a few minutes to express on behalf of the Ministry of Transportation. [I am] certainly sure that the members of the Road Safety Council would join in and mirror my sentiments to all of the families, not just the most recent persons who lost their lives to a road traffic accident, but every family who is out there continuing to mourn the passing of loved ones, friends and families, to road traffic accidents. I want to just put a word of encouragement to the general public to recognise that the changing of behaviour is not what this is about. It is more so recognition that these accidents do occur and on more occasions than what one would hope.

Just take your time. Do all that you can to use the utmost caution as you are traveling these roads. We have roadworks going on all over in the Island, which [calls for] more caution than is [normally] required. So I just wanted to pass on those condolences to those families and encouragement to the public to do all you can.

Thanks a lot.

The President: Thank you, Senator Curtis Richardson.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes, Madam President.

The President: Oh, Senator, sorry. Senator Robin Tucker had indicated.

You have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I will be very quick. I just wanted to say first of all before I call off the names of the people, that I want to express condolences to their families. I do not know if anybody else here feels this way, but it just seems as though there have been a lot of people who have passed away. Every time I get a call or look at the newspaper, it does something to me on the inside. And when I was preparing for today, I have a list of 10 people. And I am not going to go into detail on all of them. But I do want to call their names and just recognise their families. There are a lot of people in our community who are going through a lot of sadness. So I just wanted to say that before I call out these names.

The first group of people that I am going to call off are constituents in the area of constituency 7. And they are Ms. Roslyn Raynor, who lives on Cherrydale. I am sure Senator Darrell knew [her]. There is Diana Virgil Ming, who lives on Ramgoat Hill. [Withrew] Kingsley Beek; Donald Smith, Alberta Fubler all constituents in constituency 7.

The next person I want to call off is Keenan Butterfield. If anybody here knew Keenan, Keenan was—to me, when I stood next to Keenan my head was probably at his elbow. He was that tall. He commonly was known as sort of the gentle giant, nicest person you would ever want to meet. So he suddenly passed away. His wife's family are friends of my family, and his brother-in-law as well. So I just want to extend condolences to Keenan's family, Shamell, Carmel, Lornelle, all of the rest of the Amory and the Butterfield families.

I would like to associate with Senator Jones's comments in relation to Ms. Betty Gilbert.

I would like to express condolences to Hattieann Morissette Gilbert on the passing of her husband, Weldon Gilbert. Sister Hattieann, I will call her, attends my church. So I have had the privilege of knowing her for a long time, as well as meeting her husband.

I also would like to extend condolences to the family of Eric Goddard. If anyone knows Eric, Eric and his wife, Betty-Ann, are godparents to my cousin, Nikki Bascome. So I did get to know Eric and Betty-Ann. [Regarding] his passing, I want to express condolences there.

Finally, Madam President, I would like to express condolences to Gloria Lee Franklin on the passing of her husband, Troy. Troy and I shared a birthday on October 12. And maybe about a week or two before his untimely passing, we were able to have a little catch-up chat on the side of the road, you know, preparation for our birthday, all of the excitement and all of that type of thing, which we did every year. So it was quite shocking to hear that he passed away. So I just want to express condolences to his wife Gloria Lee, [and] the rest of the family as well.

So, on a lighter note, congratulations. I would like to express congratulations to Shapri Joell. Now, anyone who knows Shapri, Shapri is a young lady. She is a hairdresser. I first met her when she worked at Blueprint [Hair Studio] some years ago. And she is a very driven young woman. Shapri is probably not even 30 yet. She has a young son, and when we first met she says, *Miss Robin, I can do your hair. But just know in a year's time I'm going to be gone.* And the reason she said that is because she had all intentions of being a trichologist. And so she was very focused, a very skilled hairdresser. And she is a very focused young mother.

She stuck to what she said she was going to do. It was over a year that she prepared herself to pack up herself and her young son and go to the UK and continue her studies. So I say *Congratulations!* I would like for the Senate to send a note of congratulations to Shapri. She did go to the UK. She completed her studies. And she has returned to the Island and now works as a certified consultant trichologist. So I want to express congratulations to her.

Finally, I just want to say congratulations to all of the 2021 Female Entrepreneur of the Year nominees. There were 51 of them. So I want to say congratulations to all of the nominees there.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Minister Peets, you had indicated. You have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Thank you, Madam President.

I certainly want to be associated with the remarks regarding Flora Duffy. Congratulations to her! She is absolutely amazing.

As well as our U-20 team. Senator Jones is correct. This team has got some talent throughout the team, including the bench. So there is lots to look forward to in the future regarding the team.

Just regarding some *happy birthdays*, there is a constituent of mine in C-10 from Loyal Hill Pass, Tony Hollis, turning 60 today. So happy birthday! But a little closer to home, my youngest child, Aariah Peets, turned 12 yesterday. So I am pretty sure she is listening this afternoon. Happy birthday to Aariah Peets!

Thank you so much, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

Would any other Senator care to speak?
No?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: Then I would like to acknowledge the presence of Honourable Walter Roban, the Deputy Premier. He has joined us in the Senate.

Welcome to you, sir.

[Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, continuing]

The President: And for myself, I would just like to associate myself with the condolences regarding Patricia Holder *[sic]*. And I would also like the Senate to have condolences sent to the family of Rev. Coolidge “Danny” Durham, the son of Julia “Juju” Furbert Durham and the late Coolidge Durham; husband to Paula Lynn Francis Durham; and father to Coolidge “Coolie” Durham; brother to Dr. Shangri-La Durham Thompson and her husband Stanton; and his sisters, Dr. Donna Durham-Pierre and Shelby Durham-Jackson; and the entire Durham family. He is family. I am cousin to them all. He was funeralised on October 5.

I would like to also have condolences sent to another cousin, Margaret DeRosa, and her family, on the passing of her beloved husband, Eldrich “Big Joe” DeRosa. And he is father to sons, Carl Sr., Alvin, Joseph and Anthony Tavares; and [daughter] Sherri Tavares; and the entire DeRosa family. He had passed on November 12.

And that is it for me.

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: I beg your pardon? Oh, oh. Yes, I am sorry. Leonard Holder, yes, because his wife Patricia Holder had passed earlier. But Patricia’s husband Leonard Holder is the one whom I wanted to be associated with and which you had indicated condolences for.

Now, with that we move then to adjournment.
Minister Peets, I turn it over to you.

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Senate now adjourn to Wednesday, December 1.

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Senator Lindsay Simmons, I see you. You have the floor.

DOMESTIC ABUSE—ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF IN BERMUDA

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I always like sharing a story that I can relate to. I feel more comfortable, and I love to connect with the topic. Unfortunately, today I would like to share a story that I wish I did not have to

go through personally. But I must admit it made me stronger.

Madam President, like many others, I have been a victim of domestic violence. My story began in the year 2000. I met a man and thought we were going to be together forever. Little did I know a decision that I made some 21 years ago would be something that I would carry with me forever. Madam President, I thought I met the man of my dreams. We were going to conquer the world, just he and I. In the year 2002, just two short years later, my life would change drastically. I found out that the man I loved was stepping out on me. For me, I was done with the relationship.

I ended the relationship, and a few minutes later I was chased into my bathroom with a machete. I was beaten severely with the flat part of it. I remember when the officers came to my house, one looked at me and said to the other officer, *She looks like a beat-up rag doll*. Eighty per cent of my body had welts all over it.

Madam President, I knew we could no longer be together. I had never been assaulted in my life. A couple of months later I had a knock on my door. With tears in his eyes, he wanted to talk and apologise for his actions. And yes, Madam President, I let him in to talk. This ended up being a huge mistake. This decision changed my life forever. I was beaten with a ratchet. I was raped continuously. I was tortured for hours. And I was scared from the inside out.

After hours of being held against my will, he let me go. And when I was free, I called the police and he was arrested. But you see, Madam President, I thought my abuse would stop. Boy was I mistaken. He intimidated my younger sisters, following my youngest one to school. He had his brothers do the same. I felt I had no other choice, so I dropped the charges. My family urged me not to, even the prosecutor at the time. But I wanted it to end. He promised that he would leave the Island, and I believed at that time I was doing the right thing to protect my family.

Madam President, a couple of nights later he broke into my house while I was asleep. He dragged me out of my bed. I had my hair pulled out. I was beaten and stabbed, and I was told that night I would die. He broke me. I begged for my life, and I knew he was stronger than me and I could not beat a knife. I just wanted it to end. But you see, Madam President, one thing that played over and over in my mind while these horrible things were being done to me was the look on my parents’ face upon finding me dead. I almost gave up. But I knew at 23 I was not ready to die.

Madam President, I no longer wanted to be his victim. I wanted to live, and I was going to be a survivor. After almost nine hours of torture, I was finally free. I made it to my dad’s house with blood all over me, my face scratched up, and I was broken. He let me go because I promised I would leave the Island with him within two days.

When my dad saw me, Madam President, he could not even look at me. He jumped on his bike without a helmet and left. While I waited for the ambulance to get me, I laid on the ground wondering where my daddy went, my hero. My daddy left looking for this man. By the time I was in the ambulance, my daddy returned. He said, *Lindsay, where is he?* I explained where he could find him, which was a few minutes away. My dad hopped on his bike again. The police followed him. My dad was still riding without a helmet, saw this man crossing the street, jumped off his bike. And [the street] was busy. It was still in the morning. People jumped my daddy, wondering why this crazy man is jumping on this man. [My attacker] was able to escape and was on the run for hours. The police did everything they could to protect me. I was in police protection.

And, Madam President, I have been asked on more than one occasion, *How can an ex-boyfriend or boyfriend rape you? He was someone you are used to.* A lot of people did not understand. But I said, then Madam President, the answer will always be the same. *I said, No. No one has the right to take advantage of you, touch you when you say no.* We have to change the mentality of some. We are not anyone's possession or property. We must teach our daughters that they can always say no.

Madam President, when it happened I could not understand how this happened to me. But sitting back and reflecting, the writing was clearly on the wall years prior. I did not realise that our relationship was built on him controlling me. I thought he loved me. And he wanted to know my every move. I thought it was the sweetest thing. Little did I know he made me his possession. When I decided to stand up and leave him, he lost control over me, which made him lose his mind. He always knew my weak spot was him, and he played on it.

Madam President, this time I continued and pressed charges. Carrington Mahoney was the prosecutor on my case, and Oonagh Vaucrosson. They did an amazing job. He was found guilty and sentenced to 14 years in prison, which at that time was unheard of.

I remember seeing the newspaper the next day, and it had a picture of him because I gave up my right to anonymity. It had his picture and his face. And the headline said, *The face of evil.* The night that he raped me the last time he spilled his guts and told me everything. I was not his first victim. Another victim died at his hands who was not in Bermuda. So I knew that night when he spilled his guts I was going to die. But I continued to fight and beg for my life.

Madam President, it breaks my heart to see that another family is having to bury their daughter. Sadly, women are getting abused daily. Madam President, I am pleading with our women, our sisters, our family, our friends and the community that mental, physical and emotional abuse is never okay. We need to be there for our women when they are crying out for

help. In some cases of domestic violence, there might be elements of mental health issues. Many people are ashamed if their child, partner or friend exhibits signs of mental health [problems]. Most mental health disorders can be treated with intervention, medication or both. We need to actively work toward removing stigmas related to mental health and treatment.

Madam President, the pandemic has been difficult for most of us. Unfortunately, domestic violence is on the rise. This Government has stated time and time again that if you need help call 911, 211 or the mental health hotline at 534-1111. Bermuda has some amazing helping agencies that help individuals who are going through domestic violence. Two of the most well-known agencies are the Centre Against Abuse and the Women's Resource Centre.

Madam President, I have never been afraid to tell my story. I did not go into all of the gruesome details today. But every scar on my body is a reminder that I must do my part to continue to tell my story. Madam President, I do not know if Senator Simmons remembers, but many years ago she invited me to tell my story to students at the great Berkeley Institute. I will never forget the look on Mr. Laylor's face when he heard my story. He said, *Lin, in his deep Jamaican accent. My God, girl. I always looked at you as an innocent student who just sat in my classroom. But, Lin, you are strong. Continue to be strong.* And he thanked me for sharing my story with his students.

One evening I was invited many years ago by Ms. Vickers to tell my story to a group of middle-aged students at Spice Valley. After I told my story, a young girl came to me at the end and explained to me how she was getting abused. She was only 13. I got her to get help and to speak to her parents. Years later she came to my job and reminded me of that night. It changed her. She was able to seek the help she needed.

Madam President, I also told my story to a group of men who had been abusing their partners. Shockingly enough, I witnessed these grown men cry. At 23, I could have been their daughter. I have told my story countless times in hopes that it could do one of three things: (1) to keep people aware of domestic violence; (2) so that people are not ashamed that they become a victim of domestic violence; and (3) for abusers and victims to stop and seek the help before it is too late.

Madam President, we need to continue to raise our daughters [to know] that abuse such as physical, mental and emotional—and yes, financial—abuse does not equate to love. If someone loves you, you should never intentionally hurt someone or be abused by them. We need to raise our young men and women to value themselves and their partners. I also want to point out that abuse can be a woman abusing a man, same-sex couples with one abusing the other or parents abusing their child, or even a grown adult abusing their parent. Our seniors have

also been victims of abuse. Violence against another person should never be tolerated.

Madam President, we need to be the voice for the voiceless. This could be my family member. This could be my friend. This could be any of us. And, Madam President, this was me. But, Madam President, one life lost to senseless violence is one too many. Madam President, we need to remember the names of those we have lost to domestic violence.

So today I say I am Chena Trott. I am Ruth Binns. I am Shakeya DeRosa. I am Denise Evans-Wilkinson. I am Marcus Gibbons. I am Lynae Brown. And I am many others who have lost their lives to domestic violence. Let their lives always be remembered and never be in vain. My condolences go out to the friends and families who have ever lost anyone to domestic violence. No one should have to go through this.

Madam President, I would like you and anyone who hears my voice today to remember my name. I am Lindsay Simmons. I am a survivor.

[Pause]

The President: Senator Lindsay Simmons, I want to thank you for sharing your story. And I am sure on behalf of all of the Senators present and all of those listening that they have been touched by your story and the candidness in which you have shared it.

I have worked in mental health myself for some years. And so I am aware of some of the issues. So I thank you on behalf of the Senate body.

Would any other Senator care to speak at this time? I see two hands.

Senator Curtis Richardson, we will go to you first. You can speak on the motion to adjourn.

EMPATHY FOR FELLOW BERMUDIANS ENDURING ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS

Sen. Curtis Richardson: Thank you. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, when I reflect on the part of the theme of this year's Throne Speech with regard to the Economic Recovery Plan, it brings to mind the words of a famous musician whom everyone would know. Some of the words are, "Who Feels It (Knows It)." Madam President, these words I believe are heard most loudly right now, especially in these times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Madam President, there are people whose lives changed dramatically in March of 2020 on this Island. This pandemic continues to be detrimental to the economy not just in Bermuda, but also on a global scale. One's personal finances, Madam President, would no longer be the same as everyone has been impacted with their financial obligations on a daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly or annual basis.

As a matter of concern, I want to speak to those who on March 2020 woke up to no source of

revenue and no longer earning the money that they needed that they worked for every day just the day before. Madam President, some of these people eventually got back to work, started new jobs. Some may have found entrepreneurial means to finance their expenses and the like. Madam President, I want to highlight that this Government has provided just under \$2 million in financial assistance to ensure that persons like these citizens would not go hungry.

Madam President, much has been done to help, and there is much more to be done. With that, I recognise the continued success undertaken by the Minister of Finance and his team. Unfortunately, there are still many who are unemployed, underemployed and not earning the money that they need to survive on a daily basis. I could imagine, Madam President, that there are members in this community who wake up having had a sleepless night, not knowing how the day before them is going to present itself to them and the opportunities that they may be fighting for to get ahead. Some may not even know where they are going to get the money for the next groceries. Mortgages, rent, utility bills, groceries and other living expenses are not being paid. Twenty months or so of not being able to pay your own bills is the reality for a lot of people on this Island. Homeowners, businesses, service providers are all suffering. This is a most difficult position for anyone to be in.

When I think about the way to provide a sense of understanding, the word "sympathy" comes to mind. I am not exactly sure if that is an appropriate word. I know that I feel strongly that the faith of these people is being tested, the strength that I encourage them to keep on enduring the hardships that seem to be a major task here, maybe "empathy," . . . maybe that could be asked for. I believe it is a most difficult undertaking for those fortunate enough to not lose a day's work in salary and fortunate enough to make amends to the adjustment and deal with this COVID-19 and its impact that it is having on them as well. Just imagine that—waking up like I said earlier and not having the finances that you need for months and months to come.

What I do feel and know is that there must be an understanding that no one asked to be in this position. This pandemic has placed them in unprecedented times and an un-thought-of place in their lives that they could not prepare themselves for. Those who are owed monies from persons who are unable to pay these funds to them, I can only encourage you to accept that [situation], although you may find it hard to understand what it is like to go from having money to not having any at all overnight.

Madam President, I share these words as I recognise that I am not alone in this. Only those who feel it truly know it, Madam President. And I just want to encourage people to understand that we too shall get past this position in our lives.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Curtis Richardson.

And, Senator Robin Tucker, you indicated you would like to speak on the motion to adjourn. You have the floor.

DOMESTIC ABUSE—ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF IN BERMUDA

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to begin my comments by first of all thanking the Junior Minister and Senator Lindsay Simmons for sharing her story, her heartfelt, heart-wrenching story with us. It undoubtedly must have been a very difficult thing to do. And certainly if it helps anybody, thank you, Senator Simmons. It is definitely appreciated.

I do want to say that what is particularly sad or even sadder, or as sad, is probably a better way to put it, is that Senator Simmons's story is happening more often, maybe not to the same degree. But the issue of domestic violence in this country, in this Island is at a crisis point. And some of it is compounded by the effects that COVID-19 is having on us. Some of it is mental health issues. Some of it is just people being people because of whatever their upbringing or their life's perspectives or personalities (however we want to put it). And she is absolutely right in saying that domestic violence, while it is primarily men beating on women, it could be any combination of things—women beating men, children being abused by parents, the whole nine [yards].

And it is something, quite frankly . . . and my comment right now is not necessarily one that I want to make as a disparaging one against the Government. It is an observation only, not a criticism as such. But the issue of protection for our women as it relates to domestic violence and the increase in domestic violence is absolutely something that I would have loved to have seen appear in the Throne Speech. We are at a crisis point, Madam President. Countless times, countless stories, if you read social media . . . just last week I was made aware of a situation where a woman had to get some friends to help her leave her house with her children. And she is in hiding as we speak.

We are beyond a crisis point. And the situation of domestic violence is not going to get better by our going ahead [with] business as usual. And I do not mean that in any kind of finger-pointing way, but just that we have to be very aggressive about how we are going to deal with situations where people are being abused in intimate relationships. It is something that should be at the top . . . one of the key things at the top of our priority list.

The situation that occurred with Morissa Moniz is beyond awful. Nobody should have to go through that. But we have said that in other cases as well that have come up. Senator Simmons has called some

names already. What I am most afraid of, Madam President, is that in a year, six months, two years, whatever the timeframe, Morissa Moniz's name will be the second-last name that will be called out because we will not have acted as quickly and aggressively as we should to ensure that somebody else is not in this situation. A 28-year-old has lost her life!

We must as a community, as those who are in decision-making who have the power and the authority to be able to make some changes, let us get some legislative changes done! Let us get the domestic violence court going! We have to put our money where our mouth is, Madam President. We cannot keep waiting until things happen to decide sometime down the road that we are going to do something. Let us be proactive about protection for our women, for our men who are being abused, for our children, for our seniors. This cannot be just words on a page and a reaction when something tragically happens.

So, Madam President, I thank you for the opportunity to speak. This topic is one that is very near and dear to my heart. I am thankful for entities like our charities that are, Centre Against Abuse, Women's Resource Centre. I cannot remember the name of the organisation that Tammy Richardson-Augustus is a part of where she and her team are making sure young people are being educated on what the signs of domestic abuse look like. But we as a community have to be aggressive and diligent about making sure that these types of situations, as what has happened to Ms. Moniz, do not continue. We are too small a county not to have some kind of positive impact.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to speak at this time?

No?

If not, then Senators, we have come to the end of our Senate session. Senate stands adjourned until December 1. I wish for all to enjoy the time that you have and stay safe.

[At 5:18 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 1 December 2021.]

BERMUDA SENATE**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
1 DECEMBER 2021****10:03 AM***Sitting Number 3 of the 2021/2022 Session**[Sen. Michelle Simmons, Vice President, presiding]*

The Vice President: Good morning, Senators, and good morning to the listening public.

Let us pray.

PRAYERS*[Prayers read by Sen. Michelle Simmons, Vice President]***CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES***[Minutes of 17 November 2021]*

The Vice President: Senator John Wight.

Sen. John Wight: Madam Vice President, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, 17 November 2021, be taken as read.

The Vice President: Is there any objection to that?
No, there are no objections.
Senator Wight.

Sen. John Wight: Madam Vice President, I move that the Minutes of Wednesday, 17 November 2021, be confirmed.

The Vice President: Is there any objection?
No.
The Minutes are confirmed.

[Minutes of 17 November 2021 confirmed]

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Wight.

MESSAGES

The Clerk: No messages, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Mr. Somner.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Vice President: There are none.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY
THE VICE PRESIDENT****APOLOGIES**

The Vice President: I would like to make two announcements. First of all, today Madam President is engaged in a panel interview which has been ongoing for several days. Therefore, I am serving as Acting President.

Also, we have apologies from Senator Curtis Richardson.

Those are the two announcements I have to make. And now we can hear from Senator O. K. Darrell, Junior Minister of Education, who has an announcement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**BERMUDA COLLEGE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020/2021**

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you. Good morning, Madam Vice President. My first announcement is the Bermuda College 2020/2021 Report.

Madam Vice President, I hereby present for the information of Senate the Annual Report of the Bermuda College for the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Senators may access copies of the report on their tablets and on the parliamentary website.

**BERMUDA COLLEGE
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

Sen. Owen Darrell: The second report, Madam Vice President, is the Bermuda College Financial Statements 2021. Madam Vice President, I hereby present for the information of the Senate the Audited Financial Statements of the Bermuda College for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Senators may access copies of the report on their tablets and on the parliamentary website.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The Vice President: There are none.

PETITIONS

The Vice President: Again, there are none.

STATEMENTS

The Vice President: We have several Statements today. And the first is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which will be presented by Senator L. K. Simmons, Junior Minister for Social Development and Seniors.

Senator Simmons, you have the floor.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

Madam Vice President, the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) is observed on the 3rd of December and has been promoted by the United Nations since 1992. The observance of the day aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities at all levels of society and development. Also, it provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the achievements and challenges persons with disabilities face within every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life in our community.

Madam Vice President, the UN estimates that approximately 15 per cent of the world's population, which equates to one billion people, are living with some form of disability. Disability is defined by the UN as *a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual of their group*. It is often used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment, mental illness and various types of chronic disease.

Madam Vice President, under the Human Rights Act 1981, "disability" is defined as "the condition of being a disabled person." The said Act defines "disabled person" to include physical disability; physical reliance, for example on a guide dog; or [the person] previously has had a mental impairment that has substantial and long-term adverse effects on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Madam Vice President, this year's theme is *Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world*. With this theme in mind, the Ministry of Social Development and Seniors strives to make the promises made by the Government which impact persons with disabilities a reality.

Madam Vice President, the UN highlights the fact that evidence and experience show that when barriers to inclusion are removed and persons with disabilities are empowered to participate fully in societal life, the entire community benefits. Barriers faced by persons with disabilities are therefore a detriment to society as a whole, and inclusion and accessibility are necessary to achieve progress and development for all.

Madam Vice President, currently the Ministry is in the process of working with the UK to have the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities extended to Bermuda to ensure Bermuda is an inclusive society that recognises and respects persons with disabilities for their ability and not their disability. A formal register of persons with disabilities is being developed. The register aims to assist with data collection to provide projections for support, services and benefits, which will ultimately assist in improving quality of life. Also the register will ensure there is clarity of the current and future needs of persons with disabilities.

Madam Vice President, no person in our society should be left behind or feel ostracised because they have a disability. The Government encourages dialogue on all forms of disabilities. This provides a platform to educate all sectors of our community to ensure persons with disabilities are given the dignity they deserve. I believe that more awareness of persons with disabilities ultimately will lead to more understanding and acceptance.

Madam Vice President, I would like to highlight some events that will be taking place in the community on Friday, the 3rd of December, in recognition of the International Day of People with Disabilities:

Ageing and Disability Services will be *Taking it to the Streets* with the assistance of Media Maya to engage persons in the City of Hamilton (throughout the community) to start the conversation and bring awareness of persons with disabilities. Also, this provides an opportunity to determine if people in our community can identify unseen/invisible disabilities—for example, autism.

The Intellectual Disabilities team at the Mid Atlantic Wellness Institute (MAWI) will be having their second motorcade. It is intended that the motorcade will start at 11:00 am from MAWI. More information will be provided through the media. Residents of Bermuda, I encourage you to show your support by standing along the motorcade route.

WindReach (registered charity 92) is hosting a one-day free virtual conference on Zoom from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm entitled Common Ground 2021. The theme of the conference is to encourage advocacy to ensure persons with disabilities are given their right to be heard on issues impacting their lives and across the community. The event will be facilitated

and moderated by occupational therapist Alyssa Frick and Paralympian Jessica Lewis.

Madam Vice President, on Saturday, the 4th of December, Special Olympics Bermuda (registered charity 978) will be having their first Polar Plunge at Horseshoe Bay, starting at 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. The Polar Plunge is a fundraising event for the Special Olympics globally. This event has shown increased popularity in other jurisdictions such as the US and Canada. Madam Vice President, I encourage people to show support by attending at least one of the events I have mentioned.

In closing, I quote the British neurologist Oliver Sacks: "I wish for a world" (in this case Bermuda) "that views disability, mental or physical, not as a hindrance but as unique attributes that can be seen as powerful assets if given the right opportunities." Let us come together as a community and provide opportunities for persons with disabilities so that we can create a better Bermuda. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

And we will move on to the second Statement, which is Update on the Tynes Bay Waste-to-Energy Facility. And this is being presented by Senator Owen K. Darrell, Junior Minister for Public Works.

Senator Darrell.

TYNES BAY WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITY UPDATE

Sen. Owen Darrell: Good morning again, Madam Vice President. Madam Vice President, today I rise to provide the Senate with an update on the present critical status of the [Tynes Bay facility](#).

Madam Vice President, two weeks ago on November 10 in a press conference the Acting Minister of Public Works spoke of the critical state of Tynes Bay and the need to invest heavily in the plan for it not to fail. This morning I will give an update of the ongoing battle that the engineers and technicians at Tynes Bay are waging to get the plant back up and running, and the serious challenges we are all facing in terms of the Island's ability to dispose of its waste.

Madam Vice President, the Tynes Bay facility is our only means of municipal solid waste disposal, and should the facility fail, it will mean the country's reverting back to landfilling. Madam Vice President, sadly I must report that we may very soon be at that point. For the last two weeks, since the initial report, a crew of specialist boilermakers from Europe have been working nonstop to make repairs to both boiler units at the plant. At the same time, our contingency system, which normally bales [refuse] during these times of outages, also suffered a critical failure. In addition, COVID-19 and supply-chain issues in Europe have exacerbated the repair of the baler to the point where our own employees had to skilfully fabricate

replacement parts, using 3D printing technology, to rebuild a hydraulic ram. But sadly, even these efforts to get the system up and running have failed.

Madam Vice President, while we do have a replacement ram being air-freighted, the timing for its arrival and the space left in the bunker to stockpile the [refuse] that is collected daily are simply at odds. In order to preserve what little space we have left, bulky waste material is already being diverted for shredding at the Marsh Folly location for later disposal at Tynes Bay. But even this will not buy us the amount of time that we need. Madam Vice President, with the tentative timeframe to have the boilers back in operation still being two weeks ahead, we will simply not have room to store any more garbage. As such, the Ministry is now preparing for its last resort for waste disposal, and that is the reopening of a portion of Marsh Folly for landfilling.

We had hoped to avoid this outcome and have done so [thus] far for the last 10 years. But at this point the options are few. We anticipate needing to landfill for a period of perhaps one to two weeks while the boiler repairs are completed and the baling system is repaired. Once these alternatives are available, the landfilling will stop.

While time is not on our side, we as a Government are committed to doing something about it. It was reported two weeks ago that we are looking to invest some \$7.5 million into the plant to get it to a point of stabilisation. Since that time, engineers have now received the actual pricing from the specialised waste-to-energy contractor, I.C.E. AG, out of Switzerland for the full scope of works necessary to get the boilers through the next three or four years. While our original in-house estimates were close, the true pricing is closer to \$8.5 million. The cost may still increase, as much of it is based on the cost of steel and other materials, which are changing rapidly due to the global supply-chain crisis.

Madam Vice President, with the cost of baling and other associated works such as quality assurance for insurance purposes, crane hire and other on-Island logistics added to this figure, the final total for the project may be closer to \$9 [million] to \$10 million and will take about 11 weeks for each boiler to be repaired. While this may seem like a lot of money, for comparison, the cost of full replacement, which is what we really need at this point, is closer to \$150 million.

And to be clear, the \$10 million that we are planning to spend now only addresses the boilers, which are at the heart of the plant and the most vulnerable at this time. But there are still many critical auxiliary systems at Tynes Bay that are obsolete and that can easily shut down the plant if they are not soon replaced. So with life restored to the boilers, time will be of the essence to pursue the full solution of the estimated \$150 million investment. I am pleased to report that the Ministry of Public Works in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance are meeting urgently to

find creative financing solutions for such a large sum in our present financial state.

Madam Vice President, as mentioned, with the effects of the pandemic on the supply chain and even getting people mobilised, these costs cannot be cast in stone, and we are constantly balancing the risk of getting support here as quickly as possible while also providing COVID-19 safety. With the support of our specialist contractor we are aiming to execute the works in February of next year, leaving little time to even prepare. But the contractors and the Ministry are committed to getting the work done as soon as possible. I will endeavour to continue to give updates on this critical work as it transpires.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Owen K. Darrell.

The next Statement is COVID-19 Update in Schools, also presented by Senator Owen Darrell, who is the Junior Minister for Education.

Senator Darrell.

COVID-19 UPDATE IN SCHOOLS

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

Madam Vice President, I rise this morning in the Senate to provide an update on the ongoing impact of [COVID-19 in our schools](#) and the preventative measures that have been put in place in both our public and private schools to keep our children safe.

Madam Vice President, you will recall that the Premier has shared with us repeatedly, and this morning I say it again, the coronavirus is with us and will continue to be with us for some time. We must all accept and make adjustments for what has become our new normal. In our public and private schools, this has meant finding creative and engaging ways to ensure quality teaching and learning environments for students in the classroom, as this is where our children learn best.

Madam Vice President, the beginning of the 2021/2022 school year was not without its challenges. Bermuda was in its fourth and deadliest wave of community spread from the virus. Public school staff were being sent home in unsustainable numbers even before the school buildings were fully open. Our private school partners did begin the school year with in-class learning. However, several schools were hit with positive cases, resulting in large numbers of students being placed in quarantine. One school had a delayed start, and the other completely closed for a week.

Madam Vice President, the increased number of COVID-19-positive cases caused the Ministry of Education to make the difficult decision to begin the 2021/2022 academic year with remote learning for public schools. Despite the setbacks, there has been continued collaboration with the Ministry of Health to

put the appropriate safety and health guidelines in place for our schools.

Madam Vice President, let me remind my Senate colleagues that toward the end of the 2020/2021 academic year, through collaboration between the Department of Education and the Molecular Diagnostic Lab (also known as MDL), a saliva screening pilot programme was implemented in both public and private schools. The pilot programme saw staff from MDL visit various schools to conduct saliva testing on consenting students and staff. Ultimately, students and staff consenting to participate in the programme were tested at least once per month.

The programme proved to be successful in identifying asymptomatic cases. The saliva screening programme was revised and has continued into the 2021/2022 school year with all public schools testing weekly. At this point I want to extend my thanks to our parents and the staff for supporting the programme and providing consent for their children to participate, as this will help to keep our schools safe.

Madam Vice President, both public and private schools have implemented key COVID-19 preventative safety measures to ensure safety in the school buildings. Public schools introduced a *pre-return* testing policy in that all staff and students were required to have a negative COVID-19 test to enter school buildings after a break in school. Private schools, on the other hand, have implemented the lateral flow testing for staff and students up to twice a week, which includes teaching staff, administrative staff, and janitorial and security staff.

Madam Vice President, research has shown that in-person learning is best for our students. The focus of our schools has been to minimise continuous disruption of student learning due to identified positive COVID-19 cases in schools. The Ministry of Health has received input from the Ministry of Education, Department of Education and our private schools which has resulted in a revised approach to how close contacts and casual contacts are now treated in the event of a positive case that has been identified in a school.

Instead of having a full class of students having to quarantine, the Department of Health risk assessment now allows persons deemed as a casual contact to remain in school if an initial negative PCR test is obtained. However, close contacts are still required to quarantine as per usual. We are pleased about the change in policy which has allowed more students to remain in school for in-class learning.

Madam Vice President, since schools have opened for the 2021/2022 school year, there have been 38 positive [COVID-19] cases to date—14 in public schools and 24 in the private schools. I am certain that the safety measures that have been put in place have helped to identify positive cases earlier and also have allowed schools to remain open with continuous in-person learning for our children.

Madam Vice President, earlier this week the Ministry of Health advised that schools could move from phase 1 to phase 2 of the School COVID-19 Guidelines, which means that our younger students from preschool to P3 do not have to wear face masks while inside the classroom. The intent is to review this policy in two weeks for a possible move to phase 3. Many in the community have advocated for a quicker move between the COVID-19 protocol school phases, as other entities in Bermuda have opened up.

However, Madam Vice President, I wish to remind all that our schools are considered high- to medium-risk locations. Students are in a classroom approximately three feet apart from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm daily. A relaxation in the school protocols too quickly, leading to an outbreak, could cause an entire class or year level to be quarantined. This would negate our recovery and our movement toward the new normal.

Madam Vice President, each child sent home typically results in that household also being quarantined. A household in quarantine can affect a parent's ability to work and other siblings' ability to attend school. Those other siblings' [situation] may result in fellow students at their schools being affected, and their respective households as well. If we stop and think about this, it is easy to see the potential knock-on effects of a positive case in a school. We want to, and we will, ease the restrictions, but this is to be done and needs to be balanced with the safety of our children and the need for them to remain in school.

Madam Vice President, in this last outbreak, approximately one-third of cases were children. And to my understanding, a few cases can be traced back to parents' sending their children to childcare settings when other children were infected and then returned home to infect household members. While children may not be as affected by COVID-19 as adults, children tend to be around their elders, who may be more susceptible to COVID-19 complications. With our prevalence of multi-generational households, this could be a real issue. The guidelines in schools have allowed us to have schools open and keep them open, and at the same time help protect our community.

Madam Vice President, we will continue to do what is best for our students and their families to keep them in school and learning. While this may inconvenience our adults at times, our focus will remain on keeping our students and our schools safe for in-person learning.

Madam Vice President, I want to take the time out right now to thank the staff at the Ministry of Education, the Department of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Department of Health School Surveillance Team, our private school partners and the Schools Testing Team at the Bermuda Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory. It is genuinely the collaborative effort of all involved and their hard work and dedication to ensure

that our schools have programmes that enable us to keep our students in school and be protected as much as possible from the COVID-19 virus.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Owen Darrell.

Senator Darrell, I think I am calling on you yet again. The next Statement is Bermuda College 2020 Annual Report, 2021 Audited Statements and 2021 Student Financial Support. It will be presented by Senator Owen K. Darrell, Junior Minister for Education.

Senator Darrell.

BERMUDA COLLEGE 2020 ANNUAL REPORT, 2021 AUDITED STATEMENTS AND 2021 STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

Madam Vice President, this morning I rise before the Senate to lay the [Bermuda College 2020–2021 Annual Report and its 2021 Audited Financial Statements](#), as required under section 8(2) of the Bermuda College Act 1974. I will also report on the Government's \$300,000 annual grant and the Bermuda College Promise Merit Award programme, both of which are provided as financial support for students to attend the Bermuda College.

Madam Vice President, one of the main functions of the Bermuda College Board of Governors is to deliver an annual report on the college activities and to produce annual audited financial statements. I will report first on the Bermuda College Annual Report. The 2020–2021 Annual Report highlights the resilience demonstrated by faculty, staff and students in ensuring that business operations, instruction and learning proceeded with minimum disruption despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual report also shows the progress made by the Bermuda College in key areas of its five-year strategic plan, Vision 2023: Delivering Success.

Madam Vice President, some of the operational, academic and technical activities undertaken by Bermuda College during the past year are as follows:

- A virtual site visit of the college was held with the New England Commission of Higher Education [NECHE] accrediting agency. The site visit culminated in NECHE accepting the first five-year interim report produced by the Bermuda College.
- More than \$6 million was raised for capital projects and student financial assistance by the Bermuda College Foundation and its donors.
- The building commenced for a state-of-the-art Career Development Centre, renovation of

one of its lecture theatres and upgrading of its IT infrastructure as a result of a generous gift of \$3.8 million from Athene, Athene Life Re, Athora [Life Re], Aspen Insurance Holdings and Catalina Holdings.

- There was an increased enrolment of 6 per cent in the academic divisions during a challenging period when comparable institutions grappled with enrolment. Additionally, PACE [Division of Professional and Career Education] serviced 1,181 students compared to 857 the previous year, an increase of 37 per cent.
- During the past year, the college graduated 139 students, including 32 in January 2021 when it held its first winter commencement in over a decade. There were 15 graduates of the Mount Saint Vincent University programme, which represented the largest cohort in 10 years.
- In December 2020, a total of 296 students earned international qualifications and Workforce Development Certificates via the Division of Professional and Career Education (also known as PACE); 109 public high school students earned their City and Guild Entry Level Introductory Award in Employability Skills, and 16 students earned the Certificate for Nursing Assistants (or the CNA).

Madam Vice President, Bermuda College has expanded its online programme offerings with signed articulation or transfer agreements with overseas institutions such as Southern New Hampshire University, offering a BA in Psychology or General Studies, and a BS in Business Administration or Technical Management; East Carolina University in the area of Coastal and Marine Science; Walden University for studies in Nursing from an RN to a BSN programme; and Framingham State University, where the first cohort of 13 students has commenced the Graduate Programme in Educational Leadership.

Madam Vice President, the college also established partnerships with the Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers (ABIR) and St. John's University in New York to develop a talent pipeline for Bermudians to enter the insurance and reinsurance industry. The Division of Professional and Career Education recorded its first qualified Associate Chartered Certified Accountant (ACCA) graduate since the programme's inception in 2011. The PACE Division also achieved a commendable 25th ranking out of 200 community colleges in the Learning Resources Network (LERN), having registered over 90 students for online professional certificate courses during the year.

Madam Vice President, student success undergirds all instructional strategies and initiatives at the college, and the following highlights are examples of student success: A partnership with Northampton University and the Bermuda Hospitals Board led to three nursing graduates from Northampton University's Bachelor's of Mental Health Programme, of which two received excellence awards. In Computer Information Systems, a second-year student took part in the Technology Leadership Forum, a government-sponsored internship involving multiple companies. Two students also took advantage of summer internships with @Company, a Silicon Valley tech start-up.

Madam Vice President, two Earth and Environmental Studies students participated in a six-week-long weekend programme for Marine Science scholars at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences (BIOS). The programme aimed to reach students who could benefit from field and laboratory experience at BIOS. One student is now enrolled in the Marine Science Programme at Bermuda College; the other is currently attending the University of Plymouth to study Ocean Exploration and Surveying.

Madam Vice President, I will now shift to the fiduciary responsibility of the Bermuda College Board of Governors. I am pleased to report that the 2021 audited financial statements for the Bermuda College were unqualified. As such, in the opinion of the Auditor General, the statements present fairly the financial position of the Bermuda College at the end of the fiscal year of 2021. The audited financial statements indicate that the Bermuda College had assets worth \$22,642,466 and total liabilities of \$17,326,538.

Additionally, Madam Vice President, it should be noted that Bermuda College currently has no long-term debt. Cash and cash equivalents for the period increased by 22.7 per cent to \$3,807,943. The accounts receivable increased by 6.7 per cent to \$1,133,591. And the accounts payable decreased by 2.2 per cent and stood at \$2,892,951 at the end of the 2021 fiscal year.

Madam Vice President, although there have been capital investments at the Bermuda College with the building of the Career Development Centre and upgrades to the IT infrastructure, this did not occur before March 31, 2021. As such, the capital assets reflected a depreciation as of March 31 and totalled \$14,909,119. However, with the establishment of the Bermuda College Foundation, it is expected that there will be ongoing capital investments in the infrastructure.

Madam Vice President, the Government grant to the Bermuda College remained at \$15,906,000 during the 2020–2021 fiscal period while other revenue decreased by \$577,704, or 2.6 per cent. However, total expenses also decreased by 9.2 per cent, resulting in excess revenue of \$1,016,304 for the year.

Madam Vice President, the Government grant to the Bermuda College remained at \$15,906,000 during the 2020–2021 fiscal period while other revenue decreased by \$577,704, or 2.6 per cent. However, total expenses also decreased by 9.2 per cent, resulting in excess revenue of \$1,016,304 for the year.

Madam Vice President, the Bermuda College financial officers and the Office of the Auditor General have been working assiduously during the past year to ensure that Bermuda College complies with the financial standards of its accreditors, NECHE and the Bermuda College Act. This goal has been achieved since the college submitted both its 2020–2021 audited financial statements and its 2020–2021 Annual

Report by September 30, 2021. As of today, both documents have been presented to the Senate.

Madam Vice President, I extend thanks to the Auditor General, Ms. Heather Thomas, and her team in the Office of the Auditor General for their efforts in bringing Bermuda College up to date with its audits. Additionally, thanks are also given to Mr. Dwight Furbert, Vice President of Finance & Operations, and his team at the Bermuda College.

Madam Vice President, I will now report on the annual Government Tuition Grant of \$300,000 given to Bermuda College for financial support to students, and share information on the College Promise Merit [Award] programme.

Madam Vice President, let me first speak to the annual grant of \$300,000. My honourable colleagues will recall that since September 2017 the Bermuda College has been receiving an additional \$300,000 specifically to support students in financial need. The purpose of this grant is to provide financial assistance to students in one of three academic divisions or the Professional and Career Education (PACE) Division at the College. To qualify for the funding, students must demonstrate a financial need and current students must have a grade point average [GPA] of 2.0 or higher. The tuition awards range from 30 per cent to 100 per cent of the student's educational costs, with the educational costs defined as the value of tuition plus fees.

Madam Vice President, this semester 78 students received financial assistance from the tuition grants totalling \$141,855. There were 25 students enrolled in the Mount Saint Vincent University Business of Administration [degree] programme; 23 were enrolled in business and finance programmes; 15 were enrolled in health programmes; and 15 in in-service programmes.

Madam Vice President, allow me to point out that since this tuition grant was instituted in 2017, a total of 174 students have graduated or earned a certificate. Of that number, 99 students have graduated with an associate degree, diploma or certificate from the academic divisions, 40 students earned a Workforce Development Certificate from PACE, 29 students have earned their bachelor's degree from Mount Saint Vincent University, 2 students earned a master's degree from Miami University, and 4 students have earned their post-graduate Teaching Diploma from the University of West Indies. Our students are experiencing success from this tuition grant, which we expect will trickle down into the economy as they pursue jobs in their respective fields of study.

Madam Vice President, on the other hand, the College Promise Merit Award programme was introduced in 2019 specifically for high school students. This programme allows qualifying public school students to attend the Bermuda College tuition-free immediately after their high school graduation. This is the third year of the programme, and I am pleased to

share with my honourable Senate colleagues that since its inception in 2019, four students have graduated from Bermuda College. Currently, 65 students are participating in the College Promise programme at the Bermuda College this year, of whom 33 are new College Promise entrants and 32 are returning students.

Madam Vice President, this Government remains committed to supporting our Bermudian students. They are taking the opportunity to pursue tertiary education and doing well in their pursuits. The Government will continue to provide funding to ensure that no student is denied a Bermuda College education due to a lack of finances.

Madam Vice President, in closing I want to commend the board chair and members, faculty, staff and administration at the Bermuda College for their continued commitment to the operations and delivery of tertiary education at the Bermuda College during these unprecedented times. I invite the Senate to read the annual report for details of the Bermuda College's accomplishments and successes for the 2020–2021 reporting period. Lastly, I encourage the general public to take advantage of the various courses and programmes offered at Bermuda College, where there are many paths—discover yours!

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell. I think you can take a little break right now.

We are moving on to the next Statement. And it is An Update on Universal Health Coverage, and it will be presented by Senator Arianna J. L. Hodgson, Junior Minister for Health.

Senator Hodgson.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE UPDATE

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

In this year's Throne Speech, the Government of Bermuda has reaffirmed its intention to implement [universal health coverage](#) for all residents. Our vision for health care seeks to ensure that "all people have equitable access to needed, informative, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative essential health services, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that people do not suffer financial hardship when paying for these services and critical medicines."

Bermuda is fortunate in that we have a health system that is well-developed and well-supported by dedicated professionals. However, the overall affordability and sustainability of our health system is deeply concerning for this Government. Bermuda has one of the highest per capita health expenditures globally, but our population health outcomes do not reflect this. Continuing with the status quo in the hope this situation resolves itself is simply not a responsible option.

Madam Vice President, change is required, and the journey is indeed complex and one which we will travel together for several years as we seek to ensure the following:

- better health outcomes, particularly of chronic disease management;
- essential health services that residents can be confident they can afford when they need them; and
- the elimination of waste and duplication where it occurs.

Having committed to universal health coverage [UHC], the Ministry of Health was tasked with developing the way forward. To do so, the Ministry brought together a core group of stakeholders from across our health system to serve as the UHC Steering Committee to develop the roadmap for strengthening Bermuda's health care. The UHC Steering Committee is led by the Ministry of Health and comprises representatives of BermudaFirst, the Bermuda Medical Doctors Association, Bermuda Health Council, Department of Health, Bermuda Hospitals Board, the Health Insurance Department, Ministry of Finance and a patient representative. Its work is supported by KPMG. In this process, the steering committee took note of health care systems in other jurisdictions, both large and small, who have already taken their first steps on this journey. It is clear that there are many paths to reach universal health coverage, and UHC is very much advocated by the United Nations and World Health Organization. But the approach taken here, on our Island, must be Bermuda-centric.

Madam Vice President, we do know the goal of achieving universal health coverage will be accomplished in stages, and these stages will take place over a number of years. It is our commitment to the people of Bermuda that we will keep them fully informed of progress. As part of developing the roadmap, the UHC Steering Committee examined the current health system and identified a number of actions to prioritise for its strengthening. These can be grouped into the following three areas: (1) stewardship and governance; (2) health care service delivery; and (3) health system value and financing.

Taking each in turn, *stewardship and governance* is the foundational framework for the health system. This is where vision and strategy are set, population health needs are understood, transparent responsibility and accountability are established, and organisational and legal structures are implemented. For example, with respect to responsibility and accountability, identified actions include setting standard metrics for measuring and monitoring system and population health performance and for public reporting of the results. How does Bermuda measure up against other jurisdictions in terms of our population's health? How does Bermuda measure up in terms of best practices?

Secondly, *strengthening health care service delivery* involves ensuring all residents have equitable

access to essential health care that is integrated in an efficient manner and which produces good patient experiences and health outcomes. Identified actions in this area include determining the following: What are the essential health care services? What approach do we take to the delivery of care services? How do we take advantage of advancements in information systems to better manage patient care?

Concerning the third work area, *health system value and financing*, this is a very challenging aspect for Bermuda. As stated previously, our health expenditure is high and does not match our health outcomes. However, before making abrupt changes to achieve a sustainable health system, it is crucial to fully understand current and future costs both at a system and at an individual patient level. Therefore, identified actions include, but are not limited to confirming the current costs of care and how these costs are distributed; modelling future costs, including the do-nothing option; identifying where savings exist across the health system; and evaluating modern purchasing and procurement mechanisms so that we know how the essential benefits can be most efficiently purchased. These steps and more constitute very necessary and responsible due diligence.

Madam Vice President, while the pandemic delayed work on plans for universal health coverage as the Ministry, hospital, Health Council, physicians and allied professionals across Bermuda joined in the fight against COVID-19, this delay created space and time for the Ministry, working closely with the UHC Steering Committee, to develop a refreshed approach to health system change. As a result, the many actions identified as necessary to strengthen Bermuda's health system are based on and framed by a patient-focused approach that puts patient experiences and outcomes at the centre of the work on universal health coverage.

Madam Vice President, year one of the initial three-year roadmap for universal health coverage is foundational in nature. Three of the year one areas of work are mentioned in the Throne Speech.

1. The first would be the digital health strategy. Establishing a national strategy for digital health care and data that leverages health information systems to capture improvements and efficiencies for patients, health care providers and health system payors.
2. Integrated patient pathway for essential care. Implementing a *patient pathway* approach, which focuses on a patient's journey or pathway through the health care system, allows us to examine the fragmented components of health care and the costs involved at each point that care is delivered. A pathway can be a particular patient group (such as maternal/childcare) or disease (such as kidney disease or heart disease). By following a pathway from start to finish, we can better see op-

portunities to improve patient experiences and outcomes, and address any duplicative, wasteful use of resources.

3. Commence merging the administration of Government health care plans. Review and implement a merger of the administrative functions of the government plans. A portion of this work was undertaken when the Health Insurance Plan and FutureCare were consolidated under the Health Insurance Department. The administrative merger would represent the completion of this process and involves GEHI and funds controlled by Financial Assistance and other patient care subsidies.

The other areas of work in year one involve the following:

- setting up the organisational structure for stewardship and governance (including new working groups for collaboration with stakeholders);
- determining the baselines required, for example, for our health needs and for the metrics to measure our performance; and
- establishing the economic case for strengthening our health system.

Madam Vice President, vitally important for the work on universal health coverage is the engagement of and collaboration with the broad group of stakeholders who form part of Bermuda's health system. We have a direction of travel, but there are many questions to answer and decisions to make that will need broader input than is represented solely by the UHC Steering Committee or the Ministry itself.

In the coming weeks, the Ministry will be meeting with the executive and membership of those represented on the steering committee, as well as the private insurers, Bermuda Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, Bermuda Employers Council, ABIR, ABIC, our union leaders and others. The purpose is to share the roadmap for achieving universal health coverage and the work done so far, and most importantly, the work still to be done. We know their insight and feedback will be invaluable as we improve health care access, experience and outcomes for all who live here.

Madam Vice President, let us not lose sight of our personal responsibility for our own health. With or without universal health coverage, the Ministry of Health seeks to empower the community to lead healthy lifestyles. To do so, the Department of Health provides information and tools for individuals to take charge of their health. Lifestyle is the cause of many common chronic diseases—and that means it can also be part of the solution in treating and even reversing them. Through the Department of Health's HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living) programme, we strongly encourage the people of Bermuda to participate in one or more of the following initiatives:

Complete Health Improvement Programme (CHIP) is one of the world's most scientifically proven, intensive lifestyle intervention solutions designed to help support and facilitate the prevention, treatment, and reversal of chronic disease. Facilitated over 12 to 18 sessions in a group setting, CHIP puts you on the fast track to better health by guiding you toward habits that help you thrive.

Grow Eat Save is a free eight-week gardening initiative where attendees learn the basics of starting their own garden from gardening experts and have the opportunity to work in teams on a plot provided by the Parks Department to implement the skills they have learned in class. Attendees learn to be sustainable in providing some food to their families during these difficult times.

The HEARTS Initiative is a pilot programme to be launched in January 2022 to implement evidenced-based hypertension and diabetes protocols to improve the management of cardiovascular health in primary care.

Madam Vice President, these are only a few examples of the wellness initiatives available through the Department of Health. We fully recognise the fundamental role of prevention in contributing to healthy outcomes and a sustainable health system.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Minister Wilson's thanks to the UHC Steering Committee for their hard work to date. We are all very much at the beginning of a multi-year journey with challenges and complexities in front of us. I echo Minister Wilson's appreciation for your contributions in getting us to this point. You have helped to put Bermuda on a realistic path to achieve universal health coverage.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson.

And following on, we have another Statement, The Role of the Labour Advisory Council and Its Functions, also presented by Senator Arianna J. L. Hodgson, Junior Minister for Labour.

Senator Hodgson.

LABOUR ADVISORY COUNCIL ITS ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I am pleased to rise today to provide to the Senate an overview of the role and functions of the [Labour Advisory Council](#) [the LAC] and the work that it will commence in 2022.

Madam Vice President, the LAC was established in the 1960s in response to the labour and social unrest that was taking place during this time. It is a non-statutory tripartite government board tasked with advancing industrial relations and garnering consensus amongst its members to make recommenda-

tions concerning legislative amendments, policies and standards regarding Bermuda's labour force.

Madam Vice President, the LAC is chaired by the Minister of Labour and comprises representatives from the government, employer groups and worker groups as equal and independent partners, together seeking solutions to the issues facing Bermuda's labour force through social dialogue. This form of social dialogue is referred to as *tripartism*, and it is extremely effective as it allows for the views of each side to be taken into consideration when decisions are made, leading to more favourable outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Madam Vice President, the LAC meets quarterly and has the ability to meet more frequently where necessary. Subcommittees of the LAC meet more regularly. The LAC will reconvene quarterly meetings in January 2022 and has a robust agenda that I will now share with the Members of the Senate, which includes, but is not limited to

1. further amendments to the Employment Act 2000;
2. guidance on independent contractor contracts; and
3. inequalities in the world of work.

Further Amendments to the Employment Act

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam Vice President, the Ministry has identified areas within the Employment Act 2000 where further strengthening of workplace protection is required. The LAC will be asked to review and opine on a policy document in this regard, which includes but is not limited to the following areas:

1. A requirement to notify the Ministry of Labour where an employer intends to engage in mass terminations of more than 20 persons. This will enable the Ministry to provide the necessary assistance in a timely manner to employers as it relates to compliance with the Act, as well as to employees as it relates to seeking alternate employment and/or retooling them for the labour force.

2. Determining what constitutes the end of a layoff period. This will ensure that when recalling employees to work, there are measures in place that protect employees from consecutive layoff periods and clearly defining the end of the layoff period.

3. The publication of employment standards. This will ensure that all employed persons, particularly work permit holders, are aware of their rights and obligations under the Act and whom they may contact for assistance.

4. Workplace inspections by the Labour Relations Manager. This will ensure that employers maintain adequate employment records in accordance with the Act and that employees have the appropriate access.

5. Wage theft protections. This will strengthen employee protections ensuring that there are ade-

quate provisions to protect employees from employers who

- a. fail to pay employees for all hours worked;
- b. fail to make appropriate overtime payments;
- c. fail to allocate tips to employees; and
- d. illegally deduct or fail to make the appropriate statutory benefit payments.

Provide Guidance on Independent Contractor Contracts

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam Vice President, the Ministry has received a number of concerns from workers and members of the public pertaining to unfair contractual terms and employment contracts that seem to take advantage of the current economic climate in Bermuda and persons' inability to find suitable and sustainable employment.

The Act was amended to address this longstanding issue and allows for the Manager of the Labour Relations Section, in consultation with the Labour Advisory Council, to issue guidance for the purpose of determining whether an employment relationship more closely resembles that of an employee than an independent contractor.

The LAC will consider this issue and determine whether it is necessary to issue guidance in this regard and the contents of the same.

Inequalities in the World of Work

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam Vice President, on the 23rd of November 2021, the Minister attended the International Labour Organization Caribbean Labour Ministers Meeting in preparation for the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference. The LAC will review the report submitted to the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference, entitled "Inequalities and the World of Work." The LAC will consider this report as it relates to Bermuda and will seek to address the following areas:

- the economic and social implications of inequality in the workplace;
- the main drivers of inequality inside of the labour market; and
- what effective responsive policies and measures should be introduced to reduce inequality and promote productivity and growth, including in the context of the recovery from the pandemic.

Madam Vice President, the Ministry would like to take this opportunity to thank Senators for the opportunity to address them in this regard. Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson.

And the final Statement this morning is Bermuda's Participation in COP26. And it is being pre-

sented by Senator Lindsay K. Simmons, Junior Minister for Home Affairs.

Senator Simmons.

BERMUDA'S PARTICIPATION IN COP26

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam Vice President. I rise to provide an update of [Bermuda's participation in COP26](#). Senators will be aware that Minister Roban had the opportunity to represent Bermuda at this year's UN Climate Change Conference COP26 in Glasgow between 31 October and 12 November.

Through our London Office and UK representative, Bermuda holds Chairmanship of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA). UKOTA is recognised in the United Kingdom as the official association which exists to advance the interests of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories, facilitate cooperation between them and promote solidarity. The association demonstrates the collective partnership between the Territories and Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom. As such, the UK Government facilitated our presence at COP26 as part of the UK delegation overflow, of which Bermuda led a delegation of seven from across the Territories.

Madam Vice President, governments of the UK's Overseas Territories are custodians of internationally important habitats which span the globe from the Antarctic to the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean to the Pacific. All 14 Territories are on the front line of the impact of climate change as vulnerable small island states. We are also at the forefront of renewable energy; nature-based solutions; adaptation and resilience; ocean protection; and, with global leadership in catastrophic risk reinsurance, climate finance.

Together with the UK, the Territories represent the world's fifth-largest marine estate of which 75 per cent is protected, containing over 90 per cent of the UK's biodiversity. We recognise that we are vital to the UK's meeting its pledge by 2030 to protect 30 per cent of the world's oceans.

Bermuda is not immune or isolated from the impacts of climate change. Our Island is exposed to rising sea levels, increasingly severe and frequent storms, and to changes in ocean currents and weather patterns. Isolated, beautiful and unique, Bermuda is home to the most northerly coral reef system in the Atlantic Ocean which is a critical habitat for marine biodiversity as Bermuda is the only landmass in the Sargasso Sea, a floating rainforest of Sargassum seaweed that is a home and spawning site for several species of threatened and endangered marine wildlife. We are a treasure trove of environmental wealth, a capital of ocean conservation and a key player on the global stage of financial risk management.

As an Island community vulnerable to the effects of climate change and as a global capital of climate-related financial risk management, we are de-

termined that Bermuda will participate in the international response to ensure our collective safety and prosperity. To that end, we continue to declare that Bermuda is committed to increasing our protection of our fragile ecosystem, reducing our carbon footprint and mitigating the impact of climate change.

Madam Vice President, we are particularly proud of the work being done under the auspices of the Bermuda Ocean Prosperity Programme, which will manage the marine spatial planning. The marine spatial planning will develop and legally adopt an enforceable, comprehensive EEZ-wide plan designed to sustainably manage resources and protect 20 per cent of Bermuda's waters as a no-take fisheries replenishment zone. Our ambition looking forward is to be a thriving Blue Economy with the diversification of our national revenue and to strengthen our sustainable use of our ocean resources and economic growth, with improved livelihoods and jobs, and continued ecosystem health.

Madam Vice President, all of Bermuda's success and ambition in fighting climate change were featured at COP26. Minister Roban had the pleasure of chairing an Overseas Territory event in the UK Pavilion on Nature Day entitled "Our Vision for Healthy Oceans." The event, organised through UKOTA together with the UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), was thematically focused on raising awareness, protecting our oceans and how the Overseas Territories are taking action against climate change.

The event importantly featured a powerful video collaboration of all of the Overseas Territories, highlighting how climate change impacts our marine life and sustainability. If any Senators have not had the opportunity to see the video, I strongly encourage viewing this video, which can be found on the UK Government YouTube channel.

Madam Vice President, the UK Minister for the Pacific and the International Environment, the Right Honourable Lord Zac Goldsmith, acknowledged, "What these leaders are doing is simply heroic. Our overseas territories are protecting an area of water bigger than India. It's one of the best Conservation wins of my generation."

Lord Zac Goldsmith's acknowledgement went further with commitments in the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) in which the Premier presided as President of the UKOTA Political Council. The UK Government committed to working closely with Overseas Territory Governments where technical expertise was requested, and to prioritise climate change and environmental issues in future funding for the Territories. The Overseas Territories committed to continuing to formulate ambitious climate targets and policies.

Madam Vice President, we should be proud of the work achieved at COP26 in terms of heightened recognition within the UK and international community on Bermuda's efforts and success in this space. We

agreed that a greater level of engagement will continue for all Overseas Territories including at future conventions of biological diversity and climate change summits.

Madam Vice President, the work continues, and our partnership with the UK and our fellow Overseas Territories in tackling climate change and accessing international funding is at the forefront of this Government's work.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons. We will now move on.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Vice President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

BERMUDA NATIONAL TRUST AMENDMENT ACT 2021

GOVERNMENT FEES AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION ACT 2021

The Vice President: The following Public Bills have been received from the Honourable House of Assembly and are now read for the first time. Their titles are, respectively, the Bermuda National Trust Amendment Act 2021; and the Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The Vice President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Vice President: Senators, you are invited to ask questions about the Statements. I think we will just take them in turn. That would be a lot easier.

So the first Statement which was read was that on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Would any Senator like to ask a question?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: Good morning and thank you, Madam Vice President, and good morning to my Senate colleagues and the listening audience.

The question that I have for the Junior Minister . . . first I actually want to say thank you to the Junior Minister for bringing this Statement to the Senate Chamber. It is important as a society that we protect

and care for every person in this community, and particularly for our vulnerable.

I do have a few questions. My first question is around the formal registrar of persons with disabilities that is being developed. I would like to know if the registration of persons with disabilities will be mandatory.

The Vice President: Would you like to ask all of your questions? Or do you want to wait for the response because you might have a supplementary?

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes, please. I would prefer to wait for the response.

The Vice President: Okay. Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Senator Lindsay Simmons, do you have a response?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: I am waiting for a response now. One second.

The Vice President: While you are waiting, perhaps I can ask if there is any other Senator who would like to ask a question about the Statement on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

No, I do not see any. So we are just waiting with you, Senator Simmons.

[Pause]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam Vice President, if you want to move on, as soon as I get the answer I will let you know.

The Vice President: I do not particularly want to move away from this Statement. There do not seem to be any other questions. So perhaps we can just wait a little bit longer.

[Pause]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Senator Simmons. Yes.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: That will be evaluated. That is the answer I have for that question.

The Vice President: Senator Tucker, do you have a supplementary you would like to ask?

Sen. Robin Tucker: It is a little difficult to ask a supplementary question with such a vague answer. However, I would ask this question: If the—

The Vice President: This is a supplementary?

Sen. Robin Tucker: This is a supplementary, yes.

The Vice President: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Robin Tucker: So if registration will not be mandatory, then I would like to know what the plan is to ensure that they have reliable data. If the registration is not mandatory, particularly because registration of persons is, based on the Statement, supposed to be used to support other initiatives . . . so one would think that having the information that is on the register, if it is going to be relied upon for benefits and supports and all of that, that the information on the register will be reliable.

If it is—

The Vice President: This is still part of the same supplementary?

[Laughter]

Sen. Robin Tucker: This is part of my same supplementary.

The Vice President: Okay.

Sen. Robin Tucker: If registration is mandatory, I would like to know if there is an opt-out for people. And if it is an opt-out, on what basis?

Am I allowed three supplementaries or just two?

The Vice President: Two. Do not stretch it.

[Laughter]

Sen. Robin Tucker: Okay.

The Vice President: We will wait for a response.
Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

[Pause]

The Vice President: We are just awaiting answers from Senator Lindsay K. Simmons, the Junior Minister for Social Development and Seniors.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: At this time we have not made a decision whether it is going to be voluntary or mandatory. But it will be evaluated.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Simmons.
Senator Tucker, supplementary or a new question?

Sen. Robin Tucker: A new question, please, Madam Vice President.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Excuse me, Madam Vice President. I have a supplementary for that original question. Sorry to interject, but may I?

The Vice President: Yes, you may, Senator Marcus Jones.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam Vice President. Again, good morning to you and my fellow Senators.

Again, I would like to thank the Junior Minister for bringing this very important Statement to this Chamber. I believe that if we take care of the least of these within our community, I believe that the whole community would benefit from it. I do appreciate the fact that the answer that [Senator Tucker] is looking to ascertain is not fully available at this point, as that Ministry is evaluating.

My question would be, I am sure that this whole idea of the disability register is not new in the world. The template, I believe, that the Ministry is looking to emulate comes from other jurisdictions. So my question would be, What are the best practices in other jurisdictions where it is mandatory? And if there is that stipulation in other jurisdictions, does the Junior Minister have any idea of what that looks like? Just to give us an idea here in this Chamber of what parameters that the Ministry is looking [at] to formulate their evaluation of whether Bermuda is going to do it and make it mandatory or not.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Senator Simmons, you have heard the question.

[Pause]

The Vice President: While we are waiting, is there any other Senator who has a question related to this?

Senator Tucker, would you like to go to your second question?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: I can answer.

The Vice President: Oh, Senator Simmons?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes.

The Vice President: Yes.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: So right now we are in the early stages, and we are still in the development stage. Most of the registers are electronic, but we will

also be on hand to help with manual [registers]. But we are still trying to evaluate and get an [undertaking] out of the jurisdiction. So we are still working on it. Thank you.

The Vice President: Okay. Thank you, Senator Simmons.

Senator Robin Tucker, your second question?

QUESTION 2: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

My second question for the Junior Minister is, while I appreciate that we are still in the development stages, I think that my question is probably one more geared toward the foundational level, which I would expect would be determined at this particular point. So there were two different definitions, similar definitions, for “disabled persons.” I am wondering what qualification for being on the register will be required and if it will be aligned with the Human Rights Act 1981 definition of “disabled”? Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Senator Lindsay Simmons, do you have a response?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: One second.

[Pause]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: So, yes. They will align with the Human Rights Act 1981. The Human Rights Commission has a “disability” definition.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Supplementary, Senator Tucker?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

So my supplementary question is that the Human Rights Act 1981 includes as part of their definition of “disabled person” persons with diabetes, epilepsy and acquired immune deficiency syndrome, otherwise known as AIDS. So what I would like to know is whether everyone who has a disability including what I have just mentioned under the Human Rights Act will be required to register and be part of the register.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam Vice President, I just want to reiterate that it is still under development. And as soon as formal decisions are made, we will

definitely let the public know and the Senate Chamber.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Senator Tucker, do you have another supplementary or a new question?

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I do have a supplementary question. What I did not see specifically stated in the definition . . . I am sure that it is covered, but a specific category was “persons with learning disabilities.” And so again I would like to know if the plan would be to specifically include them and set that out as well.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Senator Lindsay Simmons, do you have a response?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes, Madam Vice President.

It will be covered. I mean, we did touch on autism. So it definitely will be covered. Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Senator Tucker, the third question?

QUESTION 3: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes, please.

My third question is, What entity will have responsibility for obtaining this information and keeping the register confidential, private and updated?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Senator Lindsay Simmons.

[Pause]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: One second.

[Pause]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: As stated before, the policy is still under development. So I do not have an answer for you at this time. But as soon as we formalise it, you will know. Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Simmons.

Senator Robin Tucker, do you have a supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Robin Tucker: I do have a supplementary. And I do not mean to be . . . when I make this comment and ask this question, I certainly do not mean to be difficult or disrespectful in any way.

I am just surprised that we are making an announcement that a register is going to be put out but we do not have any of the answers to any of the very basic and very fundamental questions as it relates to this very important register of people with disabilities.

So I would like to know whether there is any information that can be provided that gives us a little bit more detail about what this register would be about.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.

I will say that the reason why this was announced is because it is very important that we are going to have a registry. So we are letting the public know. But right now we are in the early stages of developing it, so it would be too early for me to give too much information.

I think my Statement said enough about how we plan on starting and that we are going to have a registry. So I think that it is not too early to announce that we are going to have a registry. We just need to formalise everything. And as soon as everything is formalised, we will let the public know and the Senate Chamber.

Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

I think we will move to the next Statement, and that is Update on the Tynes Bay Waste-to-Energy Facility. I see Senator John Wight.

You have the floor.

QUESTION 1: TYNES BAY WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITY UPDATE

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I find it somewhat concerning, as I am sure many Bermudians do, that in 2022 we are having to talk about reverting to using a landfill site for disposal of solid waste. I also find it somewhat concerning and disturbing that the reported repairs will be upwards of \$10 million on this facility. If I just think of an analogy being, say, the owner of a commercial office building with critical assets such as air conditioning and other

such assets, businesses often plan ahead for replacement of ageing assets.

The Vice President: Senator Wight, if I can just interrupt. Please would you get to your question as quickly as you can?

Sen. John Wight: I will.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

So my question would be, there was a reference by the Acting Minister of Works about the replacement cost being \$150 million. So I guess my question would be, in light of many other countries around the world who are facing similar financial challenges [as] Bermuda, the technology for waste disposal over the last 30 years has improved tremendously. And there are many more cost-effective and cost-affordable options for consideration for waste disposal. So I would ask whether in light of the \$150 million comment, which is really buying a similar asset to what we installed 30 or 40 years ago, whether consideration is being given to these more cost-effective, cost-affordable, much more modern technologies that many other countries—some in the Caribbean—have sought and are using?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Wight.

Senator Darrell, would you like to respond now?

Sen. Owen Darrell: I would actually ask, respectfully, Madam Vice President, [if] it would be more effective in my answers if everyone could ask all of their questions? Some may be crossover questions and I can give a full and comprehensive answer.

The Vice President: Okay. Thank you.

Would any other Senator like to ask a question on the Update on the Tynes Bay Waste-to-Energy Facility?

I see Senator Marcus Jones.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I actually had a supplementary to Senator Wight's question. So should I proceed with the supplementary as well?

The Vice President: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Marcus Jones: Okay, fine.

Tagging on behind Senator Wight, my question would be . . . well, let me preface it by saying that

in another place, and at an earlier time even in this Chamber, the cost that was dedicated to this particular facility happened to be in 2009 [when] the PLP Government invested \$22 million. The OBA Government, between 2013 and 2015, invested \$16 million. That is a combined \$37 million into this Tynes Bay Facility in the last 10 years.

So my question would be, Can the Junior Minister give us any indication of whether with so much money having been invested into this facility over 10 years, was there ever a schedule in place for preventative maintenance? Was there a schedule that would actually assess the lifetime of this equipment? We are talking \$37 million; that is a lot of money. And mind you, there were two Governments that were involved in this.

So maybe the Junior Minister can give us a clearer indication of how this very expensive capital project was maintained and preventative maintenance put through for this particular facility.

Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Are there any other Senators who would like to ask a question?

Okay. I do not see any at this point.

QUESTION 2: TYNES BAY WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITY UPDATE

Sen. Marcus Jones: Madam Vice President, I do have another question.

The Vice President: Please proceed, Senator Marcus Jones.

Sen. Marcus Jones: In light of the fact that the Government now has to take on an alternative plan which is to use the Marsh Folly plant, my question would be, Has the Ministry done an environmental assessment to determine how much possible damage [may be done by] reverting back to the old way of disposing of our waste? Can he possibly give us an indication of what damage could possibly be done to a system that was actually made obsolete? I would appreciate that.

And finally my last question, Madam Vice President, is, at a time when we and the world actually are focusing on climate control and taking care of our environment, will this Government in working on a financial solution to solve this, also find in their planning an alternative way of disposing of our waste without causing us to use the old fuel-driven machinery to do away with our waste?

I think if we have got to invest money to produce something new, this would be a good time for the Government to look at alternative means by which we could dispose of it without creating more damage to our environment.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Senator Robin Tucker, I believe you have a question as well.

QUESTION 1: TYNES BAY WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITY UPDATE

Sen. Robin Tucker: I do. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

My question has to do with, When will a decision be made as to whether we will need to revert to landfilling? In the Statement it was mentioned *very soon*, but what does that actually mean?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Are there any other Senators who would like to ask a question about the update on the Tynes Bay facility?

I do not see any. So, Senator Owen Darrell, we are coming to you for the answers.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Vice President. I will gladly respond to the Senators who have asked questions.

So the first question that was posed was from Senator Wight. And he asked (I believe if I have this right), Was any consideration given to other, cost-effective options?

The answer is yes. The technology that is used for our waste is actually waste-to-energy. And it is still mass-burn technology. The Ministry of Public Works did produce extensive studies on new technologies. And just as a comparison, mass-burn is still used in Europe and in Asia, which are the leaders in this industry. You know, closer to home in another Overseas Territory, the Cayman Islands has proposed to build a new plant. And their example is also mass-burn.

So, yes (to answer your question), other options of technology have been looked at, and mass-burn still remains the most cost-effective and best use to make waste to energy.

The supplementary posed by Senator Jones asked about a schedule for preventative maintenance. I know this is not a debate, so I will just answer the question that was asked. But preventative maintenance is ongoing. And the \$37 million which Senator Jones talked about was actually to upgrade the turbine and the ash plant. What we have talked about in my Statement was about main systems that need to be replaced. And to add on to that question, and in the debate that I had two weeks ago, I would have reminded Senator Jones that when the Progressive Labour Party exited office in 2012, there was money that was put aside to do this upgrade of the main systems,

and that money was diverted to an America's Cup boat race.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Point of order, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Senator Marcus Jones, just a minute. Can you tell us what your point of order is?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Sen. Marcus Jones: I believe the Junior Minister is blatantly and determinedly misleading this Chamber as well as the listening audience.

To even make such a stretch to even suggest that monies that were set aside for one project were then put into another . . . he cannot prove it. There is no evidence to substantiate that. And to say that is just being a little bit mischievous, Madam Vice President. Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Jones.

Senator Darrell, would you like to continue with responses to the questions?

Sen. Owen Darrell: Yes. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I will move to the second question that was actually asked by Senator Jones regarding an environmental assessment [regarding the] landfill. I would also like to remind the Senator that my Ministerial Statement came from the Ministry of Public Works. And all environmental questions actually come under the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, I do have an answer for him: All permissions for landfilling have gone through the Environment Authority, who control the licence for the site. So the answer is yes.

The next question: Have we looked into alternative ways of disposing our waste? Yes, I think I answered this a little bit in question one. I think Senator Jones misspoke again when he mentioned fuel-driven technology. Mass-burn technology is actually not fuel-driven. It actually reduces CO₂ by offsetting fossil fuel use.

And the fourth question by Senator Tucker: I believe she asked when will landfilling commence? Unfortunately, landfilling has actually started since Saturday, and will continue for approximately two weeks while we restore the systems which the Statement talked about. And the Acting Minister will give an update as soon as the plant and the operations improve.

The commitment is to stop landfilling as soon as the risk is reduced at the plant. It is important to know, and it was not in the Statement, but I will add this to it that if we do nothing, the risk to actual human life actually increases. It is dangerous at Tynes Bay if we do nothing. I want to just add that.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Owen Darrell.

Are there any supplementary questions? Any follow-up [questions]?

Senator Robin Tucker.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

My supplementary question is just around the initial question concerning maintenance, the maintenance plan. I am wondering what contributed, aside from age and all of those types of things . . . but if we have an efficient maintenance programme in place, I am just wondering what contributed to the critical failure of the contingency system in particular if we have an efficient ongoing maintenance system? Obviously, the contingency system is supposed to be the last resort to make sure that we are not in this position we are in now. So I am just wondering what led to that?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Are there any other follow-up or supplementary questions?

Senator Darrell, back to you.

Sen. Owen Darrell: The failure that we are experiencing now was actually not maintenance-related. It was normal wear and tear. And I would say that if you divert funds [which would be for] normal wear and tear, then you are left with this problem.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Senator Tucker, another supplementary?

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes, thank you.

The Vice President: Go ahead.

Sen. Robin Tucker: So if we are talking about general wear and tear, does that not relate to maintenance? So if we are talking about monitoring and having efficient maintenance programmes, then those types of wear-and-tear issues would be picked up when we are in the midst of the maintenance process. So I am wondering where the lapse is that we would get to a point where we have general wear-and-tear issues that were not dealt with and prevented so that we do not experience the critical failure?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: The last straw, as you could say, of why we got to this point was the particular part that is needed. I mean, normally we would bale trash; you have seen it. You wrap it and take it to a place and store it until we get it up and running. But the part, as I think I stated in the Statement, is not here. The workers down at Tynes Bay have been working. I saw one actually on Saturday. He was working over the weekend trying to get the plant up and running. But the supply-chain issue for these particular parts for the baling has gotten us to this point. You know, I can look into a proper maintenance schedule going forward if that is what you are looking for. But as far as this Statement goes as to the emergency measures that we are taking, I think I have laid out the reasons why.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.
Senator Tucker, did I see your hand? This is your second question.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes, Madam Vice President. Apologies; do I have a second supplementary?

The Vice President: No. You have used two supplementaries already.

Sen. Robin Tucker: I have used them? Okay. Thank you. No, I do not have another question. Thank you.

The Vice President: Okay. Thank you.
If there are no other questions on this Statement, we will go to the next one, which is the COVID-19 Update in Schools.
Are there any questions?
Senator Ben Smith.

QUESTION 1: COVID-19 UPDATE IN SCHOOLS

Sen. Ben Smith: Good morning, Madam Vice President.

First of all, thank you to the Junior Minister for bringing this forward. Obviously, with what has been going on with education, this has been a topic that we have discussed here. I know that there are people in this Chamber and in the public who are interested to know, specifically because of the impact that COVID-19 has had on education, specifically [with] in-person learning as opposed to virtual learning.

Madam Vice President, on the second page of the Statement, the first paragraph, the Junior Minister refers to a saliva screening pilot programme and said, "The programme proved to be successful in identifying asymptomatic cases." And then it goes on to talk about "all public schools testing weekly." My question is, Can the Junior Minister confirm that all students, teachers and staff of public schools are participating in the testing programme every week? Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Are there any other questions about this Statement?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: COVID-19 UPDATE IN SCHOOLS

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

My question is, the schools have obviously been identified as medium- to high-risk locations. So I am wondering if there is at any point, a plan to put the public schools on the same testing requirements as the private schools? Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.
Senator Marcus Jones, I see your hand. Do you have a question?

Sen. Marcus Jones: Yes. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

On the first page of the Statement, may I read it, Madam Vice President?

The Vice President: Yes, please.

QUESTION 1: COVID-19 UPDATE IN SCHOOLS

Sen. Marcus Jones: The last paragraph says, "The increased number of [COVID-19] positive cases caused the Ministry of Education to make the difficult decision to begin the 2021–2022 academic year with remote learning for public schools." Now remember in our last session we were talking about our students having to be at home. And one of the sticking points, if there was another wave, was that there may not be enough laptops and equipment for every student if they had to stay at home. Now, we have seen in the public domain that there have been a number of laptops that have been donated to the public schools. BELCO donated 200, and L&G Re [Legal and General Reinsurance] donated 50.

Can the Junior Minister give us an update on the numbers of laptops that are actually now needed with this addition since the last time we talked about it? How many more laptops will be needed where [the Junior Minister] and his Ministry will be comfortable that there will be sufficient technical equipment (i.e., laptops) for every student in the public school system? If we have a wave that makes everyone have to go back home to do remote learning, would there be sufficient [laptops]? And if there is a shortage, here is a great platform for him to sell the idea of seeing who else can donate and prop up the inventory of laptops for our students in public school.

Thank you, Junior Minister. Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Jones.

Are there any other questions about this Statement?

Senator Ben Smith.

Sen. Ben Smith: So, Madam Vice President—

The Vice President: Is this a second question?

Sen. Ben Smith: I just want to make sure—do I have to ask all of my questions now, or can I wait until we start to get responses?

The Vice President: You can ask all of your questions if you wish to.

Sen. Ben Smith: So one of my questions relates to a question that has been asked. So this will be my second question.

The Vice President: Yes.

QUESTION 2: COVID-19 UPDATE IN SCHOOLS

Sen. Ben Smith: Because in the second paragraph on page 2, it talks about the return to school testing policy that happened in the public schools as opposed to the lateral flow testing that is happening in the private schools. So if we are going to the asymptomatic testing in order to protect the students and the population of the school, you get the snapshot before you return to school in the public schools. But you are getting a continuous snapshot in the private schools.

Can the Junior Minister give us an explanation of what that difference . . . what the impact could be if there are actually asymptomatic cases that are happening in the public schools that are not being identified because they do not have an ongoing testing regime?

And my third question would relate to, in the Youth and Sport Ministry, they have implemented lateral flow testing to get to a return to sports. Connecting the two things, because inter-school sports and sports with schools comes under Education as opposed to Sports, if the Junior Minister can give us some idea whether the inter-school sports and sports between schools has been part of the conversation of returning back to normalcy for students, and whether they will be using the lateral flow testing that has been implemented by Youth and Sport in order to do that?

Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Smith.

Senator Darrell, I think those are the questions. There may be supplementaries following. But if you can provide answers, thank you.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The [answer to the] first question is, I can confirm that all schools have over 80 per cent consent for saliva testing. As Senators would be aware, or I would remind them that in order for us to re-open schools, the requirement was 80 per cent. So I can confirm that all schools have over 80 per cent consent for saliva testing.

The Vice President: Would you like the supplementaries as we go?

Okay. Senator Smith, a supplementary. Thank you.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Ben Smith: Madam Vice President, so that did not answer my specific question, because having 80 per cent consent does not line up with the question which is, Are we doing saliva testing every week for every student, every teacher and every staff member of every public school? That is different than 80 per cent consent, which already has a hole in it because that means there are 20 per cent who are not participating, which could be where your asymptomatic is sitting. And the second part is if you are not doing it on an ongoing basis that is a problem that could lead to where we were where schools [were] closed. So I think that question needs to be answered specifically.

Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: I can confirm that 100 per cent of the 80 per cent who have consented are being tested weekly.

I will go on to question two, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Yes, please, Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: The question was posed to kind of compare public schools and our PCR gold standard testing regime that happens once a week, with the less-accurate twice-a-week testing regime of lateral flow in other schools. I would just like to point out that although private schools are using antigen tests, and that is a decision they have made, we are doing weekly PCR screening. And I am happy to report that there has been a donation, and we may be looking to do antigen tests in the near future to also add to our gold standard PCR weekly saliva test.

Question three. My Statement here was not about laptops. So I would have to do some further research. But the answer that I supplied in previous Senate sessions is going to have to stand for now. When we discuss laptops again, I can give an updated number. But right now I am just talking about COVID-19. That is the answer I have for that, Madam

Vice President. I do not know what else to say about that at this time.

The Vice President: Okay.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Supplementary, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: You have a supplementary, Senator Jones?

Sen. Marcus Jones: Yes.

The Vice President: Please proceed.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Marcus Jones: I think I need to just add to my question to bring a little bit of clarity on this. The question about the laptops is very much directly related to this COVID-19 situation because if our children have to be at home and do remote learning, it is going to be critical that the Government has everything in place to be able to take care of our kids, knowing that in the public school system many of our children are further behind than normal. So it is very important, and the question is very relevant.

But I will concede that this information may not be at the Junior Minister's disposal, and I will be more than willing to wait for a later date when he can provide us with those numbers.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Senator Darrell, would you like to respond?

Sen. Owen Darrell: I think the Senator answered for me. I can provide those numbers at a later date. Thank you.

The Vice President: Okay. Thank you.

And there was another question posed by Senator Ben Smith that you have not responded to yet. In fact, two questions.

Sen. Owen Darrell: So when it comes to the testing and the connection with sport, I know the Minister has spoken to the Minister of Youth and Sport to assist in coming up with a plan for Youth and Sport and Education. They are going to consult, and the Ministry of Youth and Sport will be assisting [the Ministry of] Education with their antigen tests and their framework for sport, which will have the sign-off from [the Ministry of] Health. So I believe that the antigen tests that were donated that I spoke about earlier will be used to put that plan in place for education, sport and testing. So you should hear more about that in the coming weeks.

The Vice President: Do you have a supplementary, Senator Smith?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Ben Smith: Yes, I just wanted to make sure. So specifically to the inter-schools board, which does not come under Youth and Sport, just because I have had several questions about when that might return. So—

Sen. Owen Darrell: I guess I do not understand *inter-schools*?

Sen. Ben Smith: Okay. So if Purvis Primary is doing school sports within Purvis Primary, can they play football with Prospect Primary, as an example? At present I believe this is not allowed. So my question is, Do we have a plan for how that will return?

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Smith.

Sen. Owen Darrell: I believe, and I will look into this, that inter-school sports returns in phase 4 of that plan.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Senator Smith, you are entitled to another supplementary.

Sen. Ben Smith: So I would like to have a supplementary to the response that Senator Darrell gave earlier when he talked about the gold standard testing as opposed to the lateral flow testing. My specific supplementary is based off of using the gold standard. If you are using the gold standard then it would be at 100 per cent. That is the difference. So if you come through the airport, every person who comes through the airport has to do a test. That is the gold standard. That is why Bermuda implemented it.

So if you are only doing 100 per cent of the people who are consenting, you have got a hole in your net. So the idea that if you were testing on a regular basis using the lateral flow testing, which is also something that seems to be being approved by the Government, because you are hearing about the potential of it happening coming through the airport and different ways for us to use it, I do not think that we should be in a situation where we are kind of talking down on the lateral flow at the same time that we seem to be implementing it in other areas.

So my question to the Junior Minister is, If we are trying to make sure that we are keeping our schools open, keeping our students protected, our teachers protected and the people whom they go home to protected, should we not be looking at 100 per cent consent? And if it is not 100 per cent consent, then those students who are not participating should not be in the environment if the goal is to protect all of our students and allow in-person learning to continue.

Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Smith.
Senator Darrell, we await your response.

Sen. Owen Darrell: There is a lot in that, Madam Vice President. There is a lot of speculation, and I do not want to get into hypotheticals. But there is a situation that can arise that even if we went to antigen lateral flow testing, the same 20 per cent who have not consented, whatever number that is, may not consent to antigen tests. So I actually do believe that if we are getting 100 per cent buy-in from the 80 per cent consenters, we are in a much, much better position than we were months or even a year ago when we were first facing the coronavirus in our schools.

So yes, I actually do feel and there is evidence that the plan that is currently in place is assisting to keep schools safe.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell. You still have a question, Senator Darrell, which you have not responded to. It was asked by Senator Ben Smith about the impact if asymptomatic carriers are not identified in a public school.

[Pause]

Sen. Owen Darrell: As I stated before, the programme that we have in place is a marked improvement of where we were some time ago. And we believe that PCR testing once a week is keeping our students safe.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Senator Robin Tucker, you have a new question?

Sen. Robin Tucker: I have a new question that I believe is related to something that was already said. So I do not know if we would consider that a supplementary or not.

The Vice President: A supplementary.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes.

The question is around consent. So we are talking about that 100 per cent versus the 100 per cent of the 80 per cent. I am curious to know whether parents are asked every week to provide consent for their children to be saliva-tested, or has blanket consent been given? And if it is blanket, then how often or what strategies are in place to increase the number from 80 per cent to improve it?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Are there any other supplementaries or additional questions while Senator Darrell is thinking or collecting information?

Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: I do know that the initial push, as everyone would be aware, was to get schools reopened. And I cannot speak as to how often there is a renewal of effort to increase the percentage of consent. I will have to seek that [information]. But I have been told that at any time a parent can sign up and give consent at www.moed.bm. So yes, there was an initial push, but it remains open at any time.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Senator Tucker, you are allowed a new question or another supplementary.

Sen. Robin Tucker: I actually just have another supplementary. I was just looking for a bit of clarity around Senator Darrell's response. Because if we are testing people's children every single week and it has been going on for some time, I am just looking for clarity as to whether there is blanket consent by parents, or do they have to provide an approval every week?

Sen. Owen Darrell: No.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Once the consent is given, it remains in place.

The Vice President: Thank you.

I think we can move to the next Statement, which is Bermuda College 2020 Annual Report, 2021 Audited Statements and 2021 Student Financial Support, also given by Senator Owen Darrell.

Are there any questions about this Statement?

I do not see any hands. Therefore, I assume that there are no questions.

The next Statement is An Update on Universal Health Coverage. And I would ask again: Are there any questions?

Senator John Wight.

QUESTION 1: UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE UPDATE

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam Vice President. My question . . . I guess I start by declaring my interest as the CEO of one of the health insurers in Bermuda, BF&M. But I am very much in favour of universal health coverage.

My question is, With arguably the greatest knowledge base for health care financing residing with the local health insurers and with the local health insurers being the largest source of financing, why are the local health insurers not participating on this critical steering committee that is driving the future of health care in Bermuda? Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Wight.

Are there any other questions about this Statement?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE UPDATE

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

My question is very much related to Senator Wight's question. I just wanted to get clarity around the number of persons who will make up the steering committee. I did note that it was specifically stated that a person from the public or patient arena would be added. So I am just wondering why it would be just one person. But also I would like to know what the total number of representatives from each group would be.

I have a second question if I am okay to go ahead and ask?

The Vice President: Yes, please.

QUESTION 2: UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE UPDATE

Sen. Robin Tucker: The second question is around prevention. That is very, very important to me, and I think that this is very key to helping us to improve our overall health outcomes. So there were a couple of initiatives that were mentioned. I think that all of them are very, very important. But I would like to know what data have been obtained that guides our understanding of how impactful these initiatives are. I recognise that the HEARTS Initiative is a pilot programme. But certainly the CHIP [Complete Health Improvement Programme] has been around for quite some time. And I do know that it is very popular.

But popularity is not necessarily something that can be particularly impactful and especially from a longitudinal point of view. So I would like to know, What data do we have that speaks to the promotion of these programmes, the two particular programmes, that will translate into positive outcomes as it relates to improving our health care outcomes?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Are there any other Senators who would like to ask a question about this Statement, Universal Health Coverage?

I do not see any other hands.

So, Senator Arianna Hodgson, we would ask, can you respond to the question?

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam Vice President, at this time I am still waiting for some clarity regarding the questions posed by Senator Wight and Senator Tucker. So we can if you are willing move on to the next Statement and we can gather that information.

The Vice President: Okay. We will come back if that is okay with [Senators].

So the next Statement is The Role of the Labour Advisory Council and Its Functions. Are there any questions about that Statement?

I see Senator Robin Tucker.

QUESTION 1: LABOUR ADVISORY COUNCIL ITS ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I think that this is a very positive step. My question is around the part of the Statement that speaks to a number of concerns being received by the Ministry by workers and members of the public pertaining to their unfair contractual terms.

I would be interested to know exactly how many reports have been received. And of that number of reports received, how many actually translated into legitimate complaints?

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Are there any other questions about the Labour Advisory Council Statement?

No, I do not see any other hands.

This one is also in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson. Would you like to respond now to that question?

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam Vice President, I actually do not have those numbers at this time. But just for clarity, you are wondering how many complaints have been filed and how many of those were legitimate?

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes. So, the Statement says that . . . if I may read it?

The Vice President: Please do.

Sen. Robin Tucker: The Statement says that "The Ministry has received a number of concerns from workers and members of the public pertaining to unfair contractual terms and employment contracts . . ."

So I am interested to know, what is “a number of concerns”? Is that five or is that fifty? And also, I am wondering . . . we are both in HR. So I mean, we certainly know by the nature of people that there will be complaints, but not all of them will be legitimate complaints. So that is what I am wondering. If there were five complaints, were there four that were legitimate concerns? So I hope that clarifies.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.
Senator Hodgson.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you for the clarification. I will just get some definite numbers or at least a ballpark figure so that we can go from there.

The Vice President: Thank you.

So let us keep moving, and we will go to the seventh Statement, which was Bermuda’s Participation in COP26. Are there any questions?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: BERMUDA'S PARTICIPATION IN COP26

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

My question is very basic. I think that the initiatives are wonderful. I think that it is great that Bermuda is being recognised for trying to do its part in helping to fight climate change and that initiatives are in place. I am just wondering whether there were any new or innovative initiatives that other Overseas Territories were doing that the Minister who attended the COP26 Conference was able to identify and maybe bring home to consider for us? Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Are there any other Senators who would like to ask a question about the COP26 Statement?

I do not see any other questions.

Senator Lindsay K. Simmons, would you like to respond?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: If you give me a minute, Madam Vice President, we will have an answer for you. Thank you.

The Vice President: Okay. Thank you.

[Pause]

The Vice President: We are just awaiting responses to questions about the last three Statements. Hopefully, they will be forthcoming soon.

In the interest of time, I suggest that we move on. If there are answers that are forthcoming, we can accept them as we proceed toward the end of the day.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Good timing, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes. So the Minister took a lot of ideas from the Blue Shield programme. Also the UK Government is going to support the Overseas Territories’ efforts. And also the Territories together are going to work together to help support each other with the initiative of COP26.

Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Simmons.

Is there a follow-up or a supplementary?
Senator Tucker.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I just wanted to know, was there anything new that came out of the discussion out of the conference that could translate back to the Bermuda environment? Anything specific that might be able to be discussed here and for the listening public to know about?

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.
Senator Simmons.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: So I think one of them that I said is that the UK Government is supporting us more. And also the Territories are working together to help with the initiatives of COP26. So I think working together in collaboration would help all Territories. So I think this is something that is new and it is something that we are excited to be a part of.

Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Senator Hodgson, do you have some responses?

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Well, actually, Madam Vice President, I do not have the responses at this time. So I did want to make it clear that we would be reaching out to the Labour Relations Manager just to get an idea of the nature of the complaints and the legitimacy of them, and to give an idea of a ballpark number.

But I will endeavour to have some responses for the questions related to my Health Statement.

The Vice President: Okay. Thank you very much.
We are now moving on.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Vice President: There are none.

MOTIONS

The Vice President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Vice President: I see the hand of Senator Marcus Jones.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I would like this Chamber to extend condolences to the family of the late Mr. Brian Hall, whom many in this community would consider to be the godfather of captive insurance in Bermuda. He was a visionary figure in the international business world and was also a major promoter of talent in the Island's pioneering captive insurance sector. He was a major supporter of education and created the Bermuda Foundation for Insurance Studies in 1996. He later became the Chairman Emeritus.

Now, he was not born here in Bermuda, but he was born and raised in the UK and came here in the 1950s. He was hired within the industry and made an instant impact. He married his wife, Frankie June Hall from Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1963. And they had together four children. He definitely was a pioneer in this industry. He later became the Chief Executive and President of Johnson & Higgins in 1979.

I remember him very clearly because as a budding 22-year-old graduate from university, I came to Bermuda and that was my first job, working at Johnson & Higgins. And I was very much impressed with him because, although this was a big major company, he made it feel like a small company in that everybody was family. And I remember the first day I was hired, I was told by my direct boss that I had to go up to the sixth floor and be introduced to Mr. Brian Hall. Of course, my knees were shaking and I was sweating profusely on the palms on my hands because I was going up to the sixth floor to meet this gentleman.

And I found him very engaging, very down-to-earth. He made me feel like I was so important, and that can be the testimony of many whom he hired back in those times.

We also realised that he was appointed as Officer of the Order of the British Empire [OBE] in 1998. He was also instrumental as one of the Chairmen of the Bermuda College in the 1990s.

So, Madam Vice President, I would like for condolences to be extended to his wife and his four children because we have definitely lost a giant and a pioneer in the captive insurance business.

And I would like to also extend congratulations to our sister island to the south of us, the Island of Barbados. We now realise that this island has now become a republic for the first time in its history. We know that it was made independent back in 1966, but it still held on to the colonial trappings of the United Kingdom. But we see that three decades later, they now have launched out and now have become a republic. The drive to become a republic began more than two decades ago and culminated with the island's Parliament electing its first-ever President last month in a two-thirds majority vote. Barbados Governor-General Sandra Mason was sworn in before dawn on Tuesday as the island marked its 55th anniversary of independence from Britain.

We also understand that Prince Charles was there in attendance, and the famous celebrity, Rihanna, was given accolades, as she is from that island. And she was given high accolades as being someone from that island who had made an impact on the world. So, Madam Vice President, I just want to ask us as the Senate Chamber to be able to extend congratulations to Barbados in this auspicious event that they just experienced this week. Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Is there anyone else?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I would like to extend condolences to the family of Charles "Teddy" Macdonald Napier Davis. Actually, Teddy was one of my cousins. So I would like to extend sincere condolences to my family, particularly Crumbug, Pinkey, Joanne, Myer and the entire family.

I am very excited to extend congratulations to Ryan Eve. Ryan Eve is a 29-year-old young man who has been a part of the [family]—we are not blood relatives, but we call each other *twins* because he is a family friend. I have known Ryan from the time he was tiny. And he is friends with my children as well. Ryan, if anybody knows him, is a remarkable, very balanced and very focused young man. He works for Argus. He is the son of Aubrey and Shelly Eve.

And he was recently appointed to the position of Vice President of Broking at Centurion Insurance Services Ltd., which is a subsidiary of the Argus Group Holdings. Ryan will be responsible for leading operations at Centurion. He is, as I said, 29 years old, and this is not his first promotion at Argus. He is a phenomenal young man and an excellent example of someone, as young as he is, who can put his head down and do what he has to do and accomplish great

things. So I just again want to say congratulations to Ryan on his most recent promotion.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Are there any other speakers?

Senator Lindsay Simmons, I see your hand.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes, Madam Vice President.

I would like to extend condolences to Florence Patricia Bell's family. She was the daughter of the late Kenneth L. Simmons and Florence M. Bell. She was the mother of Daemon Bell and [her daughter-in-law], Shawnette Bell, and doting Ma to Angel. I just want to give my deepest condolences, as I met Ms. Bell a few years back through her daughter-in-law, Shawnette. And she used to have cruises and donate proceeds to the Foster Parents Association. She was very giving. And definitely every time she had something, she wanted to give back. So I want to extend my condolences to her family.

Thank you, Madam Vice President.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Senator Owen Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam Vice President, thank you.

I would like to [ask] if the Senate could send congratulations to Ms. Ojeda Smith. Senate may recall that about a year ago I congratulated Ms. Smith for starting a pupillage at Wakefield Quin. Here we are just a little over a year later, I was pleased to be invited to and saw the subsequent news clippings that Ojeda was called to the bar last Friday. So I know that it was a very exciting time for her. She named a list of people who helped her to get to this lifelong dream of hers.

I would just like to also congratulate her parents, Ms. Laquita Bell and Mr. Orick Smith. I would just like to say again that I met Ojeda just over a year ago, as she lives in Smith's South up on Knapton Hill. So again, congratulations to Ojeda. And I also saw many of her classmates also from I think it was BHS [Bermuda High School] who were successful in being called to the bar over the last couple of weeks. So to everyone who is fulfilling all of their dreams, especially in the area of law, congratulations, and we hope to see good work from everyone in the future. Thank you.

The Vice President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Minister Peets, would you like to speak?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Thank you. Good morning, Madam Vice President.

I was wondering if Senate would be willing to join me in sending thanks to the Parliamentary Prayer Committee for organising this year's Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast. I really felt encouraged, and it certainly is nice to know that there is a group of individuals who are dedicated to ensuring that our emotional and spiritual well-being, particularly for Parliamentarians, are being taken care of. So thank you very much.

The Vice President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

Would any other Senator like to speak?

If no one else is going to, I will.

I would like to ask the Senate to join me in extending condolences to the family of Nurse Eloise (Minors) Bell. She was, I feel, an extraordinary person and an exceptional nurse who worked for many years at King Edward VII Memorial Hospital. I describe her as caring, compassionate and someone who regularly went over and above her responsibilities to provide loving care to her patients.

Our family benefited greatly from her service when my sister and I were caring for my mother. We will be forever grateful to her for what she did at that time. I am thinking in particular of her daughter, Lakeisha, her granddaughter, Jiyai, and her brothers Arnold and Irving Minors. I would ask that we just send condolences to her family of an extraordinary nurse.

And I would also like to join with the congratulations to the people of the Republic of Barbados. We recognise we have many Barbadians residing in Bermuda, Bermuda-Barbadians or Barbadian-Bermudians. And I am sure they are feeling a lot of pride right now.

I also would like to join with the condolences to the family of Patricia Bell. She is someone whom I knew quite well. And one thing that always stood out about Pat was her gregarious nature. She drew people to her all the time. And I am sure her family will appreciate knowing that we are thinking of them and extending our condolences.

So we now move on.

The Vice President: Minister Peets.

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

I make a motion that Senate do adjourn to Wednesday, December 8.

The Vice President: Thank you.

Would any Senator wish to speak on the motion to adjourn?

I do not see any hands. Therefore, Senate stands adjourned until December 8.

[At 12:28 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 8 December 2021.]

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BERMUDA SENATE**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
8 DECEMBER 2021****10:02 AM***Sitting Number 4 of the 2021/2022 Session*

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

The President: Good morning, Senators.
The Senate is in session.
Shall we pray?

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES*[Minutes of 1 December 2021]*

The President: Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.
I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, 1 December 2021, be taken as read.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

Sen. Marcus Jones: Yes, Madam President.

The President: Yes.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Madam President, on page 1 there is a Senator by the name of Mr. Marcus Jones who is a Justice of the Peace, so if you could just add "JP" after his name; and on page 4 under Orders of the Day, those two pieces of legislation were the first reading, not the second as is in the Minutes.

The President: Page 4?

Sen. Marcus Jones: Page 4. Am I right? Yes. Oh, it says 1st of December.

The President: Yes.

Sen. Marcus Jones: So maybe the date needs to be changed to the 8th and then the second reading will be correct.

The President: Yes. Thank you, Senator.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

With those two amendments, I move that the Minutes of Wednesday, 1 December 2021, be confirmed.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection. The Minutes are confirmed.

[Minutes of 1 December 2021 confirmed as amended.]

The President: Thank you, Senator John Wight. And thank you, Senators, for your notation of the corrections.

MESSAGES

The Clerk: No messages, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Mr. Somner.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: There are none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President: I have a few comments/announcements today. First of all I would like to thank Senator Michelle Simmons, the Vice President, for covering the Senate last week, as I was engaged in a panel of interviews for a position in government.

APOLOGIES

The President: She is traveling back today, so she had given her apologies for not being here today.

I also would like to indicate that Senator Ben Smith, Opposition Leader in the Senate, as well as the international swimming coach, is away accompanying a number of swimmers. So, he also sends his apologies for today.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: There are none.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: There are none.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The President: The first Order of the Day is the second reading of the Bermuda National Trust Amendment Act 2021, and that is in the name of Senator O. K. Darrell, the Junior Minister of Education.

Senator, you have the floor.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the [Bermuda National Trust Amendment Act 2021](#) be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Carry on, Senator Darrell.

BILL

SECOND READING

BERMUDA NATIONAL TRUST AMENDMENT ACT 2021

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, as Junior Minister I am eager to introduce these proposed changes to the Bermuda National Trust Act 1969 (the Act). The Minister of Education worked with the Bermuda National Trust (known as “the Trust” going forward) to

develop proposals to modernise and improve the governance and administration of the Trust, a largely member-driven and volunteer-based organisation.

To provide some background, the Trust was formally established in 1969 via the enactment of legislation that sets out the detailed principal objects of the Trust. The Trust continues to be governed by public rather than private legislation. Despite the Trust being a private charitable organisation, the legislation affects members of the public directly and includes offences for breaching of regulations on Trust land. Additionally, the Act provides certain tax exemptions and [provides] for ministerial involvement which would not be achievable via private legislation.

Madam President, the Trust is an organisation that is critical to Bermuda’s sustainability and the preservation and remembrance of our natural, built, and cultural heritage. It is the mission of the Trust to protect and promote Bermuda’s unique natural and cultural heritage by (1) acquiring and conserving land, buildings, and artefacts; and (2) inspiring appreciation and stewardship through advocacy, research, education, and participation.

The Trust cares for 277 acres of land comprising 82 properties that represent much of Bermuda’s heritage including historic houses, nature reserves, islands and coastline, farmland, gardens, and cemeteries. It also has three museums which display an outstanding collection of antique furniture, artwork, and artefacts owned and made by Bermudians. Along with the Trust, I share the belief that the history of Bermuda and her people must be taught in meaningful ways. The Trust delivers on its belief through its properties and collections. The storytelling [illuminates] Bermuda’s diversity and helps our community to understand just how significant our heritage is.

Madam President, after considerable work, including extensive consultation with its members and affected parties, the leadership of the Trust sought support from the Minister of Education for changes to the Act. In support of the Trust’s mission and responsibilities, it is important for these amendments to move forward. These changes would enable better governance and efficient administration for the Trust. They would also provide the Trust with more power and flexibility to run its own affairs.

In broad terms, the amending Bill proposes the following changes:

1. The bodies representing five specific charities on the Trust’s governing Council would no longer see members appointed. Instead, these positions would now be elected from the membership of the Trust.
2. The Council’s total membership will remain at 13 with 3 members appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Minister and up to 10 of the members elected from the membership of the Trust.

3. The Council would govern its own procedure and business affairs through the making of by-laws rather than regulations.
4. The Council would be empowered to appoint an auditor without the approval of the Minister.

A small change is also proposed to ensure that all regulations would be made under the negative resolution procedure.

As stated, these proposals were developed after significant consultation with the members of the Trust, including the following five member charities: the Bermuda Audubon Society; the Bermuda Historical Society; the St. George's Historical Society; the Garden Club; and the Keep Bermuda Beautiful Committee. The need for the Trust to chart its own independent course was understood and supported by the five member charities. The improvements to the Act would be of benefit not only to the Trust, but to all of its beneficiaries, who are the people of Bermuda and our visitors.

Madam President, with those remarks I now present the Bill entitled the Bermuda National Trust Amendment Act 2021 and welcome any comments from my fellow Senators.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?
Yes, Senator Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to the listening audience and to my Senate colleagues. I first want to thank the Junior Minister for bringing this piece of legislation into this Senate Chamber.

As we all know, the Bermuda National Trust plays a pivotal role in preserving, educating, and celebrating our heritage. And having read the Bill, it does exactly what the Junior Minister stated it does. It certainly will give the National Trust the ability to be able to amend its governance structure and make its own by-laws. I particularly like the amendment that allows for the appointment to the Council by election rather than by entitlement, and also the piece concerning the Council being able to appoint its own auditor.

The amendment gives the National Trust the opportunity to govern its own affairs and to be more independent. Those are the things that are needed to continue its growth and evolution, and certainly to further its mission to protect and promote Bermuda's unique natural and cultural heritage to the benefit of us all. So, with that, Madam President, I will say that the Opposition has no objection at all to this particular piece of legislation.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

I thank the Junior Minister for bringing this legislation forward. It makes perfect sense to me. I echo the comments made by Senator Robin Tucker, so I am in full support of this legislation.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

Thank you, Senator Wight.

With that, then it is over to you, Senator Darrell.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, while this Bill does not focus specifically on education, I would like to highlight that the Trust's responsibilities include significant contributions to the education [of] young people and adults of all ages about our heritage. Specifically, the Trust has a number of resource guides for teachers, students, and families. It provides a depth of information on Bermuda's natural, built, and sociological history. Each guide includes activities which are linked to the Education Department's Social Studies and Cambridge International Science Curriculum.

Also, in support of young people, the Trust with the support of SOMPO International is holding a My Bermuda Student Art Competition 2021. Young people all over Bermuda from the ages of 9 to 18 are working toward finishing their entries, which are due on Friday, 10 December. The subject of the competition is *What Bermuda truly means*, whether it be one's heritage, hopes, or connections to our community. It is yet another example of the work and the efforts of the Trust in helping young Bermudians and residents to expand their understanding of our history.

Madam President, thank you for allowing me to make these closing comments.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda National Trust Amendment Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Carry on, Senator Darrell.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

BERMUDA NATIONAL TRUST AMENDMENT ACT 2021

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I now move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda National Trust Amendment Act 2021 be read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?

No objection.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Bermuda National Trust Amendment Act 2021 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

We now move on to the second reading of the Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021, and this is in the name of Senator A. J. L. Hodgson, the Junior Minister of Labour.

Senator Hodgson, you have the floor.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

BILL

SECOND READING

GOVERNMENT FEES AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I bring to the Senate today the Bill entitled the [Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021](#). The purpose of this Bill is to prescribe a fee of \$2,625 for granting ministerial permission to reside in Bermuda under section 25(1) of the 1956 Act, pursuant to the grant of an economic in-

vestment certificate [EIC], and to amend the Government Fees Regulations 1976 to validate certain fees imposed under those regulations.

Madam President, the economic investment certificate was launched on 1 March 2021. The policy's objective is to fully harness immigration as one of the many tools for creating economic growth for Bermuda while taking into account our limited space and ensuring that Bermudians fully benefit. It was designed to stimulate economic activity, create the environment for job creation, and help market Bermuda as a place to reside and to do business.

An EIC is granted to a person who satisfies the eligibility requirements, including an upfront investment of at least \$2.5 million in the Bermudian economy, by the Minister responsible for Immigration for the right to reside in Bermuda for five years. The EIC policy specifies that a fee of \$2,625 will be charged for an economic investment certificate, which is the same as the residential certificate fee. This fee has been charged and received from the eight applicants to date.

The residential certificate fee of \$2,625 will be charged to applicants after five years when the EIC holder seeks to apply for a residential certificate which shall give them the ability to reside in Bermuda indefinitely.

Madam President, this Bill provides for the insertion of a fee of \$2,625 for an economic investment certificate. The Bill also specifies that where, before the commencement of this Bill, a fee of \$2,625 has been imposed for the grant of an EIC, that fee shall be deemed to have been validly imposed and paid as if it had been imposed and paid for after the commencement of this Bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?
Senator Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to you and to my fellow colleagues here in the Senate and to the listening audience.

We in the Opposition do not have any objection to this Bill. We see the necessity of this amendment in order to implement this particular government fee as it relates to giving ministerial permission to grant economic investment certificates. So, the fee is necessary, and we support it.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

I too am in full support of this Bill. I think this Bill generates economic activity and growth for the Island. Minister Hayward's book released recently [addressed] the economic benefits to Bermuda from individuals who have come to Bermuda in the past year and the substantial benefits [to] especially so many small businesspeople and entrepreneurs in Bermuda. So, I am in full support of this Bill.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator John Wight.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

No.

Then, Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister of Labour, it is back to you.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you, Senators, for your support of this Bill.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

GOVERNMENT FEES AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?

No objection.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill entitled the Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021 do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Government Fees Amendment and Validation Act 2021 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Before I move on, I would just like to acknowledge that Senator Marcus Jones is the Acting Opposition Leader in the Senate today. I just acknowledge that fact.

Moving on then with our agenda.

MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on this?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I would just like to extend congratulations to Raeven White. He has recently been promoted to sous chef at Devil's Isle, having gone through Take Five Ltd.'s training programme. He is actually their first graduate in their culinary arts programme. For persons who do not know what a sous chef's responsibilities are, Mr. White has responsibility for the oversight of the back-of-house operations, for menu creation and managing the chefs and the kitchen operations. So, I want to express congratulations to him. He is just a great example of another young person who is working hard and making a path for himself in the hospitality industry.

I also would like to say *Kudos!* to Take Five for doing its part to train and mentor young Bermudians in the culinary arts.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Owen Darrell, you have the floor.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I would like to send condolences to the family of, actually my former MP, Mr. Sylvan Richards. His father, Mr. Sylvan Richards, Sr., passed away. I would like to send condolences to Mr. Richards' wife, [Dorothy], and his children, Sylvan, Sherry and Sandra, whom I do know well. And I would

like comfort to be sent to the family at this difficult time.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.
Would any other Senator care to speak?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: I am pretty sure most of us are aware that our Pan Am team participated in the Junior Pan Am Games in Colombia. We certainly want to send congratulations to our junior athletes who represented their country extremely well. And special congratulations to Kaden Hopkins, who picked up a silver medal in the cycling time trial.

Other than that, Madam President, two very special belated birthdays. There is Kingsley Simmons from Foothills, Loyal Hill, who celebrated his 97th birthday. I enjoy canvassing in the Foothills/Loyal Hill area, and I certainly want to wish [Mr. Simmons] a wonderful, belated happy birthday.

As well as the most special person in my life, my mom. She celebrated her birthday on the 4th of December. And I just want to send congratulations to her. She listens to the broadcast from another place every Friday, and she especially tunes in to our Senate sessions. *So Happy belated birthday!*

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

Before moving on, I would like to associate myself with the condolences that were expressed for Sylvan Richards, [Sr.]. I thank Senator Owen Darrell for his comments.

I would also like for the Senate to express condolences to the Richard Canterbury Simmons family. [Mr. Simmons] was the brother of former Member of Parliament, Lionel Simmons, and he is the uncle of Jamahl Simmons, MP. He was brother to Leon Simmons, Dianne Simmons, Dr. Leroy Simmons and the late Dr. Henry Simmons. Richard attended Howard Academy and Pickering College in Canada. He later went on to study dental technology at the Purple School of Dental Technology in New York. And he returned to Bermuda 58 years ago to open Simmons Dental A Business. He ran this until his retirement with his brother Lionel.

He was an elder in the Radnor Road Christian Fellowship Church and was involved with the church from its inception. He leaves his wife, Gloria, and a daughter, Kimberley Lawrence. So, the Senate extends condolences to the entire Simmons family. Thank you.

We move on now to the last item.

ADJOURNMENT

The President: Minister E. G. Peets, Government Leader in the Senate, Minister of Youth, Culture and Sport, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes, Madam President.

I ask that this Honourable Chamber adjourn until Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Hearing none, Senate stands adjourned until Wednesday, 15 December.

Thank you, Senators, for participating today. The Senate stands adjourned.

Thank you.

[At 10:25 am, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am Wednesday, 15 December 2021.]

BERMUDA SENATE**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****15 DECEMBER 2021****10:03 AM***Sitting Number 5 of the 2021/2022 Session*

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

The President: Good morning, Senators.
The Senate is in session. Shall we pray?

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

[Minutes of 8 December 2021]

The President: Senator Michelle Simmons, the Vice President of the Senate, you have the floor.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, 8 December 2021, be taken as read.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Madam President, I move that the Minutes of Wednesday, 8 December 2021, be confirmed.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection. The Minutes are confirmed.

[Minutes of 8 December 2021 confirmed]

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: You are welcome.

MESSAGES

The President: Mr. Clerk, are there any?

**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
FROM THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

The Clerk: Yes, Madam President. We have a message from the Honourable House of Assembly. The message reads as follows:

“To the Honourable the President and Members of the Senate:

“The Members of the House of Assembly desire to extend to the President and Members of the Senate our greetings and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.”

And that is signed by the Speaker, the Honourable Dennis E. Lister, JP, MP, and that is dated 10 December 2021. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Mr. Somner.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: Are there any reports of committees?
Hearing none, we will move on.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President: Are there any announcements?
Senator O. K. Darrell, Junior Minister for the Cabinet Office, you have the floor.

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
INTO HISTORIC LAND LOSSES IN BERMUDA**

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the information of the Senate the Commission of Inquiry Report 2021 on Historic Land Losses in Bermuda.

Senators may access copies of the report on their tablets and on the parliament website.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The President: Are there any notices of motions?
Senator Darrell.

TOURISM INVESTMENT (THE LOREN AT PINK BEACH) ORDER 2021

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you again, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the consideration of Senate the draft Order entitled the Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Tourism with the written agreement of the Minister of Finance under the provisions of section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

I give notice that at a later point in the meeting, I will move that the said draft Order be approved.

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell.

And today there is a second one with Senator Hodgson. You have the floor.

PUBLIC HEALTH (COVID-19) EMERGENCY EXTENSION (NO. 7) ORDER 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the consideration of Senate the draft Order entitled Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 7) Order 2021, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Health under the provisions of section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949.

And I give notice that at a later point in this meeting I will move that the said draft Order be approved.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: We have the first Statement in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister for Labour.

You have the floor.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I rise in this Honourable House today to provide you with an update of what the [Ministry of Labour](#) has accomplished over this past year.

Madam President, The Ministry of Labour has worked hard to secure Bermuda's success by introducing policies that address the impact of the global crisis. The Ministry has progressed policies that

strengthen the fundamental principles and rights in the workplace, enhance social protections and foster economic growth. In short, the Ministry is focused on promoting jobs, protecting Bermudians and responding to the needs of the economy. Throughout the past year, departments within this Ministry have worked hard to ensure that we [accomplished the following]:

- eased the economic burden of those in need;
- found the right formula to achieve economic activity and growth;
- kept families together;
- provided opportunities for job seekers to achieve personal satisfaction; and
- preserved jobs and implemented laws that support progress in the workplace.

Eased the Economic Burden of Those in Need

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the impact of the global pandemic has not been easy on any of us. As we work our way back to a place where we can all prosper, in an effort to assist our people, particularly our most vulnerable, the Ministry of Labour has done the following:

- (1) Implemented and extended the Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Fund from April 2021 to November 2021 and has provided approximately \$1,054,633 in benefits to assist those displaced from the workforce as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (2) Provided over \$5 million in financial assistance to unemployed able-bodied individuals, as well as those underemployed from April 2021 to November 2021;

- (3) Provided over 400 Bermudians with information on the various services, programmes and initiatives offered in response to the Minister's Appeal for Unemployed Bermudians to register at the Department of Workforce Development;

- (4) Expanded financial assistance benefits for an additional two years to over 100 individuals and families who would have timed out of support in 2021;

- (5) Tabled the Wage Commission's report containing recommendations on a minimum wage. This brings Bermuda one step closer to implementation of a much-needed minimum wage in alignment with a living wage; and

- (6) Undertook stakeholder feedback on the Government's consultation paper for a proposed Unemployment Insurance Fund and developed a roadmap for the implementation of an unemployment insurance scheme. This will enable a phased implementation in 2023 that will ensure adequate protections for unemployed workers.

Found the Right Formula to Achieve Economic Activity and Growth

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, to strike the right balance to achieve economic success while

also ensuring that our people benefit, the Ministry of Labour has completed the following:

(1) Implemented the Economic Investment Certificate and Residential Certificate policies entitling a person to reside in Bermuda. To date this has generated over \$32 million through direct investment in the Bermuda economy;

(2) Implemented the one-year Work from Bermuda policy which yielded over 900 residents and generated over \$23 million into the economy. While also referred to as *Permission to Reside on an Annual Basis*, permission can be obtained for periods of up to five years. As of November 2021, there are 206 Work from Bermuda Certificate holders remaining on the Island; and

(3) Increased visitor stays permitting visitors to remain in Bermuda an additional 90 days for a total of 180 days.

Kept Families Together

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the family unit plays a crucial role in the social development of our community. To keep families together, the Ministry of Labour has accomplished the following:

(1) implemented the mixed status family legislation which addressed the longstanding discrepancy where some members of the same family were Bermudian, but others were not;

(2) removed the requirement for an Affidavit of Domicile for children born to Bermudian parents while overseas, making it easier for these children to obtain Bermudian status;

(3) amended the eligibility requirement for Permanent Resident's Certificates enabling individuals to be granted Permanent Resident's Certificates if they (a) have resided in Bermuda for 20 or more years; (b) are non-Bermudian parents of children with Bermudian status who have resided in Bermuda for 15 or more years; and/or (c) if they are children of second-generation Permanent Resident's Certificate holders.

Provided Opportunities for Job Seekers to Achieve Personal Satisfaction

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, persons who are satisfied with their growth tend to achieve higher productivity in the workplace. To provide a sound foundation for those seeking employment or re-employment, the Ministry of Labour has done the following:

(1) Implemented the Personal Employment Plan initiative designed to help financial assistance recipients to secure employment. This is a joint initiative between the Department of Financial Assistance and the Department of Workforce Development.

(2) Implemented phase one of the two-phased National Reemployment Strategy aimed at reducing unemployment. Phase one included the following:

- education, training, and employment services to help individuals secure employment;
- administered various face-to-face on-the-job online virtual learning, webinars, internships, apprenticeships and trainee programmes in which over 650 persons participated;
- secured part-time or full-time employment for 70 individuals as a result of these training initiatives; and
- facilitated employment for 747 unemployed Bermudians through the Workforce Development Department's Bermuda Job Board referral process;

(3) Implemented the Graduate Training Programme which provided paid internships and career readiness training for two cohorts of graduates, 15 in the first cohort and 10 in the second. This programme will assist young Bermudians in gaining work experience often needed to fully enter the workforce.

(4) Provided a total of \$350,000 in scholarships to support 43 Bermudians to attend local educational programmes and overseas tertiary education. This demonstrates the importance of education and this Government's commitment to ensuring Bermuda's young people complete their respective course of study.

(5) Continued the College Summer Jobs Programme with 75 participants, and the High School Jobs programme with 52 participants. This demonstrates this Government's commitment to providing job opportunities for our young people while they continue to pursue their educational goals.

Preserved Jobs and Implemented Laws that Support Progress in the Workplace

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, preserving jobs and implementing progressive labour laws require collaboration between government and the private sector. While building a foundation of trust to bolster worker security, the Ministry of Labour has accomplished the following:

(1) Legislated the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 2021 which further strengthens the Employment Act and ensures workers' rights are protected in the workplace. Additional rights include the following:

- a requirement for employers to provide a written policy against bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace and advise how it can be accessed;
- a requirement for employers to provide employees with a midway performance review during their probationary period to identify areas for improvement;

- expanded bereavement leave to include grandparents, great-grandparents, grandchildren and great-grandchildren;
- a requirement for employers to pay any wages and other remuneration or benefits owed to the employee upon termination within seven days or at the next interval that the employee would have been paid; and
- a requirement for employers to provide their employees with a meal break of at least 30 minutes after the employee has worked continuously for five hours;

(2) Placed a moratorium for new work permits on 41 additional occupations (for a total of 53), which began in November 2020 and extends to January 2022. This enabled us to create more opportunities in the local job market for Bermudians; and

(3) Enhanced scrutiny of work permit applications to ensure that capable and qualified Bermudians were not passed over for job opportunities.

Madam President, the cumulative effect of the aforementioned policies and initiatives has enabled Bermuda to be better positioned to overcome the many challenges that lay before us. As we build upon these initiatives we look forward to strengthening Bermuda further throughout the upcoming year when we will take further steps to continue to build a better Bermuda for all.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister for Labour.

The second Statement is in the name of Senator Curtis Richardson, Road Safety Council.

You have the floor.

ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL—DESIGNATED DRIVER CAMPAIGN

Sen. Curtis Richardson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, it is a sobering fact that 16 lives have been lost to road traffic accidents in 2021. I extend my condolences to the families and friends grieving the untimely death of a loved one.

Madam President, through to New Year's Eve celebrations, holiday parties will be taking place, which is why the [Bermuda Road Safety Council's](#) [RSC, or the Council] slogan for December is *Designate YOUR Driver!* Madam President, a designated driver is crucial for everyone to enjoy a safe holiday season. Designated drivers are an integral part of keeping roads safe, and by educating friends and family we can work together to lower the number of accidents and deaths.

Madam President, an alarming trend observed by the Council is persons choosing *the person who seems least intoxicated* of the group to get behind the wheel after a night of drinking, instead of a

completely sober driver. That is why it is crucial to designate a driver *before* any drinking occurs.

There will be an increase in events and parties where alcohol will be consumed in the holiday season. The Council encourages all event planners, organisers and hosts of large events to incorporate a Transportation Plan. For assistance with implementing a Transportation Plan for your event, organisers should in advance of the event email the Bermuda Road Safety Council at bdarsc@gmail.com or contact the Road Traffic Officer at 707-2349. Again, you can contact the Road Traffic Officer at 707-2349.

Madam President, we want everyone to have a safe holiday. I take this opportunity to remind the public that if you cannot secure a designated driver, remember that there are other ways to get home safe without getting behind the wheel, such as hiring a taxi, limousine or minibus; using Home Safe; or calling a family member or friend to come pick you up. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge CADA for hosting their annual Let Us Drive initiative, which commenced on the 9th of December.

The programme runs from outside of the LOM Building on the corner of Reid Street and Burnaby Street in Hamilton between 12:15 am and 12:45 am. The service can take up to 24 people a night and will run on the 16th, 17th and 18th of December, the 30th of December and New Year's Eve.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Curtis Richardson, Junior Minister of Transport.

The third Statement is in the name of the (sorry, let me get my papers in order here) Senator O. K. Darrell, the Junior Minister of Education.

You have the Statement; you have the floor.

HISTORY AND LEGACY COMMITTEE

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, this morning I share with my honourable colleagues and the community at large the work that will be undertaken for the establishment of a [History and Legacy Committee](#).

Madam President, many of us are walking on paths that have been tread for us by those who came before us—our parents, grandparents, educators, and political and community leaders, some of whom were groundbreakers and most of whom were average citizens. Their efforts to develop the Bermuda that we live in today have created opportunities for us to continue to improve Bermuda so that we can make our nation better and so that we can all thrive within our community. As we move forward with education reform, we know that change in education is not only desired but it is a prerequisite to designing the kind of public education system that inspires confidence and meets the educational, social and other related needs of each and every learner.

Madam President, when important things are to be gained, like better education for each and every child, it is critical that we keep in mind what we do not want to lose. These changes, which are the Government's response to community calls for change, have also brought longstanding issues and concerns about Bermuda's history and legacy to the forefront. From lived experiences, discussions with our family members, concerns for our constituents and from prior debates in the [Legislature], we know that our country's history is a difficult and painful one, especially for those of our parents' and grandparents' generations.

It is rich with examples of our great history of building and trades, seafaring and shipbuilding, and developing and shaping young minds and leaders. However, it is also a painful and difficult history of racial segregation, separate and unequal schools, and class stratification. Along with my previous legislators in Education, I recognise that decisions have been made in decades past that continue to have profound implications on current and former students of the Bermuda Public School System and Bermudian society. Many Senators know about the vital history of schools such as the Bermuda Technical Institute, Howard Academy, Warwick Secondary School, Prospect School for Girls, the Robert Crawford School and others that have closed or been repurposed in decades past.

Madam President, during the recent consultation on parish primary schools, we were reminded and reminded again about these critical issues of the need to teach, learn, know, understand and appreciate our educational history and legacy. In addition to listening to and reading the numerous submissions from community members, I also received many messages of support, and the Minister met directly with community members passionate about protecting and preserving the history and legacy of schools. Through this process, it became evident that, despite very good intentions and the imperative to bring about change for young people, a response was needed that met the moment of change that we are undertaking.

Madam President, prior to [the Ministry's] making a single decision regarding parish primary schools, it was resolved that these concerns had to be addressed. As we listened to and considered the concerns, mostly of elders with deep connections to particular schools and school communities, it was evident that while there have been significant contributions made to documenting and understanding Bermuda's educational history, more was and is needed. Therefore, we committed to establishing the History and Legacy Committee to engage with the community and to document, commemorate and preserve Bermuda's educational and school history and legacies.

Madam President, of course this effort could be easily misjudged as just another government committee being thrown at a problem. I can assure

you and the Members of the Senate that this indeed is not that. This past summer the Minister met directly with passionate and committed community members, including the adult children of renowned educators, current and former educators and parents of current students, many of whom are also public school alumni. The Minister met with the technical officers of the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport; historians and researchers; and community and cultural leaders to share feedback from the parish primary consultation, to engage in deep discussions about the history and legacy of education and schools, and to obtain input on the development of the History and Legacy Committee. This assistance helped to shape the vision and design of the History and Legacy Committee.

Madam President, subsequently, the Minister has initiated the work of the History and Legacy Committee with the appointment of the Chairperson, Ms. Heather Whalen. Ms. Whalen will steer and oversee the work of the History and Legacy Committee. She has been working with members of the Ministry of Education team toward the formal establishment of the History and Legacy Committee. This preparation work includes creating a small short-term working group (known as the Working Group, going forward) to develop the terms of reference that the eventual History and Legacy Committee will use once it is fully established and constituted.

Madam President, the Working Group's membership consists of Ms. Heather Whalen, who is the retired Director of Community and Cultural Affairs. During her professional career she spearheaded a number of international events, served as the head of the delegation for CARIFESTA and was a member of the team organising the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. She is the co-author of Bermuda's first National Cultural Heritage Policy.

Well known to Members of the Legislature, Ms. Whalen has co-hosted several ceremonies for the Convening of the Legislature and has also served as a member of the committee to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Bermuda's House of Assembly. In addition to previously serving on several government committees, she is a member of the Board of Education and the Interim Director of Age Concern. Ms. Whalen began her career in education, teaching history and civics at the Berkeley Institute where she also served as Head of the Social Studies Department.

Ms. Alberta Dyer-Tucker is retired from public service, having served in numerous roles including Assistant Cabinet Secretary in Policy, and Senior Education Officer for Early Education, among many other roles. She was also one of Bermuda's inaugural policy analysts and later co-led the Cabinet Office's Intern Programme, which helped launch the careers of many young Bermudians. Immediately before her retirement, Ms. Dyer-Tucker helped organise a Commission of Inquiry, also serving as Commission Clerk. She later served as Clerk to the Parliamentary Joint

Select Committee Inquiring into the Events of December 2nd 2016. She also briefly worked with the Commission of Inquiry into Historic Land Loss in Bermuda. She is also a former educator, having begun her career as a classroom teacher at the Victor Scott Primary School.

Mr. Adrian Lodge has worked in the IT industry for over 20 years. He has recently completed a Privacy Officer and Cybersecurity course with a passion for always learning and improving. Adrian is the founder of local software development company Supatone [Ltd.] He has led the BEDC's StartUp Weekend for entrepreneurs, has volunteered at the annual Hackathon and has taught WordPress. He also designs mobile apps and games for Bermuda Island Games, a local business he started to promote Bermudian culture digitally. Adrian holds a Master's Degree in Information Technology Management from the University of Liverpool.

Ms. Taneesha Ottley is a Ministry of Education Policy Analyst and will provide research and secretary support for the Working Group. Having reviewed and analysed all of the submissions from the parish primary school consultation process, she has developed a deep and broad insight into the issues raised by community members regarding the history and legacy of schools and education. She is also a public school alumna, having graduated from Cedar-Bridge Academy. She has obtained an Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts from the Bermuda College and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Policy from the University of Lincoln in the UK. Ms. Ottley is currently studying toward a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Management from the University of York in the UK.

Dr. Theodore Francis is an Assistant Professor of History at Huston-Tillotson University [HBCU], a historically Black college and university in Austin, Texas. He teaches African American, Caribbean and United States history courses. His research focuses on race, resistance and Black travel in the African Diaspora, particularly the Caribbean and the Americas. In 2020 Dr. Francis served as an expert witness for the Bermuda Government's Commission of Inquiry into Historic Land Losses. He completed an extensive research report on the Tucker's Town portion of these land losses. Dr. Francis is the co-author of *Prudent Rebels: Bermudians and the First Age of Revolution* with Dr. Clarence Maxwell and Alexandra Mairs-Kessler. His current book manuscript explores African American tourism to Bermuda during the Island's desegregation movement.

Mr. Randy Scott is a retired Parliamentary Registrar, having served in this leadership role for many years after working as the Assistant Parliamentary Registrar. After teaching for a period at the Robert Crawford School, Mr. Scott also worked in the Department of Statistics for more than 20 years. He is an alumnus of the West End Primary School and attended Sandy's Secondary School, having completed his

high school education in the United States at Eron Prep School in New York City. He attended Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in History Education.

Dr. Quito Swan is a Professor of African American and African Diaspora Studies at Indiana University Bloomington. The author of *Black Power in Bermuda* and the forthcoming *Pasifika Black: Oceania, Anticolonialism, and the African World*, his scholarship is focused on 20th century Black internationalism. In 2020 Dr. Swan served as an expert witness for the Bermuda Government's Commission of Inquiry into Historic Land Losses. He submitted a report on the St. David's/US baselands section of these land grabs. He is the recipient of several awards including fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute, the Wilson International Center for Scholars, Pennsylvania State University's Humanities Institute and Australia's University of Queensland. He is also the founder of DrinkWell, a professorial consulting agency.

Ms. Rhonda Woods-Smith is the Senior Manager of the Tourism Regulation and Policy Unit. She previously served as a Senior Policy Analyst in the Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism and as the Acting Director of Telecommunications. Ms. Woods-Smith has an extensive background in education. She began as a mathematics teacher at the Berkeley Institute, graduated to the position of Year Three Supervisor and culminated her career at the Berkeley in 2003 as Head of the Mathematics Department. Ms. Woods-Smith served as the Bermuda Education Strategic Team [BEST] Project Manager and was a member of the Hopkins Review Team led by Professor David Hopkins. She later served as the Chief Operations Officer of the Interim Executive Board of Education and the Board of Education, respectively, and is currently a member of the Board of Governors of the Berkeley Institute.

Madam President, the Working Group's membership consists of a breadth of academic, technical and practical knowledge and experience that is needed to plan and prepare for the work of the History and Legacy Committee. Under the direction of the History and Legacy Committee's Chairperson, the Working Group will accomplish the following:

- i. develop the terms of reference for the History and Legacy Committee;
- ii. identify the types of professional and community roles and skill sets necessary for the Committee;
- iii. identify potential work streams and supporting organisational structures and processes for the History and Legacy Committee project. Examples include research, data collection, community engagement and communications;
- iv. develop a provisional project plan outlined with milestones;

- v. make recommendations on the likely duration of the short- to medium-term phases of the History and Legacy Committee project;
- vi. make recommendations on the likely required time contribution of the History and Legacy Committee members for the project; and
- vii. complete and present the terms of reference by March 31, 2022.

This two-part process of creating a working group to support the introduction of the Committee has worked well before. This approach was taken regarding the School Reorganisation (or SCORE) Committee that allowed technical and community expertise from outside the Ministry of Education to be utilised to develop the groundwork for the larger body of work to be undertaken.

Madam President, following the development of the terms of reference and the completion of these other responsibilities, some or all of the members of the Working Group will transition to the History and Legacy Committee. Therefore, other members of our community will also have the opportunity to serve on the History and Legacy Committee once it is formally and fully established in early 2022. This History and Legacy Committee will use the terms of reference as a framework to guide and carry out the longer-term work with the ultimate responsibility of documenting Bermuda's educational history and making recommendations on the best ways to preserve, honour and commemorate the history and legacy of education in Bermuda.

I extend thanks to the persons who have made contributions to the development of the History and Legacy Committee. The interest, passion and dedication of those committed to the documentation and celebration of our educational history will help with the necessary changes needed to the public education system and make our understanding of our past educational achievements much richer in the process.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Owen Darrell, Junior Minister of Education. Moving on . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2021

COMPANIES AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION ACT 2021

BERMUDA MONETARY AUTHORITY AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2021

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2021

The President: The following Public Bills have been received from the Honourable House of Assembly and are read for the first time. Their titles are, respectively, the Insurance Amendment Act 2021, the Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021, the Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021, and Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021.

And, Senators, these Bills will be taken up during today's session on the Orders of the Day.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: Senators, we will now entertain questions on the Statements that were given earlier, the first one being in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Statement, the Ministry of Labour Year-End review?

Senator Ben Smith, you have the floor.

Sen. Ben Smith: Thank you and good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning to you.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Ben Smith: First of all, I would like to thank the Junior Minister for providing this Statement this morning.

I would like to start on page 7 of the Statement where it speaks to facilitating 747 unemployed Bermudians being employed. Would the Junior Minister be able to provide a breakdown of whether that is full-time employment or part-time employment? Just if we could get some idea of whether these 747 people have continued to be employed, which would obviously be a positive for Bermuda knowing that we were able to move people from unemployed to employed. Just if we could get some information around what that looks like.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Would any other Senator care . . . Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to go to page 4 of the Statement and ask about the much-needed minimum wage. It says in the Statement that “This brings Bermuda one step closer to implementation of a much-needed minimum wage, in alignment with a living wage.” I appreciate the statement. My question is, When? When will we see next steps in terms of the implementation of (I agree) a much-needed minimum wage and also a much-needed living wage in this country? We have talked about it a lot, and I am happy to see that we are moving forward. But it would be very helpful to have some idea of the timeline. That is my first question.

May I ask another, Madam President?

The President: You certainly may. Carry on, Senator Michelle Simmons.

QUESTION 2: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Michelle Simmons: My second question refers to page 8, and that is the Graduate Training Programme which was implemented.

It is great to see that there were 15 people in the first cohort of that Graduate Training Programme and 10 in the second. I hope that this is the beginning. Because there is no definite commitment in the Statement to that programme's continuing. But I am hoping that the Junior Minister will be able to assure us that the Graduate Training Programme will continue.

I also would ask to hear if there are graduate trainees currently in the programme. So my question is in two parts: Is it continuing; and if so, how many graduate trainees are in the programme now?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak?
Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President. My questions are very similar to what my Senator colleagues have already asked.

I would like to know, again on page 8 as it relates to the Graduate Training Programme, in the first cohort being 15 graduates I would like to know if any of those graduates have already received full-time employment.

QUESTION 2: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Robin Tucker: My second question on the same page as it relates to point number 5, the College

Summer Jobs Programme, I would like to know how many of the 75 participants were assigned to their area of study? Just looking at it, of course, from the point of view of education and educational experiences and being able to work in areas specific to the college or university level student's area of career interest. So just wondering how many of those students are actually involved in the area that they have interest in.

QUESTION 3: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Robin Tucker: And similarly in that same section it speaks to high school students and the High School Jobs Programme. I am interested to know whether the high school students or the high schools are consulted when the department or the summer employment initiative is being promoted. Because I am just wondering whether the guidance counsellors or the schools and the department work together to help the high school students to identify areas of internship where they could possibly go to begin to get exposure to their career interests. So I am just wondering if there is any collaboration there.

I know that when I was a high school student and when my children were [high school students], they were looking for summer employment. And they were basically just assigned wherever. So I am wondering if that process has been streamlined to make it a lot more focused.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you. And those are your three questions. Thank you.

Would any other Senator—

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: Yes, yes. You have asked three questions. I am just confirming that.

Senator Wight, you have the floor. John Wight.

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

Reference was made to the supplemental unemployment benefits, which I think was very timely and very helpful for so many Bermudians. There was also a story in the media a couple of months ago where the Minister of Finance referenced certain payments that were made to individuals who were not eligible, who had actually returned to work. From memory, it was a pretty substantial material amount. So I am just wondering if there is a progress update that can be provided to the Senators on how much of

those funds have been successfully claimed back by Government.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator John Wight.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Hearing none, then it is over to you, Senator Arianna Hodgson.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

With respect to Senator Ben Smith's question about whether or not these Bermudians were able to secure full- or part-time employment, I can confirm that most persons have secured full-time employment. However, there was of course a mix.

Regarding Senator Michelle Simmons's question about minimum wage and the timeline for sharing in terms of next steps, I can confirm that we are actually waiting for the second report, which is due back [to us] in March. And at that point we will be better able to advise.

Again, regarding the Graduate Training Programme, this is actually an initiative that we will further explore with the youth employment strategy. And so we will be able to provide the particulars in the new year. However, it is very likely that the programme will continue. At this time, we currently have the 10 trainees due to participate with the second cohort. And I will confirm the exact dates just so that we have a better appreciation.

[Pause]

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Senator Tucker had some questions about whether or not the graduates were placed in their area [of interest]. And, of course, this is a concern that we hear quite often in terms of, Are our students getting the best experience possible? Of course, we do work hard to ensure that we can place them in the best place, but there are instances where they may go to an alternative location. However, there are skill sets that can be developed in most of these positions that can be transferred to their respective area of expertise or study.

I have personally seen the partnerships between the Ministry and the high schools, the guidance counsellors and all of those entities working hard. But again it depends on the availability of an opportunity in that particular arena. So the Ministry does do their best to ensure that students have the best experience. This goes for the graduates as well as the high school students.

I am still waiting for further clarity regarding Senator Wight's question and the unemployment benefit. So if you could give me some time to prepare that, or, in the meantime, we can go forward.

The President: Senator Ben Smith, you have a supplementary or a second question?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Ben Smith: Supplementary. Thank you, Madam President.

So on my initial question about the 747 unemployed Bermudians who were employed, obviously that is a period when phase one was implemented to the present.

If the Junior Minister can let us know if the 747 would have been at the peak when everybody was employed? Can she give us the number that it is today, the number of those unemployed Bermudians who are employed today? Because as she said, some were part-time, some were full-time. It would just help us to understand whether we have continued to have these Bermudians employed.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, of course I would not have those details at the moment. So I can endeavour to get those answers as well.

The President: Fine. Thank you.
Senator Ben Smith.

Sen. Ben Smith: Second question.

The President: Second question.

QUESTION 2: MINISTRY OF LABOUR YEAR-END REVIEW 2021

Sen. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam President.

So, Madam President, on page 10, the Junior Minister refers to the "moratorium for new work permits on 41 additional occupations" which takes the total to 53. Can the Junior Minister give us a breakdown of how many Bermudians have been hired in each of these closed categories since this moratorium has been put in place so that we can have an understanding of whether this has had a positive impact to not just create an opportunity, but turn the opportunity into employment in each of the categories so that we can see the success rate?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Again, Madam President, those are figures that I would have to confirm with the Ministry.

The President: So you are endeavouring to get the information for the Senators later. Thank you very much.

Oh, sorry. Senator Robin Tucker.

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: You can have a supplementary question. On which? You posed three.

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: Oh, Senator . . . I beg your pardon.

On Senator Ben Smith's [question], you certainly may [pose a supplementary.]

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

My supplementary question relates to again the facilitated employment of 747 unemployed Bermudians. The Junior Minister did mention (obviously) that those people are employed. I am just curious as to how many of those people have been confirmed in their employment? So in other words, how many have passed probation? Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.
Senator Ben Smith.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Ben Smith: Yes. As the Junior Minister is looking to get the answer to my questions on page 10, I ask a further supplementary question, as it is going to take her some time to get those figures.

Specifically, training in those closed categories, what is the training? Has training been provided for all 53 of those occupations? How many people have participated in the training for those occupations that have then led to employment? Just so that we have kind of a full idea that we have closed categories, and this is the result of closing those categories so that we know that it is a successful programme to close categories. But the impact is so that when the decision is made in the future, it is based off of the data that we have collected during this period.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Senator Arianna Hodgson has agreed to obtain that information.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, at this time we actually do not track that information. And regarding the Bermudians hired in the particular categories, of course we would have to wait until the results of the next employment survey to confirm that information.

The President: Thank you.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: I am sorry, Madam President. I also just wanted to let Senator Wight know that the supplemental unemployment benefit would actually come under the Finance Ministry. So I can endeavour to provide some more clarity from that Ministry.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.

I see Senator Marcus Jones has raised his hand.

Senator Jones, you have the floor.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

Supplementary to Senator Ben Smith's question and the answer that was given to him in regard to the Junior Minister's saying to us that these numbers are not tracked, that being the jobs, can the Junior Minister give us an indication of how her Ministry measures success if these numbers are not tracked? I think that is very important. I believe the public would demand to know how this Government, and particularly this Ministry, measures success.

The President: Thank you, Senator Jones.

[Pause]

The President: Senator Hodgson, are you getting the information now or will you want to provide it later?

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Sorry. I did misspeak, and I just wanted to provide some clarity to Senator Wight.

So I did say that the supplemental unemployment benefit was not under us. But I do want to provide clarity that it was the unemployment benefit that resulted in the loss of revenue for the government. And that is actually under the Ministry of Finance.

With regard to Senator Marcus Jones's question, I will endeavour to provide a response before the end of the session.

The President: Thank you.

With that said, Senators, Senator Arianna Hodgson has indicated that she will [endeavour to] obtain the information before the end of the session.

We will move on then to the second Statement, which was in the name of Senator Curtis Richardson, Junior Minister for Transport.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

[No audible response]

The President: Hearing none, we will then move on to the third Ministerial Statement, which was given by the Junior Minister of Education, Senator Owen Darrell. This has to do with the History and Legacy Committee.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

[No audible response]

The President: That was a comprehensive Statement, Senator Darrell.

Hearing none, then we will now move on.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The President: The first Order of the day is the Consideration of the draft Order entitled the Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021.

Senate O. K. Darrell, Junior Minister for Tourism you have the floor.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 71(2)

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that Standing Order 71(2) be suspended so that the Senate may now proceed with the consideration of the Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Carry on, Senator Darrell.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 71(2) suspended.]

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that the Senate do now take under consideration the draft Order entitled the Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

DRAFT ORDER

TOURISM INVESTMENT (THE LOREN AT PINK BEACH) ORDER 2021

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, the purpose of bringing this Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021 before the Senate is to enable the grant of tax relief for developers investing in the tourism product, The Loren at Pink Beach, Sardis Developments Limited, which is in the national economic interest of Bermuda.

Madam President, Senators will recall the Tourism Investment Act 2017 (the Act) became operative in November 2017. The primary objective of the Act is to make Bermuda more attractive to foreign investors and to incentivise and assist local tourism-related business owners to reinvest in their product. The Tourism Investment Act provides a scale of tax

relief that can be accessed by developers through the grant of an Order approved by the House.

As background, Madam President, The Loren at Pink Beach is located at 116 South Road, Tucker's Town, Smiths, on eight acres of coastal landscape formerly occupied by the Pink Beach Club. Sardis Developments Limited incorporated in Bermuda on February 14, 2014, and amalgamated with Pink Beach Hotel Limited on March 6, 2014. Sardis is controlled by C12 Capital Management, a privately held investment company founded in 2009 by Stephen King.

Madam President, The Loren at Pink Beach is a five-star luxury boutique hotel which includes 37 hotel suites, a restaurant, lounge and a full spa. In addition to the 37 hotel suites, The Loren at Pink Beach offers guest accommodation at seven villas and a private residence. The residence sits on 5.5 acres of waterfront land and includes six bedrooms, eight en suite bathrooms and a two-bedroom staff cottage. Villas 1, 2, 3 and 7 each consist of a two-storey, four-bedroom, four-and-a-half-bathroom villa with a pool and a detached garage. Villas 4, 5 and 6 each consist of a two-storey, three-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bathroom villa with a plunge pool and a detached garage. All aspects of this development were completed in 2019.

Madam President, Sardis Developments Limited was granted a hotels concession order, the Hotels Concession (Pink Beach Hotel) Order in March 2015. The total value of concessions available to Pink Beach is \$7.59 million. As per the Order, Sardis is entitled to [the following relief]:

- full relief from customs duty until a year after the hotel's opening dates;
- full exemption from land tax for five years from the hotel's opening dates for an amount not exceeding \$105,977 in each year of assessment;
- full exemption from hotel occupancy tax (1) for five years from the hotel's opening date for an amount equal to the sum expended by the hotel on marketing the hotel, redevelopment up to an amount not exceeding \$1.2 million in the first year of assessment and up to an amount not exceeding \$1 million in the remaining four years of assessments, full exemption from hotel occupancy tax (2) for five years from the hotel's opening date for an amount equal to the sum expended by the hotel on entertainment provided by Bermudian entertainers for the amount not exceeding \$250,000 in each year of assessment; and
- full exemption from the employer's share of payroll tax for five years from the hotel's opening date for an amount equal to the sum expended by the hotel on training Bermudian employees of the hotel for an amount not exceeding \$120,000 in each year of assessment.

Madam President, in November 2019 the Tourism Investment Act 2017 was amended so that it applied to specific hotel developments presently using a hotels concession Order made under the [Hotels Concession Act 2000](#). On 9 December 2020, Sardis Developments Limited submitted an application for a Tourism Investment Order for The Loren at Pink Beach. As previously stated, the Pink Beach Club was purchased in 2014 for \$14 million. To date, the total investment by Sardis Developments Limited has been \$79,323,160. In accordance with the definition of a new hotel as per the Tourism Investment Act 2017 this application meets the criteria for a new hotel.

Madam President, I draw your attention to an important caveat. The Tourism Investment Amendment Act requires tax relief already received by The Loren at Pink Beach pursuant to the Hotels Concession Act to be taken into account. This is to ensure that the period for which tax relief is granted, pursuant to the Tourism Investment Act, does not exceed the relevant period, in this case 10 years.

Madam President, in meeting the criteria for a new hotel the Act allows The Loren at Pink Beach to receive full exemption from hotel occupancy tax otherwise payable in respect for the hotel for a period of five years from the date that this Order comes into operation, [and] full exemption from the employer's share of payroll tax otherwise payable in respect of persons employed by the hotel for a period of five years from the date this Order comes into operation.

To qualify for this exemption the Minister responsible for Workforce Development shall, for the period for which the exemption is claimed, confirm in writing to the Minister responsible for Tourism annually that a management training programme for Bermudians is in operation at The Loren at Pink Beach.

Madam President, The Loren at Pink Beach "takes pride in providing various training programmes to ensure employees are constantly learning the best practices and procedures to manage the daily responsibilities in a luxury property." It is envisioned that between the years 2021 to 2025 the ratio of locals to internationals [or guest workers] employed at The Loren will be [a] 7:3 [ratio]. That is, 70 per cent locals and 30 per cent internationals. As business is expected to recover, the company envisions a team of 110 staff members during this time period.

Training programmes focus on promoting individuals from line positions to middle management [supervisory], as well as middle management [supervisory] to senior management positions. The training hierarchy includes individual development training, leadership development training and management development training. Training courses offered in management development include timekeeping and organisational skills, top-tier customer service, leadership training, train-the-trainer and luxury brand management.

Madam President, this Government is pleased to work with Sardis Developments Limited to ensure that our tourism product is constantly being refreshed so as to remain on the cutting edge of the hospitality industry. The Tourism Investment Act 2017 provides the means to this end. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Owen Darrell, Junior Minister for tourism.

Would any Senator care to speak on this draft Order?

Senator Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Junior Minister for bringing this piece of legislation to these Chambers. I think it is a very timely and important [draft Order] especially for The Loren, which I have had the pleasure of taking my wife to. We had a very enjoyable meal. It is promoted as a five-star product in this country, and I can attest to the fact that the services and the facility that we had at our disposal surely do meet the standards of a five-star operation.

I would also like to give special thanks to Mr. Stephen King, the owner and developer of this property, who has shown to us in Bermuda his confidence in the future—not only in the present, but in the future successes of our tourism product. It says a lot when an owner and developer can put their money where their mouth is and demonstrate to us, and he has demonstrated to us to the tune of \$79 million of development monies into that property. I believe that we as a collective in this country can applaud the proof of confidence in this country, especially within its tourism industry, that Mr. King has demonstrated.

Madam President, I can say now that we as Senators on this side of the aisle, as well as the other side, have been doing this job for the last year as Senators. I am sure that my Government Senator counterparts can attest to the fact that if nothing else, we on this side of the aisle have been extremely predictable, predictable in the questions that we ask. There are some things that we look forward to when we deliberate on these [pieces of legislation] and even when we listen to Statements.

I will say to you quite candidly, Madam President, that we are very much concerned about accountability. We are very much concerned about data-driven policies and legislation and their respective follow-up when it comes to data. We are also very keen on when the Government is putting together legislation that there has been diligent consultation with stakeholders around the community. Those are definitely the three objectives that we as a team on this side of the aisle look forward to.

So when I read this [draft Order], Madam President, I was moved to go back to the genesis of

what drove Bermuda to wade into the waters of (shall we call it) corporate welfare for our developers, specifically in the area and the realm of tourism where we want to entice and encourage and attract foreign investors to come to Bermuda to upgrade and to in fact spend their monies and their capital on improving the tourism product.

Allow me, Madam President, to go back in time. I remember very clearly when the PLP party first became the Government back in 1998. I remember at that time their first Minister of Tourism happened to be the illustrious, colourful Mr. David Allen. And one of the first pieces of legislation which I will submit to you was groundbreaking was the Hotels Concession Act of 2000. The objective and purposes of that particular Bill were not that much different in the purposes of this draft Order that sits before us today. We find out that the purpose of that Hotels Concession Act of 2000 was to encourage hotel development by providing relief from customs duty and exemption from certain other taxes, and by removing certain restrictions on companies holding interest in land.

Now, Madam President, as I said earlier, that particular piece of legislation was groundbreaking, very much like the groundbreaking legislation that that PLP Government brought in, for example, for the National Pension Scheme. I am sure, Madam President, that you remember that Bill when it came through. I believe it was in 1999. So these were Bills that changed the course of the direction of this industry which we call tourism.

Now, there were certain criteria placed on that particular legislation for hotel developers. For one, it had to be a licensed hotel. Now, if you go back in time you remember that the heyday of Bermuda's tourism industry was in the 1980s and the 1990s. At that time we had over 100 licensed hotels, guest houses, small hotels, medium-sized hotels. We had over 100 licensed. Madam President, I will submit to you that right now in 2021, we have less than 40 licensed tourism accommodations in this country. This is staggering.

Now, one of the things that propelled the Government of the day back in 2000 to enact this particular legislation was to encourage and to sort of spice up the industry. We know that in Disneyland, every year they have new attractions. That is part of the allure of going to Disneyworld. Well, in a tourism destination like Bermuda, you need new products. You need to keep it fresh.

So that is part of the reason why this particular hotel concession was put into place. Now, there were a number of different criteria which many of them I think my fellow colleagues would be pretty surprised about, in fact encouraged about that the Government at the time, that Administration at the time, placed on hotel developers. Not only will they be getting concessions, but there were certain things that the Bermudian people and their government were go-

ing to get back in return, which made for a win-win situation for both parties.

You know, these products, these facilities that had to be developed had to be facilities that were able to house staff, Bermudian staff there. The development had to be substantial, right? So that meant that there was a certain amount of money that this developer had to commit to paying, to bringing into the Island. It had to be of national interest, of national importance. It had to have created employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for Bermudians. Another thing about this concession was that it had a time limit. It had five years. That was the limitation to that particular concession.

Now, we advance to the year 2015 when the Pink Beach had their concession. There were certain conditions that they had to complete and satisfy [for the Ministry of Tourism]. They had to be able to spend equal sums of money that they would get in relief toward marketing, which was a great bonus for, at the time the Ministry of Tourism, which wanted each hotel as much as possible to partner with the Government's and that Ministry's overall marketing strategy. They had to comply with certain marketing strategies that the Ministry put forward.

Here is a key. And today we have in our midst the son of a very famous and well-known local musician here on the Island, none other than Hubie Smith. His son now sits as the Senate Leader on this side of the House. And one of his contributions to that particular concession was to make it mandatory that these hotels that were able to benefit from these concessions had to employ Bermudian entertainers. That was one of the conditions. They had to provide audited statements that provided the dollars and cents which each hotel contributed or paid within that calendar year toward entertainment. Why am I raising these issues? They are pretty detailed, and they are pretty (one may say and suggest) tedious. But it is important for us to see how this concession [Order] started and where it has ended up today.

So you can see, Madam President, there were a number of conditions that were required in order for these hotels and these developers to earn the right to get these exemptions.

Now here we have this particular Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021. If signed off by this Senate Chamber, they will get the privilege of having an exemption of payroll tax and occupancy tax. Now, Madam President, having listened to me give a long laundry list of all of the criteria that were required of developers and hoteliers to be able to qualify for these exemptions back in the year 2000, we now are here at 2021, and the one and only requirement that the hotels that are qualified to gain these exemptions [is that] they have to confirm in writing to the Minister annually that a management training programme for Bermudians is in operation.

That is it, Madam President. No proof that they employ Bermudian entertainers. No proof in an audited statement of how much money they have spent in marketing their product, which helps this country sell itself. None whatsoever, Madam President, just a paper that states that they plan to do a management training programme in order to qualify for these exemptions.

Using that as context and a backdrop, Madam President, I have a few questions that I would have for the Junior Minister if he can enlighten us. Question one: As this is the second extension given to The Loren for concessions on occupancy and payroll tax exemptions for an additional five years as per the Hotels Concession Act of 2000, through which The Loren was able to be granted an Order in 2015, will this be the last extension offered The Loren?

Number two, since written proof of an active management training programme is the only condition required to be eligible for this concession, can the Junior Minister provide the numbers of Bermudian employees since The Loren applied for renewal of these exemptions in December 2020 who are enrolled and actively being trained in this management programme? And with that, the associated costs and expenses that this hotel has incurred to bring about that management training programme?

Number three, can the Junior Minister provide an explanation as to why an application for the renewal of a concession Order would take a year? Now, we understand that this application was submitted in December of 2020. I would find it odd that it would take a year for that request to be made and then tabled in this House especially since this hotel has invested \$79 million of development into this country. It has a workforce of over 100 people. Surely this Government can give us some explanation of why it took so long for this application to go from draft stage to actual implementation and being tabled in the House.

Can the Junior Minister provide an explanation as to why so many useful and critical conditions were removed from the original hotels concession Order, as I am sure you took note of the long list of requirements and conditions that was made mandatory for the original concessions? Why is there just one major requirement in order for a hotel developer of this size that is going to provide national importance to the development of its tourism product? Why have the criteria changed?

And with those words and those questions, I thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Would any other Senator—

Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

Let me start by saying that I am fully supportive of this legislation and thank the Junior Minister for

bringing this forward to the Senate. Tourism, as we all know, is critical to the future of Bermuda's economy. Tourism is critical to Bermuda employment. Bermuda desperately needs new product, and this is certainly high-end new product.

The number of beds we have in Bermuda also aligns with the airlift that is important for airlines to see. So the more people we have coming to Bermuda, whether it be tourism or international business, this generates additional airlift. So to me this ticks all of the important boxes. So I am fully supportive of this legislation.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator John Wight.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this draft Order?

Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President. I will be very brief.

I want to thank the Junior Minister for bringing this to the Senate, and I would like to confirm that I too support this draft Order. We have already seen what has been accomplished at The Loren over the past several years. And it certainly is in Bermuda's best interest to encourage the investment company, Sardis, to continue to redevelop and to enhance the facility. The Loren at Pink Beach is a signature property, and I believe that this Tourism Investment Order is going to help to move them further forward.

So, Madam President, I am in full support, and I look forward to seeing the management trainees who will be advancing in their careers.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this draft Order?

Hearing none, then, Senator Darrell, it is over to you.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. Thank you for the comments of my fellow Senators.

Just to respond to one particular question that I can answer for Senator Jones. He asked, Why did this take a year? The application for the Tourism Investment Order was submitted to the Cabinet Office on December 9, 2020. The Hotels Concession (Pink Beach Hotel) Order 2015 provides relief for five years from the first period, which was January 2017 to December 31, 2017; to the fifth and final period of January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021. So the Tourism Investment Order will become operative on January 1, 2022.

For [Senator Jones's] other questions as to the number of employees who are currently training at

The Loren, I did have the number of employees who are currently there. But specifically training, I am waiting for that answer.

Will this be the last of the extensions? I think that is hard to tell. It is like looking at a crystal ball into the future. I am sure when Minister Allen back in 2000 put the concession Act in place, I am not sure that he envisioned that we would still have a necessity 21 years later. But because of different circumstances and different (I guess) projections of where we want tourism to go, sometimes concessions and other acts of government are necessary. So it is hard to answer that question, Will this be the last?

But in 2021, The Loren employed 98 Bermudians, 71 per cent [of the staff] were Bermudian. Like I said, I will have to dig down a little deeper to see how many of those are actually currently training.

And one more question that I think was posed by the Senator was . . . I think the question he was getting at was, How would we be holding The Loren accountable for doing what they said they are going to do? I think that remit will come under the Department of Workforce Development. Once that letter is then written to the Minister, I think they have mechanisms in place where they send . . . not investigators, I guess we will call them case workers, investigators. Maybe we would call it people doing inspections to see that they are indeed coming under that. But that is not specifically laid out here. But I can take that back and ask for further clarity on that. Okay?

If I do get the number on training shortly, I will pass it along. But it is being looked into, specific Bermudians who are currently being trained.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator.
We now move.

Sen. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I now move that the said draft Order be approved and the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

Sen. Owen Darrell: May it please you, Your Excellency:

The Senate, having had under consideration the draft Order entitled the Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Tourism with written agreement by the Minister of Finance under the provisions of section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017, has the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Senate has approved the said draft Order.

The President: Thank you. The message will be sent.

[Motion carried: The Draft Order entitled the Tourism Investment (The Loren at Pink Beach) Order 2021 was approved.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Darrell, and thank you, all Senators.

We now move on to the second item on our Orders of the Day. And that is consideration of the draft Order entitled the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 7) Order 2021.

And this is in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, the Junior Minister for Health. You have the floor.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 71(2)

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that Standing Order 71(2) be suspended so that Senate may now proceed with the consideration of the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 7) Order 2021.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 71(2) suspended]

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that Senate do now take under consideration the draft Order entitled the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 7) Order 2021.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

DRAFT ORDER

PUBLIC HEALTH (COVID-19) EMERGENCY EXTENSION (NO. 7) ORDER 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I am pleased to invite this Honourable Chamber to consider the Order entitled [Public Health \(COVID-19\) Emergency Extension \(No. 7\) Order 2021](#).

Madam President, Senators will be aware that the current Public Health Emergency Order is scheduled to lapse on 28 January 2022. The Emergency Orders, which have been in place since 30 June 2020, following the state of emergency put in place on 1 April 2020 were made pursuant to section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949 and declared that a public health emergency exists in Bermuda due to a communicable disease that poses a threat to the Island.

We live on a very small Island, and as we know from previous outbreaks the coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19 spreads quickly and

negatively impacts the whole community. We can slow the spread of the virus by following basic public health advice of wearing a mask to cover our nose and mouth, as well as physically distancing, practicing good hand hygiene and downloading the WeHealth Bermuda app. We can also avoid the three Cs of closed spaces, crowded places and close-contact settings.

In addition, Madam President, we are fortunate in that the COVID-19 vaccine is available to any resident who wants it. As a reminder, this includes booster vaccines for all of those who are 18 years old and older, as well as health care workers, essential and critical service workers, those with chronic conditions over the ages of 12 and pregnant women. To receive a booster, you must have had your second dose at least six months prior. To make an appointment for a first, second or booster jab, go to www.gov.bm.

As has been said many times, vaccines save lives. The two-dose Pfizer vaccine has been shown to be 95 per cent effective in randomised trials. Even with the highly transmittable Delta variant, the vaccine's effectiveness remains high, and early indications suggest a booster jab of Pfizer provides a good defence against the newest variant of concern, Omicron. This means that as a fully vaccinated person you can still test positive and still contract COVID-19, but you are less likely to get severely ill, less likely to end up in the hospital and less likely to die. Our own data have shown this to be true.

Madam President, this does not mean that there is zero risk involved. Even if fully vaccinated, your own personal health is a key factor in determining whether you will get ill with COVID-19, and, if you do, whether you are predisposed to becoming ill enough to be hospitalised or to die.

Madam President, it is clear we must all learn how to live with COVID-19 because it will be with us for a long time, both locally and globally. However—and this cannot be said too many times—success in dealing with COVID-19 requires a community effort. It is a community effort because this is one of the few situations where an individual's decision to adhere to public health measures or not impacts all of us. In this pandemic, individual decisions can and do have island-wide consequences.

This is not the same as choosing not to wear a helmet or choosing not to use your seatbelt where the person you are most likely to harm is yourself. Failure to follow public health measures has a far greater impact as the virus spreads quickly throughout our Island home, affecting families, schools, businesses and more.

Madam President, the Minister of Health consulted with the Chief Medical Officer and determined that a communicable disease of the first category, namely COVID-19 and its variants of concern, continues to pose a severe threat to public health in Bermu-

da. To control and contain the spread of the infection, public health measures such as those provided for in regulations made under section 107B of the Public Health Act 1949 will continue to be relevant and necessary beyond 28 January 2022.

This Order before us now will extend the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Order 2021 made under section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949 and empower the Governor to continue the provision of the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Powers Regulation 2021, which imposed extraordinary measures necessary in the interest of public health to prevent, control and suppress COVID-19.

Madam President, Honourable Senators will be aware that the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 6) Order 2021 was made under the affirmative resolution procedure effective 29 November 2021 for 60 days, expiring on 28 January 2022 when Parliament is not in session. We know that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage on globally, exacerbated by a new variant of concern, Omicron, which has reached Bermuda. We also know that a public health emergency will continue to exist on our Island beyond 28 January 2022.

Therefore, in accordance with section 107A(3) and (4) of the Public Health Act 1949, I bring the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 7) Order 2021 to this Honourable Chamber to seek approval for the extension of the public health emergency for a further 30 days ending on 27 February 2022.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister for Health. Would any Senator care to speak on this draft Order?

Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

Certainly we in the Opposition are in support of this extension and this [draft Order]. I do want to say, though, that I am hopeful that people will adhere to the public health guidance and will seek credible information from credible sources. Clearly, we are entering into a Christmas holiday where we will have people traveling in and out and so on. So it is hopeful that we will get to a place eventually where these emergency extensions will no longer be necessary. But in order to do that, we all have to follow the public health guidance.

So with that said, Madam President, again there is no objection to this extension.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this draft Order?

Hearing none, Senator Hodgson, you have full support of the Senate. You have the floor.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the said draft Order be approved and that the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor:

May it please Your Excellency,

The Senate, having had under consideration the draft Order entitled the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 7) 2021, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for Health under the provisions of section 107A of the Public Health Act 1949, has the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Senate has approved the said draft Order.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson. And thank you all, Senators.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you.

The President: [Is there any] objection to the message to Her Excellency the Governor being sent?

[No audible response]

The President: Thank you. The message will be sent.

[Motion carried: The Draft Order entitled the Public Health (COVID-19) Emergency Extension (No. 7) Order 2021 was approved.]

The President: Thank you.

We move on to item number three on our Orders of the Day. That is the Insurance Amendment Act 2021, and that is also in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, the Junior Minister for Finance.

STANDING ORDER 25

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President. Before going forward, I would like to make a motion for the granting of the provision of Standing Order 25 for all four [Bills].

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.
Carry on.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the provisions of Standing Order 25 be granted so that the Senate may now proceed with the second reading of the Bills entitled Insurance Amendment Act 2021, the Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021, the Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021, and the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion, moving all four?

None.

Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson. You can carry on.

[Motion carried: Leave granted for Bills on the Order Paper to be read a second time on the same day as their first reading.]

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Insurance Amendment Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

BILL

SECOND READING

INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the purpose of the Bill entitled the [Insurance Amendment Act 2021](#) is to amend the [Insurance Act 1978](#) to provide for matters related to internationally active insurance groups.

Madam President, Bermuda's financial services sector is subject to the regulation and supervision of the Bermuda Monetary Authority. The Authority was established in 1969 under the [Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969](#). The [Insurance Act 1978](#) provides the Authority with substantive licensing, supervision and intervention powers to regulate the insurance industry in Bermuda.

Madam President, the licensing and supervisory process is prescribed by law and supplemented by subsidiary legislation and guidance notes. These detail the classes of licence based on the nature of the business and related risk, reporting requirements, statutory financial statement filings, and vetting of controller shareholders among other aspects.

Madam President, in furtherance of the aforementioned, the [Senate] would be aware that the Authority is a member of the International Association of Insurance Supervisors [the IAIS]. Presently, the chief actuary serves as a member of the IAIS Executive Committee, while other senior members of the Authority serve as chairs and vice chairs of several subcommittees including, but not limited to, the following: the Macprudential Committee, the Insurance Capital Standard and Comparability Task Force, and the Policy Development Committee.

Madam President, by way of background the [Senate] is advised that the IAIS is a voluntary membership organisation of insurance supervisors and regulators from around the globe. Established in 1994, the IAIS is the primary international standard setting

body responsible for developing and assisting in the implementation of supervisory material for insurance supervision.

Madam President, by way of explanation the IAIS has issued insurance core principles (ICPs) to encourage member jurisdictions to maintain high supervisory standards. The ICPs establish the minimum requirements for effective supervision and are expected to be implemented and applied in a proportionate manner. In addition, the ICPs are applicable to the supervisor of all insurers within a jurisdiction. Accordingly, the IAIS strongly encourages implementation of the ICPs as a means to ensure that each jurisdiction has a framework for effective supervision.

Madam President, the IAIS common framework [ComFrame] provides quantitative and qualitative supervisory requirements tailored to the international activity and size of internationally active insurance groups. ComFrame 23 provides that a group-wide supervisor in cooperation with other involved supervisors determines whether an insurance group or an insurance legal entity operating through branches is an IAIG after considering whether it meets both of the following criteria: [For] internationally active, the premiums are written in three or more jurisdictions including Bermuda and gross written premiums outside of the home jurisdiction are at least 10 per cent of the group's total gross written premiums; [In] size, based on a three-year rolling average, where total assets are at least \$50 billion or total gross written premiums are at least USD\$10 billion. It is expected that the group will be required to substantially meet all criteria in the definition.

Madam President, in addition to the aforementioned, ComFrame 23 provides that a group-wide supervisor is required to identify the head of an IAIG on the control and risk basis as follows: The legal entity which controls all of the insurance legal entities within the group, and the non-insurance legal entities which pose a risk to the insurance operations. This approach is designed to ensure that there are no gaps or unnecessary duplication and supervision amongst jurisdictions.

Madam President, Part IV of the [principal] Act covers matters related to the insurance group supervision. Presently, this part of the Act does not provide for matters related to internationally active insurance groups. Recognising the need to put in place a framework that provides for such powers, the 1978 Act will be amended as a consequence of this proposal as follows: Section 6A of the Act will be amended by granting the Authority the power to make Rules regarding internationally active insurance groups.

A new section 27H will be added to the Act to provide for the manner in which the Authority may determine that an insurance group of which it is the current supervisor shall also qualify to be registered by the Authority as an internationally active insurance group.

Madam President, the Authority will be required to initially consult with the other supervisors of the insurance group, and once agreement has been reached the Authority is required to notify the insurance group of its intention to make a determination. The insurance group shall then be allowed to make written representations to the Authority and the Authority shall take such representations into account when making its final determination.

Additionally, the Authority shall be required to publish a list of all internationally active insurance groups on its website at www.bma.bm. Madam President, in addition to the changes to the Act, further details will be set out in Rules, together with guidance notes. As per the Authority's normal custom and practice all Rules and guidance documents will also be subject to public consultation in due course.

Madam President, the [Senate] is advised that the consultation process commenced in December 2020 via publication of the consultation paper entitled "Introduction of the Concept of Internationally Active Insurance Group Proposal" together with a draft Bill. In accordance with the Authority's normal custom and practice, a stakeholder response letter was published in February 2021 on the Authority's website. The [Senate] is advised that there were no material objections raised to the proposal.

Madam President, these amendments represent a collaborative effort between the Authority and various industry stakeholders. I would like to thank all of those persons within the Authority, the Attorney General's Chambers, the Ministry of Finance and the private sector who have all assisted with the development of this Bill. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister of Finance.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?
Senator Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

As Bermuda's local insurance companies do business in multiple jurisdictions, it is important that the Bermuda Monetary Authority be able to give these companies the authority to function as an internationally active insurance group. This legislation is administrative in nature, and it is important. And the Opposition supports it.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Hearing none, then, Senator Hodgson, back over to you.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Insurance Amendment Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Insurance Amendment Act 2021 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?
There is no objection.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President. I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill entitled the Insurance Amendment Act 2021 do now pass.
Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.
The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Insurance Amendment Act 2021 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson.

We now move on to the third item on our Orders of the Day—sorry. I beg your pardon. I ticked the wrong one.

The fourth item on our agenda, the Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021. And that is also in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, the Junior Minister for Finance.

You have the floor.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

BILL

SECOND READING

COMPANIES AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President. The Bill before the [Senate] is the [Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021](#). The principal aim of this Bill is to make two amendments to the [Companies Act 1981](#).

Madam President, the first amendment relates to section 2(9) of the Companies Act which was inadvertently repealed in its entirety by the [Digital Asset Issuance Act 2020](#) in consequence of the repeal of the definition of “appointed digital asset exchange.” Prior to the repeal of section 2(9) it provided that “The Minister may appoint a stock exchange” (or digital asset exchange) “and shall cause the appointment to be published in an appointed newspaper.” The intent of the digital asset issuance was to repeal only the words “digital asset exchange” of that subsection, not the whole subsection in its entirety.

Madam President, I would like to pause here to explain that section 2(1) of the Companies Act, “stock exchange” means any stock exchange that is appointed by the Minister of Finance under section 2(9). There was no intent to remove the ability of the Minister to appoint a stock exchange. Therefore, this Bill reinstates section 2(9) in its original form to enable the Minister to appoint a stock exchange with retroactive effect from the 6th of May 2020 when the section was repealed.

Madam President, it is important to reinstate section 2(9) with retroactive effect from the 6th of May 2020 because the inadvertent repeal of that section was further complicated by the purported appointment of the Euronext Growth Oslo by way of a notice gazetted on 15 September 2021. This appointment has to be validated since the power to appoint a stock exchange by the Minister of Finance had been removed.

With consultation with the industry, the Registrar of Companies discovered that in reliance on the purported appointment of the Euronext Growth Oslo certain law firms have been working with their clients and external clients on a listing for the Euronext Growth Oslo. Therefore, it is imperative to validate the appointment of the Euronext Growth Oslo.

Madam President, the second amendment relates to the electronic service of documents on the members of a company. The [Companies and Partner-](#)

[ships \(Electronic Registry\) Amendment Act 2020](#) was brought into force to facilitate the transition to an electronic registry system. The 2020 Act made provision for the filing with or issue by the Registrar of Companies of electronic records. Prior to the 2020 enactment, the Companies Act made provision for the effective use of electronic service of documents on the members of a company.

Following the replacement of that provision industry stakeholders have advised that it had been a useful tool for companies with large members of shareholders as it avoided cumbersome and costly mailings of hard copy documents. Therefore, this Bill reinstates that provision with retroactive effect from the 31st of May 2021, the date when the Companies and Partnerships (Electronic Registry) Amendment came into operation so as not to prejudice any company which may have been relying on the old provisions without realising that they had been repealed.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?
Senator Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

We as the Opposition support this amendment and recognise the purpose of this Bill, or this amendment, was to fix a mistake made in a previous amendment that mistakenly removed the Finance Minister's power to appoint a stock exchange and make regulations providing for electronic submission of documents, allowing for retroactive effect back to May of 2020.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.
Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Hearing none, then, Senator Hodgson, back to you.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

COMPANIES AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?
No objection.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President. I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill entitled the Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021 do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Companies Amendment and Validation Act 2021 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson and Senators.

We will now move on to the fifth item, and that is your Bill as well, Senator Arianna Hodgson. When you are ready, you can start.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

BILL

SECOND READING

BERMUDA MONETARY AUTHORITY AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I am pleased to present the Bill entitled the Bermuda [Monetary Authority Amendment \(No. 2\) Act 2021](#). The purpose of this Bill is to provide for the following: To repeal and replace the Fourth Schedule of the [Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969](#); to repeal and replace the Second Schedule to the [Banks and Deposit Companies \(Fees\) Act 1975](#); to provide for an increase in the time for which the approved period of operation within the innovation hub may be extended; to empower the Authority to impose a fine in relation to certain statutory requirements under the [Investment Funds Act 2006](#); and to provide for related matters.

Madam President, by way of background, the Bermuda Monetary Authority undertook a comprehensive review of its target operating model together with its fee structure in 2018. At the end of the review process, which culminated with a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process, the [Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment \(No. 3\) Act 2018](#) which contained the fee schedules for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021 was passed by the Legislature.

Madam President, it is now intended that the Fourth Schedule of the Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969 will be repealed and replaced with a Schedule that provides for the level of fees that will be applicable and the reference to a particular year will be removed.

A similar exercise is also being done in relation to the [Banks and Deposit Companies \(Fees\) Act 1975](#). Accordingly, the Bermuda Monetary Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 proposes to repeal and replace the Second Schedule of the Banks and Deposit Companies (Fees) Act 1975 by way of consequential amendments, notwithstanding that there will be no increases in fees payable thereunder.

Madam President, in addition to the repeal and replacement of the fee schedules just noted, and based on a review conducted earlier this year, the Authority observed that a small number of existing fees within the Fourth Schedule of the Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969 require alignment and/or additional precision. The Authority also determined that some new fees were required in relation to certain applications.

Madam President, section 20B of the Act provides that the fees prescribed in the Fourth Schedule of the Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969 shall be paid by certain financial institutions in accordance with the legislation specified in the various Heads of the Fourth Schedule to the Bermuda Monetary Authority. As noted, the vast majority of the fees enforced in 2021 will be retained in 2022. Madam President, the Senate is advised that the Heads of the Fourth Schedule of the Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969 under which some minor changes to fees are proposed, are as follows: The Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969; the [Corporate Service Provider Business Act 2012](#); the [Insurance Act 1978](#); and the [Investment Funds Act 2006](#).

Madam President, a summary of the changes proposed in respect to specific 2021 fees is as follows:

1. Fees related to the Corporate Service Provider Business Act 2012.

Madam President, section 13 of the Corporate Service Provider Business Act 2012 provides for matters related to annual licensing fees to be paid on or before the 31st of March in every year after the year in which the licence was granted. The fees are determined by class of licence, limited or unlimited, and also by the number of entities and corporate service provider services.

Madam President, in 2021, as part of the three-year graduated fee structure, the annual fee bands applicable to corporate service providers servicing more than 2,000 entities but not more than 3,000 entities and those servicing more than 3,000 entities have been set at \$90,000 and \$120,000, respectively.

However, due to a transposition error they were incorrectly set at \$75,000 and \$90,000, respectively. Accordingly, it is proposed to amend the Act to ensure alignment of the fees with those which were previously consulted upon with stakeholders.

2. Insurance fees.

Madam President, the relevant changes to be made in this area are as follows: The application fee for innovative insurers will be revised in accordance with previous engagements with industry stakeholders, from \$630 to \$800. Innovative insurers will also be required to pay the same fee to cover the cost of analysis provided by the Authority. Notes relating to application fees for extensions to submission deadlines for more than one filing will be clarified so that it is clear that only one fee is required.

The scope fees related to extensions of filing deadlines will be expanded to include innovative insurers carrying on general business in an innovative and experimental manner. The present fee of \$1,500 a month will remain unchanged. Fees related to filing deadlines for innovative insurers will no longer be applicable. The Senate is advised that innovative insurers will be able to apply for extensions to continue in the hub under the provisions regarding the innovation hub.

Clause 2 of the Bill covers matters related to the extension period being increased from three months to up to twelve months, accordingly.

Clause 5 of the Bill addresses matters related to the fee increase regarding the innovation hub.

The scope of application fees related to modifying Loss Reserve Specialist opinions will be expanded to include innovative insurers carrying on general business in an innovative and experimental manner. The present fee of \$1,000 will remain unchanged.

Innovative intermediaries will now be required to pay a \$3,000 registration fee to be registered under

the Act. Innovative insurers are being removed from annual filing fee provisions as it is not meant for this group to be captured under the relevant provisions of the Act.

As previously mentioned, innovative insurers will now be able to apply for an extension to utilise the innovation hub facility.

3. Investment funds fees, Schedule 1 of the Bill.

Madam President, clause 6 of the Bill provides for consequential amendments to section 17 of the Investment Funds Act 2006.

Clarify the applicability of certain fees.

It is proposed to amend the IFA by clarifying that where a fund fails to comply with the deadline for certification and statement requirements imposed on it under the relevant sections of the IFA, the fund will be required to pay a late filing fee for every month, whether in whole or in part of the month, where such certification has not been submitted to the Authority. The [Senate] is advised that the present late filing fee of \$50 will remain unchanged. The amendments are set out in Schedule 1 to the Bill. The Fourth Schedule of the Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969 will also be updated to reflect the changes.

4. The Banks and Deposit Companies (Fees) Act 1975, Schedule 2 of the Bill.

Madam President, clause 6 of the Bill provides for consequential amendments to the Banks and Deposit Companies (Fees) Act 1975. The Second Schedule to the Banks and Deposit Companies (Fees) Act 1975 will be repealed and replaced without increasing the fees, as the provisions of the current Second Schedule which currently refers specifically to fees payable in 2019, 2020, and 2021 shall cease to apply at the end of 2021.

Madam President, key highlights of additional amendments are as follows:

Section 20G of the Act covers matters related to the innovation hub applications and requires persons to submit an application to the Authority to request an extension of the initial approval. Presently, the Authority may grant extensions for additional periods not exceeding three months. It is proposed to amend the Act to increase the time to a potential extension period operation within the innovation hub for a period of up to 12 months. The Senate is advised that there will be a requirement to amend section 20H to address the extension time period.

Extension fees will be increased from \$750 to \$1,500 to reflect the increase in the time and effort to be committed by the Authority. Application fees of \$3,000 will remain unchanged. Entities utilising the innovation hub may be approved for a period of one year from the outset but they are not required to pay annual fees.

Madam President, a floor amendment has been circulated for consideration by the Members. This floor amendment will modify the Bermuda Monetary Authority Act 1969 to clarify the registration fee

provision for innovative intermediaries. There will be no change to the registration fee which is currently set at \$3,000.

Madam President, I wish to reiterate that the amendments will result in the establishment of fees that were the subject of previous engagements with industry and recent consultation with industry stakeholders. There were no material issues raised in relation to this process, which is not surprising given the nature of the changes.

Madam President, it is important to note that the fees provided for by way of this Bill support the continued effective operation of the Bermuda Monetary Authority which performs a pivotal role in the financial services sector that is so vital to Bermuda's economy. The demands placed on the Authority continue to increase due to growth in certain sectors and the assumption of new responsibilities, and it is important that fees appropriately reflect cost related to regulation.

Madam President, by way of example, the investment fund sector which the Authority is responsible for overseeing has seen the number of registrations increase from 629 in 2019, to 829 at the end of 2020. Similarly, within the insurance sector, the number of special purpose insurers has increased from 148 in 2019, to 165 in 2020. In a related sense, the innovation hub, which is a relatively new construct, so the introduction of one approved insurer in 2019, but four approved insurers have already been granted entry into the innovation hub this year. These insurers are currently in the process of developing new products for the market. In 2019 and in 2020, one approved insurer was added to the insurance sandbox per year. In 2021, three new sandbox entrants have been approved, two being innovative insurance intermediaries and one being an innovative insurer.

Madam President, in closing, I would like to thank the Bermuda Monetary Authority, the Attorney General's Chambers, and the Ministry of Finance for their assistance with this Bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister for Finance.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?
Senator Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

Here lies another Bill administrative in nature that allows for the repeal and replacement fee structures and other housekeeping matters. We of the Opposition agree and support this Bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Jones.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

No.

Over to you then, Senator Arianna Hodgson. You have support.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

BERMUDA MONETARY AUTHORITY AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?
No objection.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Bermuda Monetary Authority Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson and all Senators.

Senator Arianna Hodgson, I believe you have your final Bill to present. You can begin when you are ready.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

BILL

SECOND READING

CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2021

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President. Senators are requested now to give consideration to the Bill entitled the [Customs Tariff Amendment \(No. 2\) Act 2021](#).

Madam President, this Bill proposes to amend the Customs Tariff Act 1970 by replacing the First Schedule. The purpose of this Bill is to implement all of the 2020 amendments to the international Harmonized System Nomenclature.

Senators will recall that such an amendment to the First Schedule to the [Customs Tariff Act 1970](#) was last made in April 2017. At that time, all of the 2017 amendments to the HS [Harmonized System] Nomenclature were implemented in Bermuda's national customs tariff.

Madam President, the HS 2022, which is the 7th edition of the Harmonized System Nomenclature will be used worldwide for the uniform classification of trade goods. The HS serves as the basis for custom tariffs and for the compilation of international trade statistics in 211 economies. The new HS 2022 edition makes some 351 sets of amendments.

Madam President, the major features of the HS 2022 amendments are adaptations to current trade through the recognition of new product streams. Other significant changes address environmental and social issues of global concern. Madam President, visibility will be introduced to a number of high-profile product streams in the 2022 edition. This is done to take account of changing trade patterns. Electronic waste is one example of a product class which presents significant policy concerns as well as a high value of trade. Accordingly, HS 2022 includes specific provisions for its classification.

Another example is fresh provision for new tobacco and nicotine-based products. The new provision makes classification of these products easier and trade statistics more visible, and recognises the very high monetary value of trade in these goods. Aerial

drones and smartphones are also given their own specific provisions for similar reasons.

Madam President, major changes have been made to the classification of glass fibres and articles thereof and for [metal] forming machinery. These changes recognise that the current subheadings do not adequately represent the technological advances in these sectors. Failure to take account of improvement in technology would cause classification difficulties and a lack of key trade statistics.

Madam President, one area of growing interest is the classification of multi-purpose intermediate assemblies. Indeed, a very important example of such a product is addressed in HS 2022. Flat panel display modules will now be classified as a product in their own right. This will simplify classification of these modules by removing the need to identify final use.

Madam President, health and safety have also featured in the changes. The classification of infectious disease diagnostic test kits has been simplified. This will help reduce delays in the deployment of tools for the rapid diagnosis of infectious diseases and outbreaks. New provisions have been made for placebos and clinical trial kits for medical research. This will enable classification without information on the ingredients in placebos, thereby facilitating cross-border medical research. Cell cultures and cell therapy are among the product classes that have gained new and specific provisions.

On a human security level, a number of new provisions specifically provide for various dual-use goods. These range from toxins to laboratory equipment. As Senators may be aware, dual-use goods are items that can be used for both civilian and military applications. These types of goods are normally heavily regulated. That is because they can be manufactured and traded for civilian use and then transformed for military purposes, or worse, used for terrorism.

Madam President, the protection of society and the fight against terrorism are increasingly important roles for national custom authorities. Many new subheadings have therefore been created for dual-use goods that could be diverted for unauthorised use. Such goods include radioactive materials and biological safety cabinets as well as items required for the construction of improvised explosive devices such as detonators.

Madam President, goods specifically controlled under the various conventions have also been updated. The HS 2022 edition introduces new classifications for specific chemicals controlled under the Chemical Weapons Convention [OPCW], certain hazardous chemicals controlled under the Rotterdam Convention, certain persistent organic pollutants controlled under the Stockholm Convention, and gases controlled under the Kigali Amendment of the Montreal Protocol. Furthermore, at the request of the International Narcotics Control Board [INCB] new subhead-

ings have been introduced for the monitoring and control of Fentanyl and the derivatives and precursors.

Madam President, contracting parties to HS Convention are expected to enact the HS 2022 amendments to their respective nomenclatures by 1 January 2022. However, it has been determined that for Bermuda, a non-contracting economy, it will be simpler administratively and more cost-effective to bring these changes into operation on 1 April 2022. However, by progressing the legislation at this time, it allows for effective consideration of these matters in the budget process.

Madam President, in closing my brief on the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Bill, I wish to note that these HS 2022-related changes to the Bermuda nomenclature shall be entirely revenue neutral. Further textural or duty rate changes, as deemed appropriate, will be proposed as part of the Government's 2022/23 budget. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister of Finance.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?
Senator Marcus Jones, you have the floor.

Sen. Marcus Jones: Thank you, Madam President.

This Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act of 2021 that allows for repeal and [replacement] of fee schedules for the Customs Tariff Act of 1970 is supported by the Opposition.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Marcus Jones.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Hearing none, then, Senator Hodgson, it is over to you.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

BILL**THIRD READING****CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2021**

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?

There is no objection.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill entitled the Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection. The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Customs Tariff Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson, and all Senators for your support.

We now move on.

MOTIONS

The President: Senator Michelle Simmons, Vice President of the Senate, you have the floor.

MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNOR**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS**

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President. Thank you.

Madam President, I move that the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor:

"May it please Your Excellency,

"The Senate has the honour to present its compliments to Your Excellency and family, and respectfully extends its greetings for a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year."

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

A suitable message will be sent.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons, Vice President.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

I have another motion, Madam President if I may.

The President: Indeed you do. You certainly may. You have the floor.

**MESSAGE TO THE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY****CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS**

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Madam President, I move that the following message be sent to His Honour the Speaker and the Honourable House of Assembly:

"To His Honour the Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

"The Senate has much pleasure in extending to your Honourable House sincere greetings for a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year."

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

A suitable message will be sent.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons, Vice President.

We now move on.

**CONGRATULATORY AND/OR
OBITUARY SPEECHES**

The President: Would any Senator care to speak [on congratulatory and/or obituary speeches]?

Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to start by asking for congratulations to be sent to the new Principal of CedarBridge Academy, Mr. Kenneth Caesar. I am sure that many of us have seen the announcement, the official announcement of his official appointment. And I just would like to extend congratulations to Mr. Caesar. Even though he has been acting in the role for four years, I think it is important to acknowledge that fact that he is now fully confirmed in the position.

I also would like to ask for condolences to be sent to the family of the late Ms. Gail-Anne Graham. She was the Principal at Whitney Institute Middle School for many years. Ms. Graham was one of the principals who helped with the development of middle schools. Alongside four colleagues—i.e., Dr. Melvin

Bassett, Ms. Carol Bassett (not the president of the Senate, the other Ms. Carol Bassett), Ms. Patricia Holder and Ms. Charlotte Ming—[they] were the first middle school principals in Bermuda.

Ms. Graham had a love of children and seeing them grow and flourish. Another thing that she enjoyed doing very much was making handcrafts, especially Christmas ornaments. So at this time of the year many of us who have received a handmade Christmas ornament from her will be thinking of her.

Condolences, I am asking, should be sent to her daughter Fiona and other members of her family.

Just one other point about Ms. Graham. Even after retirement, and she had been teacher and principal for many, many years, she continued to serve Whitney Institute on their Board of Governors.

I think I am going to stick with my education theme right now and ask for condolences to be sent to the family of the late Ms. Marva (nee Stovell) Phillips, another well-known educator, former school principal, education officer and member of the Progressive Group. Most important, she was mother to Andrew and Dr. Vanessa, and devoted grandmother to all of her grandkids. Ms. Phillips was a dedicated member of the Allen Temple AME Church, where she mentored many spiritually. My deepest condolences are extended to her family.

Then finally, for me, I would like to ask for condolences to be sent to the family of Olympian, sports personality and veteran broadcast journalist, Mr. Mike Sharpe. He will be sorely missed in the Bermuda community at large. His voice, his resonant voice and the ease with which he handled interviewing people I found that just to be extraordinary. He has had a life of service in broadcasting, especially on radio, television, and on the Internet. We appreciate his legacy of reporting and interviewing that he has left behind. Condolences should be extended to his family, especially his children and his sisters Veronica, Florence and Jo-Ann.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak?
Senator Ben Smith, you have the floor.

Sen. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam President.

Firstly, I would like to be associated with the comments on the passing of Mike Sharpe. Yes, as an Olympian and obviously his amazing career as a track athlete, but as a sports commentator and journalist. As somebody who has been interviewed by him several times, I can say that he always made you feel at ease and comfortable. And you could tell that he had passion for sport. I know that in the sporting community, he will be sorely missed. He has left behind big shoes [to fill] on the track and also for what he did for our community when he broadcasted our sports and

gave that Bermuda feel to whatever he was presenting. So I would love condolences to be given to his family and friends who I know will miss him dearly.

Madam President, I would also like to give condolences to the family of Cindy Hamilton, who just passed away over the weekend after a battle with cancer. I would like to give condolences to her husband, Mark Hamilton, and their four children, Keiran, Kyle, Kayley and Kaleb. A constituent of mine, I know that she will be sorely missed by her family.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes, Madam President.

The President: Minister Peets.

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: I also would like to be associated with the condolences for Mike Sharpe. His passing has been a real shock to us all. So I certainly send my prayers at this moment to his entire family. Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor. Sorry.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I too would like to be associated with the condolences extended to the family of Mike Sharpe. I have had the opportunity as well to be interviewed by him. And certainly I can join and attest as my fellow Senators have as to how gently Mike Sharpe would conduct the interviews. And certainly as a new person to the political arena I very, very much appreciated [that]. So again, condolences to his entire family—particularly, for me, his daughter Mikheah, who is a personal friend and a family friend as well. So again, condolences to the entire family. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robin Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Hearing none, then I would just like to associate myself with the condolences that have been expressed by Senator Michelle Simmons to the family of Ms. Gail Graham, as well as Marva Phillips; and all Senators' condolences for Mike Sharpe's family.

Thank you all.

The President: Minister Peets.

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

I make a motion that the Senate Chamber adjourn until February 9, 2022.

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Senator Ben Smith, you have the floor.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Sen. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam President.

I would just like to take this opportunity to wish everybody a merry Christmas, happy holidays. Let us hope that we can come through the end of this year and into the next year in a positive light.

This has been a tough year of loss [for] our country. And let us take this opportunity to spend time with family and friends, and hold people close who are important to us. Because this year should have taught everybody that life is precious and you do not know whether the next day is going to be there for you and for your loved ones. So take this opportunity to spend that time with each other. Look out for each other.

If you have the ability to give to the people who are not as fortunate as you, take this opportunity to do so. Let us be positive to one another in this coming season and in this upcoming year.

Merry Christmas to my Senate colleagues and to you, Madam President. Let us look forward to a prosperous New Year. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Yes, Senator Lindsay Simmons. You have the floor.

NEED FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I just want to say thank you to everybody who has continued to help with the Angel Tree drive that we do every year. This is our sixth year. We do it for the children of Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and also the children in foster care and residential treatment. This year I did not even know if we were going to be able to get all of the gifts, but we have got all the gifts. I just have to go and collect some more. But I just want to thank everybody. Because this year, like my Senate colleague said, has been a very tough year. It is very difficult to see so many families suffering and in pain and a lot of loss that we have seen.

I also want to highlight that there is a need for foster parents in Bermuda. Selena Simons is the co-

ordinator. And if anybody is interested in becoming a foster parent or just getting some information, I would encourage you to reach out to Selena. Her number is 294-5871. And she has been there since I started, and was 24 when I started. She is very helpful.

Giving back and taking the time to open up your house to a foster child is rewarding. It is not always going to be easy, but to know that you can make a difference in somebody's life . . . I would encourage anybody to reach out if they have space in their house. I spoke to somebody yesterday, and they said, *I would love to be a foster parent, but I'm single*. You can be a single foster parent! You do not have to come from a house that has a mother and a father. If you are single person and you have room, you know, you get vetted and you get checked. But open up your house. These children need love and they deserve it.

And these are children of our community, our fabric. And I just think that we need to take the time and put ourselves forward if we can to open up our house and homes to our children because they do not deserve to be taken from their families. And if they are, to safeguard them, I would encourage them to be placed in a home where they are safe.

So again I want to thank RenRe, especially Denise Lynette, who from the first time I did the Angel Tree, she stepped forward and said, *We'll do it, Lindsay*. And she has been instrumental in getting these children gifts. Walkers (Bermuda) Limited, Diane Steede; Melonie Dill; DanceSations, Holly Pacheco; Thyme Bermuda [Restaurant], Shannon Simons; and Sonya Martins.

I just want to salute Bermuda because we only do angels for a specific number of people because every angel represents a child. We do not just take gifts just to take gifts. So the children do request what they like. Not necessarily do they always get it. But it is nice to see that the community rallies around to help these children during Christmas because I could not imagine being away from my family. So thank you, Bermuda. Thank you. The children thoroughly enjoy opening up these gifts, just to see them some years [INAUDIBLE] come and collect them is heart-warming. It brings tears to my eyes every year. So thank you, Bermuda.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes, Madam President.

The President: Sorry. Yes.

Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Sen. Michelle Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Very briefly, I would like to associate myself with a comment that Senator Ben Smith made earlier. It has been a tough year. But we have come this far. And we will be all right.

Let us be sensible about how we go about spending our time with family and friends, if that is our choice, during this Christmas season. COVID-19 is still with us. But we have to learn to live with it. And we have to adopt sensible public health guidance which will take us to the next stage in fighting this pandemic. I firmly believe that we can do this, but we have to be sensible.

Also, this tough year has seen a lot of families here in Bermuda and throughout the world struggling for survival. Let us remember to lend a hand, lend our hands to help those who we recognise are still struggling, are still in need of a hand-up and a helping hand, a helping hand or two. Encourage your friends to do the same thing.

I want to wish you, Madam President, all of my Senate colleagues and all of Bermuda all of the blessings that this wonderful Christmas season will bring. Remember what Christmas is all about. It is not about gifts and presents. It is about recognising an event that happened over 2,000 years ago. And there is no dispute that it happened.

So with that, I would like to also say all the best for the New Year of 2022. I can hardly believe we are there almost. But blessings to all.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Yes, please, Madam President.

The President: Minister Peets, you have the floor.

GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER

Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets: Thank you so much, Madam President. And certainly thank you to the entire Senate here today.

I have been told that it has been said that being ungrateful is like a man enjoying what he has without really considering where it came from. And as I have sat here today and have had a chance to listen to all of the things that we have been sharing, I certainly want to encourage the entire Senate team on both sides of the aisle, as well as our Independent Senators, to of course take some time during this

Christmas period to reflect. Certainly, as has been said, this has been a very difficult year. And the entire country has been under an extreme amount of stress—including all of us.

But having said that, I have been told by those who have gone before me that if we count our blessings and name them one by one, we certainly will be able to see what our good Lord has done.

So having said that, I think that this is the antidote for some of the issues that we are facing, particularly those that are stressful: take every opportunity to reflect on the good things that have happened and find a way to express our gratitude.

So I certainly want to say thank you to you, Madam President. You have a relatively young Senate team here in the Senate. So your patience with us has been noted, and we are certainly grateful for that.

I certainly want to thank the Opposition Senators. Your due diligence each and every time we come back to these Chambers has not gone unnoticed. And we certainly thank you for your contribution. We have not always agreed. But even in that disagreement, I am certainly grateful for your contribution to make this country and what we do here in the Senate Chamber so much better. As well to the Independent Senators, thank you so much.

For the team that is behind me, they are loyal and dedicated. I am really, really glad to have them to be a part of this particular Senate. And I certainly want to send my thanks personally to our Premier for trusting us to carry the Government's business here, and to the Deputy, who each and every week checks on us to make sure that we have everything that we need.

I do not call names all the time because I feel like I am always going to forget someone. But I certainly want to thank the Minister of Education, as well as the Attorney General for her support as well.

In closing, Madam President, just for the public who are listening, the Junior Minister for Transport did have an announcement this morning regarding the Road Safety Council designated driver campaign. Of course, I do not necessarily endorse the drinking of alcohol, per se, but I do certainly endorse safety. And I certainly want everyone to be safe this holiday.

And I will certainly echo the sentiments from Senator Ben [Smith] and Senator Michelle Simmons. This COVID-19 situation is something that we have been managing for quite some time, but we are certainly doing a lot better than some other [places] around the world. And we certainly can get through this, but we have to get through this together. So please be sensible as it relates to this new variant that has arrived on our shores.

But I am confident that we have the right people and the right community to really, really stay together so that we can be successful.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS TO SENATE TEAM

The President: Thank you, Minister Peets.

And before we all leave and depart, I would just like to say how proud I am of this Senate team. I also am very proud of the staff, who have supported us through thick and thin, because we have had meetings in the Chamber and we have had to have virtual meetings. And they have risen to the task. And I really want to, on our behalf, thank them for their support and their diligence in helping us do our work.

I also want to reiterate some of the things and to compliment each one of you who has spoken on the motion to adjourn with respect to what we have accomplished as a team, a Senate team. And also to encourage the public that when we are here doing the work . . . and some of the things, the Bills that we pass, are important. But more than that, we want people to be safe and to know that we are here for them to do the work that we have been appointed to do.

So I want to wish each and every one of you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I know you will have time because you have a break now in this recess to spend time with your family. I just want everybody to remain safe, and I reiterate what has been said about the reason for the season. So whatever you do, enjoy time with your family and friends. And we will follow the regulations, and we encourage everyone who has heard us this morning to do the same.

Thank you all for the work that you do. And I look forward to continuing the work in the new year. So with that, Senate stands adjourned.

Thank you.

[At 12:29 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am Wednesday, 9 February 2022.]

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BERMUDA SENATE

2021/2022 SESSION

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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