



**2018/2020 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**5 June 2020
VIRTUAL SITTING**

*Sitting number 49 of the 2018/2020 Session
(pages 4097–4196)*

**Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., JP, MP
Speaker**

Disclaimer: The electronic version of the *Official Hansard Report* is for informational purposes only. The printed version remains the official record.

BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
VIRTUAL SITTING****5 JUNE 2020****10:00 AM***Sitting Number 49 of the 2018/2020 Session**[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]*

The President: Members, it is getting up to 10:00. Just letting you know we will be live at ten o'clock. And we have 20 Members on board right now, so we have our quorum to start.

We are going to give just another moment, and I will give an indication that we will start.

One of the assistant clerks is going to do the prayer for us this morning. And we will begin after her prayer. One second.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Good morning, Members. It is now 10:00. We are going to start.

Ms. Beale, would you like to do prayer for us . . . Deputy . . . rather, Assistant Clerk, Ms. Beale?

PRAYERS*[Prayers read by Ms. Kara Beale, Assistant Clerk]*

The Speaker: Good morning, Members.

Good morning, Government benches; good morning, Opposition benches.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

An Hon. Member: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES*[Minutes of 22 May 2020]*

The Speaker: The Minutes and the Order of Business for the day have been circulated, as you all would see. And the Minutes for the meeting of the 22nd of May have been circulated.

Are there any omissions, corrections or amendments required?

There are none. The Minutes will be confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 22 May 2020 confirmed]***MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

The Speaker: There are no messages from the Governor.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING**

The Speaker: No announcements this morning by the Speaker.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: No messages from the Senate.

**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

The Speaker: This morning we have two papers, one in the name of the Premier and one in the name of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Premier, would you like to do your paper?

**EMERGENCY POWERS
(COVID-19 CONTINUING PRECAUTIONS)
AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2020**

Hon. E. David Burt: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Emergency Powers (COVID-19 Continuing Precautions) Amendment Regulations 2020.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister of Finance.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

**CUSTOMS TARIFF (APPROVED BUSINESSES)
AMENDMENT (NO. 3) NOTICE 2020**

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Customs Tariff

(Approved Businesses) Amendment (No. 3) Notice 2020.

The Speaker: Thank you.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are no petitions this morning.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND JUNIOR MINISTERS

The Speaker: There are six Statements on the Order Paper this morning. The first is in the name of the Premier.

Premier, would you like to present your Statement?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence for just a minute.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, I am unable to access any of the Statements on the Samsung tablet at this time. Can you update us on where we can find them?

The Speaker: We will have—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I do not have them.

The Speaker: Good morning. Who is that?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It is Opposition Leader. I do not have them either.

The Speaker: Okay. If we can get the attention of Mr. Lamb . . .

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Mr. Speaker, it is the Opposition Whip. I have emailed him, Mr. Lamb.

The Speaker: Okay. Yes. Just checking with Mr. Lamb now to see if there is a problem with the circulation. Okay.

Our department . . . two Whips. I should explain. The two Whips were informed just before we came on this morning that we were having a technical problem from this end with the in-house computers. And that may have delayed the circulation going out. But Mr. Lamb is actually working on it right now to make sure that the Statements and other communications are up on the website.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just a suggestion. As long as . . . if we put them on the tablet, as well, but send them out by email so we can have access to them quickly.

The Speaker: The problem was not necessarily the communication of the information this morning; it was actually more of our in-house computer system had an issue that we could not get the system up. So he has got the system up. We are on the air now. And he is frantically at the computer now updating all the information that should have [been] circulated to you. So I am expecting that to be available to everybody momentarily.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: All right.

The Statements are now up on the homepage if you go to the Parliament website. We just got confirmation from Mr. Lamb.

So with that being said, the Statements are now circulated.

Mr. Premier, would you like to do your Statement?

UPDATE ON THE CONTINUING PRECAUTIONS REGULATIONS

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, spring will shortly turn into summer, and this year of 2020 is unlikely to shake its reputation for turmoil. Our community is cautiously reopening, and greater activity is taking place. There is a consistency in our message to the public, and that is paying off with high levels of compliance with the phased approach outlined following the days of shelter in place.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members and the public will be aware of the series of regulations made by the Governor on the advice of the Cabinet which are required to provide a framework around our resumption of free movement and activity. These aptly named [Continuing Precautions Regulations](#) have been amended from time to time to better reflect the balance provided between public health advice and the need to promote economic activity.

In that vein, Mr. Speaker, the Governor has been invited to approve amendments to the regulations to extend the hours during which commercial boat operators can ply their trade to 9:00 pm. At this time of year, this sector would be booming owing to cruise tourists and other visitors, as well as a steady local trade. With the impact of the pandemic on our tourism, the economics of charter boat operations are incredibly challenging. Pending our move to phase 3, this change will improve their opportunity to provide a more attractive service to local customers.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the regulations have been amended to permit the Minister of National

Security to grant permission for gatherings larger than the mandated 10 persons maximum. Dependent on public health advice, that maximum is likely to be increased to 20 in phase 3.

Mr. Speaker, this change is principally for two purposes. Firstly, our union partners operate in an open and democratic manner which requires them to assemble their large memberships to consider and vote on important matters. At this time when we are working together to realise an efficient and workable means to reduce government expenditure, it is critical that they not run afoul of the law. The unions' leadership have confirmed that a suitable venue has been identified in which appropriate physical distancing and hygiene can be observed and they can safely conduct their ordinary business, properly informing their members.

Mr. Speaker, the second reason for this change is more sombre. The world watched in horror at the images of a white police officer killing a defenceless black man, with no regard for his humanity as his life was snuffed out by a knee on his neck. Mr. Speaker, the murder of George Floyd may have sparked this movement across countries, but let us be clear: This is not an out-of-the-ordinary occasion. The celebrated black author James Baldwin wrote (and I quote), "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read."

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Security will be invited to continue discussions with the organisers of this weekend's planned march, with a view to working with them to facilitate a peaceful expression of the universal demand for an end to the systems that unduly and unjustly target and destroy black and brown people.

Mr. Speaker, just as the pandemic appeared to unite us, the events in a Midwestern US city have stirred the unhealed divisions that know no borders. Bermuda cannot turn away from this moment. In a land where in living memory children were taught that slavery in this country was *benign*, we have a responsibility to enable the liberation of the minds of the people through a peaceful demonstration. These regulations will be amended to allow us to answer a moral call for action that we must convict every system that bears the hallmarks of oppression. We can do this safely. We can do this peacefully. And one thing is certain, Mr. Speaker. We must do this, morally.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

The next Statement this morning is from the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier actually has two Statements.

Would you like to do your first?

And as we are waiting for the Deputy Premier to start, just confirming . . . Members, have you found the Statements on the website yet?

An Hon. Member: No.

Another Hon. Member: They are here.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: They are just posting now. So, Mr. Speaker, we missed the Premier's Statement.

The Speaker: Okay. All right. But they are up now?

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: I see two.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It has just come up for the . . . one, two, three. There are three Statements up.

The Speaker: Okay. All right. They probably slowed down the upload, download, however you want to describe it. There should be a total of six. Okay. I will confirm again with Mr. Lamb.

Deputy Premier, would you like to do your Statement?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, Mr. Speaker. And good morning to everyone.

The Speaker: Good morning.

BERMUDA NATIONAL SPACE STRATEGY

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update the Honourable House about the introduction of the [Bermuda National Space Strategy](#).

Mr. Speaker, space has never been more exciting and promising for Bermuda and for the world. The space industry is undergoing a revolution. Once the exclusive domain of national governments, space is increasingly accessible to private companies with capital and big ideas. Today, technology is sufficiently advanced to enable new commercial activities in space which seemed like science fiction only a short time ago. Entrepreneurs are building rockets to take humans to Mars, preparing to launch hundreds—and in some cases thousands—of small satellites into orbit to provide ubiquitous Internet on Earth and taking high-resolution photos of our planet with increasing frequency.

Mr. Speaker, this Government continues to pursue activities related to the space industry as part of our broader effort to grow and diversify our economy. In June of 2018, I established a Space and Satellite Policy Advisory Panel. Mr. Speaker, the advisory panel was tasked with producing a draft Bermuda National Space Strategy 2020–2025. The strategy, which was completed in December 2019, includes the establishment of a "space ecosystem" by 2025 and has the

following strategic goals: (1) build Bermuda's reputation as a responsible, leading jurisdiction for space and satellite-related business; (2) enhance domestic space and satellite-related capabilities; (3) further integrate Bermuda into the international space community; and (4) generate revenue from national orbital allotments, of which Bermuda has four.

Mr. Speaker, coupled with the strategic goals, the Bermuda National Space Strategy identifies priority industry areas for Bermuda, based on anticipated benefits, namely the following:

- satellite communications;
- remote sensing/earth observation;
- space insurance;
- space situational awareness and debris monitoring; and
- new space (for example, on-orbit servicing, asteroid mining).

The aforementioned benefits will be a by-product of the Government's partnership efforts to (a) develop policies and regulation for the sector; (b) build domestic capacity; (c) engage with international partners; and (d) fully utilise Bermuda's national orbital resources.

Mr. Speaker, the advisory panel comprises consultants, [namely,] Access Partnership, who act in the capacity of secretariat of the panel, while membership includes public sector and private sector partners, both local and international. The current membership, excluding Ministry and department personnel, is as follows:

- Adam Sturmer, Senior Vice President at Marsh Space Projects;
- Bruce Kraselsky, Managing Director at Space Partnership International;
- Chuck Schumann, Vice President and Founder at Pacific Dataport, Inc.;
- Danielle Wood, Assistant Professor of Media Arts and Sciences, and Director of Space Enabled at MIT Media Lab;
- Jennifer A. Manner, Senior Vice President of Regulatory Affairs at EchoStar;
- Kyle James, Business Development Manager at Bermuda Business Development Agency;
- Ray Duffy, Senior Vice President at Marsh Space Projects;
- Ryan Henry, Senior Manager at SES Satellites; and
- Scott Gibson, Vice President of Legal Services at SES Video.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is pleased to report on this initiative and highlight the technological advances that enable such new commercial activities in space, which seemed like science fiction only a short time ago. The strategy sets out a vision of developing a space industry as a vital part of Bermuda's efforts to grow and diversify its economy, noting that expected growth of the global industry from a present value of

US\$350 billion to over a trillion dollars (US) by 2040. We intend to position Bermuda to participate in that trillion-dollar industry by offering services over a broad range of areas.

As evidence of the benefits of the space strategy, Bermuda was acknowledged for its role in successfully supporting a historic high-profile launch on Saturday, May 30, 2020, of two NASA astronauts into orbit on board a SpaceX rocket from Florida's Kennedy Space Center. This successful mission, which cost around \$1.5 billion, would not have been possible without Bermuda's launch tracking support from Cooper's Island and speaks to Bermuda's credibility as a leading space jurisdiction. We are aware of further launches planned in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, as the government body with primary responsibility for space and satellite matters in Bermuda, the Ministry of Home Affairs will lead the implementation of this strategy with support from other government bodies including the Ministry of Education and Department of Workforce Development, as well as the Regulatory Authority and non-governmental partners, namely, the Bermuda Business Development Agency.

Mr. Speaker, the document titled Bermuda National Space Strategy 2020–2025 will be made available for public scrutiny on www.gov.bm and on our website www.space.gov.bm. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy. Would you like to do your second Statement?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, please, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Continue.

LICENSING DEADLINE FOR DEBT COLLECTORS

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform this Honourable House of the status of the implementation of [licensing of debt collection](#) businesses.

I would remind Honourable Members that a debt collection business pursues and collects a debt on behalf of other persons or businesses. Those who are engaging in this type of business must obtain a licence from the Licensing Authority by submitting the required documentation and fee outlined in section 8 the Debt Collection Act 2018 (the Act). Applications can be obtained from the Consumer Affairs office by sending a request to consumers@gov.bm.

Mr. Speaker, the Act received assent on the 31st of [January] 2020, at which time the provision of a 90-day grace period to obtain a debt collector's licence was activated. However, due to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the April 30th deadline was extended to June 30th, 2020.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind businesses that the impending deadline of June 30th is only just a few weeks away. I wish to make it crystal clear that persons or businesses that engage in a debt collection business without a licence after June 30th will be committing an offence under section 7 of the Act. The offence makes offending principals of a business liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$60,000 or imprisonment of up to one year, or both. Conviction on indictment carries a fine of \$100,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both. As a result, I am encouraging debt collection businesses to get their applications in to the Authority as soon as possible. There will be no further extensions, and the Authority will need enough time to review and verify documents submitted before issuing a licence.

Mr. Speaker, upon assent, businesses should also be aware that Part 4 of the Act, "Unfair Debt Collection Practices," immediately became operational. Part 4 extends to businesses that, although they are not required to be licensed, provide credit to a debtor in the form of a sale on credit, a loan of money or the provision of goods and services, and collect their own debt. Since the assent, the Authority have received complaints concerning debt collection practices by creditors. As a result, we will be publishing guidelines to assist creditors.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy, for your Statements, for both Statements.

The next Statement this morning is that in the name of the Minister of Finance. Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are advised that on Monday, March 23, 2020, and on Friday, May 22, 2020, the Ministry of Finance successfully executed a \$20 million and a \$150 million credit facility, respectively. Therefore, in accordance with section 2(3) of the [Government] Loans Act 1978, I rise this morning to inform this Honourable House of the execution of these borrowing transactions pursuant to the requirements of the Act.

Honourable Members will recall that on April 15 Government held a press conference updating the general public on the impact of COVID-19 on the Bermuda economy and the measures [that have been] taken and will be taken to support the local economy as a result of the pandemic.

During this press conference I notified the public of the following:

- The debt ceiling was raised by \$150 million to \$2.9 billion at the final sitting of the House of Assembly, and at that time Bermuda's net debt stood at \$2.68 billion, leaving the Government with \$219.6 million of borrowing capacity.
- The Ministry of Finance executed a \$20 million credit facility with a local financial institution and was in the process of finalising another \$150 million facility with another local financial institution.
- The increased borrowing capacity with current cash reserves was to assist the Government in taking the appropriate actions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the short term.

Mr. Speaker, I can now advise Honourable Members that the Bermuda Government has executed a \$20 million one-year term loan facility agreement with Clarien Bank Limited and a \$150 million loan facility agreement jointly with HSBC Bank of Bermuda Limited and Clarien Bank Limited due to mature on September 17, 2020. The facilities were priced at 4.00 per cent and 3.75 per cent, respectively, and it is encouraging that the two local financial institutions were supportive in providing Government with its financing needs in these uncertain times.

Mr. Speaker, it must be highlighted that the Government has not borrowed a total of \$170 million, but rather has facilities in place to borrow up to this amount. As with all credit facilities Government enters into, funds will only be drawn when absolutely necessary and only funds that are drawn will be charged with interest. To date, I can confirm that the Government has drawn the full \$20 million from the Clarien facility and approximately \$10 million from the \$150 million joint facility. Currently Bermuda's net debt stands at \$2.71 billion, leaving the Government with \$189.6 million of borrowing capacity.

Mr. Speaker, these two credit facilities are just one step that the Government is taking to ensure we have sufficient liquidity to offset the financial stability risks brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. As soon as is practicable, the Government intends to refinance these short-term credit facilities by issuing long-term government debt in the global capital markets. The plan will be to not only refinance our credit facilities, but to also refinance the fiscal 2020/21 deficit and strategically refinance current government bonds at a more favourable interest rate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The next Statement is that of the Minister of Education.

Minister, you have two Statements. Would you like to do your first one?

BERMUDA PUBLIC SCHOOLS UPDATE

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise—well, I do not rise, but I come to give my honourable colleagues an update on the [Bermuda public school](#) system and, more specifically, school reopening this school year in light of the impact of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, just yesterday the Premier announced that phase 3 of the reopening of Bermuda will commence on Thursday, June 11th. Prior to his announcement, it was the expectation of the general public that all schools, both public and private, would reopen during phase 3.

Let me say that the end of the school term for our students was scheduled for Monday, June 29th, which is 15 school days away from today. However, with phase 3 of the expanded business operations starting so close to the end of the school year, I have decided that our public schools will not reopen for the remainder of this academic year. I have further decided that the school term will end five days earlier for public school students, to allow for the execution of end-of-year closing activities and additional school staff training prior to school reopening in September for the new 2020/21 academic year.

Mr. Speaker, this means that the last day of school for all public school students is Friday, June 19th, instead of Monday, June 29th. During the remainder of the school year our students will continue with their remote learning programme, which commenced on March 23rd. As I shared previously with my honourable colleagues, the remote learning programme includes online teaching, learning and services using a variety of applications and platforms, plus the provision of learning packets for students without devices. Continuing with the remote learning programme will enable our students to maximise the remaining learning days during the month of June. All pre, primary, middle and senior school students will be engaged in remote learning programmes.

Mr. Speaker, the last day of the school term for our school staff will remain as Tuesday, June 30th. After providing the online learning experiences and learning packets for students up to June 19th, all school staff will then commence the execution of end-of-year duties, participate in training and carry out other essential tasks in preparation for the reopening of classes in September.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that this time of year is usually a special time for our students who are transitioning from pre to primary, or to “big school” as we would say to our younger ones; a transitioning from primary to middle; from middle [to senior school]; and from senior to college/university or to enter into the world of work. During these transitions there are always celebratory activities to recognise what our children have achieved and how they progressed during

the year. Despite the limitations that COVID-19 presents to us in that our schools will not be having the usual graduation ceremonies, I am very pleased to share that our school leaders are being very creative in organising drive-through graduation activities to recognise our graduating students at the different school levels. Information about the celebration activities will be communicated directly to our parents. All graduation activities will follow safety and health protocols as stipulated by the Department of Health and the Ministry of National Security.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable colleagues are aware that the Department of Education is currently operating an Educational Support Programme at the CedarBridge Academy for children of those parents who returned to work during phase 2. This programme will now be expanded to accept children of parents who return to work during phase 3. The expanded programme at the CedarBridge [Academy] will start for these children on Tuesday, June 16th (as June 15th is a public holiday), and it will end on Friday, June 19th, the last day of school for students.

As the Programme is growing in numbers, we urge that only those parents returning to work during phase 3 who have absolutely no home support at all for their children, and who are interested, to contact their child's school principal no later than Tuesday, June 9th. This will provide our officers who are running the operation of the Education Support Programme with the numbers of children so that they can plan effectively.

Mr. Speaker, we are aware that our parents and the general public want to know more details about our plans for the upcoming school year. Rest assured, these plans are being worked on. During the past two months the Department of Education officers have been engaged in intensive preparation developing safety and health protocols for schools. This has been in collaboration with the Department of Health. These protocols have also had the input from school staff and union stakeholders. Once finalised, the department plans to share the protocols with our parents so they are aware of what safety and health measures will be implemented and, if needed, have the opportunity to provide further input. The Commissioner of Education will be writing directly to our parents regarding this.

Mr. Speaker, the summer break will soon be here for our students. The Department of Education will be having summer course offerings for our S1, S2, S3 and S4 students. A plan is being developed to have online learning services which will align with the education needs of our students, and more specifically offer courses that will allow them to make up any loss in schoolwork and earn credits towards their Bermuda School Diploma. It is important to keep our senior school students on track with their coursework as they prepare for graduation, college or university plans, and the world of work. The department will also

be assessing our primary and middle school children at the start of the next school year to identify learning gaps with the intention of immediately putting in place any needed interventions.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me say that this has been an experience for all of us that no one could have ever been able to predict. I am very much thankful to all of our school staff and the team at the Department of Education under the leadership of the Commissioner of Education, for their diligence in rising to the occasion and remaining committed to the education of our children. Oftentimes, staff were called upon on short notice to map out a plan for implementation, and they have worked evenings and weekends to deliver. We should be proud of the Department of Education team and our school staff. This has been a journey, and we will continue to press on for the future of children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: It does. Continue on.

BERMUDA COLLEGE GRADUATES— CLASS OF 2020

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, This morning I rise before this Honourable House to share information about the recent graduation event at the [Bermuda College](#), and to provide details of this inimitable Class of 2020 and the unique ways in which their success was celebrated by the college.

Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda College made the difficult decision to cancel its traditional commencement ceremony in March as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the growing concerns about the spread of the disease locally. Commencement represents the culmination and highlight of the academic year for most colleges and universities. And, certainly, Bermuda College was no different.

Correspondence of the cancellation was sent to the campus community by College President, Dr. Duranda Greene, with the promise that graduates would receive their graduation diplomas on May 28th, and they would be celebrated in some form at a future event.

Mr. Speaker, an ad hoc committee was assembled to organise a series of celebratory events for the Class of 2020. These included recorded congratulatory messages from the Honourable Premier; myself, as Minister; the Board Chair, Mr. Peter Sousa; Dr. Greene; and the VP of Academic & Student Affairs, Dr. Phyllis Curtis-Tweed. Congratulatory messages from both faculty and support staff were compiled into a celebratory video clip, and Mr. Shane Rogers, a graduate from the Associate of Applied Science Hospitality Management Programme, delivered

the virtual graduate student address. All of these were made available for view on the college's website, and Facebook and Instagram social media platforms.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, graduates were provided the opportunity to share highlights of their college experience, thank family, friends and college supporters, and provide parting advice in short video interviews which were then uploaded to the website and social media. Outstanding graduates have been featured on the online radio programme, "The Daily Hour"; and graduates also enjoyed a virtual commencement party with DJ IBreeze.

Tomorrow, Saturday, June 6th, graduates will return to the campus to have graduate photos taken as part of the commemorative events.

Mr. Speaker, by far the absolute highlight to this adaptive event was the drive-through curb-side collection of associate degrees, diplomas and certificates by the proud graduates of the college. A total of 107 graduates received graduation packets from Dr. Greene, containing a congratulatory personalised letter, their cap and gown, and an academic parchment, to the cheers and car toots of family members and friends. And notwithstanding the challenges they faced, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to note that 53 per cent of the Class of 2020 graduated with honours, earning either merit (GPA of 3.0 to 3.49) or distinction (GPA of 3.5 to 4.0) status, with the Associate of Arts (Business Administration) Programme producing the largest graduating group of 32 graduates.

Mr. Speaker, please indulge me in this time as I share the number of graduates for other programmes represented on the graduation list, which included in the Division of Arts & Sciences the following:

- Associate of Arts (Art & Design), five graduates;
- Associate of Arts, 13 graduates;
- Associate of Arts (Early Childhood Education), three graduates;
- Associate of Arts (Human Services), one graduate;
- Associate of Arts & Science, seven graduates;
- Associate of Science, three graduates;
- Associate of Science (Actuarial Science), four graduates; and
- Associate of Science (Education), three graduates.

[In the Division of Business, Hospitality & Technical Education, the following:]

- Certificate for Accounting Technician, five graduates;
- Certificate in Applied Science Technology, nine graduates;
- Certificate in Electrical Wiring Technology, three graduates;
- Certificate in Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Technology, one graduate;

- Certificate in Plumbing Technology, one graduate;
- Diploma in Culinary Arts, [two graduates];
- Diploma in Hospitality Management, one graduate;
- Associate of Applied Science (Culinary Arts), one graduate;
- Associate of Applied Science (Heating, Ventilation/Air Conditioning), one graduate;
- Associate of Applied Science (Hospitality Management), three graduates;
- Associate of Arts (Business Administration), 32 graduates; and
- Associate of Science (Computer Information Systems), nine graduates.

Mr. Speaker, I am most pleased to share that 17 graduates are dual-enrolment students who will be awarded associate degrees, diplomas or certificates prior to receiving their high school certificates later this month. I want Bermuda to know the names of our public school students who have done extremely well in this programme. From the Berkeley Institute, we have

- Mr. Christopher Jackson, with an Associate of Arts with merit;
- Zené Wade, Associate of Arts & Science with distinction, Most Outstanding Arts & Science Graduate;
- Jaiden Furbert-Jacobs, Associate of Arts/Business Administration, with distinction;
- Samaria Paynter, Associate of Arts/Business Administration, with distinction, Most Outstanding Accounting/Finance Graduate, Phi Theta Kappa;
- A'Naije Keese-Ming, Diploma in Hospitality Management, with merit;
- Lee-Kaysia Burch, Diploma in Culinary Arts, with merit;
- Jacari Renfroe, Certificate in Applied Science, Most Outstanding in Motor Vehicle Technology Award;
- Leano Ming, Certificate in Applied Science Technology, with merit, Most Outstanding in Computers & Programming Award;
- Ryan Outerbridge, Certificate in Applied Science Technology, with merit, Most Outstanding in Materials and Mechanics;
- Asheia Wellman, Certificate in Applied Science Technology; and
- Kevin Sunga, Certificate in Applied Science Technology.

Mr. Speaker, [the following graduates are] from CedarBridge Academy:

- Atiya Furqan, Associate of Science/Actuarial Science, with merit, Phi Theta Kappa;
- Miguel Postlewaite, Certificate in Applied Science Technology;

- Ka'ri Richards, Associate of Arts/Business Administration;
- Julian Roser, Certificate in Applied Science Technology, with distinction, Most Outstanding in Electricity Electronics, Most Outstanding Applied Science Technology Graduate;
- Kelly Trott, Associate of Arts/Business Administration, with merit; and
- Taever Zuill-Dyer, Certificate in Applied Science Technology.

Mr. Speaker, Other Outstanding Award recipients include

- Most Outstanding in Electrical Wiring—Paul Melo;
- Most Outstanding in Wood Technology—Marcus Fuhrtz;
- Most Outstanding Arts Graduate—Kaitlyn Jeffrey;
- Most Outstanding Education Graduate—Justine Acevedo-Ramirez;
- Most Outstanding Science Graduate—Gloria Simmons;
- Most Outstanding Actuarial Science Graduate—Nisha Smith;
- Most Outstanding Art & Design Graduate—Xela Swan;
- The Distinguished Dean's Award Division of Arts and Science—Latifa Smith;
- Overall Most Outstanding Division of Arts and Science Award Graduate—Naphisa Smith;
- Administration Shield/Most Outstanding General Business Graduate—Ania Gilbert;
- Administration Cup/Most Outstanding Hospitality Management Graduate—Shane Rogers;
- Butterfield Cup/Best Culinary Graduate—Tremayne Bailey; and
- Award for Excellence in Information Technology/Most Outstanding Information Technology Graduate—Tyler Trott.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the 20 students who graduated with their bachelor's and master's degrees through the partnerships Bermuda College has with Mount Saint Vincent and Miami Universities, respectively. There were 16 Mount Saint Vincent students who completed their Bachelor of Business Administration [degrees] in association with Bermuda College, and four students completed their Master's in Special Education with Miami University.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the only casualties of this remarkable Class of 2020 were the 11 nursing students who were unable to finish their studies because the clinical component of their graduation requirements could not be completed as a result of the pandemic. It is hoped that this final portion will be completed in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and this Honourable House join me in congratulating the unique and

resilient Bermuda College graduates of the Class of 2020, who discovered and followed their path at the Bermuda College!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

And yes, Minister, of course the entire House would be supporting you in congratulating this year's graduating class. And we know that you named them, and I take it that was because we were unable to have that physical graduation for them as normal. But yes, we support their efforts of reaching that milestone.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: That brings us to a close of the Statements for today. We will now move on.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are no reports of committees.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: The first question has been deferred, from Mr. Dunkley to the Minister of Finance.

MP Dunkley, I understand you are in agreement with that. So we will move on, and that will be done at the next sitting, I understand.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: That is correct, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS: UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

[Deferred]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House, the total number of individuals who applied for unemployment benefits each week from the beginning until the week ending May 29, 2020?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House, the total number of people paid weekly, and the total amount paid each week, from the start of the unemployment benefit through the week ending May 29, 2020?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many applications were outstanding at the end of each week starting from when the unemployment benefit began up until the week ending May 29, 2020?

The Speaker: Good. That now will bring us to questions from this morning's Statements. And there are questions for Ministers in reference to Statements

given this morning, and the first is for the Deputy Premier. And we also note the time. The time is now 10:42. And we have 60 minutes for all questions.

Deputy Premier, you have a question this morning in reference to your first Statement in regards to the Bermuda National Space Strategy, and that is from MP Dunkley.

MP, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: BERMUDA NATIONAL SPACE STRATEGY

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Honourable Minister for the Statement. Good morning to everybody.

In regard to the Bermuda National Space Strategy, definitely we are pleased to see progress in this regard, Mr. Speaker, because I recall there was a lull in activity for a number of years. And Bermuda has been a key focal point in this. In 2017, the OBA initiated the programme again with the United States at their request. So we are pleased to see it move forward.

My question to the Honourable Minister is, Has there been a budget set by the Bermuda Government to support this programme? And does the Bermuda Government have any revenue projections on this programme?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you for the question.

That is the purpose of the strategy. Right now most of the work is being done in cooperation with what we have done under the Department of Telecommunications and Energy and their budget, and the retaining of Access Partnership, whom I mentioned, as a consultant to help assist us with our work with building and continuing the work which had already been started some years ago around our space activities.

But the national strategy is the blueprint for putting together all of which you mentioned, a proper budget, setting the priorities and what else can be done to advance us in this area.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go right ahead.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you. Thank you, Deputy Premier.

Deputy Premier, can you advise the Honourable House of the terms of the consultancy arrangement with Access on the fees and how long it spans?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I cannot do that at this time. But I can undertake to get more information on that in the future if that is the wish of the House.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: What I can say is that they have been a consultant advisor to the Bermuda Government over many years, going back to previous PLP Administrations, through the OBA Administration and up until now. And they have advised in areas of telecommunications, and they advised, clearly, in our efforts in the space and satellite areas, and they continue to do so. But I will get more information on that if that is the wish of the House.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would appreciate that. I am aware of Access. What I am looking for is the specific terms of this new arrangement to see how it works going forward.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes. This is the—

The Speaker: I think the Deputy has undertaken to produce all of that for you later.

Deputy, is that what we are to understand?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes. I am happy to provide that information to the House and to oblige the request of the Honourable Member.

The Speaker: No problem. Thank you.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are you on your second supplementary, Honourable Member?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, Mr. Speaker. That covers it. Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay. Deputy Premier, the next question is also for you, and it is on your second Statement. And that is also from MP Dunkley.

Would you like to put your question, MP?

QUESTION 2: LICENSING DEADLINE FOR DEBT COLLECTORS

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the Deputy Premier in regard to licensing for debt collectors: Can the Honourable Minister inform the Honourable House how many debt collection businesses are in service at the present time?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I cannot give the precise number. I know that around perhaps 10 to 20 businesses were a part of the process and were given information for them to submit their applications. But that number will be finalised and will be clear once the licensing process is completed as per [what] I have outlined in the Statement. And that was part of the Debt Collection Act of 2018. So that will give a more precise number.

I would be kind of winging it, because until such time as [they receive] their licence they essentially are not officially operating lawfully in that business. And right now to some degree [there is] a grace period for them to get themselves officially licensed.

I can again, because there was no licensing system prior to this Act being set up . . . So once we have the licence system in place and they complete the process, there will be a more precise number.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you. I would appreciate that commitment.

Supplementary question to the Minister, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary? This is your first supplementary. Go ahead.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes. To the Honourable Minister: The fees of the debt collection services, are they monitored or regulated in any way?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: That is the purpose of this legislation. It will provide that support. And there will be a committee under the actual legislation under the Department of Consumer Affairs, which will oversee the regulation of the sector.

And as I will repeat again, prior to this legislation there was no regulation of the debt collector sector. So if I can just be very informal, it was a bit of a Wild West. So this legislation is to remove that and to provide a balance of regulation of the sector, but also the protections for those who find themselves engaged in a debt-collection relationship.

So this legislation provides many of the answers to some of the queries that the Honourable Member has once it is fully in place and everything is in place by the end of the month.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that.

Let me rephrase the question in a slightly different way.

The Speaker: Is this a supplementary question?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: A supplementary, yes, sir.

The Speaker: It is your second supplementary.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Speaker, yes.

Will the Minister give any guidance to the committee on what fees will be allowed to this sector?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes. I mean, I believe the fees are already published, have already been set up. So the fees are a matter of public matter already.

I will provide that information to the Honourable Member directly if he so wishes. But if one goes on the government website, they should be able to see the scheduled fees related to the licensing process for the debt collection agency.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: (Sorry for that.) Do you have any other further question?

Supplementary?

No further question?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, Mr. Speaker, not on this. Thank you.

The Speaker: We will move on to the next series of questions. And the next series of questions are for the Minister of Finance.

And, Minister of Finance, you have questions from four of the Members. The first will be from the Opposition Leader.

Opposition Leader, would you like to put your question now?

And, Members, the Deputy Speaker will be in the Chair for the next hour or so. So you will refer to the Deputy Speaker. He has got control of the House as of now.

[Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr., Deputy Speaker, in the Chair]

QUESTION 1: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as the Deputy stepped in, thank you, Deputy. And good morning to Bermuda and colleagues.

Minister, thank you for your Statement. What I would like to understand a little more, on page 3, the last paragraph, you state that these two credit facilities are just one step that the Government is taking to ensure that we have this financial stability offsetting COVID-19, paraphrasing the last part. At the end of that paragraph you also mention that you are looking for more favourable interest rates, and we start looking at government bonds and the likes.

Can you shed any more light on when you say at the beginning of this paragraph that this is just one step?

The Deputy Speaker: Member.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I mentioned in the House previously, or at least in my public statements, that the Government is expecting a shortfall in the revenue and substantial expenditure, additional unbudgeted expenditure, related to COVID-19. And so, inasmuch as there is no reduction in spending levels, the anticipated deficit will swell from negative-\$20 million, as the debit in the Budget Statement earlier this year, to in excess of \$315 million.

The target deficit that I am shooting for this year is \$150 million. And in order to achieve the \$150 million deficit, it is going to be a requirement to reduce expenditure. We have identified opportunities within the existing budget to cut costs, primarily related to the hiring freeze or to not fill funded vacant positions; to reduced travel; to reduced training expenditures; and a host of other expenditures. We are also in discussions with the unions with a view towards the pay cut for public officers. Those are parts of the strategy.

The Honourable Opposition Leader also mentioned the last sentence of the paragraph, favourable interest rates. As you will know, the Government had borrowed through private placements a couple of hundred million dollars in times gone by. Those instruments mature in 2022 and 2023, I believe. And it is my view that if we are going out to raise capital, it may make sense to also do a liability management exercise to refinance those higher interest-rated pieces of debt with more favourable terms in light of the current pricing environment.

The Deputy Speaker: Any supplementary, Opposition Leader?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, supplementary.

Thank you for the answer, Minister.

Considering the \$189.6 million borrowing capacity, do you believe that this is sufficient enough dollars in order for us to offset COVID-19 and the costs that we are continuing to incur as we move through the phases?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Well, the projection at the moment is about \$89.5 million of unbudgeted COVID expenditure. And so, inasmuch as the \$189 [million] could cover that, I would say yes. But there are other factors that need to be considered, including the shortfall in revenue.

So the shortfall in revenue, coupled with the increased expenditure, and if the goal is the \$150 mil-

lion deficit, then the \$189 [million] should be more than enough to cover the shortfall in revenue over the cost.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Second supplementary?

The Deputy Speaker: Continue, Opposition Leader.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much.

With its being a very fluid situation, Minister, in your estimate of about \$89 million, we are seeing more and more businesses closing. We are going to likely see even more of that. When you took into consideration that this would be more than enough, did you also take into consideration how fluid this is and how we are seeing more and more businesses closing down? Was that part of your analysis, and the loss of businesses?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member mentions the fluidity of the situation. And as a result, I think that I need to keep an active brief on the projections, advising them of more current information as and when it becomes available.

It is my intention, as we are contemplating kind of accessing capital markets, to thoroughly review the needs of the Government to build in some contingency to be reflective of the state of play on the ground. And they need to raise additional monies inasmuch as the economic environment deteriorates.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have another question, Opposition Leader?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. The next Member who wants to ask a question is the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wish to inquire of the Minister, who indicated . . . I had lost sound a bit during the first question. So I apologise, and you can let me know if my question is repetitive. But the Minister indicated in his Statement that the rates that he was able to obtain were 4.00 per cent and 3.75 per cent from the two banks, respectively. He indicated in

his Statement that he has drawn all of the 4.00 per cent, and drawn some from the 3.75 per cent money.

The question is, In drawing down on the more expensive money, was that just purely as a result of the timing and the availability of those funds?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is correct. The first facility, the Clarien, was entered into in March 2020. The second was entered into two weeks ago, May 22nd. So a need arose, and we drew on the first facility, which was priced at 4 per cent.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you. I have a supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you.

My first supplementary is, Of the \$20 million plus the \$10 [million] which has been drawn from the two banks, has all of that money actually been spent?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would refer the Honourable Member to my Statement. The Government does not draw monies down until and unless there is intention to spend it, or has a need to spend it.

The Deputy Speaker: A supplementary?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I have a second supplementary, yes, sir.

The answer to the question, the question that I had was, Has the money been spent? I note you said that the Government will draw the money down when . . . and it was made very clear the Government will only draw the money down when it has the need, when it realises it has the need to spend.

The question is, Has that \$30 million that has been drawn down already physically been spent? Or is it just in the hopper, waiting to pay some bills? That is the question.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess I will say it again. The Government does not draw down money unless it has a need to draw the money to spend it. The money has been spent.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you. That is a very simple answer to a very simple question.

I have a second question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

**QUESTION 2: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN
LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE
GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA**

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The question is, in the Minister's Statement he has indicated that it is his intention down the road—and he has made it very clear, the purpose for it in terms of creating a better deficit and refinancing strategy—to refinance some of the government bonds at more favourable interest rates.

The question that I have of the Minister is, Is there any consideration given to very paltry returns that locals are able to get from the banks, knowing that the banks are using their money to loan out at 4.00 and 3.75 per cent, but they are offering depositors less than a half of one per cent? Is there any intention in his financing strategy to allow some of the financing to be obtained from locally generated funds? In other words, will they have a bond offering similar to what we have done before in which people who deposit funds into the bank will actually get some kind of return?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for her question. I can tell her from prior experience in this space that I have been a proponent of issuing debt in the local capital markets. The unfortunate reality is that in this Government's attempt—not particularly this Government elected, but the prior Government's attempt to raise money through domestic distribution of their debt—there has not been much interest in us by local investors.

I can recall a time when I was at Butterfield Bank and the bank did a \$50 million tranche of government debt. The bank ended up buying the entire tranche. I think investors, local investors stepped up for about \$14 million of the \$50 [million]. So I am very supportive of selling bonds to local investors. However, it does not seem that my enthusiasm for doing it is matched by the investor interest. I would say that inasmuch as we do go to the capital markets to raise money, and local investors want to participate in those transactions, we will work our best to try to find ways of ensuring that there is a local component to the distribution.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you. That is my question. I have no further questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The next speaker is the Honourable Michael Dunkley.

**QUESTION 1: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN
LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE
GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA**

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Good morning, Deputy Speaker.

To the Honourable Minister of Finance: Thanks for the Statement. And just to continue on where the Opposition Leader left off, Minister of Finance, you said you anticipated or estimated \$89.5 million in unbudgeted COVID expenditure. And the rest of the money that you have available to draw down on will cover [the] shortfall in revenue. Any idea at this point in time your estimated shortfall in revenue, and what will be the principal areas?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Deputy Speaker, I think I said this publicly in a press conference, that we were looking at our preliminary estimates were about a \$200 million shortfall in tax revenue. That is a fairly broad category. Looking at Customs duties, hotel occupancy tax, payroll tax . . . across the gamut in terms of tax receipts as a result of the economy extensively being closed down for a period of time.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you.

So in regard to that, do you feel that there will have to be additional borrowing, going through the year? The Honourable Minister, you did say that you were looking for \$150 million deficit at the end of the year. It could go up to \$300 million. So do you feel comfortable at our current rate you can stay where we are and not have to draw, not have to go to the local institutions or overseas institutions and borrow more money?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I said is that, based on the current projections, with a revenue shortfall of \$200 million, the unbudgeted expenditure of \$89.5 million, keeping expenditures at the levels at which we presented in the Budget Statement earlier this year, that would yield a \$315 million deficit. We are taking steps to try to rein that number in to a target of \$450 million through cutting of expenditures and seeking salary reductions from public officers. Those strategies, we are hopeful, will yield \$150 million deficit.

I can tell you that we are only two and a half months into the fiscal year. We are hopeful that the economy will start to bounce back. But we have to accept that we are in difficult times and that the extent of the slowdown may last longer than we anticipate.

So we will look at the situation when we access the capital markets. And inasmuch as there is an opportunity for us to take advantage of supply—in other words, to borrow more money on favourable terms without putting at risk the country's debt rating—we will avail ourselves to those monies.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: So is it fair to say, Honourable Minister—

The Deputy Speaker: Is this another supplementary?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: So is it fair to say that there will likely be more borrowing?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: There is a possibility that there could be more borrowing depending on the state of play when we go to access the capital markets. I would also add that I have to look further down the road. So we have the 2020/21 Budget. And then we have the 2021/22 Budget, which no one has started to think about yet. But if we believe that this, the pandemic will have a fairly short-term impact, I would suggest that the need to borrow more money would probably be reduced. I am not as bullish, and as I tend to be somewhat conservative, I would rather kind of have the dry powder to assist the economy, support the government, fund it into the future. And inasmuch as there is opportunity for me to borrow money on favourable terms, subject to ratings, I am going to avail myself to it.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Minister. In this case, there is nothing wrong with being conservative. My second question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Your second question?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION 2: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Minister of Finance, in regard to the \$20 million at Clarien and the \$150 million at the HSBC, were other local institutions invited to participate? And what was the outcome with them?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: As a general matter, when I took on this job I took the view that I wanted to work with all local banks. They are important constituents in

the Bermuda economy. So, all local banks were provided with the opportunity to participate in the offering.

I can tell you heretofore, before my time here, there had been very little done with Clarien. Clarien approached me about working together. We found an opportunity to work together, and that yielded the first credit facility with them. It was the \$20 million piece.

And then we decided that we were going to raise the additional \$150 [million], which I spoke about, back in April. And we talked to the banks. And those that wanted to participate took part, and those who did not did not.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. The next speaker is Cole Simons, who wants to ask the Minister of Finance a question.

Mr. Simons, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My first question is in regard to the \$150 million facility. Why did we go for such a short term? I know we have been through some challenging times. And as you said, you had taken a short term because you are preparing for a public offering. I take the view, if we had a—

The Deputy Speaker: Honourable Member, you asked a question. Now you are expounding on it. Would you let the Minister answer the question?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. Yes, I will.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Honourable Member is correct. The intention here is to borrow the short-term need in the domestic markets, and then to refinance those facilities longer term in the global capital markets.

The other part of the strategy is, in light of the significantly negative impact that COVID-19 has had on the economy, what our financing strategy will do in paying back the local banks will give them capacity to deploy those monies domestically. The last thing that I want to be responsible for is saddling the ability of the local banks to lend into the local economy. And so by taking the Government's lending away from those institutions, we provide capacity for those institutions to lend to local businesses and local consumers.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you. So in regard to the capital markets—

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, is this your second question or supplementary?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Supplementary, which is . . . capital markets.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: What do you project the amount to be when you do the public offering, based on the numbers that you have seen to date?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Well, we would refinance the \$150 million, \$20 million and then the \$200 million associated with the Morgan's Point project, at a minimum. That is the refinancing.

There is also scope to a liability management exercise, which would mean that we would buy back debt that matures in 2022 and 2023, and we would also consider any potential drive to fund future needs. Those amounts have not yet been determined.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: My second supplementary.

So, would you expect to increase the debt ceiling as a consequence?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I am not in that position yet. I think we set the debt ceiling to where I think it needs to be for now. But inasmuch as there is change in my view on debt ceiling, I will come to the House of Assembly to get approval to do that.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. My second question.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

QUESTION 2: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Can you give me the arrangement fees for each facility? What percentage do we pay in arrangement fees?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I would need to come back . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would need to come back to the Honourable Member with that information. I do not have the facility letters in front of me.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Supplemental.

In a similar way, can you also come back with details on the legal costs in structuring these facilities?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will undertake to come back with facility fees and the legal fees associated with both facilities.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: That is it for you?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes, it is.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Scott Pearman.

Mr. Pearman, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Can you hear me?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. I hear you.

QUESTION 1: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Honourable Minister, thank you for your Statement. What you were saying in respect of the budget deficit is that, as I understand it, you were forecasting a top-end exposure of somewhere between \$300 [million] and \$350 [sic] million. But in a press report on the 9th of May, you were reported as saying that the Ministry's target for 2020/21 is to keep that below \$175 million.

In answer to a question put to you this morning by the Shadow Minister Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, you said the target was \$150 million. Could you clarify if the 175 has changed to 150 since the 9th of May by any particular reason? Are things better or worse?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the first instance, I referenced \$315 million, not 350.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Oh, no, three-one-five, correct.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Yes. The target is between 150 and 175. You know, budgeting is like asking someone how long a piece of string is. This is a fairly substantial budget. And there is some wiggle room. And so I may have said 175 in the press; the target is \$150 million, plus or minus.

[Crosstalk]

The Deputy Speaker: Another question, Mr. Pearman?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Supplementary, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Supplementary. Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Scott Pearman: Honourable Minister, in terms of that target, 150 to 175, are you able to indicate which end of that range we are on?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Well, it depends on how our discussions with the unions go with respect to getting concessions on salaries. And those negotiations are ongoing.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Minister.
Deputy Speaker, second question, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

QUESTION 2: FACILITY AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LOCAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Mr. Scott Pearman: Minister, in your carefully worded Statement today you discussed how you had drawn down \$30 million from the borrowing facility, the joint facility. And in response to a question from the Shadow Minister Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, you accepted that the monies drawn down had in fact been spent. My question is, When do you anticipate drawing down the next tranche of monies from the facility, the joint facility, and how much will that be?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the drawdowns will be a function of Government's expenditures. So there is a pattern that happens with Government tax receipts. They typically come in quarter ends. And then in the intervening periods the Government typically has enough net outflow of funds as opposed to a net inflow. And so we would anticipate an outflow in the last month, May. We would anticipate a significant inflow in June at its quarter end. And the next projection would be August and September, with October being a positive month. So it follows a particular pattern.

Typically when there are periods of quarter ends, there is the observation of a net inflow of cash, and during the intervening months [a] general outflow. So when we had outflow periods, we have borrowed to keep the Government operating. And months when there is significant intake of cash receipts, we generally do not.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Pearman, do you have another question?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes. I am not sure you answered when you anticipate the next drawdown to be, Minister?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: August. There was a drawdown in May, and another one is expected in August.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Supplementary.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Scott Pearman: Minister, you were asked earlier whether you felt there would be a need to increase the debt ceiling, and you have answered that question. Do you feel there will be a need to increase the joint facility?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I do not anticipate the need to increase the joint facility. It is my expectation that we will access the capital markets within the next three months.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: That is it for the Minister of Finance.

The next question is to the Minister of Education, the Honourable Diallo Rabain. And that question comes from the Honourable Member Cole Hadley Simons.

QUESTION 1: BERMUDA PUBLIC SCHOOLS UPDATE

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My question to the Minister is this: Where do we stand in the preparation of guidelines or a reference document or a manual that will summarise what is required from a COVID mitigation perspective for each of our schools?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you for that question, Member. If I refer to page 3 of my Statement, I did say that we have been working on plans for the last two months on where we stand with that. And we have also had collaboration with the Department of Health with the school leaders, the schoolteachers and with our union stakeholders. That document is in its final draft form. And as soon—as I stated within the Statement, as soon as it is completed it will be shared directly with our parents, from the commissioner's office.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Supplemental.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Do you have an anticipated completion date?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: The completion date, as we stated, as we have come back now and we are ending the term early for students, and the teachers will be coming in and doing some final preparations for September 2020. That [document] will be available shortly after that.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you. My second question.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

QUESTION 2: BERMUDA PUBLIC SCHOOLS UPDATE

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: When we return to school in September, will our educational delivery system be a hybrid of traditional educational classrooms and online education?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: All of that information will be sent out when we finalise what school will look like come September.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: So supplemental.

The Deputy Speaker: You have a supplementary, Mr. Simons.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: So the hybrid method has not been ruled out, are you saying?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: I am saying nothing has been ruled out. You are correct; nothing has been ruled out on how things will look in September.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay, my supplemental.

The Deputy Speaker: Your second supplemental.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I understand that a number of teachers have been stressed because of the remote and virtual classroom and remote learning. What type of support do we have in place to help our teachers going forward with the remote instruction and virtual classrooms?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: As stated, once the term finishes for our students, teachers will be back in the

classroom to deal with end of term. And also, I think we will be dealing with professional development for teachers. Some of that professional development will include enhancing the remote—the ability, the capability to teach remote learning. As we move forward, as I have made you well aware, Shadow Minister, that moving forward we will be accelerating our remote learning possibilities by instituting Google Class within our system. And so that is something that we are looking forward to bringing into the system.

And as it is implemented throughout, professional development will occur, as well as devices made available for those who do not have [one]. We will be able to move forward with that process.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you. That is it for me.

The Deputy Speaker: The next Member who wants to ask the Honourable Rabain questions is Ben Smith. Honourable Member Ben, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: BERMUDA PUBLIC SCHOOLS UPDATE

Mr. Ben Smith: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you to the Honourable Minister for the Statement.

I would like to ask, now that the Minister gave the decision to not reopen in phase 3, was the input of the teachers, the union of teachers and parents solicited prior to taking the decision specifically to not open in phase 3?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: We have consistently sent out surveys and asked for input from all of our stakeholders ever since we closed school on May 3rd.

The Deputy Speaker: Supplemental.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Ben Smith: With that information, is the Minister able to tell us what the feedback was from the stakeholders specifically for reopening . . . of not reopening in phase 3, and instead reopening in September?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: The feedback was varied. Some people wanted schools to reopen as soon as possible. Some people wanted us to wait until we were very sure that we could be safe. Some people wanted us to wait until September. It was varied across the board.

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you.
Second question.

The Deputy Speaker: All right.

**QUESTION 2: BERMUDA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
UPDATE**

Mr. Ben Smith: So, obviously this is not usual, and the Minister has had to come up with a bunch of solutions for us to move forward. But my question is, Has an analysis been done at this point on what impact this change in the learning process and how things were being done, the impact on the students and how they are going to [INAUDIBLE] as you move into another year?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Yes. The student performances are still being measured. Remember, school—what we have done is we have closed school buildings. We have not stopped school from occurring. So students have still been learning, although they have not been able to enter into the school building. So students have still been getting their lessons and still been doing, making progress as they move forward.

Part of the reason of allowing the term to end early is to do evaluations and see where we are with the learning and how far we did get. And as I mentioned in the Statement, though, we intend to have summer school for our senior school students so they can catch up on whatever it is that they may not have done. And when we start in September, there will be an evaluation of where our primary and middle school students are, and interventions put in place to either get them to where they need to be or to see if they are fine and move on, as we would regularly do.

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you, Minister. As we all know—

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, Member. Are you doing a supplementary or another question?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Ben Smith: Yes. Supplemental.

So as we go with the challenges of dealing with, you know, having meetings online and trying to gain confidence online, as a teacher who is standing in front of a classroom normally, when they get the opportunity to see their students and see if a student potentially is struggling in a certain area, that could then create a difficult situation as you are doing it in a Zoom call.

Is there a way for them to be able to monitor whether that has had an impact on some students whom potentially we will not see now, but we are going to see when the students come back in September, whether they have fallen behind? That is more of what the question is. It is the analysis of what that impact potentially is going to be going forward that we might not know.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Well, what I can say, Member, is we find ourselves in a situation now that literally the rest of the world finds themselves in for the very first time. And some of these things are where you are figuring out as we go along. So I completely get and understand the question that you are asking. And we are busily trying to find ways to solve those exact problems as we move along.

But as I informed, when we come back in September, especially for our primary and middle school students, and hopefully we will be back to some semblance of normality. That is when we will have an opportunity to check and see how far have we progressed, or how far, or how much intervention needs to be put in place to progress further than where they are? And so, I mean ideally we would love to be in school. Ideally you would like to have the person in front of the teacher. But it is just not something that has been allowed to happen. So we have to work with what we have in front of us.

But I am very, very confident and I am very, very happy that we have had, the majority of our teachers have been very, very inquisitive and very, very good at checking in on students not just during lessons, but outside of that, to see how they are doing. I myself get emails from my child's teacher just to check and see how they are doing. We have also . . . the department has also put things in place to check on the mental strain that is happening not just with our students, but with our teachers as well, because we are very concerned about them from that level.

So we are doing as much as we can with the hand that we have been dealt. But until we get a chance to see them face to face, we just have to work with the hand that we have been dealt.

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you, Minister. You mentioned in that response that—

The Deputy Speaker: Is this a supplementary or another question?

Mr. Ben Smith: Supplementary.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

Mr. Ben Smith: You mentioned in your response that all over the world everyone is having to deal with this and it has changed the way learning is being delivered. Is there a certain model that we are following? Because there are going to be some people who are going to do this well, and there are going to be some people who are going to have challenges with a certain model that we are following.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: As I think I mentioned it earlier when I was speaking to your colleague, that we are looking to implement Google Class on a systemwide basis within our system. But that is some-

thing that will be . . . we are looking at September and beyond for the introduction. Right now we are working with what we do have. And admittedly, there are several systems that we are running. Some schools are working in, for example, ClassDojo. Some schools are even working on Seesaw and the like. And we do have some schools that are very, very proficient at Google Class at the moment.

And so what we have done is look at all of those [to] see what is working. And so what we want to have is one system that we can use throughout our 34 campuses that we currently have, and have something that is coherent and is similar throughout the entire system.

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: No further questions, Member?

Mr. Ben Smith: No further questions. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. That ended the questions for Ministers.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Deputy Speaker: I will take the opportunity to read a tribute for Dr. the Hon. Eva Hodgson from Hamilton Parish.

Since her death, many of those who showed disdain for her will make complimentary comments about Dr. Eva Hodgson, an educator, author, union president and above all a Christian woman. In her book, *Second Class Citizens; First Class Men*, Dr. Hodgson wrote about the most tumultuous period in Bermuda's social history, from 1953 to 1963. This was the time when hotels, restaurants and theatres were desegregated, labour found a voice in the BIU [Bermuda Industrial Union] and the PLP was formed.

Dr. Hodgson was deeply involved in the desegregation movement. And because of her participation, she was threatened with the loss of her job. Dr. Hodgson also wrote that "In all racially segregated societies, the oppressiveness of racism is most destructive and soul-destroying for man." She said in Bermuda women were not only the backbone and strength of the black family, but they were the ones who became teachers within the community and were respected as such. While sons were sent out to work at an early age, black families often tried to protect their daughters from the most humiliating and degrading aspects of racism, by trying to educate them. She said it was clearly a socially destructive agenda for the black community.

Dr. Hodgson knew there were opponents to her advocacy on racial equality, and she wrote, "I know that there are self-righteous blacks who want to appease the white community, who are very accepting

of the racism that created the racial divide, but are very critical of the way black folks have responded to it, going so far as to declare that blacks are as racist as whites. And they are tired of hearing about black prejudice, that those of us who talk about it are creating the divide."

Dr. Hodgson said, "I would not talk about the divide if it did not exist. It has been there since 1834, and we did not create it."

When it came to racial equality, Dr. Eva Hodgson was not [INAUDIBLE] Bermuda would be a better place today. Proverbs verse 31 of chapter 31 reads, "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." Dr. Eva Hodgson loved her family and will be deeply missed.

Any further speakers want to speak?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I could, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Premier, continue.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you for that wonderful tribute.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is with great sadness that I associate myself with the beautiful condolences that were given in tribute, that were given from Hamilton Parish to the family of Dr. Eva Hodgson. As you stated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Dr. Hodgson was an educator, a union leader and a great Christian woman who told the story of Bermuda and the impact of race relations and economic inequality on our society, inequalities which still bear relevance in our society to this very day.

She used her intellect to enlighten and inspire generations of Bermudians to strive for a better society in which race was no barrier to success. Dr. Hodgson is the very embodiment of a freedom fighter.

On behalf of the Government of Bermuda, I send my deepest sympathies to her family during this time of mourning, especially to her beloved siblings, former Minister of this Honourable House, the Honourable Arthur D. O. Hodgson, JP, and younger sister Grace Swan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also ask the House to send a letter of condolence to the family of the late Mr. Reginald Gomes. Mr. Gomes was an avid sportsman who was an active member of the great and mighty Somerset Cricket Club, representing the club in both cricket and football. Although Mr. Gomes was a Somerset boy at heart, I am proud to represent him and his family in this Honourable House, as he was my constituent in Pembroke West Central. My thoughts are with his wife, his son, his brother-in-law and his entire family; his son, Mr. Regeno Gomes; and his wife, Mrs. Sandra Gomes, and his entire family during this time of mourning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to also send a note of congratulations if I may to my constituent,

Ms. Amali Smith, who recently graduated from Wilberforce University in Ohio as Valedictorian of her graduating class, with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. During her time at university, she managed to maintain academic excellence while representing her university on the basketball team, a feat within itself. I would also like to recognise and congratulate her mother, Ms. Stacey Burt, who happens to be my cousin. Congratulations to Ms. Amali Smith, and it is without question an achievement to graduate as a valedictorian of a university.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Member Tinee Furbert from constituency 4.

Ms. Furbert, you have the floor.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Good morning. I would like to first of all send congratulatory remarks to Ms. Atiya Furqan, who is one of my constituents, on her recent graduation, being a Berkeley student and being part of the dual enrolment, on obtaining her associate's degree. So I just want to send congratulations out to her. She worked very hard. And I am sure many of our other students out there worked very hard. So I just wanted to send congratulations to her.

I also want to send condolences to the family of Mr. Cyril Smith, again one of my constituents. You may know Mr. Cyril Smith as "Humphrey." I want to send condolences to his family, his children Arif and Kennita, and his wife Barbara.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, the Honourable Member Ms. Furbert.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Member Neville Tyrrell.

Mr. Tyrrell, you have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, and good morning, all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish for condolences be sent to the family of the late Noel Lathan, of [Unit] 34, Olive Bank. Mr. Lathan was a very popular person in the community, made friends with everyone whom I certainly knew about. And he surely will be missed by his wife, Jean, and the rest of the family. So as a constituent of mine, I had the opportunity, obviously, to speak with him on several occasions. And I always found him to be very straightforward and at the same time humorous at that time. So again I ask that condolences be sent. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member, Mr. Tyrrell.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Opposition Leader, Mr. Craig Cannonier.

Mr. Cannonier, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Deputy, and good morning again to the listening public and colleagues.

I would like to also join in the condolences and accolades for a life that, quite frankly, has contributed to a better Bermuda, the life of Dr. Eva Hodgson. I thoroughly enjoyed, Deputy, what you read there. And I can recall my first time having met Dr. Hodgson as I was just a fledgling getting involved in politics and the conversation we had. What I did not know was that my mother was very good friends of the family. And I came to know that there was some closeness there, my mother being from Bailey's Bay area and knowing them.

And what ensued after meeting her was I had made conversations with her brother Arthur Hodgson, and we had become very good friends. But I cannot say enough about the life of Eva. She is a known celebrity in her own right throughout the Island for her cause. And I noticed, quite frankly, how with ease she moved within all communities and what she had to say. I know that some may have felt a little intimidated even by her because, in her stature she may not have been a tall, big woman. But she was obviously, with her cause, greater than what she physically showed.

So I am grateful to have had the opportunity to have met her. And yes, many of you will have had a longer relationship with her. And my condolences on behalf of the One Bermuda Alliance; our condolences go out to the family as they mourn the loss of Dr. Hodgson. I take into consideration also the timing of her death, as it coincided around the same time as we are mourning the death of George Floyd in the United States and what has taken place. And so these things do not happen by chance. They are messages being sent to us to pay attention. And so I thank the life of Dr. Hodgson for, even in her death, calling out for us to pay attention.

Thank you, Deputy.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member, Mr. Cannonier.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Member Scott Simmons.

Mr. Simmons, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Simmons: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I ask that I be associated with the condolences to the Dr. Eva Hodgson. Her contribution to Bermuda and her memory, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will not soon be forgotten.

In addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I respectfully ask that this Honourable House send sincere best belated birthday wishes—and all Members, I am sure, will want to be associated—to Mr. Chesley Trott, who celebrated his 90th birthday yesterday. I had the pleasure of joining Mr. Trott, joining his daughter and one of his cousins, Ms. Sheila Burrows, the wife of the former Honourable Member of this House, the late

Reginald Burrows, JP, MP, and another one of his cousins, in marking his 90th birthday yesterday.

As you will be well aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Trott is known Island-wide for his cedar sculptures which are displayed throughout the Island, most notably the true triumph of his craftsmanship that is prominently displayed in the Arrivals Lounge of the L. F. Wade International Airport.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Trott is a very proud, but very humble man, and shared with us in conversation yesterday the true mastery of his enormous talent as he regaled us with an afternoon of reflection on the many private and public commissions—his love and involvement in tennis and golf, and in teaching, and shared his love for family and his true love for Bermuda.

If you would allow me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Trott recalled the occasion when he was asked by three sisters who were members of the Anglican Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity Church in the city to carve the likeness of the Virgin Mary. Mr. Trott worked tirelessly, tirelessly on this piece and produced it to the presiding canon and the three ladies for their approval. The Reverend Canon expressed concern that the sculpture offered the most common of depictions of the Virgin Mary, while the three sisters reflected that it over-weightingly . . . it weighed heavily on the African origins of the sculpture's creator, to put it bluntly, that the lip size compromised the integrity of the overall piece.

Although, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Trott disagreed and stressed the same to all present, Mr. Trott wished to preserve the financial integrity of his commission, conceded, and he slimmed and smoothed the lips on the sculpture to meet the requirements of the church and his commission charges. His sculpture prominently stands today near the altar in the Anglican Cathedral.

Mr. Deputy, today we celebrate and yesterday we celebrated a true Bermudian icon. We wish him many more years with us, and thank him for making our Jewel in the Atlantic shine ever so much brighter.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, the Honourable Member, Mr. Scott Simmons.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Member Cole Hadley Simons.

Mr. Simons, you have the floor.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would like to begin where the previous Member ended. I would like to associate myself with the comments made in regard to Mr. Chesley Trott. He is another icon in the art space. He is one of our outstanding champions for the arts in this country. I remember going to his studio and buying a sculpture, a brass sculpture of a lady reaching for the sky. And I

have it on my dining room table. And the movement in that sculpture is amazing. He has unlimited talent.

I would like to also associate myself with the comments made with regards to Dr. Eva Hodgson. Everyone will know that she was a principled person, and no one could sway her against her principles. And that is what I admired most. When she saw something wrong, whether it was the PLP, the OBA or Front Street, she told it as it was. And she had a tongue that was sharp, and when she spoke you listened. And when [she] spoke, you felt what she had to say.

In addition, I found it very interesting that she was also an advocate for black empowerment and black self-empowerment. I think during her life she was disappointed that we as black people did not do more amongst ourselves to empower ourselves. And that also includes the governments of this country, be it the OBA Government or the PLP Government. She felt that blacks did not do enough to support each other, to basically empower each other economically and socially.

So I agree that she was an icon of this country. Other people would have crumbled under the blowback that she had from the community. But she believed in our cause; it was part of her essence. And because of her principles and Christian beliefs, she fought on like a true soldier—in fact, a general—in the march of racial equality.

I would like to also send congratulatory remarks to the graduating students of 2020, be they high school students, Bermuda College or the primary schools. They have completed their year or are completing their year under extenuating circumstances. But they have all stood up to the wicket, they have all done the best that they could do and the results are here to show their successes and achievements. So I wish them all the best.

I would also like to recognise the parents who have supported our young people during these times of COVID-19, and being there for them in their homes when they had virtual learning/remote education. Because it is something that the parents were not used to, the teachers were not used to and the students were not used to. And as a consequence, we got it together and it worked. Again, I would like to support the parents, teachers and students during these trying circumstances . . . I am delighted that they put their best foot forward, and our children will benefit from their support. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Oh, one other person. I would like to send condolences to [the family of] Barbara Rabain, a retired teacher, who was the mother of Ryan Rabain and Kristin Rabain. She recently died here in Bermuda. She was a charming person, always smiled and was committed to education in this country. She was a teacher at the Bermuda Institute for many years. And she was part of the social Warwick team. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hadley Simons.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Member Christopher Famous.

Mr. Famous, you have the floor.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Are you hearing me well?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. I hear you very well. Continue.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Firstly, I would like to send birthday greetings to two of your most avid listeners. That would be Ms. Effie Godfrey in [AUDIO SKIP] Devonshire, and her brother, Mr. Thomas Famous of Hermitage Road Devonshire, who listens to this show every week.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to send condolences to the family of Mr. George Minors of George's Bay Road up in Somerset. I know it is not my constituency, but he is a relative and he was a good man who unfortunately has passed away.

I would also like to send congratulations to the Green Acres community, especially the DeGraff and Simmons family and the Pole [PHONETIC] family. They organised the first annual Bermuda Day Marathon, which was four laps around Green Acres, last week, which was a good community event with social distancing that helped to bring the community together safely under trying times.

I would like to associate with the congratulations for the Bermuda College Class of 2020, and especially I would like to congratulate Berkeleyite Mr. Jacari Renfro for his achievements in the field of auto mechanics. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, the Honourable Member, Mr. Famous.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Member Michael Scott.

Mr. Scott, you have the floor.

[Pause]

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Scott, are you with us?

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you. I'm sorry, I did not unmute.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the condolences of the House, I would also wish to first be associated with the elegant presentation of tribute paid to our social activist and educator, Dr. Eva Naomi Hodgson. I offer these condolences, as has the House, to her whole family and in particular to Mr. Arthur Hodgson and his family, and the entire extended family of this great sister of the nation, this great daughter of the nation.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Dr. Hodgson's book I have in front of me, *Second Class Citizens; First Class Men*, has been billed as representing the first organised documentation of Bermuda's most tumultuous social history. And that book begins [by] documenting a period of 1963 with the introduction of the universal franchise, whose great champion was the [Honourable] Tucker, the Hon. W. L. Tucker, MCP. And it must have struck Dr. Hodgson as an important phase to both calculated document for posterity. We will all miss her. I certainly will miss her great dignity, her great knowledge about social and political affairs. And I offer my condolences to her family.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to also ask that this House send condolences to the family of the late Jeffrey Christopher Astwood, the son of Sir Jeffrey Christopher Astwood, both eminent Members of Parliament and members of the Somerset community. "Kit" Astwood to his devoted wife, Denise, and to their children—that is Christopher and his wife Karen; Kit is also survived by his son Bryan Astwood and his wife Chiharu.

Kit Astwood served in the Somerset North constituency, the very seat I hold today. And I formed a close and warm and jovial relationship and friendship with Kit Astwood and his family. And as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would like to ensure that this House offers its condolences to Denise and the entire Astwood family.

Thanks, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, the Honourable Member.

The Deputy Speaker recognises the Honourable Member Kim Swan from St. George's.

Mr. Swan.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to be associated with that fine tribute that you led us off with this morning to the family of the late Dr. Eva Hodgson. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know of which you speak because I certainly had the experience. Dr. Hodgson was my father's sister-in-law. And I, in the early '80s, was very much entrenched in the United Bermuda Party, learned at Dr. Hodgson's feet, not as one of her willing students, but one who had to be argued with. And in time she prevailed on me and I am eternally grateful. In time I participated with her with the NAR, the National Association for Reconciliation, and then was called upon on many occasions to pick her up at home and bring her to banquets and the like. I was the beneficiary of her knowledge and her commitment to lead Bermuda forward. I am very grateful for that.

I want to associate myself with the remarks celebrating the life of Chesley Trott, for 90 years, whom I call *Emperor*, because Tango Burgess and I used to golf with our good friends. And Tango coined

him *Emperor Highly Celestial Bermuda* because he looked just like His Imperial Majesty. Golf and tennis he was great at. He made the finals in the Bermuda Tennis Open. He was the runner-up as Walter King often reminded him. But he also, as a schoolteacher, made the quarter finals of the Bermuda Amateur Stroke Play Championship, which caused a stir when his principal, Mr. Horton, had allowed him to play. And the officials in the '70s at the Ministry of Education did not take kindly to him featuring so prominently in the sport that they enjoyed.

And finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like condolences to be sent to the family of Mr. Vincent Tweed of Pain Lane, who passed away, my good friend who spent many years at Ferry Reach out at BIOS [Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences] working. Many will remember him walking the community, keeping fit. To his entire family, and especially his darling daughter, Sharon, I offer my deepest condolences. And I know I associate you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those remarks. Thank you.

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Swan. We appreciate your contribution.

I now understand, Mr. Commissiong, that you would like to make a contribution.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Do you hear me?

The Speaker: Yes. I hear you loud and clear.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Mr. Speaker, good morning.

I too wish to associate myself with the fine set of tributes to the inestimable Dr. Eva Hodgson, particularly that of your Deputy. It was very fitting, very gracious and so accurate in describing the woman that we knew, admired and loved. That woman is Dr. Eva Hodgson.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to add too much to that now because on the motion to adjourn I intend to speak more fully about her life and her work. But I will say this, that as I have said before in the last few days, she would have to go down as one of the most consequential Bermudians of the last two centuries. And she is in exalted company, as we know, as a consequence of that. And we should never forget.

Eva Hodgson spent a lot of her time, if I can get a little fancy here, in deconstructing white supremacy and one of its chief by-products, white privilege, in her language, that disadvantaged black Bermudians and was such a feature of the types of racial oppression that persons of African descent had to endure in this country. I can imagine that if she was still with us over the last five or six days, she would have sat there and watched in amazement as the young

Eva Hodgsons in the US and beyond came to the fore, these Eva's daughters, as I would say, and in many respects showed the type of leadership and commitment and courage that Eva demonstrated (Dr. Hodgson) over the last four, five or six decades.

And so I send my great love to the family, a family who have given so much to our community, the black community, and thus Bermuda in general. And she was one of their brightest, shining lights. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for affording me this time. And I will return to this at the back end of our session because Eva was also about action. It was not just about talk. She knew firstly you had to have the first, the right type of talk. But then it was also about, How do you translate those ideals, those principles, those values into action, particularly public policy? And I would hope to be able to address that further on in our debate in this House, this virtual House, today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member Commissiong.

I understand that Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin, you would like to make a contribution at this time?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Go right ahead.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the congratulations to, on the 90th birthday of Chesley Trott. And I believe that most of us, if you are anywhere in the sporting world . . . certainly I am not a golfer, but certainly I am a tennis individual. And one would know that from way back when, when I just started to play tennis as a young child, there were certain fixtures, people who were fixtures on the tennis courts. And Chesley Trott could count himself to be among one of those. So I would like [INAUDIBLE] congratulate him on his birthday.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like—it would be remiss of me if I failed to join in the [INAUDIBLE] family of Dr. Eva Hodgson. I believe that with the opening comments being made by the Deputy Speaker, I think the ordinary person can say nothing more than *Ditto*. Because the Deputy Speaker [INAUDIBLE] the lady, the woman, the teacher, the doctor, Dr. Hodgson.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know her in a slightly different way, as one of my teachers of geography. And as I have shared with my son on occasion recently, if I hear one more time the word “tundra,” I was going to barf, because she actually—she impacted that in us. She made sure that we understood it. She made sure that we knew all of the various layers of the earth and God-only-knows what else. I used to think to myself at that time, as an 11–12-year-old child, *What on earth*

relevance was this going to have for me? Well, whether it did or whether it did not in subsequent years, Mr. Speaker, the one thing was very certain: And that is that this teacher, notwithstanding her style as a teacher, she ensured that we learned that which she attempted to impart. And for that, Mr. Speaker, giving us an attitude of discipline in the learning process is something that has stood, I would imagine, every single one of her students in very good stead as they undertook various medium of studies.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to speak very briefly in the same vein to her friend Ms. Muriel Smith because Mrs. Muriel Smith was a staunch advocate of the prowess of Dr. Hodgson. I believe there is not one of us in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, who has not been the recipient of a letter that may have been written by Dr. Smith in terms of their lament or her lament at the fact that both she and her very dear friend, Dr. Hodgson, were never rewarded with the positions commensurate with their academia within the Education Department. And that lament goes across the previous governments from the '70s all the way through to the day that Dr. Hodgson took her last breath.

And let me say, Mr. Speaker, that as we traverse our life journey, it is very important for us to understand and recognise that while we may not have an appreciation for an individual at any specific point in time, the sum total of their contributions to our upbringing and to our development is something that we must always recognise, acknowledge and be grateful for.

So as Dr. Hodgson takes her final journey, Mr. Speaker, it is owing to us to express our sincere appreciation for the value that she put into us as young people. And I think her esteem in which she held my father has been recorded in her writing, and certainly as a family member of my dad, of Dr. Gordon, the people to whom she referred in her book, *Second Class Citizens; First Class Men*, these are things that are invaluable to us who remain behind because the written word is there for perpetuity.

So, Mr. Speaker, finally, very quickly, let me just offer my congratulations to the graduating classes both of the college, as well as of all the high schools in these very different times, and how they have been able to overcome the adversity of the challenges created by COVID-19, but still yet being able to celebrate their incredible and wonderful achievements.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I understand that the Member from constituency 28 would like to make a contribution.

MP Lister.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Good morning to the listening audience.

First off, I would like to associate myself with the comments and condolences to the family of Dr. Eva Hodgson, and also, Mr. Speaker, to associate myself with the comments made to Mr. Reginald Gomes, who, myself as a member of the Somerset Cricket Club and also member of the Somerset Trojans Football Team, I would just like to send condolences to his family for the representation he did as a Somerset Trojan back in the day. So I would like to send condolences.

Also, Mr. Speaker, on a lighter note, I would like to send congratulations to Ms. Maude Bassett, a constituent of mine from Kentwood, who celebrated her 101st birthday two weeks ago since we last met. So I would like to send congratulations to Ms. Maude Bassett.

And also I would like to associate myself with all of the comments for the graduating classes of 2020, whether it be high school, middle school, primary school and college level students.

So, Mr. Speaker, thank you, and again congratulations to all of them.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Would any other Member wish to make a contribution under condolences or congratulatory remarks?

No other Member.

Before we move on, I would just like to add my comments to those that have been expressed in regard to the passing of a great, great lady who has contributed her life to making life better for all of us here in Bermuda. Dr. Hodgson, as I am sure has been said by all who have spoken, has done outstanding in her own ways to bring about change in this country.

I first met Mrs. Hodgson actually as a youngster. I was . . . the Lister and Hodgson families go way back to the old Gospel Hall Brethren days. But I was one of those youngsters in school who needed a little extra tutoring. And my parents arranged for me to go sit at the feet of Dr. Hodgson for that tutoring. And as a youngster, I knew well that she was a lady of great stature, not only because of what she offered academically to help push me along, but in the other realm of the conversation that she shared even to me as a youngster at that age. So I just want to add comments in regard to what has already been said.

And of course, I need to add to [the comments for] the family of Mr. Reginald Gomes. As a Somerset man, I too have been touched by his loss. I knew him personally, and I am very saddened to hear of his untimely death. And my deep condolences go out to him and his family. And I wish the family our prayers and well wishes during this time.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, hello! It is Wayne Furbert. I was trying to get on, but I could not get the speaker thing going.

The Speaker: You could not get on? Well, let me just finish what I was saying, and then I will let you make a comment before I move on then.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: All right.

The Speaker: I just want to add my remarks to those of the last speaker in reference to his constituent, Ms. Bassett, who just celebrated 101 years. But the speaker who made remarks did not realise that she also grew up in our neighbourhood, spent years when I was a child, the Bassett family were neighbours of ours up in Heathcote Hill. So I would like to add my condolences to—well wishes, rather, to her on her 101st birthday celebration.

Mr. Furbert, I will let you make your comments before I move on.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. I was trying to push this speaker button, and just something was going wrong. So, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you again for letting me say a few things about my cousin, Dr. Eva Hodgson.

I join in the condolences of the rest of the Members of Parliament who have spoken this morning. She was a great lady of Hamilton Parish, as we all know. She was an author and anti-racist who had been advocating for better race relations in Bermuda for many years. Of course, she taught at the Berkeley Institute, as I heard the Honourable Member Patricia Gordon-Pamplin speak to just a few minutes ago. She earned her Ph.D. in African History. She founded an anti-racism organisation called National Association for Reconciliation. She was a great inspiration to all of us in Hamilton Parish. She was a legend in her own rights.

My prayers are with the family, in particular my cousin Arthur, her brother, and Grace, her sister. [INAUDIBLE]—I am not sure that many have been out there. It will never be the same with Eva not being out there.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say she fought a good fight. She kept the faith. Henceforth, there is a layup for her [INAUDIBLE] righteousness of which her Lord has given her. So my blessings and prayers to the family today. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

And with that, no further Members are making a contribution at this time. So we will move on.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: There are none.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

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

The Speaker: There are none.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Speaker: There are four Government Bills to be introduced this morning, today, afternoon—right now.

The first is in the name of the Minister of Health.

Minister Wilson.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

FIRST READING

PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2020

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting, namely, the Public Health Amendment (No. 2) Act 2020.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The next introduction of a Bill is from the Minister of Finance.

Minister.

FIRST READING

CONTRIBUTORY PENSIONS TEMPORARY AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Contributory Pensions Temporary Amendment Act of 2020.

And, Mr. Speaker, can I proceed with the second one?

The Speaker: You can do the second one as well, yes.

FIRST READING

NATIONAL PENSIONS SCHEME (OCCUPATIONAL PENSIONS) TEMPORARY AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: National Pensions Scheme (Occupational Pensions) Temporary Amendment Act 2020.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next item is in the name of the Minister for Cabinet Office.

Mr. Furbert.

FIRST READING

BERMUDA BAR AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Bermuda Bar Amendment Act 2020.

Thank you.

OPPOSITION OR PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

The Speaker: Thank you.

There are no Opposition, no Private Members' Bills.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The Speaker: No notices of motions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: That now brings us to the Orders of the Day.

The first Order of the Day is the second reading of the Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020, in the name of the Premier.

Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020 be now read the second time.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?

No objections.

Continue, Premier.

BILL

SECOND READING

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before this Honourable House is the Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020 and seeks to broaden the Governor's power to order a temporary curfew. Mr. Speaker, the Bill will permit the Governor, acting in his discretion or on the advice of the Minister of Health, to order a curfew in the interest of public health for a period not exceeding seven days; permit the Governor to specify the hours during which such curfew should be enforced; confirm for the avoidance of doubt that the Governor can make consecutive orders of curfew; repeal the definition of "hours of darkness"; and permit the order made under the relevant section of the Act to come into force on a date as specified in the Order.

Mr. Speaker, in the earliest days of the response required to this global pandemic, the legislative tools available to the Government were not best suited to the objectives. In the main, the provisions were aimed at managing times of civil unrest and not the protective measures required by these events. The initial legislative means employed for that purpose was section 14(2) of the Summary Offences Act 1926.

Mr. Speaker, the practical evidence of the operation of the Act indicated that the provisions did not lend themselves to the flexibility demanded of public health instances in which they may need to be utilised. For the avoidance of doubt, it was proposed that public health interests for those in public safety is an element with which the Governor must be satisfied before exercising his discretion to impose a curfew.

Honourable Members will note that in the exercise of his discretion, it is proposed that the Governor do so in the interest of public safety or public health, and in doing so permits the Governor to consult widely, including with the Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Members will also note that the Minister of Health will now have the ability to invite the Governor to make an order under the Act to prevent the spread of disease.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill further proposes to eliminate "hours of darkness" and the definition of the same between the hours of 1730 and 0600 hours, as it is impractical and does not provide the flexibility required to properly apply to curfew times. In keeping with the need for appropriate flexibility in the making of an order under the Act, it is further proposed to provide, for the avoidance of doubt, that the Governor can make consecutive orders.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Bill provides for an order made for a curfew to come into force on the

date as specified in the order, and not on publication. This allows the ability to provide public notice and manage the implementation of the curfew's terms, as intended.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this Bill to the House and for the consideration of Honourable Members. It is important to note that as we speak today, we do so still under a state of emergency. The unprecedented events of the last few months have demonstrated the need for us to be nimble and to have better legislative tools at our disposal that match these modern needs. This is a short Bill, but one which will further assist us in managing the ongoing response to this pandemic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. Ben Smith: Yes. Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good afternoon, MP Smith.

Mr. Ben Smith: Yes. We would like to firstly say that we support the amendment and the changes that are being made. In this unprecedented time that we are dealing with now, there have had to be changes made in order to give flexibility to the Government so that it can move as quickly as possible, while being mindful of the rights of the citizens. So there is no way that we are going to take it lightly that we are restricting the movement of our citizens. But with the situation that we are dealing with at the moment, we have to take the safety of the country first. And anything that needs to be done so that we can make these changes as quickly as possible to keep the country safe we are going to be in support of.

The only thing that I would add to that is that we have to make sure that we continue to communicate with the population as we are making changes that will restrict their movement, because there are portions of our population who are going to be frustrated as we continue to move forward with these restrictions. But it is important that the population know that we are doing this in their best interest to make sure that we keep our country safe and we can start to revitalise our economy. And in doing that, we will have to potentially restrict some movement going forward. And with the changes that are being presented here, I believe that it will give the flexibility for the Government to make those changes when necessary.

And with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No other.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Opposition for their support of this Bill. I did ensure that I shared my brief with all Honourable Members, my caucus and also with the Leader of the Opposition prior to make sure that if there were any questions that could have been answered, they were.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be now committed.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Deputy Speaker.

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

[Pause]

The Speaker: Excuse me, Members. Were you able to hear the Deputy?

Hon. E. David Burt: No, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: No? Okay.

Deputy, we will start. We will restart.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Can you hear me now?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I hear the Deputy now.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: I hear you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

House in Committee at 12:20 pm

[Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr., Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT ACT 2020

The Chairman: Honourable Members, we are now in Committee of the whole [House] for the consideration of the Bill entitled the [Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020](#).

Mr. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I move clauses 1, 2 and 3.

Mr. Chairman, clause 1 is self-explanatory.

Clause 2 repeals subsections (1)(e), (2), (3), (4) and (5) of section 14 of the Act, as their provisions are re-enacted, with modifications, in the new section 14A [see clause 3], which provides for a seven-day

(currently three-day) curfew in the interests of public safety or public health (which is currently only “public safety”), and broadens the curfew hours so as not to restrict to hours of darkness, currently defined as “the period between 5.30 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. next following”.

Clause 3 *[sic]* repeals subsections (1)(e), (2), (3), (4) and (5) of section 14 of the Act . . .

One second. One second, Mr. Chairman.

[Pause]

An Hon. Member: Clause 2 does that.

Another Hon. Member: Clause 3 inserts [new section] 14A.

[Pause]

The Chairman: Do you have it, Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: I have got it now. Stand by.

Clause 3 inserts section 14A of the Act. Proposed section 14A(1) provides for the Governor to order a seven-day curfew in the interests of public safety or public health. The curfew hours may be all hours of the day and night, or such hours as are specified in the order. Under [proposed section] 14A(2), the Minister responsible for Health may request the Governor to make an order under subsection (1) where it appears to the Minister that it is necessary to check the spread or threatened spread of a communicable disease. Proposed section 14A(3) makes it an offence to be in a public place (as defined in section 1 of the Act) contrary to an order made under [proposed] section 14A(1). Under [proposed] section 14A(4), the Governor can make consecutive orders. [Proposed] section 14A(5) provides for the order to be published in the *Gazette* or in such other manner as the Governor determines. [Proposed] section 14A(6) provides that the Statutory Instruments Act 1977 does not apply to such an order.

The Chairman: That's it, Mr. Premier?
Mr. Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes, Mr. Chairman. That is clauses 1, 2 and 3. That is it.

The Chairman: Are there any further speakers?

[Pause]

The Chairman: There are no further speakers?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Chairman, I apologise, but I am having difficulty unmuting. May I just . . . May I proceed, sir?

The Chairman: Yes, certainly. Continue, my dear.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you.

I just wanted to say, and I had difficulty unmuting. So I wonder if you would just give one second of levity to support the comments made by my honourable colleague, Ben Smith, and say that with the specific clauses to which the Premier has just referred, it obviously gives us the levity and the flexibility to be able to, from a public health or a Ministry of Health perspective, to be able to ensure that we arrest the possible spread of any disease. And in that regard, Mr. Chairman, we have no objection to these clauses.

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Chairman. Sorry.

The Chairman: I am sorry.

Mr. Scott Pearman: (MP Pearman.) I put something in the chat, but I am not sure if you have seen that, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Continue, Mr. Pearman.

Mr. Scott Pearman: I just have one question, Mr. Chairman, for the Honourable Premier.

And that is in relation to the fact that the Statutory Instruments Act 1977 shall not apply, which is what is stated there at the very end of the Bill on the bottom of page 2. But I am just curious why that is.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Are there any further speakers?
There appear to be none.
Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I note there was one question from the Shadow Attorney General. The Statutory Instruments Act of 1977 does not apply. It does not apply to orders that are currently made under any curfew orders; and in this particular case and instance, given the hubbub around the non-clarity we wanted to ensure that it was absolutely clear and stated inside of statute that the Statutory Instruments Act does not apply, and just making sure that we are taking the opportunity to tidy up any particular Acts. As we can understand, if a curfew is issued in seven days, then, I mean, the matter can be taken up. But it is not a long-term, I would say, issue. Whereas if it was an order that was issued for something else which might have longer duration or effect, something that would be more appropriately subjected to parliamentary scrutiny.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I move that clauses 1, 2 and 3 be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that clauses 1, 2 and 3 be approved.

Are there any objections to that?

There appear to be none.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1, 2 and 3 passed.]

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I move that the preamble be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the preamble be approved.

Are there any objections to that?

There appear to be none.

Approved.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman . . . I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

Are there any objections to that?

There appear to be none.

The Bill will be reported to the House as printed.

Thank you, Mr. Premier.

[Motion carried: The Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 12:27 pm

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT ACT 2020

The Speaker: Members. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Members, are there any objections to the Bill or the Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020 being reported to the House as printed?

There are no objections. The Bill has been reported to the House.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Exactly.

We now move on to the second item on the Order Paper, the second reading of the Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020. And again this is in the name of the Premier.

Premier, would you like to present the matter?

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 be now read for the second time.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?

No objections. Continue on, Premier.

BILL

SECOND READING

EMERGENCY POWERS AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, very often when Bills of this nature come to this House, there is a tendency to refer to them as “housekeeping amendments.” Mr. Speaker, to the casual observer this may appear to be the case with this Bill. However, more than housekeeping, this is a clarified legal position to ensure greater transparency in the management of affairs on behalf of the people of Bermuda.

The Bill before this House will amend the Emergency Powers Act 1963 to provide that regulations, orders and rules made under the Act are subject to parliamentary scrutiny by way of the negative resolution procedure. Mr. Speaker, I undertook to this House and the public to resolve that the diversions of views that emerged in the course of recent debates in this House, I would bring such a Bill to make it clear that the negative resolution procedure would be applied to regulations made under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, it should not be lost on Honourable Members that we are considering this change and erring on the side of more scrutiny at a time when in other countries the restrictions on individual freedoms have been transformed from defensive to shield the most vulnerable from COVID-19 to an offensive to quell the unrest provoked by an act of criminal homicide in the United States.

Scrutiny of administrative action is a good thing. It promotes confidence in decision-making. It encourages better decision-making and cultivates an atmosphere of inclusion among everyday citizens and their representatives.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to fulfil the undertaking I made to this House and to the public, and I commend this Bill to the House and to the support of Honourable Members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Does any other Members wish to make a contribution on this Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Speaker, with your leave I am happy to speak to it. But given the time, if you prefer to rise and have me do it after we return from lunch?

The Speaker: Honourable Member.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Well, actually I prefer [INAUDIBLE] at home and at their office, we are doing the shorter lunch from 1:00 to 2:00 rather than 12:30 to 2:00.

[Pause]

The Speaker: You can continue to 1:00.

Mr. Scott Pearman: No problem. I am happy to continue, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Continue on.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I am rather surprised by this amending Bill being brought. And I think it does benefit us just to remind you why this amendment is being brought to the House. We had a debate a few sittings ago about whether or not the regulations that were being passed under the Emergency Powers Act should properly have been brought to Parliament so that Parliament could exercise its right to scrutinise those regulations. And it was the Opposition's complaint that those regulations had not been brought to Parliament and that they should have been.

The Opposition was pleased to recognise that the regulations were subsequently brought to Parliament, as we say they should have been, and the Opposition was pleased to contribute to the debate on those regulations.

It is important to place this, Mr. Speaker, in context. The Emergency Powers Act is one of the most powerful statutory tools that can be wielded by people on this Island. Bermudians have seen themselves confined to their homes. They have seen the Regiment on our streets. This is a very, very powerful piece of legislation that can impose restraints and sanctions on our citizenry. Therefore, it is vital that regulations made under this Act come to Parliament. And, as I said a moment ago, we were pleased that they did.

What is less clear is why they did not come to Parliament in the first place. It is being said by this Government by reason of this amendment that they did not come to Parliament in the first place because there was a lack of clarity. Respectfully, Mr. Speaker, section 6 of the Emergency Powers Act makes very clear, and I quote, with your leave: "Copies of regulations made under this Act" (that is, the Emergency Powers Act)—

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, if I may, I think the Honourable Member is out of order.

The Speaker: Is that a point of order, Mr. Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that the Honourable Member is reflecting on a previous—

The Speaker: State your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Reflecting on previous debate]

Hon. E. David Burt: I do believe the Honourable Member is reflecting on a previous debate that we did have, where we extensively covered the duelling legal positions on this particular matter and in which I clarified the position of the Government in regard to this and what actually led to this particular Bill. So I do believe that he is reflecting on a previous debate.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Speaker, with due respect—

The Speaker: MP Pearman, just be guided by the guidelines as it refers to bringing up a previous matter during this time. I am sure you are astute enough to be able to get your point across without having to go down that particular road.

Mr. Scott Pearman: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker. And let me tie it to what was said by the Honourable Premier in his opening today. In effect, the Premier is saying that this amendment brings more scrutiny to the regulation, more parliamentary scrutiny. And my respectful submission is it does not.

The previous section that is being amended requires, and I quote, "Copies of regulations made under this Act shall be laid before both Houses of the Legislature as soon as practicable after they are made; and if either House, within ten days after a copy of such regulations has been laid before it, being days on which that House has sat, requests, by message to the Governor, that the regulations or any part thereof be annulled, then the Governor shall as soon as may be, by notice in the Gazette, declare the regulations or such part thereof to be annulled . . ."

So what we are amending is that power. It was very clear that the regulations under the previous Act, the existing Act, required regulations to come to the House and be debated.

What we are now proposing is that they should come and be debated in accordance with the 1977 Act, under the negative resolution procedure.

The only material change between the Act as it was and the proposed amendment, as I see it . . . and if someone has another material change, by all means point it out. But the only material change is that under the Emergency Powers Act 1963, any regula-

tions from the Governor had to come to Parliament and had to be debated within 10 days. Now . . . and they *had* to be debated, *positively* debated. Now this amendment is putting in place the *negative* resolution procedure.

Now, I know that is a technical parliamentary term. But what it means is that something does not have to be debated; it can just be picked up and debated if someone feels like it. So it is not a *must*; it is a *could*.

And I say this, Mr. Speaker, because the suggestion by the Premier is that today's amendment brings *more* parliamentary scrutiny. Now, respectfully, if the position is that the Parliament has to meet within 10 days to debate the regulations, and we are amending that to be that we *may* meet within 21 days and debate the regulations, I would suggest that that is *less* parliamentary scrutiny and not more.

And, Mr. Speaker, that begs the question why we are having this amendment. And I respectfully suggest that we are having this amendment because of the kerfuffle, to make it look like it was the Act's fault that what was supposed to happen did not happen and that someone made a mistake somewhere. But nonetheless, the amendment is being made.

And it is interesting, as a final observation, Mr. Speaker, just one Bill ago when we made another amendment to the Emergency Powers Act, we included in that a section where the Statutory Instruments Act did not apply. And yet now in this amendment, this Bill, we are inserting a requirement that the 1977 Statutory Instruments Act does apply.

So we seem to be at sixes and sevens as to what we are trying to achieve here. And that is unfortunate because, as I said at the beginning, this is an immensely powerful tool in the hands of those who are governing our citizenry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP Pearman.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution on this Bill?

No other Member?

Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am here. Can you just give me one minute, if I may?

The Speaker: No problem.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, it is Michael Scott.

The Speaker: Yes. Would you like to make a contribution, MP Scott?

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Yes, please.

The Speaker: Yes. Go on. While the Premier is sorting himself out, I will give you the opportunity.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Statutory Instruments Act of 1977 at section 6, to which the Honourable and Learned Member, my colleague, Mr. Pearman, referenced in his remarks, makes it very clear that "Every statutory instrument made by [His Excellency] or the Minister under an enabling Act, or which though made by some other person or authority requires the consent or approval of the Governor or a Minister, shall, unless specifically provided to the contrary in such Act, be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny"

The operative words are "shall, unless specifically provided to the contrary in such Act." And the rationale for the making of a tabling in the House for parliamentary scrutiny an emergency powers set of regulations has been provided by the Premier not only on this occasion, but on the previous occasion when the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Pearman, raised it.

But the point I make is that the old Statutory Instruments Act itself makes it abundantly clear that there is statutory power to specifically provide to the contrary the ordinary parliamentary scrutiny.

The point is that there has been a viable, reasonable and rational rationale put in ordinary terms giving flexibility to the Government to cope and for the Minister of Health to protect the health system of this country in the case of a virulent pandemic type of disease such as COVID-19, and for future references. Either the nimbleness or flexibility is required.

But I do not take the Honourable and Learned Member's point; in fact, he has no point really at all. There is a statutory basis—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: What is your point of order?

[Inaudible interjections]

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Scott Pearman: My point of order is that the Honourable and Learned Member is misleading the House.

He says he does not take my point. That is because he is reading from the wrong Act. He is reading from section 6 of the Statutory Instruments Act 1977. My point was about section 6 of the Emergency Powers Act 1963, which is the section that is being amended.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.
MP Scott.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: That does not interfere with the point I am making that I . . . that does not interfere with the strong point that I am making, Mr. Speaker, that I do not take the point of the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Pearman. Because the governing power of the Statutory Instruments Act at section 6 gives the power to the Minister, in this case, the Premier, to express a contrary statutory power not to table a set of regulations such as these emergency regulations.

The Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Pearman, is counselling or schooling on what I choose to read to make the point in the House that the operating statute is the Statutory Instruments Act. I make the point [that] it gives to the Minister, obviously as a legislative draftsman, it has as far back as 1977—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: —flexibility was contemplated as important.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Yes. There is another point of order. I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER *[Misleading]*

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable and Learned Member is again misleading the House.

The governing statute is not the Statutory Instruments Act 1977. As the law currently stands, the Emergency Powers Act is expressly *not* subject to the Statutory Instruments Act 1977. It is the amendment that is proposing to make it subject. So the governing power that we are debating here is what was wrong with section 6 of the Emergency Powers Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: MP Scott, would you like to continue?

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Certainly. Mr. Speaker, I have made my point. I think I have made it on two occasions now.

And that is my position, to reference this Honourable House to the operating statutory words of section 6 of the Statutory Instruments Act, giving flexibility to our Minister and to the Governor to either adopt negative resolutions or positive resolutions. In this case, we are adopting, for good reason, negative res-

olution and the requirement to avoid the requirement of parliamentary scrutiny, for good reason.

Those are my observations. And I am sure that the Premier now is ready to come back to the matter.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP Scott.
Any other Member wish to speak?

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Well, another “Mr. Speaker” from someone else. Who is . . .

Hold on just a minute, Mr. Premier.

Was someone else indicating their wish to speak?

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: It is MP Moniz. I put in the chat that I would like to speak.

The Speaker: Yes. MP Moniz, go ahead.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just wanted to add my two cents’ worth, Mr. Speaker, to say that I fully support the comments made by the Shadow Attorney General, the Honourable Scott Pearman. Perhaps he did not quite close the circle on it, maybe. He talked about the importance of what is being done here.

You have to remember that under the Emergency Powers Act, this is the most powerful of possible legislation. We are talking about suspending the basic human rights guaranteed under the Bermuda Constitution. So it is of paramount importance when you are going to be suspending people’s human rights, that you have the oversight and scrutiny of the people’s representatives in Parliament, that that is done in public—not in private, not behind people’s backs—that it is debated by the people’s representatives on the floor of the House of Assembly, which is our Parliament.

And this is what was not done when these original curfew and the emergency powers were enacted. It is exactly what was not done. And what was required by the legislation was that those items be tabled as soon as practicable under section 6 of the Emergency Powers Act. *It was not done then.*

And now the Government is moving into the Statutory Instruments Act. There is an element that can be seen of sleight of hand, where they are going to now say, *Oh, we are strengthening it*, but actually they are weakening it. They are putting it in the Statu-

tory Instruments Act, but they are making it negative resolution, so someone has to take it up.

So then you have the issue of how soon it is tabled in Parliament. It says “as soon as practicable.” And then you have the 21 days to take it up. Well, if you have a seven-day curfew, guess what? The curfew period, the suspension of people’s rights could be over before the people’s representatives get to debate the issue. And that is surely wrong. That cannot be right.

And I wish the Premier would stop using this sleight of hand. We see it in the United States with President Trump threatening to use these rights.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Point of order, Mr. Speaker! Point of order, Mr. Speaker!

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Hold on. MP Moniz, hold on a minute. Someone is trying to get a point of order.

Is there a point of order trying to be made?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Member is inadvertently misleading the House.

The Speaker: Hold on one minute now. Is that Minister Caines?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister Caines, you have got to improve your audio so that we can hear you. Because we really had difficulty last time you were on at the last sitting. And today you are breaking up right away. We are struggling to hear you.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, is it any better?

The Speaker: Barely. Can get closer to your microphone?

[Inaudible interjections; Feedback]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The Member is impugning improper motive. The terminology used “sleight of hand” . . . that has really bad connotations. That implies trickery and underhandedness, and that phrase should not be used, and it should be withdrawn immediately, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

MP Moniz, the term did imply a bit of negative undertone. I am sure you are astute enough to put your message across without having to use that term.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take the point.

What I meant to say was that it could be seen that way. It is not a good look. That is what my suggestion is. I am not suggesting it. I am saying it is not a good look; that is the impression he could give to a member of the public looking on to this. And we are all very mindful now because of what is taking place in the United States, and there we have a President who is threatening to use the military against his own population, you know. And all I am saying is that we need to be very careful.

When I look at other jurisdictions, for example like the UK, they are not calling out the military to deal with their population during coronavirus. I am talking about here in Bermuda. We have called out the military with their powers. And we should always be very careful when we are talking about using military personnel to deal with the civilian population.

And here we are dealing with an ability to suspend human rights, in particular the right of movement, which is guaranteed under the Constitution. We are talking about the ability to suspend that. In the first instance, you are talking about suspending it for seven days. But before when the human rights were suspended, it did not come to the House until long past that time. It took a very long time for the Government to bring those enactments to the House and let them be debated by the House of Assembly.

We have seen it happen once. And now this change worries us that it would allow it to happen again. And what the Premier is doing is not strengthening people’s rights, but it is, in fact, weakening them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution on this matter?

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Yes, Mr. Speaker. (Michael Scott.)

The Speaker: MP Scott, you spoke already. We are in the House. You cannot speak a second time.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Oh, we are still in the House. I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am ready to reply.

The Speaker: Mr. Premier, would you like to make your reply?

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, *some* could consider it a sleight of hand. For the former Attorney General and the current Shadow Attorney General to mislead the public with their particular statements and their reading of laws, when I would expect that the former Attorney General should know better. I can understand the Shadow Attorney General is an expert in corporate law and not in public law, so he could be mistaken. But I am quite surprised at the former Attorney General, who should know better.

So let me walk through this process one more time, Mr. Speaker, so all of those persons listening can understand.

In the very first instance, let us look at the existing provisions of which exist inside of section 6 of the [Emergency Powers Act](#). The existing provisions inside the Emergency Powers Act in section 6 read as follows, in which it says that “Copies of regulations made under this Act shall be laid before both Houses of the Legislature as soon as practicable after they are made; and if either House, within ten days after a copy of such regulations has been laid before it, being days on which that House has sat, requests, by message to the Governor, that the regulations or any part thereof be annulled, then the Governor shall as soon as may be, by notice in the Gazette, declare the regulations or such part thereof to be annulled”

Mr. Speaker, in that statement the Shadow Attorney General had implied that that is a mandatory debate of the House of Assembly, and he is wrong. It is not a mandatory debate of the House of Assembly. The only mandatory debate of the House of Assembly which is required is on the invocation of a state of emergency, which took place inside of this Honourable House. So let us be clear on that particular instance first, Mr. Speaker.

But I think what is also important, Mr. Speaker, is this whole issue of, *Oh, 10 days?*, and et cetera, and we would have to debate it within 10 days, which is wrong, Mr. Speaker. That is not what the law states.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: Let us go ahead and look at these Statutory Instruments Act.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Mr. Premier, let me just pause for a minute. There is a point of order.

What is your point of order, MP Pearman?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Premier is misleading the House.

First of all, he is not a lawyer. And secondly, he took a swipe at my legal knowledge. Well, it is a darn sight more than the Premier's, respectfully. But both statements he has just made are incorrect as to the legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Well, it does not require everyone to have to be a lawyer; it just requires that they have the proper technical advice. And I would hope that a Minister as responsible, as the Premier, would have been given the correct technical advice.

Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I will help the Honourable Member who is, of course, not past his . . . well, maybe he is past his first year in the House. But I will help him. If he would have let me finish, I am going to just give him reference.

Because almost the exact same wording that exists inside of section 6 of the 1963 Emergency Powers Act is reflected inside of the 1977 Statutory Instruments Act. And here is what it says under the negative resolution procedure, and it will sound eerily similar, Mr. Speaker, to what I just read in the Emergency Powers Act.

Because what it says is [at [Statutory Instruments Act 1977](#), section 8], “Where the negative resolution procedure applies—(a) copies of the statutory instrument shall be laid before both Houses of the Legislature as soon as practicable after the statutory instrument is made” That sounds very similar to what I just read where it says, “as soon as practical” as they are made for things under the Emergency Powers Act.

I go further on, Mr. Speaker, reading from the Statutory Instruments Act 1977 [section 8(b)], in which it says, “if either House of the Legislature, within the period of twenty-one days” (not 10 days) “(beginning with the day on which a copy is laid before it) or before the expiration of the third sitting day (including the day on which a copy is laid before it), whichever is the later, resolves that a message be sent to the Governor requesting that the statutory instrument or any part thereof be annulled—(i) no further proceedings shall be taken under the statutory instrument or such part” (and) “(ii) the maker shall as soon as practicable by notice in the Gazette declare the statutory instrument or such part thereof to be annulled in pursuance of the resolution”

So what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? That means that all of the items of which we table under a negative resolution procedure in this House are subject to that particular provision—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: —which is the exact language save and except—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Premier, let me ask you to pause one more time.

Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Premier is misleading the House.

It is not the exact same language between one Act and the other. Moreover, he knows that the negative resolution procedure, which does not mandate debate, is not the same as the other procedure. He must know the difference between them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP.
Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Shadow Attorney General has said that I am not a lawyer. But my job is to make law. And I can promise the Honourable Member that I read quite a lot of it.

So what we see here inside of the Emergency Powers Act and the process for regulations under the Emergency Powers Act reads and states [at section 6] that “Copies of regulations made under this Act shall be laid before both Houses of the Legislature as soon as practicable after they are made” And the Statutory Instruments Act says [at section 8], “copies of the statutory instrument shall be laid before both Houses of the Legislature as soon as practicable after the statutory instrument is made”

The Emergency Powers Act allows for these particular matters to be taken up, and it does not state that they have to be debated in the House.

And what is clear, Mr. Speaker, is that the Shadow Attorney General said that we are watering these things down because we are taking away the mandatory debate in the House. And what I am stating, Mr. Speaker, is there no mandatory debate provision of which exists inside of the Emergency Powers Act 1963.

It is the same process as is followed in the negative—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: —with similar wording.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Premier, if you would allow the point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Again, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Premier is misleading the House.

All debates are positive unless the negative resolution is expressly referenced.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is now just being argumentative and vexatious for no other particular purpose.

Allow me to say it again, Mr. Speaker, that the Emergency Powers Act, as it currently states, runs out a process that is very, very similar to what is laid out in the Statutory Instruments Act. That applies to negative resolution procedures, Mr. Speaker, where items can be laid. And if the House passes a resolution that it does not agree with the regulations, then they cease to be in effect. That is the very essence of the negative resolution procedure, Mr. Speaker.

And as much as I have destroyed the Honourable Member's arguments and he wishes to push back on it, that does not change the fact that in his submission where he said there was a mandatory debate, he was wrong.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.
Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable MP.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Scott Pearman: The Honourable Premier has suggested that there is no difference. If there is no difference, why is he amending the Act?

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.
(Michael Scott.)

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable and Learned Member, Mr. Pearman, is being entirely argumentative. Let me add my legal analysis of the reading of simple black-letter statutory language.

The Premier is entirely right. There is a deep similarity between the Statutory Instruments Act and the Emergency Powers Act on negative resolutions. It is very similar. And it is similar, Mr. Speaker, I submit, because those two Acts are aligning deliberately so that the very objective that we are trying to accomplish by the amendments being projected by the Premier is to use the negative resolution procedure for what has

historically been used in parliamentary usage for centuries. It is for emergency situations when you require flexibility.

It is disgraceful that both the former Attorney General, the Honourable and Learned Member Mr. Moniz, and Mr. Pearman are being entirely argumentative in drawing in comparisons with Donald Trump and deployments of the Bermuda Regiment. The Bermuda Regiment has been deployed by the Minister of National Security to assist, to preserve and protect the health system of this country. And neither of those Members are happy that the country has been appreciative and trusts the magnitude of care and efficiency with which this Government has carried out those protections with the use—I will finish on this, Mr. Speaker—with the use of flexibility—

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

The Speaker: Yes. I was going to suggest you are long on a point or order.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Sorry, sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I continue?

The Speaker: Yes, you may.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the intervention of the former Attorney General, the Honourable Member for constituency 36, who has read the law correctly, Mr. Speaker, and is not being purposely argumentative and vexatious, because here is the thing. The Honourable Shadow Attorney General asked, *Why are we making the change?* I am happy to let him know why we are making the change.

We are making the change so future generations do not have to have this particular argument and discussion. And the fact is that this also does add additional scrutiny. Allow me to state: Anything that is done under a statutory instrument is required to be published. Under the Emergency Powers Act, regulations which are made are not required to be gazetted. So this is in fact adding an additional level of public scrutiny to these particular things.

And, Mr. Speaker, instead of the House only having 10 days of which to take something up, in case the House is meeting every two weeks, now the House has 21 days in which to take something up, Mr. Speaker. So in that case, it actually does, in a way, make this better, Mr. Speaker.

But allow me to continue, because it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we recognise and we understand the views and the intervention from certain Members on the other side. Because I know that the

Honourable former Attorney General would take great delight in attempting to compare me to his good friend Donald Trump. But allow me to say this, Mr. Speaker. I understand what he is trying to do, and it is not going to work.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Point of order. Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order. Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: The Honourable Member is misleading the House, as he well knows. Donald Trump . . . I have never met him in my life, and he is certainly not a good friend of mine. But he certainly looks more like Mr. Trump than myself at the moment. Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Point of clarification Premier, the Honourable Member does not want to consider himself to be a friend . . . that he does not have a friendship with the current President.

Hon. E. David Burt: No problem, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I will wear the badge of leadership of the great country of Bermuda with a badge of honour, and I shall continue to do so.

But here is what I will say, Mr. Speaker. What I will say is that if there is anyone who has a similarity to attempting to put police upon persons who are in peaceful protest, such as the former Attorney General clearly declared himself on December 2nd of 2016 . . . who the cap fits, then he shall wear that, Mr. Speaker.

But what I will say in closing, Mr. Speaker, on a very, very simple point: This Bill clarifies the point. This Bill brings additional scrutiny. This Bill will require these items to be laid before the House in the future and allow Honourable Members to take them up within 21 days. And, as the Statutory Instruments Act says, they actually now are parts and pieces of legislation and have to be gazetted, which they previously were not required to do, Mr. Speaker.

And with that, I move that the Bill be committed, and also will ask that we can break for lunch.

Mr. Scott Pearman: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes. The Honourable Premier is again misleading the House.

He keeps saying that they did not need to be gazetted. Of course, the reason they are not gazetted is because the Governor, under the Emergency Powers Act, must formally proclaim an emergency, which is higher than any gazetting.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member must listen for one second and take the fact that this person who occupies this office can be right sometimes and is not always wrong. So let me try one more time for the Shadow Attorney General.

A declaration of emergency is different than regulations which are made under the Emergency Powers Act. A declaration of emergency, which was made by the Governor at the request of the Cabinet, was required in which to summon the House. The House was summoned and debated that state of emergency. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker, of historical record.

We are not talking about the declaration of a state of emergency. We are talking about section 6, which states that regulations which are made to accompany a declaration of the state of emergency . . . that is the matter of which we are dealing with, Mr. Speaker. And regulations which are made to accompany a state of emergency are not currently required to be gazetted. We as a Government gazetted them. They are not required to be gazetted.

This change will require them to be gazetted. So there is no dispute as to whether or not that happens in the future, Mr. Speaker. And as you said, Mr. Speaker, we act on these things on the basis of advice. And it is quite surprising to me that the Honourable Shadow Attorney General thinks that he knows better than every single lawyer in Chambers who has advised the Government on this particular point, Mr. Speaker.

What I am saying is the brief has been laid out. It is clear as to what this Act does. I can understand the need to try to make a political argument or political hay out of this fact. We can see what is attempting to be done with the conjuring up of all types of images of these types of things. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that this adds more rights and this adds additional flexibility and more scrutiny, Mr. Speaker.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I ask one more time that the Bill be committed. And I will ask, of course, that we could adjourn for lunch.

The Speaker: Well, Premier, we will permit it. Originally, we were going to go to lunch from 1:00 to 2:00. And I would like to have seen this matter finished before then. But it looks like it may take up more time than originally anticipated.

So, Committee . . . I am looking to it . . . there are . . . How many clauses altogether, Premier?

An Hon. Member: Four.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, there are four.

The Speaker: Four clauses?

Hon. E. David Burt: I am happy to go through.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Given the arguments and nature thus far, Mr. Speaker, we might be here until 2:30.

The Speaker: Well, I was going to suggest that we go ahead into committee. At least get this matter finished, and when we come back we will start onto the next matter on the Order Paper.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am happy to do so, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Let me . . . Members, do you have an objection to our continuing this before we do lunch?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: (MP Gordon-Pamplin.)

Hon. Michael J. Scott: I would like to go to lunch, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay.
Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. I was just going to suggest that we go to lunch. I do not want to be perceived as an attempt—

The Speaker: No problem. No problem. I am easy to get along with. Members.

Mr. Premier, will you adjourn us for lunch until 2:00 pm?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move that this House do now adjourn until 2:00 pm.

The Speaker: And we will open in the House and then go into Committee at two when we return.

Thank you, Members. The House now stands adjourned until 2:00 pm.

Again, no need to turn off your systems so we do not have a problem getting them back on, just mute your cameras and mute your microphones.

So we will see you at 2:00 pm. The House is now adjourned.

Proceedings suspended at 1:07 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:01 pm

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

The Speaker: Members, we should be going live in a few minutes . . . in a minute or so. It is now one minute before 2:00 pm.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Good afternoon, we are live now folks. Let us confirm that it is now 2:00 pm and we are just waiting to confirm that everyone is back in.

An Hon. Member: I'm in.

The Speaker: Mr. Premier, are you back?

Hon. E. David Burt: I am here, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay, Mr. Premier. We are going to be in the House for one second and then we will let you move us back to Committee and the Deputy [Speaker] will take over.

Mr. Pearman, are you there?

Mr. Scott Pearman: I am, sir.

The Speaker: Okay. So, everybody who wants to participate is back in the session.

So, Mr. Premier, would you like to move us into Committee?

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 be now committed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

And the Deputy Speaker will now take over and take us into Committee.

Deputy Speaker?

House in Committee at 2:02 pm

[Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr. Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

EMERGENCY POWERS AMENDMENT ACT 2020

The Chairman: We are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled the [Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020](#).

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Chairman, I move clauses 1 through 4 of the Bill.

Mr. Chairman, clause 1 is self-explanatory.

Clause 2 repeals and replaces the provisions of section 6 of the Emergency Powers Act 1963. The new section provides that regulations made by the Governor under that Act, as well as orders and rules made by another authority or person under such regulations, are subject to parliamentary scrutiny by the negative resolution procedure.

Clause 3 amends the First Schedule to the Statutory Instruments Act 1977 by removing the Emergency Powers Act 1963 from that Schedule. This would make the Statutory Instruments Act 1977 apply to the Emergency Powers Act 1963.

Clause 4 provides for the commencement.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Premier, I heard you—Michael Scott [here]—but I have not heard the Speaker for the last . . . I am sorry, the Chairman.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Chair did say “hold on.” That is the last I heard him say.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, I had missed that. I am sorry. I will wait.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: He said “hold on,” but I thought he was back on. Oh, well.

[Pause]

The Chairman: Are there any further speakers?

There appear to be none.
Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes?

The Chairman: [INAUDIBLE]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Chairman, I am having difficulty hearing you. But, for the avoidance of any doubt, the Opposition's position has been set out in the debate and we have nothing to add in Committee and we are content for the Premier to close out Committee.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Pearman.
Premier, do you want to close it?

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I move that clauses 1 through 4 be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that clauses 1 through 4 be approved.

Are there any objections to that?
There are none.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 4 passed.]

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I move that the preamble be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the preamble be approved.
Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.
Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none. The Bill will be reported to the House as printed.
Thank you, Mr. Premier.

[Motion carried: The Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 2:06 pm

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

EMERGENCY POWERS AMENDMENT ACT 2020

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members. We are now back in the House.

Are there any objections to the Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 being reported to the House as printed?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: I beg your pardon?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, I think there was some difficulty in understanding the process here.

The Speaker: Okay. We were in Committee, the Deputy Speaker had the House in Committee, and Mr. Scott Pearman spoke, I believe, and indicated that the Opposition was in favour and the Premier moved it back to the House . . . sorry, the Deputy Speaker moved us back to the House.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, based on the new revelations that took place during the debate, we

thought that we would have the opportunity . . . I do not think we were sure where we were to say that we did not agree with the Bill.

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

The Speaker: Although I do not participate when you are in Committee, I am indeed listening. And from what I heard, Mr. Pearman came in and said he did have some difficulty hearing the Deputy Speaker, but he wanted to make clear that the Opposition was fine and that the Premier could go ahead and proceed, and then he proceeded.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Speaker, if I may, what I said is that we did not have anything to say in Committee, having made our points in debate; that I could not hear the Chairman, but we were prepared for the Premier to close out Committee.

The Speaker: Yes, that is what I said. So, the Chairman did close out the [Committee] and it was moved back to the House. So, we were following direction based on Mr. Pearman indicating that the Opposition did not have any objection to the Committee concluding and the matter being returned back to the House. And that is the stage where we are at now.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: If we have an objection, isn't this the time for us to say that we do have some?

The Speaker: Oh, you could object to it, yes. I thought you were . . . I thought the indication here was that the Opposition Leader was trying to speak.

The objection, if you are objecting to it being returned to the House, then we will have to take a vote on it.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Beg your pardon?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is correct.

The Speaker: So, you would like to vote on it being returned to the House?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay. Hold on one second.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: For the confusion—

The Speaker: You are objecting to the Bill at this stage, because the question is that the . . . when I come back to the House is that I have asked if there is any objection to it returning to the House, and are there any objections to the Bill being accepted in the

House as printed without any amendments. It is either yes or no.

At this point you are saying no, so, there is an objection to it returning to the House as printed. Am I being clear?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: That is correct. So, if there is an objection, I am going to take a yay or nay unless somebody calls for names. Okay?

So, are all Members clear about where we are right now?

There has been an indication of an objection to the Bill—the Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020—being returned from Committee to the House as printed.

Being there is an objection, we will take a vote. And the first vote will be a yay or nay, unless Members call for a name vote.

So, are all Members ready for the first yay or nay?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, if I may, just a point of order and clarification.

At this point in time, the House is not . . . we are not doing the second reading of the Bill. The second reading of the Bill is done. The Bill was reported to Committee. We are coming back out of our Committee and the question that is put to the House is, Is there any objection to the report of the Committee?

So, what . . . just so I am clear, the Opposition did not have any discussion in Committee, but they are now objecting to the report of the Committee, even though no contribution was made inside of Committee?

The Speaker: That is where we are. Whether they made a contribution or not, you are correct, Mr. Premier, in that when it does come back to the House the Speaker comes back to the Chair and then asks if there are any objections to the Bill being reported back to the House.

The Opposition has now indicated that they have an objection. So, the vote will be as a result of this objection.

Yes, they did not contribute, but they . . . the order allows them to be able to indicate favour or not on it being reported.

So, there has been an indication that they have some objections, so we will now take the vote.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: So, are all Members ready to for a yay or nay vote at this time?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

The Speaker: I am going ask first for those who are in favour, yay. And then I am going to ask second for those who are opposed to give a nay, okay?

So, here we go. All Members who are in favour, will you please indicate by saying Yay?

AYES.

The Speaker: Okay. All right.

Now Members, those who are opposed you can indicate by saying Nay.

NAYS.

The Speaker: Thank you Members for your contribution. I will have to make a decision based on what I heard. And what I heard sounds like the nays outweighed . . . the yays outweighed the nays. And that means that the matter will be reported . . . that the report has been accepted in the House.

[Motion carried: The Report of the Committee on the Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 was accepted.]

The Speaker: We will now move on to the next order of business today, which is the second reading of the Merchant Shipping Amendment Act 2020 in the name of the Minister of Tourism and Transport.

Minister, are you ready?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am ready.

Do you hear me?

The Speaker: Yes, I hear you loud and clear, Minister. You can proceed.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Merchant Shipping Amendment Act 2020 be now read for the second time.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to the matter being read a second time?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It is MP Gordon-Pamplin.

I am not objecting, I would just ask Members to mute out their microphones. We are getting a lot of background noise and it is very difficult to hear.

The Speaker: Okay. I will check and make sure everyone is muted out. Thank you for that.

Okay. Minister De Silva?

Minister De Silva?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Okay. Are you ready to proceed?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I am ready, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Please do. And, again, a reminder to Members who are not speaking, just make sure your microphone is muted until you are going to speak.

Minister, you have the floor.

BILL

SECOND READING

MERCHANT SHIPPING AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Amendment Bill before this Honourable House today is to bring Bermuda's maritime legislation up to date with the recent International Maritime Legislation Amendment. The Bill allows Bermuda to keep up with our international obligations to ensure maritime legislation remains current and aligned with the International Maritime Organization's conventions and protocols.

Mr. Speaker, the initial amendments proposed relate to safety and pollution to protect the environment from pollution from ships. The Bill gives the Minister the authority to give directions to a ship or ship owner following an accident on a ship in Bermuda waters or an accident involving a Bermuda ship where the ship is in danger of leaking a hazardous substance that would cause damage to Bermuda's coastline.

To ensure the Minister has the power to give direction to deal with pollution incidents within Bermuda's territorial waters (12 nautical miles) and within our offshore waters (which is 12 to 200 nautical miles) there is a related amendment to include a definition for Bermuda's "Exclusive Economic Zone."

Details of actions the Minister may take are set out in a new Schedule 3A entitled "Safety Directions."

Mr. Speaker, the Bill makes further amendments with respect to how the regulations are to be made. Sections 179 and 180 of the Act deal with the provisions of the Convention relating to the Carriage of Passengers and their Luggage by Sea, having the force of law in Bermuda, and provide for the Minister to make orders which are currently subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. To facilitate the frequency and speed with which, sometimes, these orders need to be made to meet Bermuda's internation-

al obligations, amendments to sections 179 and 180 are being made to enable orders made by the Minister to be made by negative resolution procedure.

Mr. Speaker, additional amendments mean the Minister will now have the authority to make ambulatory references to international conventions. The new section 254A will allow the continuous and regular changes to international maritime conventions to be made in a much quicker fashion than Bermuda legislation. The current practice of updating maritime legislation, at times, can lead to delays in implementation of amendments to specific instruments which, in turn, can result in ships being challenged during inspections in foreign ports, leading to delays and inconvenience for Bermuda ships.

The effect of the new section 254A is to ensure that the powers of the Minister to make regulations, orders, or rules wherever they appear in the Act in the exercise to provide that a reference in the legislation to an international instrument is to be interpreted as a reference to the instrument as modified from time to time (and not simply to the version of the instrument that exists at the time the secondary legislation is made).

Mr. Speaker, it is important to mention that the inclusion of ambulatory references to international conventions does not ultimately obviate the Minister of the responsibility to ensure our legislation remains current and up to date with international instruments and obligations. The main benefits of using ambulatory references are: simplification, clarity for industry users of our maritime legislation, and prompt compliance by Bermuda with international obligations. Parliamentary control will be maintained as the Minister will always have the power to make an instrument to prevent an unwanted amendment to an international instrument from becoming Bermuda law. Such an event is thought to be extremely unlikely as the measures are generally related to safety, are agreed internationally, and will invariably be international obligations which Bermuda has to fulfil and internationally applicable standards with which Bermuda ships have to comply, regardless of whether they pass into domestic law or not.

Mr. Speaker, final amendments include: revoking the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Regulations 2005, which is essentially a housekeeping exercise; and making a consequential amendment to the Dangerous Vessels Act 1990 by inserting a new section for safety directions into the Act. The purpose of the new section is to expand the Minister's powers in the Dangerous Vessels Act 1990.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes, please, Mr. Speaker. Sorry I did not put my name in the chat thing, I cannot find it.

The Speaker: No problem. I recognise the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I did discuss this piece of legislation with the Minister beforehand and he has provided me a copy of his brief.

We on this side, actually, do not have any issue with the amendments that he is proposing and understanding that in the case of an emergency that the Minister may need to move quickly, and we support the legislation with the caveat (as usual) that the extra powers or the release of some restrictions for the Minister to be able to move quickly are not abused, which I am sure they would not be.

So, we support the legislation and thank the Minister for bringing it forward.

I just want to ask a question, just completely . . . not unrelated to the legislation, but—

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: —I would like to know how . . . is there a cycle or something that determines when these pieces of legislation should come up? How is it . . . how do you know when . . . what determines when this has to be amended? Is there a trigger that says we need to look at this legislation? And that is just for my own edification, for nothing else. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Minister, would you like . . . first of all, would any other Member like to speak to this matter?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes, I would like to speak to it. This is Cole.

The Speaker: Yes, MP Simons, you can go right ahead.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Just one issue I would like clarification on. When we have a ship traversing our waters, be they the 12 miles or the 12 to 200 miles, is there a requirement that these ships have insurance for environmental impairment and environmental damage?

You know, because pollution liability can bankrupt an organisation, especially a shipping organisation. And so, is there a requirement that any ships that come to Bermuda or pass through out international waters, that they have sufficient pollution liability insurance and that we have to sign off on that before they transverse our waters?

So, just a question for clarity.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Thank you, MP.

Minister, before you respond, are there any other Members who would like to contribute to this debate?

No?

Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Well, before I answer those questions, we may as well move to Committee and then I can answer the questions or I could do them here, I am easy, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: If you think they fit properly under clauses, then you can do it in Committee, I have no problem. But if you want to answer in an open forum, you can do it now.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay. I will do it now, Mr. Speaker.

First of all—

The Speaker: Go right ahead.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —let me say thank you to the Opposition Tourism and Transport Minister as we do tend to work fairly close together and this is one of those situations where we have done just that.

With regard to when we do these things, obviously, the reason for the change is that, you know, if we have an accident in our waters we want to be able to move very quickly and make whatever decisions we feel are appropriate at the time. And the other reason that we may have to make further amendments is that we are all familiar with the IMO and they are constantly making changes over the years. So, you know, we will have to make changes, I am sure, throughout the years. So, when those changes are made internationally, we look at them closely and then we decide whether or not we need to make changes here and we then do so if we feel it is necessary.

MP Cole Simons, the question with regard to insurance, I can try and get that [answer]. But from what I know, just about every ship that traverses the waters around the world has insurance. But I will endeavour to get the answer to that question for him in due course.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill be committed.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

We will call on the Deputy Speaker and the House will be in Committee.

Deputy Speaker?

House in Committee at 2:23 pm

[Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

MERCHANT SHIPPING AMENDMENT ACT 2020

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honourable Members, we are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled the [Merchant Shipping Amendment Act 2020](#).

Minister De Silva, you have the floor.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I propose to move all 11 clauses. They are fairly short. I make that proposal.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No objection, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you.
[Continue.]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, clause 1 is the citation for the Bill.

Clause 2 inserts a definition for the use of the term “Exclusive Economic Zone” in Bermuda into section 2(1) of the Merchant Shipping Act 2002 (“the principal Act”).

Clause 3 inserts a new section 121ZA into the principal Act. The new section 121ZA gives power to the Minister to give directions to a person in control of a ship, following an accident in Bermuda’s territorial waters or the Exclusive Economic Zone of Bermuda.

Clause 4 amends section 179 of the principal Act by repealing subsection (7). The purpose of this amendment is to enable orders made by the Minister in respect of Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Sea under section 179 of the principal Act, to be made by negative resolution procedure. This is to facilitate the frequency and the speed with which these orders sometimes need to be made, in order to meet Bermuda’s international obligations.

Clause 5 amends section 180 of the principal Act by repealing subsection (3). The purpose of this amendment is to enable orders made by the Minister under section 180(1) of the principal Act, to be made by negative resolution procedure. It is to facilitate the frequency and the speed with which these orders sometimes need to be made, in order to meet Bermuda’s international obligations.

Clause 6 amends section 254 of the principal Act by repealing subsection (4A) and inserting new subsections (4A) and (4B). The new subsections (4A) and (4B) give power to the Minister, to amend Schedules 6 and 12, respectively, to the principal Act, by order. A change has also been made to subsection (5) to enable the Minister to make regulations, orders,

rules and notices generally, for carrying out the provisions of the principal Act.

Clause 7 inserts a new section 254A into the principal Act. The new section 254A deals with the power to make ambulatory references to international instruments. The effect of the new section 254A is to ensure that the powers of the Minister to make regulations, orders, rules or any subordinate legislation under any provision in the principal Act, can be exercised to provide that a reference in the legislation, to an international instrument, is to be interpreted as a reference to the instrument as modified from time to time (and not simply to the version of the instrument that exists at the time the subordinate legislation is made). The new section 254A provides a mechanism that will allow changes to international maritime instruments, which have been extended to Bermuda, to take effect in Bermuda law without the need to make further legislative or regulatory provision.

Clause 8 inserts a new Schedule 3A on safety directions into the principal Act. The new Schedule 3A details actions the Minister may take, following an accident on a ship or an accident involving a ship in Bermuda’s territorial waters or the Exclusive Economic Zone of Bermuda if, in his opinion, the accident has created a risk to safety or a risk of pollution by a hazardous substance, and the direction is necessary to reduce or remove the risk.

Clause 9 revokes the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Regulations 2005. This is essentially a housekeeping exercise.

Clause 10 makes a consequential amendment to the Dangerous Vessels Act 1990 by inserting a new section 6A on savings for safety directions, into that Act. The purpose of the new section 6A is to provide that any safety direction given by the Minister under Schedule 3A of the principal Act will take precedence over a direction given by a harbour master to a dangerous vessel under the Dangerous Vessels Act 1990.

Clause 11 provides for commencement and validation. Subsection (1) makes provision for the coming into force of this Act on assent. Subsection (2) brings clause 7 (the new section 254A) into force as at 18 February 2019. Any ambulatory provisions in regulations made by the Minister on or after that date are hereby validated.

The regulations to which subsection (2) refers are as follows: Merchant Shipping (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 2004; Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Regulations 2019; Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Sewage and Garbage from Ships) Regulations 2015; and Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution from Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulations 2019.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any further speakers?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Chairman, you are being very . . . you are extremely muffled. I do not know whether anybody is having difficulty, but it is extremely muffled.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It is muffled to me as well.

The Chairman: How about now?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is better, that is better, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: I'm so sorry about that.
Any further speakers?
There are none.
Minister, carry on.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay, Mr. Chairman.
I move that the preamble be approved.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No objection, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No objection, Mr. Chairman.

[Pause]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Minister, do you want to approve the Schedule to the legislation?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Ah . . . yes, I move that the Schedule be approved.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No objection.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It appears it might be just you and I at the moment, MP Scott.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I guess you're happy.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, thank you very much for all of your support.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No. No. No. You have got silent support right now.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Point of order. We cannot hear the Deputy Speaker at this time. We cannot hear the Chairman at this time.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Silence is acquiescence, Minister.

[Laughter]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Let us not get carried away here.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: MP Pat Gordon-Pamplin—

The Chairman: Okay, can you hear me now?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, he is back.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Loud and clear.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Very loud and clear.

The Chairman: All right.
Minister, let us start it over. Can you move the clauses first?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I move that the preamble be approved.

The Chairman: Minister, listen to me first please. Can you move the clauses first to be approved?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, you mean—

The Chairman: You have clauses 1 through—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, yes, okay. Sorry, Mr. Chairman. All right.

Mr. Chairman, I move that clauses 1 through 11 be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that clauses 1 through 11 be approved.
Are there any objections to that?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No objection, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: There appear to be none.
Approved.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 11 passed.]

The Chairman: Now move the preamble . . . the Schedule.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Chairman, I . . . Mr. Chairman, am I coming through?

The Chairman: I hear you.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Chairman, I ask that the Schedule be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Schedule be approved.
Are there any objections to that?

Some Hon. Members: No.

The Chairman: No objections.
Approved.

[Motion carried: The Schedule passed.]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I move that the preamble be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the preamble be approved.
Are there any objections to that?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No objection, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: No objections.
Approved.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.
Are there any objections to that?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No objections.

The Chairman: Bill approved.
The Bill will be reported to the House as printed.
Thank you.

[Motion carried: The Merchant Shipping Amendment Act 2020 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 2:35 pm

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

MERCHANT SHIPPING AMENDMENT ACT 2020

The Speaker: Members, are there any objections to the Merchant Shipping Amendment Act 2020 being reported to the House as printed?

There are none. It has been reported and accepted.

We now move on to the next item on the Orders for today and that item is a Resolution to be moved by the Premier, notice of which was given on May 22, 2020.

Mr. Premier, would you like to move your matter?

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes, Mr. Speaker.
Thank you.

MOTION

MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE (SALARIES AND PENSIONS) ACT 1975 MOTION TO REVOKE

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now take under consideration the following motion, notice of which was given on May [22,] 2020:

BE IT RESOLVED that previous resolutions of this House made pursuant to section 2 and 15A of the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975 be revoked;

AND BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to section 2 of the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975 the annual salaries payable to Members of the Legislature listed in Part A and Officers of the Legislature listed in Part B of the [table below](#) shall be as set out in column 3 of the table with effect from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, and with effect from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 shall be as set out in column 2.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to section 15A of the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975 the contributions toward the cost of pensions payable under the Act by Members and Officers of the Legislature shall be reduced from 12.5% of their salaries to 0% with effect from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, and with effect from 1 July 2021 shall be increased from 0% of their salaries to 12.5 %.

Mr. Speaker, am I okay to proceed?

The Speaker: Yes, continue on.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are aware that at the last sitting I gave notice that at the next day of meeting I proposed to move this motion. The purpose of this resolution is to provide for a salary reduction under the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are aware that the salary of Ministers and Members is provided for under section 2 of the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975. A resolution fixes the salaries of a member for a specified period. Resolutions are passed by both the Senate and House of Assembly and the last resolution was passed in March of 2020.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be aware that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on economic activity and a severe knock-on effect on the 2020/21 budget. The combination of lower fiscal revenues and higher public spending necessary, of course, to protect the health and welfare of our country, as well as provide a very generous packet of unemployment benefits for those persons who have

been displaced, will cause the projected budget deficit to increase significantly. Government Ministries have already identified significant areas of savings within their budgets, however, to reduce the deficit further, other temporary payroll or other government employee overhead savings have to be considered.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be aware that it has been proposed that public officers accept a reduction in salaries and wages as part of the effort to address the anticipated shortfall in revenues and the concurrent impact that it can have on the delivery of government services to the people. It is said that you cannot lead where you will not go and, as leaders in this country, all Honourable Members have been asked to do their part. Salaries of all Members and non-ministerial officers will be temporarily reduced by 12.5 per cent. In addition, the ministerial portion of Member's salaries will be temporarily reduced by 15 per cent. Reductions will take effect on 1 July 2020 and end on 30 June 2021, a period of one year.

Mr. Speaker, section 15A of the Act requires that Members make contributions towards the cost of their pensions. In conjunction with the above-mentioned salary reductions, Ministers and Members contributions to the Ministers and Members of the Legislature Pension Fund will be suspended along with the matching government portion. The suspension of pension contributions will also take effect on 1 July 2020 and end on 30 June 2021, a period of one year. During the cessation period a Member will lose one year of pensionable service. Later in the sitting will be . . . I will speak to the fact of the Act being amended to allow a Minister or Member to make voluntary contributions to buy back the year that is being lost to pensionable services.

Mr. Speaker, however, let me make it clear that this temporary salary reduction will not have a bearing on a Member's current pension. Honourable Members may recall that in 2013 the former administration reduced the ministerial portion of a Member's salary by 10 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, section 11 of the Act provides for the calculation of pensions under the Ministers and Members of the Legislature Pension Fund. Pensions under the fund are calculated based on the rate of salary payable to a Member on the date on which the Member becomes entitled to receive a pension. Accordingly, the reduction in the ministerial portion of a Member's salary provided for in the 2013 resolution (which is still in effect) would have had the effect of reducing the pension of any Member who served as a Minister and retired after 1 April 2013. This was an unintended consequence of the 2013 resolution and is also unfair to the affected Members as they would have, for the most part, paid into the Ministers and Members of the Legislature Pension Fund at the higher salary level.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall that to address this matter in December 2015 the former administration passed a retroactive resolution that was brought into force to deem reduction in ministerial salary that was made in March 2013 to not have affected the salary of a Member who retired after April 1, 2013. This resolution was for the purposes of pension calculations pursuant to section 11 of the Act and it is still in force.

What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that a Member's pension is still calculated based upon the above-mentioned resolution and not the reduced temporary salaries.

Mr. Speaker, since this resolution has been in force, pension calculations in accordance with sections 11 and 12 have used the salaries contained in the 2015 resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I note there is also a question regarding Members whose pensions are set to vest during this temporary suspension and what precisely that would mean for them. What I have stated in this brief is that the Government will be bringing an amendment to the law which will allow for persons to buy back their pension of their pensionable service and that pensionable service will count towards the vesting period. So, [for] persons who do buy back their service the vesting period will not be affected, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I am happy to entertain the comments of Honourable Members as part of this particular brief. This change is temporary. I believe that the change is necessary and the combined value of these changes will affect the public purse just short of \$1 million and they will give a savings of \$980,000 this year to the Consolidated Fund, which will help in regard to the other savings which have been identified to meet the \$150 million spending reduction target that has been targeted by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this in closing, it is certainly a very difficult place to be where, as a Government, we are looking to cut and cut and cut. And I look forward to future debates in this House where we are actually debating . . . where we are actually debating not what more can we cut, but how we can make sure that we can grow so that we have less time to cuts—whether it be from Members' salaries, Ministers' salaries, public officers' salaries, contributions and grants to the public sector.

We have an opportunity and a chance over the next few months to make radical changes and reform, Mr. Speaker. And I would sincerely hope and expect that all Members would recognise that these temporary changes can only be *temporary* if we fix the challenges that exist before us, or else we will find ourselves here next year looking for savings. And I am quite certain that that is not something that is wanted from Members, that is not something that is wanted from Ministers, I am sure that is not something that is wanted from public officers, and I am sure when we

are talking about the effects the cuts on grants and contributions have inside of society, that is not what is sought by Members.

We must recognise that the situation is difficult and unless we make sure that we are deliberate in effecting long-standing structural and fundamental change, we will be having these discussions for years to come. And Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to have this conversation next year.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, Mr. Speaker, can you hear me?

The Speaker: Yes, Opposition Leader, I hear you loud and clear.

You have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you very much and thank you, Premier, for your brief as we go through this troubling time.

I must say that we have spent quite a bit of time this week going back and forth, highlighting some of the challenges that this presents for Members of Parliament in going this route, not necessarily just with the pay cut, but also in how it would affect people's pensions and the likes.

So, I will say first off, just thank you for the back and forth. We were able to come to an agreement as far as those who, potentially, could be retiring within the next year or so as we go forward. So, I thank the Premier for the clarification as we spoke quite a bit with the Finance Secretary and the likes in trying to resolve this challenge.

I also recognise that this affects many of those who came into being Members of Parliament in 2012. And this also affects them. So, we look forward to seeing what those amendments are and I am sure others will probably have some questions for the Premier as we go through discussing this this afternoon.

What I can say is that, yes, we recognise that during these times . . . as the Premier ended off he said, you know, we do not want to be in this position another year from now, having to look at more and more cuts and, paraphrasing, I believe that he was looking for opportunities for growth and the likes. This is something that we have been talking about since the inception of the PLP becoming Government, that the economy needs to be growing. And now we find ourselves in a situation of COVID-19—no fault of anyone's—but because we have had no stimulation to the economy, it even intensifies the challenge that we have of having to take a pay cut, having to affect pensions, and the likes.

And many, as they have listened to the Premier, even prior to this year, have chimed in with their voice in basically saying, *Well, you know, if the take home salary is no different, then exactly how is it that we are sacrificing?*

And these are all fair questions that, at the end of the day, the Premier should be willing to entertain.

Along with the salary cut we have heard many people mention also that we need to cut even further. Some have mentioned that we even need to cut further as far as the number of Ministers that we do have and the likes. So, all of these things are out there and it would be interesting to hear from the Premier as to how he feels about some of these things.

But on face value, as we look at this here, I think we were not sure, quite frankly, when he said that Ministers would be taking a 15 per cent pay cut and I was not quite sure exactly how that was being facilitated. And I did ask the question of the Premier and he did say that 2.5 per cent—the additional 2.5 per cent from the 12.5 per cent that was taken . . . this may get a bit confusing. The 12.5 per cent that we already are looking at taking, the Ministers will take an additional 2.5 per cent off of their salaries. So, if I am incorrect, Premier, you can correct me there, but that is what I understood it to be.

This has to happen, and we recognise that. When the OBA was Government we recognised in 2013 immediately that due to the recession that we were in these measures would have to be taken. We took a 10 per cent cut back then. And so, it is interesting to see the unique approach that the Premier has taken on this particular one, and we obviously agree that a pay cut has to be taken. And it will be interesting as we go forward.

I believe that we are in for some troubling times as we move forward, and more is going to be needed. Whether it is the Premier considering what he has put in front of us as salary cuts and other things, we do recognise that more is going to be required of us. In fact, I got a call from the House of Assembly for the Opposition Office to contribute to this cutback. And we agreed to a certain amount that we would cut back on in our office, already being strained, but we recognise that during these times we have got to do our part. And so, I agreed with the House of Assembly when they made the call to take a cut in our budget to ensure that we are doing our part.

It is important for the Premier to convince Bermuda that it is doing as much as it can when it comes to the salaries of, more importantly, the Ministers and MPs, and that we are collectively moving forward in the direction of showing that we will do our part.

As the One Bermuda Alliance we showed that and we are willing to show that we were willing to do our part in 2013. So, any questions out there about what we have done, well, we already showed Bermu-

da what we had done and are willing to do. And we will continue to look at areas where we can make suggestions to the Premier and his team as to the areas that we believe they can make more cuts.

But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, we have some troubling times coming ahead. And I do not believe that they end within the next year. I believe that the impact of this COVID-19 will continue to affect us in the years to come. The question is, what is the Government, what is our Premier going to put in place that will stimulate the economy that will get us back to the place that we need to be? It is imperative that we do this. As he said, we want to be (and I am paraphrasing here) in a position where we are not having to take these cuts out, but we want to be in a position where we are growing the economy, where we are stimulating the economy, and where we have more people on the Island contributing to this economy.

I am very much concerned about where we are in the numbers of people that are here. Any less people on the Island will continue to [exacerbate] and make the position we are in economically even more dire. I am aware that there are many businesses that are now closing down, as I hear day to day more reports, and we see in the paper where many of our charities are going to be taking a hard hit in the next couple of months some already having closed down.

So, we agree with this here and, Mr. Speaker, I will say the priority right now, which I did hear from the Premier. He was looking to move with tourism, but the priority right now is we have got to stimulate this economy to put people back to work so that this economy can thrive during this tough time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Opposition Leader.

The next indication of a Member who wishes to speak, I believe, is the Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker, would you like to contribute now?

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes. I just want to . . . can you hear me?

The Speaker: Members, can you hear the Deputy Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: No.

An Hon. Member: He is muffled.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: The Deputy Speaker is coming on now.

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

Mr. Speaker, one thing I do agree with is the pay cuts. And the Opposition Leader just asked . . .

we need to do something to stimulate the economy. Well, this is one of the measures that will stimulate the economy because our workers will not be taking home any less pay. So, that is a positive.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have a concern because during the furlough days back in, I think it was, 2014 and 2015 or 2015 and 2016, it was not fair to all. It appears that not all government workers participated in the furlough day, which was a wage cut, the freeze on pensions, they probably participated in increases in pay, but not even all participated in freezing their pay increases.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am in full agreement that everybody must participate in this here. That includes the judiciary; it means all the lawyers, all the judges. They must participate—including Government House. The Governor, the staff that work on that big estate on Langton Hill, they must also be included in the cuts.

If it does not happen, then it is not fair to the workers—meaning the government workers. Because, as with the America's Cup, the workers—the government workers, that is, only the government workers—contributed . . . let me put it this way, contributed over \$120 million for the America's Cup. And we cannot continue like that because it also, during that period, we increased hospital costs to seniors by 10 per cent.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I am not sure that the Honourable Deputy Speaker is correct when he said that government workers had contributed over \$120 million to the America's Cup.

The Speaker: Okay. Your point of order is taken. Deputy?

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

Mr. Speaker, let me put it this way, let me break it down for you. Nineteen months of furlough days would have cost of at least \$35 million. A year freeze on pensions would have cost you almost \$30 million. Pay increases over six years that the workers did not get would have cost you \$50 million. Now, you can add that up.

Add it up.

That was contributed through the government coffers to fund the America's Cup.

Now, let me talk about the job hiring freezes.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, point of order. That is a real stretch. That is his opinion, but that is not the facts.

The Speaker: Honourable Member, I am sure when you get an opportunity you can help to put your point across. Thank you for that.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I anticipated that reply from that Honourable Member, and that is fine. That is his right to do that.

The Speaker: Continue.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the workers are concerned. I think the workers agree that we knew something was going to happen, a severe cut. And I think what the Government has done, I think correctly, is they have made the cuts and in order to keep the economy stimulated they have frozen the pensions and made cuts and that will help to shore up our finances, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Just a point of clarity.

This particular motion that we are discussing is in relation to Ministers and Members of the Legislature, and it does not have to deal with the salaries and the positions of whatever negotiations might be occurring with the civil service. I just want to make sure that I am not missing something here, listening to the Deputy Speaker, if you could assist please.

The Speaker: Yes, you are right in that it is dealing with Ministers' and Members' salaries, but we are in the House which gives a little latitude to drawing out other references to the point that they want to make and I am allowing the Deputy to have some latitude to make his point.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay, that is fine.

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

Mr. Speaker, history will show you that I have never been a proponent of dipping into pensions. Never was, never will be, because pensions will be needed by those folks who need every dime they can

get when they go that age. And we do not want to make their standard of living any worse by taking pensions now and . . . because what would happen is they would get less when they qualify to get their pension, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we say that we just do not sit here and make these statements concerning Government House—and I repeat because this is very important—Government House staff, all Government House officials, including the Governor down, all the judges, must be included. Including the quangos, because when this sort of action happened before under the previous Government, quangos did not participate also. And so, we want them to be included.

On the proviso for the vesting period, I am glad the proviso is there, but if I . . . and I want to be sure that I understood and heard the Premier, that if one was affected in this period and they would have been vested had we stayed where we were, they would have to make up the shortfall. I am not sure if that was clear. They may not be able to make up that shortfall. I do not think that should be a condition. And I think even if this happened, I do not think there would be many people and I think we should, the Government, look at that again to try to make up that shortfall, Mr. Speaker.

Just one other thing, Mr. Speaker, closure of businesses. I think the Government has assisted; they have done some things there that have assisted the merchants out there. I think they are exempt, some are exempt, from payroll tax. So, they are getting some relief there. And some may need, some particular smaller business may need loans. And that is available through the Bermuda Economic Development part. And I think it is very attractive, the rates there, for them to get a loan, Mr. Speaker.

People will say we should cut Ministers. Some have said, and are still saying, that we should cut civil servants—that is not the answer. I do not think we should even entertain disrespecting civil servants. Civil servants do a great job. And remember now, if you look in all the budget books, we have never been up to par in hiring what we have budgeted for. In other words, if we had an actual hiring of 4,000, we may have in the budget book 4,700 that are funded, but the positions have not been taken. So, government workers have been working short for some time.

And I understand that there is a little buffer there for the Minister . . . you put money somewhere in the budget in case something comes up that you need some funds for. You can always dip into that. There are different ways of doing it, but that is the way that is seen that the Ministers have done, and there is nothing wrong with that.

But Mr. Speaker, the other thing is in 2015 the previous Government brought a Bill to this House called the Public Service Superannuation Temporary Amendment Act 2015. This is where the government discontinued paying their portion of the pensions for a

year. Employees continued to pay. The question I would ask is, has that been paid back to the fund? Because we do not know that at present. And I think our workers want to be assured that the government's share that was suspended for a year in 2015 . . . it was suspended from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. I am just wondering if those funds have been put back to the fund, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am in agreement with this Bill, but I have some concern about the vesting period. And I think the vesting period for those that, if they become ineligible because of this Act within a year, then I think we need to fix that in particular. And the other thing is . . . and I understand the Premier's logic when he says 12.5 per cent for parliamentarians. Although I understand it, I am not always in agreement with it because I believe that if we are going to cut wages . . . whether it be 8, 9, 10, 11 per cent, whatever per cent it is, it should be the same for all. We are no better; we are no worse off giving a 10 per cent cut across the board for all workers. I do not think we have a point to prove by taking more than whatever the workers decide that they are comfortable with. Whether it is 12.5 per cent, I am not going to cry and kick your door down because it is there. I understand the logic of the Premier on this one here.

And Mr. Speaker, with those comments I say thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member Deputy.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I did wish to speak, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, my concern with this resolution is very simple. When the Premier made the initial announcement that the Government was going to take the lead and that they were going to reduce salary at a time when COVID-19 was rearing its ugly head with significantly negative impacts on the finances of the people of Bermuda, when the Premier made that statement that we were going to take the lead, it was at a time when, perhaps, every other jurisdiction had looked at their circumstances, had implemented some kind of significant adjustments for their legislature, and it seems to me as though, rather than taking the lead we are finding ourselves in a situation that—in my estimation—we have been shamed into doing something.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to go back a little bit with a little bit of historical context. Because you might recall that 1998 through to the early 2000s the salary respecting Ministers and Members and the

Premier kind of bordered on the range of a 1: 2: 3: ratio. The Members were getting something like \$39,000; the Ministers were doubled that around \$78,000; and the Premier was triple what a Member was earning and that came into the early \$100[,000]s.

In 2003 or 2004 there was a Committee of the House that was appointed . . . not of the House, a committee, an external consultancy committee, was appointed to look at the salaries in respect of what was appropriate for Members and Ministers and the Premier. And it is at that point in time that this committee came back with an increase to the membership, the regular membership, to where we were somewhere in the \$55,000 range. Ministers then went up to three times approximately what Members were earning; and the Premier's salary was somewhere bordering on four times a Member's salary.

I remember at the time when that was done, Mr. Speaker, some of the comments that were made in the House of Assembly were that we appear to be acting out of avarice and greed for Members who were Ministers, because for the majority of time, historically, Ministers in the House of Assembly were appointed to lead ministries with the sole purpose of creating policy for the Government. What has happened subsequently is that with this change from the 1: 2: 3: ratio, what we found is that a significant number of the Ministers at the time felt as though *we have to justify this massive increase*. So instead of us being here only to establish policy, it then became the creation of a full-time job for employment for those Ministers. Whether that is right, wrong or indifferent is beside the point.

One of the things that I am seeing here, Mr. Speaker, on today's basis and the motion that we are discussing today, is that we are doing this against a backdrop of significant suffering from our people. Some of them have zero money because their jobs have been made redundant. Many of them, Mr. Speaker, if they have any money at all, are just about making do. People are falling behind in their bills and they are literally struggling. And we are sitting here in the House of Assembly pretending—and I am saying pretending—that we are taking a pay cut.

And I say pretending, Mr. Speaker, because you will know—and I will declare an interest—I am an accountant by profession. And in the accountancy profession there are certain things, such as “gross” and “net,” and a gross is the 100 per cent number of what you would normally get and your net is what you end up with when all deductions and everything else have been taken into account.

Now, what this motion today is saying is that we are taking a pay cut, because on the books it can be seen that we are going to have 12.5 per cent less and a little bit higher deduction for Ministers. So, it is saying that we are taking a pay cut. But our “net,” which is the money that is flowing out the door, is the

funding that is required by the Finance Minister to be able to say that he has now got to go and borrow, as he spoke in his Statement this morning \$20 million and an extra \$10 million . . . out of that money has to come the settlement of the net amount of salary.

So, what we are really saying is that the burden on the Finance Minister is no less as a result of this reduction that we are taking in our salaries because we will not have a deduction being made for things such as the pensions and the like.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I look in the eyes of people in the street and say to them that as Members of Parliament we are taking a salary cut, I can only say that with my head hung in shame. I cannot look people in the eye, Mr. Speaker, and say hand-on-heart we are taking a salary cut, if the only difference that we are experiencing is the fact that on the books the number of our gross has decreased by this 12.5 per cent. But the number of our net has gone nowhere.

How do you justify that, Mr. Speaker, against the guy who is sitting alongside the side of the road who has zero money because he has been made redundant?

Now, I am not saying, Mr. Speaker, by any means that we have to be more of sacrificial lambs than we are because it is a clear . . . and it is clear and evident to everybody that as Members of Parliament we work our behinds off. There is no question about that. Every Member in this Honourable House will probably find that they have done more work during this COVID-19 period when we have been sheltered in place than we might have been doing under other circumstances. We find that we are constantly being required for meetings, we have people knocking on our doors with various challenges . . . able to do so, and the work is there. Our work ethic has not changed. If anything, in some instances, it may have intensified.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you say to the public *we are taking pay decreases, we are taking a cut in pay*, but we are not changing our take home pay, that is a hard sell for the man who is out there who has no money, who has been made redundant. He does not have the option, Mr. Speaker, of saying that, you know, *okay, I could take a little bit less* . . . some of them have taken a 100 per cent pay cut because they have no jobs. And hence, as my Leader speaks in terms of stimulating the economy, that is a critical element of what we must do under these circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is also difficult when we see the actions that were taken by the Government yesterday to say look, we are going to come to the House tomorrow, we are going to debate taking a pay cut, when the cost of operating the Cabinet increased. We have "X" number of Ministers, we have taken one Minister out of the mix, we have put another Minister in, but now we are paying a Junior Minister's salary for

somebody who, you know, is an extra body. So, you know, this is all . . . it is very difficult to explain to members of the public, Mr. Speaker, that we are struggling as Members of Parliament, we are making this great big sacrifice, when, in fact, it is all a paper exercise, Mr. Speaker.

When we say that we are leading . . . when the Premier indicated he was leading in this, this was no more true than we heard that we were testing aggressively when we talked about the testing that we were doing for COVID-19. We were saying on a daily basis that we are testing aggressively. Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue as Members of Parliament to look the public in their eyes and continue to tell them mis— . . . to tell them untruths, to continually obfuscate the position that we have when we know full well that it is not 100 per cent honest, Mr. Speaker. And that is where I have a problem with this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you will also know . . . and we have been trying to get the information. But we have yet to get that information as yet. And what we found, Mr. Speaker, is that some Members in the House, Members who are backbenchers, not Ministers, they have been appointed as heads of boards. And those heads of boards engender tremendous additional salaries for some people. So, to say on the one hand you are going to take a pay cut . . . *I am not worried about this (wink, wink, nod, nod); I am going to make it up because I will go sit on my board meetings and I am paid extra*. How can we in good conscience, Mr. Speaker, put that position to the public and feel like we have done something and that we have done something good?

Mr. Speaker, I am embarrassed. I really am embarrassed that we are not coming with something that is of substance when we can say to the public, *I'm okay, Jack; pull up the ladder*. My salary gross, my salary net, is not going to change. I am going home at the end of this debate today, Mr. Speaker, with the exact same money that I would have taken home before this. Then you have to have that conversation with somebody, Mr. Speaker, who is going home with absolutely nothing because we failed to stimulate the economy, because COVID has taken a significant draining impact on our people, Mr. Speaker.

Now, if you juxtapose that against the reductions that we had of the OBA salaries in 2013, Mr. Speaker, it was a reduction on the "gross" and it filtered down to the "net." And that really said that this was a *real* salary reduction. So, we had the gross amount that was decreased and then the pensions were still deducted from it and there was less take-home pay.

So, these are the kinds of things, Mr. Speaker, that this is not an equitable approach to this subject. And I think that it is very frustrating to try to justify what we are doing in this regard.

Now, I did want to speak to something that the Honourable Member who just took his seat men-

tioned. And that is that if we are going to look at savings across the board for the government and how we can look at economies, we need to ensure that we do look at quangos, that we do look at the judiciary, that we do look at Government House, that every aspect of our community on which we are expending significant amounts of salaries are all impacted. That you cannot just go to the civil servants and say that the public officers have to accept the reduction.

But what is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that we have not yet heard any update in terms of how the negotiations with the civil service are going. Because the unions had very clearly said that they had issues with people not having pension contributions. The Member who just took his seat spoke about the 2015 Suspension of Pensions Act. That was not the first time in my time in Parliament, Mr. Speaker. I remember somewhere in 2008 or 2009 when Paula Cox, who was then the Premier, brought a similar resolution for Members to not pay into their pensions.

So, the question begs, have they been made up? Have those pensions been made up, either from the 2008/09 (I did not have a chance to find the exact legislation) or from the 2015? Have those pensions been made up? I would hazard a guess to say no, because subsequent to that, Mr. Speaker, the government has not been in the position to be able to afford to make up the shortfall.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of being able to make up shortfalls, I would hazard a guess to say that those pensions are still underfunded and it will, perhaps, negatively impact some of the . . . you know, anybody with their vesting amounts, with their retirement amounts, and the like.

But I think that above all, Mr. Speaker, we have to be honest with ourselves. We have to be honest with ourselves by saying that, you know, the Honourable Member who just spoke indicated he does not think that Ministers need to take any significant pay cut any more than anybody else, that everybody should take the . . . No, maybe he did not say that. Maybe he said that the Members of Parliament should not take more of a cut than the civil service is prepared to take. But it would be very interesting to find out whether the civil service, with the union representation that they have, rests on the position, Mr. Speaker, of saying that they are willing to take "X" amount, they are willing to have a suspension of their pensions so that they can take home the same amount of money in their pay packet today, knowing the negative impact that failure to contribute to their pensions is going to have on them ultimately at the date that they are planning to retire.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is, perhaps, not much more, in my estimation, than window dressing. We are not being honest with ourselves and, therefore, it is difficult for us to be honest with the public if we want to fool ourselves in this first instance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at some of the information that I get on people, and some of the comments that have come to me, some of the comments that have come to me in respect of observations that have been made by members of the public, they are saying things like if we are paying backbenchers significant amounts to sit on boards—which are positions that historically have been handled by people with expertise from the private sector—at a time when those members who sat were earning on average \$100 per meeting for the Chair, and \$50 per meeting for the members, I could not go back and say that the actual amount that Members are being paid now for their board work is similar to, different from, significantly higher, significantly lower, or non-existent, because we have asked for the information in the Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, and that information has never been given to us. It has been over a year that this question has been put.

And I have heard many reasons why it has not come through. The bottom line is we do not have that information in the public domain. And we do not have the ability, Mr. Speaker, to be able to answer that question honestly when we are asked that question by the people of Bermuda.

And then we cut to—

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hold on just a minute. There is a point of order.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: MP Famous, is that you?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Would you like to put your point of order?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, from the western side of my house.

The Speaker: [INAUDIBLE] today.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Christopher Famous: Last year, a list was given, provided in Parliament, of what every MP sitting on boards had been making, including OBA MPs.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Member, would you like—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker, I stand corrected if that information has been provided.

I remember asking for the information in the Honourable House and I was told that there were reasons . . . there was confusion why the information had not been provided, and it has not been brought to my attention. So, I am perfectly happy that information has been provided, and I stand corrected.

I never wish to promulgate information that is inaccurate. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I am perfectly satisfied and perfectly happy to accept the Honourable Member's intervention, given that I will go and research it to make sure for myself.

The Speaker: Member, you can continue on.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I thank the Honourable Member for that intervention.

The other thing that I am getting is, why can we not cut back on some of these gratuitous consultants that we have had?

So if we are starting to talk about saving money, Mr. Speaker, and putting the burden on Members of Parliament who are out there doing all the work and doing all the things that they have to do and sitting here and perhaps, you know, hand-on-heart saying *I'm taking a pay cut*, which you are really not because your take home is going to be exactly the same, all I can say, Mr. Speaker, is we need to look at every aspect of it. How significantly can we save in our budgeting processes when we start to look at the real drivers of the cost of government? And I am not just talking about picking on anybody or any particular segment. I am saying looking completely across the board.

But if we would go back, Mr. Speaker, to the issue of the 1: 2: 3: [ratio], then I think that we would find ourselves in a significantly better position all around, so that every year we do not have to start looking at nickelling and diming, because people will come in knowing exactly what it is that is expected of them, what it is that they are going to earn, and how it is that we are going to come out of this at the end of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I will support the work of the civil servants. I will support, especially those gentlemen who come around . . . even though this motion today does not relate to them, and I have no doubt that at some point in time, Mr. Speaker, that debate will come at the point in time at which the Government is able to negotiate a condition with the unions and come up with some kind of agreement.

But, Mr. Speaker, you know, should a Minister take more than 15 per cent? You know, if your salary is \$156,000 up to \$200,000-something, and your salary for your backbenchers is now going down to . . . it is 15, 5, or 6 (or whatever the number is) and that is going to go down to \$49,000 or something, Mr. Speaker, is that the right thing? Is that of concern, Mr. Speaker, when we are not going to take home a dime less than we did before?

Therein, Mr. Speaker, is the acid test of what we are doing here today. We are sitting here singing for our supper, trying to convince people that we are doing something that is giving us some kind of significant, major sacrifice, when really all we are doing is shuffling the chairs on the decks of the *Titanic*. What we took home last month is no different than what we are going to take home this month. But that is not the condition that the average person on the street, who has had challenges with his employment, is going to find themselves in that same position.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Are you completed, Member?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am finished.
Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Is there any other Member?
I believe Honourable Member Simmons . . . would you like to make your contribution now?

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, are you referring to me or Scott Simmons?

The Speaker: You, Honourable Member, from constituency 33.

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, I think that it is very interesting because for many, many years we have heard the voices of the elite and the privileged call for the worker, call for the people poorer than them, to sacrifice. And we have heard how the business community has sacrificed, but we never speak of the wealthy and the privileged. We never hear them say, or be called on to contribute from the rental incomes that they bring in from the multiple houses they own that are paid for. We do not hear that.

And Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that those who have had employment throughout this recession, the previous recession, and recessions previous, those who have been coddled and protected and nurtured by the forces of our oligarchy and the very wealthy of this country will come here and lecture us—us who have experienced what it is like to be unemployed during recessions, who have experienced what it is like to be in a job market that does not want you—to come and lecture us about what we should be doing. You need to go lecture to those wealthy friends of yours and tell them to step up.

And Mr. Speaker, we have been . . . you know, this is an interesting discussion at an interesting time. and I thought that the Premier and the Minister of Finance came up with a unique way to do this. And I think they ought to be commended as opposed to condemned, for not only saving taxpayers' money,

there is actually a sacrifice being made. Because it is not like the money that we are supposed to contribute is going off into the ether in the Netherverse, it actually has an impact on our pensions when we retire. We will lose money on the back end. So, to say that this is not a real sacrifice is a nonsense.

But most of what I have heard was a nonsense. And I actually have a real problem with . . . we have been trying to operate in a spirit of bipartisanship. And I have seen repeatedly that the Opposition Leader speaks words of peace and kindness, but then the refugees of . . . I do not know what you want to call them, the little holes in his Shadow Cabinet, continue to go on the attack. And I do not know whether this is a strategy or he simply has no control over these people, but I would like them to start getting the rhythm somehow.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jamahl S. Simmons: It is a little confusing to hear *Kumbaya* in one verse and war in the second verse.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of order.

The Speaker: Hold on, hold on a minute now, Member.

Is there a point of order from the Opposition Leader?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I saw the Opposition Leader, but I also have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Is it the Opposition Leader or is it the Member who is doing the point of order?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I'm sorry, who—

POINT OF ORDER [Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. This muting is flickering.

The Honourable Member is misleading the House and surmising, as usual.

I would prefer it, Mr. Speaker, if you would keep that in check. Certainly, maybe what he needs to do is figure out what his Premier is doing and keep it in check because we have not seen any pay cut when it comes to the total expenditure for Ministers. We just had a ministerial change and we are spending more money.

Maybe he needs to focus on home as opposed to worrying about the One Bermuda Alliance.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: There is still an additional point of order?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Okay.

POINT OF ORDER [Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you.

The Honourable Member was very seriously misleading the House.

Bipartisanship, Mr. Speaker, does not mean that we roll over and play dead. We do not have to be in lockstep with the Government to have bipartisanship. What bipartisanship does, Mr. Speaker, is to say that we still have our constitutional duty to be able to provide the checks and balances of the actions of the Government. And we can do it in love and we can do it holding hands. We can just disagree and that is okay.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Honourable Member Simmons?

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: Well, I was going to finish, but I shall continue. And I will just end with this, the struck dog barks loudest.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I think, it is Member Dunkley.

Member Dunkley, would you like to make your contribution now?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In my view, having been a dog owner for a long period of time, the struck dog squeals the loudest, but the barking dog with anger makes the most noise, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to pick up where my honourable colleague, Pat Gordon-Pamplin, so emotionally and eloquently stated. Yes, there is a spirit of bipartisanship. But bipartisanship under the PLP does not mean that the Opposition is going to agree with everything. It means that we will speak when we believe it is appropriate to speak, we will question when it is appropriate to question, and we will support—the vast ma-

jority of times, as we have—when it is appropriate to support.

So, for the Government to try to come today in a debate, or any day in a debate, and say that *well, the Opposition is not operating in a true spirit of bipartisanship* and think that we are going to change our approach—[which is] we have a constitutional responsibility to speak on behalf of the people we serve—is not going to happen. It is definitely not going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

And in dealing with this resolution we appreciate the Honourable Premier's explanation here this afternoon. And I support my colleagues 100 per cent when I say this is not a pay reduction, this is a pension cut. It is a simple pension cut. And I appreciate that the Honourable Premier said it will save about \$980,000, but somewhere down the road . . . you are giving today and you are paying tomorrow. So, somewhere down the road people will need to pay tomorrow if they want to have a pension that is somewhat sustainable.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think you have to look at it in context. We understand 100 per cent that this Government has very difficult decisions to make, more difficult now than they had in the first couple of years when they were in the Government, because even at that time, while the economy was in very critical condition, now is a time when the Government was forced—and this is the first time in my life that a Government of Bermuda has been forced—overnight to shut down the economy. This has significant consequences down the road, which will take a long period of time for us to resolve. And there were no easy decisions in any one of those steps along the way.

And so, I was quite interested to hear the Honourable Premier wrapping up on his comments on this resolution and to say, as a Government, we do not want to cut, cut, cut, cut. Well, oh my, how the shoe is on the other foot. Because the same person—now the Honourable Premier—as in Opposition said it a number of times about us as the Government, that *all you do is cut, cut, cut, cut* and we were the Government of cuts and pain. But the reality of the situation is that when you are a Government you have to make those unpleasant decisions.

It is just like a doctor, when you are in need of critical care or critical medicine. You have to take that critical medicine that does not taste good. You do not enjoy it, it makes you feel terrible, but you have to take it for the better good going forward.

And one of the challenges we face in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, is too often we do not want to take the personal responsibility for making those tough decisions, so we kick the can down the road. We kick the can down the road as far as we can kick the can down the road and let future generations pay for it . . . for us kicking the can down the road.

And here is what we are doing in the same instance. While it is a method that can be supported in

dealing with the pensions now, not mandating that Members have to pay 12.5 per cent into the pensions, you are kicking the can down the road. Because look at this in two points as far as the pensions are concerned. The first point is that we know that since private pensions started about 20 years ago, we as a community have been playing catch-up with our pensions because they are not sustainable for the life of a person. Yes, we had the government pension, social insurance, which is not sustainable in any way for people to live. But then you have the private pension which is playing catch-up.

And so, here we are looking at the pensions of Members of the Legislature, which is in the same boat. And I would like to hear from the Honourable Premier, when he has a chance to wrap up this debate, what is the sustainability of this fund? Because I think what many members of the public do not appreciate or realise is that if this [Ministers and] Members of the Legislature Pensions Fund is not able to pay out the benefits that it has to at the time, it is topped up by the Consolidated Fund. So, I would like to know what the sustainability of this fund is, what the sustainability of the fund will be if Members do not pay into the pension or do not buy back their share of the pension down the road. Because I think those are critical questions that need to be asked.

And in regard to the buy-back, the Minister said Members will lose one year of their pensionable services, but then they have a chance to buy it back. So, again, in wrap-up, it would be appreciated for the Honourable Minister to give a bit of a more of an understanding of how that buy-back will take place, what it will mean, and if the Members do not do the buy-back in any fashion, what will it mean to not only the Members' Pension, but to the sustainability of the fund going forward?

So Mr. Speaker, this is, the Government will say, a creative way to save a million dollars to the public purse. But in reality, the way the Government has spun it all the way through as a pay cut . . . it is not that. It is a pension cut and we are kicking the can down the road for later on in time. And that is a serious situation that we need to take a look at.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Members have talked about the pain in our community. And it is very clear that members of the public from one end of the Island to the other have faced difficult times, not only with job losses, and some have been out of work [for] a significant period of time, some are working less hours and obviously taking home less pay. Some are taking pay cuts to work the same hours. The private sector has felt the pain straight up because, unbeknownst to them, without any input in the decision, businesses were closed. And that impacted not only the businesses, but the people who will work in those businesses. And to Government's credit they jumped in fairly quickly and launched the unemployment benefit to take away some of the pain and allow people to at

least shelter from home and be able to pay for the basic necessities of life.

And I support the Honourable Deputy Speaker in that this sacrifice needs to go throughout the community, but also, we have to all buy into that the recovery is going to happen for all of us together. So, we have to understand the recovery. We all have to play our part in the recovery. And for us to come here today and say, *Well, Members of Parliament are taking a pay cut* when, at the same time, really, it is a pension cut, I find it very difficult for me to tell my constituents or people who ask me about it that we are taking a pay cut. No, we are taking a pension cut and we do not know what will happen down the road.

We do not know if the buyback is going to be something that is going to be effective. We do not know if the fund will have to be topped up from the Consolidated Fund. And also, Mr. Speaker, we do not know if two, three, four, five years down the road salaries will be increased for Members of the Legislature which will cover the pension cut that we have taken. I mean all of these questions cannot be answered at this time, so I am not asking for answers. But all I am doing is suggesting that this manipulation of the pension potentially impacts people who might be retiring soon and could potentially impact the fund as we go forward.

So, when we say we are pulling up because we want to show the community that we are on board with the solutions and we are going to buy in with some skin in the game, yes, it is an argument that is hard to have because you are taking home the same amount of money, it is just on the back end with your pension.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can probably understand that many Members of the Legislature will be somewhat reticent to speak on this piece of legislation because Members serve . . . and as a Member with some experience in the House and being in positions as a backbencher, as a Leader of the Opposition, Premier, and Minister, I have served in most of these areas. So I know the responsibility, having first-hand experience of how much time it takes to be a backbencher, how much time it takes to be a Minister and the Premier. And, you know, generally the remuneration for Members in most of those positions is acceptable. But for a hard-working backbench, I am sure there are many Members of the House who would look at that and see, *Well, you know what, I put in a lot more time than I get paid for.*

And so, they are hesitant to speak about this because they will keep their dog out of that fight because they do not want to be attacked for getting involved in stating the reality, that Members of Parliament who get paid . . . I am just looking at the sheet right now. Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament who get paid \$56,000 will go down to \$49,000 take home, which will not change. Put in a significant period of time, it is not just when we are in the House. It is not

just when we are in the virtual meeting. It is just not when we go to our parliamentary caucus or when we have other scheduled meetings. Members of Parliament have to prepare all along and they do not have staff to help them prepare. They have to do all their own research.

And, you know, I know because I know Members on both sides of the House, in fact, Members who work very hard in doing what they have to do . . . very hard in doing what they have to do.

So, this is a difficult discussion for Members of Parliament because we all want to make sure we pull through this together. And at this time now, as the Finance Minister has so rightly said, if we do not find ways to make up for the loss of revenue, if we do not find ways to reduce spending, and if we do not find ways to be more efficient in what we do, then the recovery will be much more difficult.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that we can recover because we are Bermudians and we are strong. So, I know we can recover. And if we recover, when we recover, how long down the road that it is, we all have to buy in this together.

So, on the face of it we can sell this thing as a huge gesture that Members of Parliament are contributing to a pay cut. But, in reality, it is a pension cut. And a year down the road or two years down the road or three years down the road it can be reversed. So there is no loss in benefit to any Member because of the pension cut. And that is something that I think we need to recognise. And if that is not the case, I look forward to the Premier clarifying that when we finish.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I bring my comments to a close, I understand the difficult challenge that the Government faces. And I also understand, Mr. Speaker, that now that the current Premier has had to use the words "cut, cut, cut" he probably is reflecting on some of the times he had in Opposition where he pointed the finger across the aisle and blamed the Government of the day for cutting, cutting, cutting when it was absolutely necessary that it was done, just like the Honourable Member has to do here today, and just like the Honourable Member will have to do over the coming weeks as we pull through this dire pandemic and the biggest threat to our economy in my lifetime.

It is not going to change. We are going to have to make very tough decisions. And this is, perhaps, one of the easiest ones to make because we as Members of Parliament are dealing with the critical issues of the day, but we still have a job. There are thousands of Bermudians who are without work, with the prospects of work in the near future not as bright as we would all like to see.

So, while we understand there are not many creative ways that the Minister of Finance can save some money to the public purse, I have to agree with my honourable colleagues that this is just kicking the can down the road paying for something that we could

have paid today. And there are better ways that we could lead by example to show our community that we are here to take some of the pain with them.

So, I look forward to the wrap up by the Honourable Premier with some of those questions being answered and thank you for allowing me to contribute, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP Dunkley.

I will now move on and call on MP Swan from the East End.

MP Swan, would you like to make a contribution at this time?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker: Go right ahead MP.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker, this motion before us today . . . I have heard [with] interest some comments that have been attributed. I am just going to put it clearly as I can.

The decision by the Government to address the economic position that Bermuda is in by having Members of the Legislature come forward here today with a cut in their gross salary by 12.5 per cent, I support.

There was a time in Bermuda's history when there were no pensions for anyone and the knock-on effect of that today is felt by persons in our community. Because there are persons older than me who are still alive and today have very low occupational pensions, which this certainly speaks to, because there were no provisions for such. There was no appetite for such. There was no climate, there was no will. That will was fought for by workers.

I can certainly say, as a backbencher, that I certainly have expressed to the Premier, the Finance Minister and the like, that voluntary or involuntary cuts that workers take at some point in time, going forward, persons need to look at that in the same way they would look at a bond.

So, when persons come here today and want to play . . . and the Honourable Member Jamahl Simmons spoke to it, it is almost like playing good cop, bad cop. Somebody gets out there and says *I'm in favour of everything* and somebody comes right behind him on the same team and finds an angle to make a different argument. But that is politics. But I will say this, that if your gross pay was \$50,000 today, and by virtue of a 12.5 per cent cut in your gross pay your gross pay then becomes \$44,000, any way you look at that, that is a cut.

Now, Mr. Speaker, historically . . . and I am one who is in the Legislature because I have chosen to be here from a very young age. I was in Youth Parliament at age 15 and I had members of my family on both sides of the House from Somerset to St.

George's—more than 10—who I looked at as role models. So, it is no surprise. I grew up around Walter King who served in the great parish of Hamilton Parish from 1976 to 1980.

And so, there are those of us who have aspirations. Just like you, Mr. Speaker. We grew up, youngsters. And let no one out in the public think that anyone getting their base . . . every Member of the Legislature gets a base pay that is not commensurate with their ability. And that is true. And if you look at the base pay of any job description in our civil service, the Members of the Legislature are at the very bottom of that scale. And that may be a problem that needs to be looked at in the future.

The Honourable Member Ms. Gordon-Pamplin spoke of the tiers, the gaps. There should not be such a, as a good friend of mine puts it, a high jump or hook or collapse between if you are serving in one category down to the base category. So, those are things that certainly need to be looked at.

As one who was the head of a quango in the 1980s and early 1990s, when a recession gripped this country, I remember the edict that came down from the Financial Secretary at the time, Dr. E. W. Walwyn Hughes, to find ways to trim your sails. And we had to do it. It was necessary. And no one could have ever budgeted for a pandemic, but it is here. And trim we must.

And we, as legislators, are here because we have been entrusted by the people in our community to provide decisions for them, to canvass them to gauge how they feel. And we must carry out that work. So, if a base pay was \$56,000, and now it is \$48,000 in gross, that is a cut, no matter how you want to look at it, or [from] what angle you want to look at it. And the Honourable Member Dunkley, I think, pointed out that your work never stops. No! We go into our pockets on a regular basis to do all types of things. So, that is not the argument that we need to be looking at right now.

But government today is going to benefit because Members and Ministers of the Legislature are going to agree to a percentage cut that will enable the government not to have to pay that money. The government will have a savings in its expenditure of a million dollars—any way you look at it, that is what is taking place. So, any type of spin that you want to put on it to try to tickle people up, that is the reality and that decision was made for the best interest of this country.

And yes, there are going to be some tough decisions that are going to have to be looked at and made, one of which may be the size of our very Parliament, Mr. Speaker. It may be the size of our very Parliament.

We looked in the early 2000s to the Civil Service College in the United Kingdom, which is now, I think, the National School of Government, that came here and looked at Bermuda. It is maybe something

we need to do right now. This COVID, this global pandemic, has caused us and caused the world to have to self-examine itself. And in the modern context of things that, even the size of the Cabinet needs to be looked at in the context of the modern-day requirements—not because you want to save \$100,000 or this or that or the like. You have to look at it into what services are provided.

And yes, persons have to be compensated commensurate with what they are providing and what the expenses are in the jurisdiction that they live in. You might get \$50,000 in one jurisdiction, and their milk and cheese might be, you know, a quarter of what the price is in Bermuda. But the last time I looked at it, eggs and all those commodities in this country could . . . three of those items could take up two hours' worth of a person's work . . . the average person's work. And that cannot be right. So, let us not, you know, try to play games on something so significant.

And as we examine . . . as I mentioned, I headed up a quango from 1985 to 1993, before I then went into my own business. And I had a contract. I had a three-year contract with the Government of Bermuda. I had to perform. And that three-year contract was approved for another three years and approved for another three and renegotiated on the third. We may have to look at that. And at that time when quangos . . . there were not as many quangos around. We reported to the Ministry. Our finances went through a Ministry. I knew the way Works and Engineering used to lock their heads with the Accountant General, revenue accountants going heads up against expenditure accountants. Different philosophies on counting beans.

We had to toil in order to get our reconciliations, to make sure that then we could get our audits done and have those reports before the Legislature. I am proud to say I can still show you all of those. Senator Vance Campbell, good man that he is, was one of the first people to audit me back in 1985/86. I remember those type of experiences.

But as a head of a quango my salary was tied to the PSs 30 or 32 equivalent, based on an evaluation that came from where? That came from where Ms. Judith Hall-Bean was, in that area. And if we needed an evaluation, Management Services would step in. We had in-service providers within government that could look at these things. That is a far cry from what you have today. That is far cry if you look at some of the government quangos and what they have morphed into where persons are making, you know, three times the amount that the Premier is making. That cannot be right either. It really cannot. And those and all of that must be on the table right now as this country is where [it is].

So, all those agencies out there occupying a space that might say, *Oh, I'm going to take . . . do*

this, that has to be looked at. And I am sure it will be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, the ¹CPA benchmarks that I am very familiar with . . . myself and Honourable Member Ms. Gordon-Pamplin and you, Mr. Speaker—were part of and played a very big part of the last CPA Plenary in Uganda. We all gave presentations and we did well as a team, we represented Bermuda. But all of us have represented Bermuda in varying capacities, so we know when we go away to represent Bermuda, we are a team, we represent our country.

And the CPA benchmarks which got introduced in about 2008, 2009, 2010 . . . I did a motion in the House in 2012 about it. Another motion . . . I think the Honourable Member Cole Simons brought one when I was not a Member of the Legislature for a hiatus period as well. There are CPA benchmarks that we fall short of. And some of it has to do with remuneration; some of it has to deal with services that Members of Parliament should have in order to be effective, the type of tools.

As a Member of Parliament, I have encouraged my daughter to get involved and she has gone off and studied law. And I am very proud of the progress that she is making because as a country boy in Parliament, Mr. Speaker, I thought that, you know, having a law degree would bring some value. And she has passed that on, she has recognised that. But you do not have to be a lawyer. One of the most important things to be a parliamentarian is to be trustworthy and to have the trust of your people that you are representing.

And so, those who are, you know, not that way inclined should have at their disposal research sources. That is in the parliamentary CPA benchmarks, as well as proper remuneration and many other things are covered there.

And why, in 2020, would a jurisdiction as sophisticated as Bermuda have to look at the CPA benchmarks for assistance in trying to change the mind-set that would look at someone being paid at the lowest PS 1 or 2 on the scale to serve them and think something . . . everything is wrong . . . that is the way it should be and you should get less? That is because we came up in a system in this country where only the select few could make decisions for this country.

Just like the same people who are heralding the late Dr. Eva Hodgson—may she rest in peace—we were not kind to her in the '70s and the '60s and the '80s and the '90s. They were not. And from that point of view we have to have some maturity, because if you did not have the right connections to be able to be a part of the system that got labelled as the "oligarchy of Bermuda," the yacht clubs and, you know, those types of clubs, the hierarchy of clubs, that made the decisions before they came up on the days that

¹ Recommended Benchmarks for the CPA Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region's Democratic Legislatures

they made Parliament. And so that is where that type of disparity and appreciation for that type of disparity would have taken place, would have taken root.

But now our circumstances—and I keep saying the here and now that we are in . . . we have got to look at the here and now. And the here and now will probably cause us to have to look at a reduced [number] of persons going forward. And it is not going to happen tomorrow; it is not going to happen at the next election. But it needs to be considered today. It needs to be considered before we come to the next election, and it needs to be implemented during the next . . . in the next sitting of the House, as we move forward, because things like that do not happen on a dime. You cannot do it. They are constitutional matters. But those are the types of things that we must look at as we restructure this country.

The private sector has a part to play because the private sector needs to maybe even look at the talent pool within the civil service of Bermuda as we are looking to grow. I get tired of hearing people say, *The only thing you got to do is open up the door and let more people into Bermuda*, when Bermudians are not even working and are unable to make ends meet in our country and we cannot afford this country, even before COVID-19 decided to show up on our doorsteps. We have got to make Bermuda fair for all that are here, and especially those of us who are here and are Bermudian. That is the level of fairness that we need to look at. That is what real, true, shared sacrifice looks like, because it is not only shared sacrifice, but it is shared success going forward.

The enlightened Bermuda needs to be a Bermuda that looks at Bermudians a lot better than it did in the past. And there are those of us who have households of three and four, but only one of us is even working during this current climate. And some of us call ourselves Members of Parliament, too. And if there is one, I am sure there is more than one. And I know there is at least one, and I know there is more than one. And I know it is more than one hand that I have, too. And I am sure that it is not just on one side of the aisle as well.

So, as we look at where we are, Mr. Speaker, we are challenged. But I teach for a living now. I was a practitioner; I considered myself a skilful one, an artist, I always believed. But in building things, tough times present opportunities and we have an opportunity right now during these tough periods. And that is the way we need to look at it going forward, and the spirit that we entered into COVID-19, is the spirit we need to work hard to make and hold on to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member Swan.

We will move on. I now recognise Honourable Member Moniz. Would you like to make your contribution now?

Honourable Member?

No? We will move on.
Honourable Member Famous.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Honourable Member. You have the floor.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am speaking from the western side of my house.

The Speaker: That is the best side of your house.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, I find it humorous that the previous speaker got up and talked about, *This is not real sacrifice; this is not real sacrifice*, when I remember correctly, that Honourable Member was taking the pay of a full-time Minister while they kept a full-time job.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

At no time . . . and I believe he is speaking to me, he just said, *the Honourable Member*, but at no time did I take a full-time salary while maintaining a full-time job. I was a part-time Minister and I was paid as a part-time Minister.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Member, I think the Honourable Member just clarified herself.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I never called one name. But somebody was taking part-time Minister pay and getting full-time pay at their job.

But let's move on, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. If he is actually going to call out someone, then he needs to call that name. Because I recognise that our Ministers, when

we were Government, those who had full-time jobs took part-time pay. So, he needs to identify them.

Mr. Christopher Famous: No. No I don't, because I did not call any names.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member, Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, be mindful of the fact that there are records that will indicate what people were paid and were not paid, and how they were paid when they sat in different positions. So just be mindful of that and be guided by that when you make your comment.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Point of clarification, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hello. Yes.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Mr. Speaker, my honourable colleague did get up and say the "previous" Member who spoke. The previous Member who spoke, the previous Member—

Mr. Christopher Famous: I did not call any names.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: The "previous" Member would have been MP Swan.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, moving on.

The Speaker: Yes, I was going to suggest that you move on if you are not prepared—

Mr. Christopher Famous: No.

The Speaker: —to name an individual, or whatever. The records will indicate how people were paid in the House and—

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, this is Minister De Silva.

I just wanted to clarify what I just heard MP Famous say. MP Famous, unless . . . and I stand to be corrected, but it seemed to me the last thing that

Mr. Famous said was that there were part-time Ministers who were working a full-time job.

And I will leave it for him to clarify that statement. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
MP Famous.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am going to move on, Mr. Speaker. I think the point has been taken—

[Crosstalk]

Mr. Christopher Famous: I think the point has been given.

Mr. Speaker, I am a union member. I have been a worker at BELCO for 30 years. At times when the economy is not doing well, under the PLP and under the UBP and under the OBA, management has come to the workers and said, *Look, things ain't going well. We need to talk.*

And you know what the workers say? They say, *Well, tell us how much of a cut you are taking first, and then we can talk.*

I think this is a universal thing amongst junior members and workers worldwide. The first thing, before anyone in a position of leadership can ask those who they lead to take a cut, they have to take a cut. Okay? That is first and foremost. So, before people get up and pontificate about whether this is a cut, whether it is not a cut, all of that, that is kind of like technicalities. The point of the matter is that in the PLP caucus and, from what I hear, in the OBA caucus, there was universal agreement that we have to do something as leaders in this country. That decision was made three weeks ago. We can get into the hows and whys and who said what, and when, but that decision was made.

But let me tell you something else, Mr. Speaker. Last year, informal discussions—I keep using the word "informal"—were had amongst some of my colleagues about whether we should be looking for an increase in pay. Now, as you know, we can be very colourful in our deliberations, but the consensus was that the economy was still in a recovery mode, and we as leaders, should not be looking for a pay increase. So, the decision was sent for this to go to . . . under Dame Jennifer, she had a . . . I don't know what it is called, salary review. And the salary review committee came back and said no pay increase. No one grumbled. No one got up in arms. So I say this is in respect to people that they make it sound as if the Government or the Opposition or the MPs are making some pile of money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know that one of my things that I am responsible for is stuff in the Caribbean. And I did some research. And guess what I found, Mr. Speaker? In BVI [British Virgin Islands], MPs are paid \$100,000. In Turks and Caicos, they are paid

\$80,000. In the Cayman Islands, they are paid over \$150,000. That is as an MP. Here we are in Bermuda getting paid \$56,000 as an MP. We are the lowest paid in the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission, may I read something from Cayman Islands?

The Speaker: Continue on, Member.

Mr. Christopher Famous: This came out in the ²*Cayman Compass* a week ago. “Premier Alden McLaughlin has said Cayman is not considering following the moves of Bermudian legislators who are set to take a 12.5% salary cut . . . to help address the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Bermuda is the first” (I am going to repeat) “Bermuda is the first British Overseas Territory to look at taking pay cuts due to the economic hardship caused by the coronavirus . . .”

Mr. Speaker, someone earlier—and I am going to call her name, Honourable [Gordon-]Pamplin from constituency [23]—got up and said, *We were shamed into taking a pay cut because everybody else was taking a pay cut.*

Here is some clarity, Mr. Speaker. In the United States not one parliamentarian has taken a pay cut. In the UK not one parliamentarian has taken a pay cut. In Canada not one parliamentarian has taken a pay cut. In the Cayman Islands not one parliamentarian has taken a pay cut. In the BVI not one parliamentarian has taken a pay cut. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

There are only three islands that have taken a pay cut. In Saint Lucia just the Cabinet took a pay cut. In Aruba MPs took a pay cut. And in Nevis just the Cabinet took a pay cut. So for the Honourable Member to get up and say we were shamed because everybody else was taking a pay cut is blatantly false.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. I just wanted to correct, not just myself, but the Honourable Member. I was not speaking [INAUDIBLE] I was speaking about places that are actually . . . I will not take up his time, but there are several countries where parliamentarians took pay cuts. I was not specific [INAUDIBLE].

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, I just listed out the big countries, and I listed out regional countries. So I am waiting to hear where is this long list of countries that took a pay cut.

I read from the *Cayman Compass* to show that we were the first British Overseas Territory to take a pay cut.

So, Mr. Speaker, here is the thing. Right? Even our parliamentary staff are getting paid, as you know, below what their responsibilities are. But we do this for . . . we do not do this for the pay; we do this for the love of our people. Right? This is not . . . what money we collect every month is no large amount of money. In the Cayman Islands, they have 12 staff. Twelve! How many do we have . . . under you, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Not that many.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Okay. Thank you, very much.

The Speaker: Not even half, probably. Half of that.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Okay. Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

They are getting paid. Their MPs are getting paid \$150,000, Cayman dollars, per year.

So, I am saying all this to say, right, that there are 36 MPs, yourself included, there are 11 Senators—47 parliamentarians. All of us agreed to a cut. I do not understand why, all of a sudden, is there a showboating by certain folks about, *Oh, it's not a cut. Oh, this is kicking a can down the road. Oh, it's this . . . oh, it's the other.* We are already at the lowest level of pay for parliamentarians in the Commonwealth. MPs in England are making \$100,000 when you convert the money, Mr. Speaker. But again, it is not about the money. It is about the people.

I got . . . every one of us are getting WhatsApps from constituents, or maybe not even constituents. People are fretting now about the end of unemployment benefits. How are they going to pay their bills? You don't think that weighs on our minds as the Government and the Opposition of how we are going to help our people out? If we have to take another cut next year, so be it. I mean, that is my personal opinion, because it is not about the pay. It is about the people.

Now, I am not saying that some Members who are vested and pensioned, they have to get that sorted, yes. But if it means that we have to take . . . if the economy does not turn around because of extenuating circumstances, we have to be prepared to take another cut.

So, I am going to close here, Mr. Speaker. Right? Let us not get caught up into the weeds of, *That isn't a cut, the pension, this, that, and the other.* Let us understand that we, the leaders of this country,

² [Cayman Compass](#) 25 May 2020

have to set an example to those we lead. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I gratefully take a pay cut and I know that the majority of my fellow MPs on both sides, gratefully take a pay cut.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Are there any other Honourable Members who wish to speak?

Honourable . . . let's see. Member Moniz, have you been able to sort out your . . .

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Yes, I had the chat box open and I did not realise that while that was open I could not unmute. So I figured that out. I am a bit slow, but I got that.

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a very interesting debate today. Of course, you know, you and I have both been around for a long, long number of years so we have seen quite a few of these debates centring around the cost of government, and not just the cost of government, but also the price of Parliament, the price of democracy and cost-cutting and austerity measures. We have been around the block a few times and seen a lot of these.

The Member who spoke immediately before me, you know, I support much of what he said. I have always been of the view that parliamentarians in general in Bermuda are underpaid. When I came in I think the salary for a normal Member of Parliament was about \$12,000, back in the early 1990s, 1993, when I came in. And it was a big deal during that time, I think when it was, I remember when it was doubled to I think about \$25,000. People, you know, are desperately underpaid in a career where your time is not your own, where the job is 24/7, where you take a lot of flogging and abuse.

And I know, and others Members know, but certainly older Members know, when you speak to what we call "young" members in the community, and that includes people up to 45, 50 years old (I am 66 now), you speak to younger members in the community and you say, *Well, would you like to step up and come and sit in Parliament?* and they just laugh at you. And they may have jobs in insurance companies or the accounting firms or business or banks and they laugh at you.

Of course, traditionally in Bermuda, if you were in those sorts of jobs [and] you came into Parliament and you served for a relatively short period of time. It used to be around 10 years. If you came out of

business, you were not going to give up more than that. You are going to make your contribution in a set period of time. And if you look at some of the more famous parliamentarians, they did not serve for more than about 10 years.

So, I agree with him that it is an underappreciated job. I agree with him that parliamentarians in Bermuda are generally underpaid in comparison to other jurisdictions. I noted when this particular Government set up its salary review committee or commission when they came into power in 2017, that we have never had a report. It has been, I don't know, at least two years since they set that committee up and we have never had a report after—

The Speaker: I will correct you, MP. That report has been tabled in this House.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: And what were the recommendations, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: I am not sure of the recommendations off the top of my head, but I do not want you to say that there has not been [any] outcome. There was a report.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Well, my recollection . . . well, I stand corrected, Mr. Speaker. My recollection was that the can was kicked down the road. It was not a substantive report. Anyway, I could be wrong on that. But in any case, nothing resulted from it that I recall. There were no actions taken, that I recall, as a result by this Government in terms of parliamentary salaries, et cetera.

So, anyway, in that view, I do not think any of us view us as being overpaid. One of the other Members, the Honourable Member Kim Swan, talked about the size of Parliament. It is one of the things I hear from time to time. And of course, in our time, Mr. Speaker, in Parliament, Parliament was reduced in size from 40 Members back down to 36, which was the original size of it before. It went down I think around [the] 2003 election. It went back to the old size that was set up in 1968. I think.

And that always worries me. You know, people . . . there are some islands to the south that have tiny parliaments. I mean, I am talking about 10 Members. And it is very difficult to imagine a democracy working effectively with so few Members to get a full and extensive debating on important issues where you need a broad skill set. And it is one of the things I have spoken about very often about needing people with skill sets. You need lawyers, you need accountants, you need people with a health background, you need people who are from the grassroots community who can give you a broad idea of what is going on in your society. And when you reduce Parliament to too small a size, you are not going to get those skill sets on both sides of the table. And so I just caution

against Members who think that they can do it on the cheap, or they can do it with a very small Parliament, of say, 20 Members or less. I counsel against that. I do not think that that would work well for democracy.

And sometimes people come to me and they say, *Oh, well, Trevor, we think you could do with less Members of Parliament. We think you could do with less salary.*

And I say, *All right. Well, how few Members of Parliament do you think we need?*

And the truth of it is that there are people out there who think, *Well, we would actually save money if we did not have a Parliament, if we did not have all this democracy.*

And that is the danger.

If you believe in a democratic society, you then have got to figure out, *Well what is going to produce the best democracy that we can get?* And you wanted then . . . the key to democracy, Mr. Speaker, of course, is that you have a change of power between the two sides. And that was always the problem in Bermuda. We went for 30 years without a change in power from one side to the other.

And certainly a conversation I had with Dame Lois Browne-Evans on many occasions, and certainly with Freddy Wade as well as with Members on my side, was that this was not healthy for our society as a whole. We need a society where we can change back and forth. The fact that it went to PLP, and then went to the OBA, and now back to the PLP, that is a sign of a vibrant democracy where you can have a change in power.

What you do not want is to have a democracy where you have monolithic power, where you have one party that is in power forever. And those are societies you need to look out for. And there are a lot of those societies where there is only one party in power and it becomes to look not very much like a democracy and it is where you have increasing concern over political corruption because, as I spoke earlier today, Mr. Speaker, you need to have the transparency, you need to have the oversight of Parliament. And if you do not get that, if people become intimidated, they are afraid to speak out, then that is when you have problems.

All of you will remember that earlier this week we had an editorial from the daily paper where the editor was saying that the Premier had been critical of people who were criticising him, and he was taking some affront at that. And I think that there was some substance to it, but you have got to be very careful that when you are in power you must not be seen to be saying, *People shouldn't be criticizing me.* And I have heard some Members say it today, *Why are the Opposition criticising us?* Well, the simple fact of the matter is that [this] is the constitutional job of the Opposition. They have only one job, and that is to criticise the Government.

And when people say to me, *Well, why do you criticise the Government so much?*

And I say, *Well, look, 95 per cent of the Acts that go through Parliament are done by cooperation and collaboration. But at all times it is the responsibility of this Government to be criticised by the Opposition and they have to accept that and not complain about it. It is not something they should be resisting.*

Now, with respect to this particular thing, it is complex and if you will allow me just one second, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: With respect to this . . . what is being proposed today, we do agree with it on our side. But we point out to the Government that it is far more complex than people realise, both with respect to Members of Parliament and with respect to the civil servants. There are knock-on effects on pensions. We have had Members today being concerned about those knock-on effects, having not been warned about them in advance to have a chance to think about it. And it affects some Members differently from others. So those are the things that we need to look at.

The civil service did, as I recall, have an increase of something like 2.5 per cent by this Government, which was backdated for (I think) almost a year. So they have had an increase, unlike parliamentarians who have not. So, now when the OBA went ahead and did their drop, we took a 10 per cent drop for Ministers, [a] reduction, and the furlough day was 5 per cent for civil servants, and they got one day off per month in exchange. So that was the sort of bargain. So now Ministers are saying they are going to take 15 per cent. Perhaps the Premier and the Finance Minister could give us more details of what they are asking the civil service to give up in this process.

And remember, the people who have been hardest hit, as the Member Kim Swan said, were people in private industry, not in insurance. Ordinary, everyday people have had reductions to their salaries for the past 10 years, since 2008. But just to beware, I am warning the Government that there are difficulties with what you are doing. We faced legal challenges when we were doing it. We faced marches, et cetera. The furlough day, of course, everyone forgets, was actually proposed by the union, although they objected to it later. Everyone has to remember that was the BPSU's proposal which was accepted by the Government for a period of two years.

In any case, this is a difficult area, but we in the Opposition accept it. We point out some of the challenges and difficulties and how members of the public may view us as a result. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Are there any other Honourable Members who wish to speak?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Deputy Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be long. But I just wanted to address the fact that I understand that these are financial times that are unprecedented, and I appreciate that we have a cash crisis that we need to address. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we all work to pension off. I know that I am always checking my pension to make sure that they are up to date, that they are being paid, and I am always concerned that my pension is not going to cover me, not so much when I first retire, but they say that the last five years of your life when all the medical conditions creep up on you. And Bermuda does not offer long-term care insurance, and so you have got to have access to funds or a pension that can support you when those health challenges do arise. So, I understand the need to invoke these unprecedented cost-cutting measures.

I disagree that this is wordsmithing exercise, as my colleague, Michael Dunkley, has said. It is a pension cut; it is not a salary cut. And to be honest, I would actually prefer a salary cut and continued contributions to my pension. But, at the end of the day, this is the decision that was made and, you know, it is a two-edge sword. People need that monthly income to stay at the same level, so I appreciate the challenges that we face with it.

I agree with MP Burgess that the cuts should extend across the board, but I am also made to understand, particularly the judiciary and other hierarchy, but I understand that this cannot be done because there are some constitutional protections that they are afforded because of their role.

I also note that my colleague, MP Simmons, is also correct. We will suffer at the backend, and we will suffer at the backend at a time when we do not have earning power to try to make up or recoup what we have not been able to put into our pensions. To be honest, when we were . . . we have afforded people the opportunity to access their pensions, and when we made that decision, that just made me cringe.

The Speaker: I see there is a point of order.
What is that?

[Crosstalk]

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is unintentionally misleading the House. Can she point out to us where in the Constitution does the judiciary get any protection on their pensions from pay cuts?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Deputy Opposition Leader.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes.

The Speaker: You can continue.
Did you get the point of order?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I didn't hear him.

The Speaker: Oh. The Deputy Speaker raised a point of order. He was just asking for clarification on your point of reference to the judiciary on the question against their authority is not like the rest of the civil service.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay. I will come back to my honourable colleague on that. That was information that was given to me, so I will get that information and revert back to him, if that is okay.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Continue.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay. Thank you.

So, Mr. Speaker, my honourable colleague, MP Famous, stated that we are the first MPs to take pay cuts in the Caribbean. And just to clarify, in Aruba, the Ministers and their advisors and MPs will take a 20 per cent salary pay cut, and other public servants are taking a 12.5 per cent pay cut. And their salaries are also being reduced in the other two Dutch countries. In New Zealand (which is not in the Caribbean, I know) but in New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern and her Ministers are taking a 20 per cent pay cut. So she is taking a pay cut, her government Ministers in public service, chief executives, are taking a pay cut; however, not all MPs are being required to take a pay cut.

In St. Lucia—

Mr. Christopher Famous: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order, [Mr. Famous]

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, again, I am going to quote the [Cayman Compass](#) of May 25th. "Bermuda is the first British" (I am going to say that again) "Bermuda is the first British Overseas Territory to look at taking pay cuts due to the economic hardship caused by the coronavirus" I never said we

were the first in the Caribbean. I specified *British Overseas Territory*, a distinct difference.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Although I do take the Honourable Member's point, but I just wanted to bring some clarity.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Honourable Member, I appreciate the clarity and your point is taken.

So, there are other jurisdictions that are taking pay cuts. And as I said, these are unprecedented times and we have to share the sacrifice. So that is all I wanted to say, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Honourable Member, you *were* brief. Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Any other Member?

No other Member thus bringing us to a close on this matter?

That brings us to a close on this matter. Thank you, Members, for your contribution this afternoon.

[Motion carried: The House revoked previous resolutions of the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975 to provide for a salary reduction with effect from 1 July 2020.]

The Speaker: Now we can do the third readings of the matters that were done today. Are the Ministers who had matters done earlier today ready to do your third readings?

I call on the Premier first to do the third reading for the Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020.

[Inaudible]

The Speaker: We are going to come back to the Premier.

The second matter was his as well.

Minister De Silva—

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Oh, yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Yes, Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: My apologies. I am very sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Honourable Members for their particular contribution to this particular debate. It is without question an emotional debate—

The Speaker: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

The Speaker: I had actually moved on because you had not responded. I was going on to the third readings.

Hon. E. David Burt: Well, we can be done, Mr. Speaker. I'm fine.

The Speaker: I had moved on to the third readings so all the matters that had been done, so the Ministers could do their third readings.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I have no particular issue. Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay. Would you like to do your third reading on your two Bills?

Hon. E. David Burt: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move the Bill entitled the Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 be now read for a third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?
No objections. Continue on, Premier.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

EMERGENCY POWERS AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the Bill entitled Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 be now read for the third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: No objections.

The matter has been read for the third time by its title and has now passed.

[Motion carried: The Emergency Powers Amendment Act 2020 was read a third time and passed.]

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Premier, would you like to do your second?

Hon. E. David Burt: Sure, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move the Bill entitled the Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020 be now read for the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?
No objections. Continue on, Premier.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020 be now read for the third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?
No objections.
It has been read for the third time by its title and has now passed.

[Motion carried: The Summary Offences Amendment Act 2020 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: Minister De Silva.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move the Bill entitled the Merchant Shipping Amendment Act 2020 be now read for a third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?
No objections.
Continue, Minister.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

MERCHANT SHIPPING AMENDMENT ACT 2020

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I move that the Bill now be read a third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: Members, are there any objections for the Bill being read for the third time by its title [only] and passed?

No objections.

The Bill has been read for the third time and has now passed.

[Motion carried: The Merchant Shipping Amendment Act 2020 was read a third time and passed.]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am here, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Would you like to announce that closing part of the day?

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, I move that the Honourable House do now adjourn until Friday, June 19th.

The Speaker: The 19th of June.
Does any Member wish to speak to that, or will we all go home now?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am certain that a number of my Members wish to speak.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am sure that my Whip has provided that information to you.

The Speaker: You must have thought I was going to hit the gavel real quick that time, Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I was just making sure, Mr. Speaker. I want to make sure that my Members have the opportunity to speak.

The Speaker: Okay. I hear one of your Members. Who was that?

Mr. Famous, is that you?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what order my name is on the order list, but I want to make sure that the gavel did not sound—

The Speaker: Well, I understand that the Deputy Speaker is on top of your list this evening, so I am going to call on the Deputy Speaker to make his remarks now.

Mr. Christopher Famous: That's quite fine. I will move down the batting order.

The Speaker: Okay.
Deputy Speaker, you have the [floor].

BLACK LIVES MATTER

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

Mr. Speaker, the protest march in America for the outright brutal murder of George Floyd I think was the impetus for some protest marches in Bermuda. And I am all for protest marches, having participated in many of them in this country. But I get concerned when I see on social media the police commissioner will join in the march.

Mr. Speaker, my concern is because when this Parliament, the supreme policymaker in the country, selected the Joint Select Committee—selected by the Speaker of this House—to look into the matters that occurred on December the 2nd, 2016, when seniors were pepper-sprayed by the police, I do know, Mr. Speaker, having read the report [of the committee] chaired by Honourable Member Kim Swan, that they summoned the police twice, and the commissioner would not let the police appear before the Joint Select Committee. In fact, he came himself and answered all the questions, one who was not even in Bermuda when that occurred.

Mr. Speaker, I am really concerned about the behaviour of this police commissioner. Just last summer, he defaced a police car to participate in a protest march. Mr. Speaker, the police commissioner violated the rules of this country when he went overseas to interview and hire a non-Bermudian without even advertising it in Bermuda.

Now, this same police commissioner, who is commonly referred to by a lot of folks as a *commissioner of public relations*, wants to participate in this march. And I do not mind anyone participating in a march because that is their right. But you cannot come to this country and violate the rules, policies, the norms of this country, and think you can do as you like. It does not happen that way in Bermuda. I would ask the police commissioner to be the police commissioner because black lives matter in this country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the legacy of Government House, that legacy is one of white supremacy. People may say, *Well, this person, this MP, doesn't know what he is talking about*. But I can prove it. I can prove it, Mr. Speaker.

You look at the history of Government House when, under British rule, Sally Basset was brutally murdered, marched from the West End of the country, stopped every 30 steps and beaten until she arrived in town. Then they burned her alive based on their accusations. [They] never wrote about what the victim, of whom she was accused of poisoning, did; never mentioned what that person had done. Sally Bassett's life mattered.

Reverend Monk's, Reverend Talbot's, Reverend Tweed's lives mattered in this country. War vets who, who went overseas to World War I and II, came back to this country, particularly black war veterans, and could not get a government job. We do not know what happened. A lot of those guys drank, basically drank themselves to death because they could not get a job, could not feed their families after going overseas to fight for world peace, Mr. Speaker. Those lives matter.

Doctor Reddy, Doctor Gordon, Ottiwell Simmons, their lives matter in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Doctor Ball, Molly Burgess, Chris Furbert, Eddie Ball, their lives matter in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker.

Then we have Doctor Brown, trying to give him a slow death, an investigation lasting over eight years and continuing, costing the taxpayers millions of dollars. Doctor Brown's life matters in Bermuda also.

I just want to remind us. I mean, march, we must remember these folks also, because their lives matter. And people will say, *Well, why are you are bringing up the history?* Do not question the feelings of us that survive. Do not question the feelings of their relatives that survive. Because it matters to them and they hurt the way that their loved ones are being treated.

We have to think of those who were wrongfully convicted and incarcerated. Their lives matter. The Uighurs that were brought to Bermuda, those four Uighurs, their lives matter. Their lives are just as important as anybody else.

Doctor Hodgson, the late Doctor Eva Hodgson, Lynne Winfield, [their] lives matter. All those workers, foreign workers and Bermudian workers, particularly the foreign workers who have been exploited up until today in this country, their lives matter also.

Bermudians doing the same jobs as their white co-workers, but being paid less, those lives matter to me also.

Doctor Kenneth Robinson, an educator, they labelled him as a Communist, came back to Bermuda, never being late in his mortgage payment. And because of his involvement in trying to change things for the betterment of people, and particularly black peo-

ple, they recalled his mortgage. His life matters. And his family hurts like everybody else, Mr. Speaker.

And when we talk about what the police are doing, led from Government House. I know Government House would not have approved the pepper spray if those protestors were senior white folks. They would have never done that, Mr. Speaker.

Doctor Brown . . . they have continuously persecuted him based on allegations and they continue to investigate him. And the dangerous part of about investigating for eight years . . . because if you would have found something, you would have brought it to the courts and tried to convict him. But the danger is that in eight years you would find something—you will make up something, I should say—just in order to save face for the embarrassment of wasting this money and trying to charge him for something he knows nothing about.

It has been done before. Our people have been killed, lynched, because of false allegations based on a conclusion that some white folks came to and lynched our people. We had whites in this country. We had a secret police file stolen. And when it was found in the possession of the Auditor General, Larry Dennis, he said the former police commissioner gave it to him. The Governor did not initiate any investigation.

Another case concerning an MP, drugs in his container. In fact, there was an investigation. And the investigation was called upon to be ceased. Why? These are all white folks now, Mr. Speaker.

The 1998 Auditor's Report states that \$16 million was not collected because the folks, people, and there were law firms, and I venture to say most of them were white law firms, or all of them, undervalued assets in order to pay less monies to the government, and the Government House did not order an investigation.

When one can receive a stolen file and the person who gave it to him . . . they both were named. There was not an investigation on this here. All within the hands of the Governor. But based on an allegation they investigate Doctor Brown for eight years and continue to spend millions of dollars.

They went and busted Doctor Reddy, his house, like he is some common criminal, and took patients files. For what? For another doctor to say that Doctor Reddy or Doctor Brown should have given them Phensic instead of Tylenol? What nonsense we are having in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the contention that all lives matter in this country regardless of the complexion of your skin. And Mr. Speaker, people do not want to talk about racism in this country, but let me give my version of that.

Mr. Speaker, how do you gauge the improvement of racism in this country? Well, you can gauge it. One way to gauge it is by the income equality. Something that Doctor Eva Hodgson talked about many

times. If it widens, it means race relations are not getting any better. And that is what is happening in Bermuda. It continues to . . . the gap continues to get bigger. It means that race relations are not getting any better, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know in Bermuda, I was told last year by a black business owner, he was buying a product from a local wholesaler and he was in the same business as a white company. And what the wholesaler was doing, was selling this product cheaper to the white firm than to the black firm. That is outright racism to the highest degree. And what name? I will not name that wholesaler. But they know who they are because the owner approached that company, Mr. Speaker, and the company told him, *Well, you know, this company has been with us for many years.*

And the reply, this black owner said, *Well, I have been with you for over 30 years.*

He could not answer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with this protest. Like I said, I have been in many of them and I agree with them, Mr. Speaker.

Just one last thing, Mr. Speaker, is that they did a survey not so long ago. I heard it on television on the news probably about two weeks ago. And I think the survey was held in Boston. And it was a survey of the wealth of blacks and whites. And what the survey said is that the average white family (I think it was Boston) was worth about \$258,000. The average wealth of a black family was \$8.00. Now, it may not be like that in Bermuda. It may not be \$258[000] to \$8.00, but I can assure you it is that same type of wealth between blacks and whites in this country, and it is not getting any better. It is getting worse because if you look at the income disparity in this country you will see that the disparity just increases every year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I won't forget, I remember in the 1970s, a colonel in the army, in the early 1970s, Colonel Darling. There was a disturbance in the country and the army was embodied. And probably in the second night of the embodiment, the second or third night, the commander kicked about 20 (at least 20) black people out of the army. Why? There was no reason. Well, there was a reason, but we were not given a reason. They said, *It is just a discharge. It is not a dishonourable.* But they were kicked out because they were black. Those lives matter.

And another one, Mr. Speaker, right from Government House again, it was the selection or appointment of a colonel in the army. It was between a black Bermudian, very well qualified, and a white Bermudian. And during the final meeting on selection of one of the two, the black one was told . . . and the black one was miles ahead in all the testing. And he was told by the Governor, *You are young and you have got plenty of time.* And they gave the appointment to the white Bermudian. And the only reason he did not get the job, it was obviously not because of

qualification or knowledge; it was because he was black.

And I just urge our marchers, do not forget these people. Do not forget George Floyd or any of the others that have been brutally murdered in Bermuda, in the United States. All over the world you see the protests, it is all over Europe (and rightfully so) and we must remember all of them—George Floyd being the impetus for these protest marches.

The time has come where we must treat everybody equal, and not just treat them equal, but pay them, pay them like you pay white folk, so we can get . . . we can eradicate this racism that exists in the world today, and particularly in Bermuda because this is where I stay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thanks very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

Does any other Member wish to speak at this time?

[Crosstalk]

Some Hon. Members: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I hear a female voice there.

[Crosstalk]

Mrs. Renee Ming: Yes, it is Renee Ming.

The Speaker: Oh, okay.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: MP Ming, I heard your voice before MP Famous, but I was going to do ladies first, being a gentleman as I am, how is that?

Mrs. Renee Ming: Okay, well—

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

The Speaker: MP Ming, would you like to make your contribution now?

Mrs. Renee Ming: Yes, I would, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go right ahead, my dear.

Mrs. Renee Ming: I am going to first say this here, I hope my voice does not sound like MP Famous' voice, Mr. Speaker.

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

The Speaker: I hope you are on the west side of your house down there in the East.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Renee Ming: Well, Mr. Famous is a St. George's supporter so he is okay. We are good.

The Speaker: Okay.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Mrs. Renee Ming: Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my time today on the motion to adjourn to actually speak to what is very topical, not just in Bermuda, but around the world, and that is the videos of black American lives being lost at the hands of the police.

Mr. Speaker, I have often heard the statement and I believe it to be very true. *Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere*. And I think that as a country we have some ways to go. And part of that is that we need to get comfortable talking about the uncomfortable.

Mr. Speaker, I could tell you this here that the first time I saw the video relating to George Floyd, I almost could not believe what it was that I was watching. And it almost makes me feel sick to think that we live in a world where this type of stuff happens.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to understand why Bermudians are horrified and they are joining in to have, you know, a protest calling for justice because sometimes we like to . . . I don't know if it is we are trying to be smart about it, but we often say that *when America sneezes we catch a cold*. I could tell you one thing for sure, that that is not one cold or sneeze that I would like to catch, because I think we highlight George Floyd because it is recent, it is current. But there are many stories like George Floyd.

I think of women, for instance, you have a Breonna Taylor. You have Sandra Bland, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Philando Castile, and countless others who really should be enjoying and celebrating their life today. And it is for this reason that we *must* call for justice as long as it is necessary to right these things.

Mr. Speaker, most of us have loved ones in the United States, family, friends, colleagues. And I am pretty sure that none of us want to see any of them fall victim to this type of violence. So, today I speak out, we speak out, in support of them. I guess when you get down to the nitty-gritty of it, Mr. Speaker, this here struggle resonates well with us because in some way we probably have either experienced racism or heard stories about it from our ancestors, our families, our aunties. And our stories can go back as far as when the first slave actually came across the Atlantic, not just to Bermuda, but to the United States, to various countries.

Mr. Speaker, for me, and this is just the personal side of my contribution, my son chose a university in the United States, when he chose a university. I could say that you are proud on one side of it because

you are like, *Yes!*, because my son was going off to university. And then the other side of it was the worry that immediately came with this decision to go to school in the United States. And although I trusted him to make the right decision, Mr. Speaker, I was keenly aware that there were going to be variables that would be outside of his control and that his skin colour would impact the experiences that he would have with this.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing worse, but [it was] also almost like a necessary check that we have to say to . . . I had to have . . . and my husband is a police officer. He had to have that conversation with my son about what to do should he find himself in a place of being stopped by the police while he was in school. And we had to tell him to keep his hands up, don't mouth, be compliant, you know, all of these things that when you really stop and you think about it, it is horrific and bad. Right? But it could potentially save his life.

It is shameful to think that we are in 2020 and we still are fighting this fight. My hope is that our communities can work together to find solutions, [INAUDIBLE] because I have been around now for, my short space of time in this [INAUDIBLE] is like the conversations like that are more and more difficult to hear. But my hope remains that our strength as a community, which has been demonstrated in the inspiring efforts by our ancestors will keep us going.

And also, it is a great opportunity for us to reflect, Mr. Speaker, on our communities. And in particular, I guess, black communities. In Bermuda I think we are blessed because we lived our lives virtually, like, we do not have to deal with the racial violence in modern day Bermuda. But just because we do not deal with the violence, does not mean that we do not have to deal with significant challenges that many face systematically as they try to live a quality and dignified life. And then that sometimes gets compounded with the erosion of our sports club, things within our education system that have, you know, have probably also shown us that our students face different kinds of challenges from students to adults.

Mr. Speaker, our job as politicians is not easy. And it is critical that we get it right while we have the opportunity. For some people, Mr. Speaker, Obama is like the "forever" president because I think [we] never thought that we would ever see that day. And certainly, for me, especially being a black woman, his wife Michelle, was a class act. She set a standard for all women to follow. But if I am honest, watching Obama and at that time his Attorney General, Eric Holder, come together to discuss solutions gave me pause.

And I say that Mr. Speaker, because you never know what you want to do in office, or what you *can* do while you are in office. I want to be the type of legislator who does the absolute most. It is funny, my kids say that all the time. When you say something, they will say, *That was the most*. And they mean it in a

very positive way, that you want to do *the most*. I want to do the most that I can.

Mr. Speaker, in eight, ten years from now, I do not want to be discussing how we can fix the problems that exist today in 2020. I want to be discussing opportunities and power and what we did that was necessary. I do not want to be in the position where we are asked to advise on fixing the problems we face. I want to be a part of the team that helps to find the solutions and drive the change that we so desperately need.

Mr. Speaker, I will say it here and I will stand on my feet if I, you know, and say I stand ready to work. In our country rent prices continue to rise, wages and salaries do not seem to come up as quickly, where losing even a month's salary could put a family in financial ruin. And many sometimes are choosing to vote with their feet and go to other places because they just cannot afford to live here. And when they dream of raising a family, sometimes it is becoming unattainable. We have to accept the gravity of the problems that we face. Mr. Speaker, our problem is not just to highlight that there are Two Bermudas. Our job is to remedy that and to find solutions.

Mr. Speaker, as a woman, I look forward to seeing the day that we can see women in leadership across the spectrum. Now, Mr. Speaker, I may be asked why I am a certain gender into this, but I am a woman. And I remember, when you go back, Mr. Speaker, and I do recall in the 1990s when you got to see radical shifts in Bermuda, and political shifts, social shifts. A lot of that actually changed when the PLP became the Government. It is times like this that I fondly remember ushering in like just a whole new phase, a whole new era where we could set a course and black Bermudian women were able to see some change and some glass ceilings removed for them.

And I am pleased to note, Mr. Speaker, that black women in Bermuda have occupied the following posts that drove change: Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Attorney General, Ministers of Home Affairs and Public Safety, principals, principals of Cedar-Bridge and Berkeley, executive director of the Bermuda International Business Association, president of the Bermuda Chamber, chairman of the BMA [Bermuda Monetary Authority], mayor of St. George's, Permanent Secretaries.

Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, I highlight just a few to show that we have adequate black women around the table who are critical to achieving equity. We do not just need to play our part. We recognise that as a . . . we should want to be recognised as legitimate partners in this movement and in life. I applaud my colleagues, my female colleagues of colour who have stepped up to the plates to serve because it is not easy. And I know that they do it for love, for passion.

Mr. Speaker, we still must do more. As black women, we have historically proven to be the back-

bone in our communities, and that is socially and politically. If I have to, Mr. Speaker, just take a moment to quote now, because I often read her quotes, Angela Davis, "Black women have had to develop a larger vision of our society than perhaps any other group. They have had to understand white men, white women, and black men. And they have had to understand themselves. When black women win victories, it is a boost for virtually every segment of society."

Mr. Speaker, with that said, I thank you for this time and again I pay respect to the black Americans who have lost their lives, and in Bermuda those who have been challenged with the exact same things.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this time.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak at this time?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, Honourable Member, go right ahead.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as my other two colleagues have spoken we are actually trying to survive two deadly viruses: one is corona and the other is racism.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Ms. Leah K. Scott: The world has found that they are tired. I know I am tired. And like MP Ming, I have watched that George Floyd video repeatedly. I have colleagues who have said that they cannot watch it. But I watch it because I cannot believe that somebody can be so inhumane. And I watch as that man leaves his knee on that man's neck and this man is calling for his mother, who is dead.

And this policeman, [and] his colleagues, were [not] moved by that. I cannot understand why people think that black lives are so irrelevant that it is okay to do that and be completely dispassionate and not think that there are going to be any consequences or, indeed, that there should not be any consequences, particularly because you are a police officer.

Mr. Speaker, today is Breonna Taylor's birthday. She would have been 27. She was killed unnecessarily. Ahmaud Arbery, it took two months for the police to bring charges against that man, and that was only because of a national outcry.

This has been going on for 400 years. Mr. Speaker, the *New York Times* last year did a project called the "1619 [Project]." It highlighted the beginning of American slavery, and it demonstrated how America and the wealth of Americans was built on the backs

of slaves and how the people in that country who now hold the concentrated amount of wealth got it because of the chattel that picked cotton and ran farms and acted as wet nurses to their children. Mr. Speaker, 400 years later we are still in the same position. Black Lives Matter started in 2013, seven years later we are still fighting. Trayvon Martin. All who have died at the hands of police.

My son is a black male incarcerated in Florida for 18 years for being addicted to drugs. He does not deserve an 18-year sentence. There are white people who have committed murder and get 10 years' suspended sentence, but that is the world we live in. And as much as I pray for change and wish that change would happen, I actually do not see it. I see that the world is in an uprising. One of my colleagues, Sylvan Richards, noted that most of the protestors here are the younger generation who are just not going to settle for the same thing that we have settled for themselves going forward. I hope that the protests do bring about the necessary change that is needed.

Mr. Speaker, my father was a pilot in the air force, and we were stationed in Bermuda when I was a young girl. He was a captain in the air force in charge of white men. And my father could not play golf at Castle Harbour, but the men who were under him who were white could play.

It bothers me that I cannot go and just walk in to Coral Beach [Club] or Mid Ocean [Club], but white people can just walk in to Blue Waters or the Spinning Wheel or Place's Place and sit down and have a drink and expect to be served and expect to be accepted. But they wonder why we think that we should have that same acceptance and expectation. It is unfair. And change has to come.

But my biggest question, and I have raised this on a Facebook Live that I did is, What would make us happy as black people in terms of reparations? Or what is it that we want white people to do or to say that will help us understand the reasons why they did, or do, what they do? What would we be willing to accept? Because it is a twofold thing. We want the respect. We want the reparations. But will that be enough? And at some point we have got to make some decisions about what acceptance is going to be for us, and white people have to determine what sort of reparations or restitutions they are going to be willing to offer. And as uncomfortable as it might be, we might [have to] find somewhere in the middle to continue to go forward.

NEWLY APPOINTED U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the challenges that we are facing worldwide in terms of our racism, we also have concerns back here at home. And while the eyes have been on the global stage, we still have to come back to Bermuda. We have got concerns about this Mr. Rizzuto who is going

to be replacing the Consulate General, and it is concerning to me because he was rejected in Barbados and the only reason that he is going to be able to be placed in Bermuda is because he does not have to be approved in the Senate.

And, you know, some people have said to me, *Well, the US Consulate is not a real role and he is not going to do much and he can't cause much harm.* Well, I do not believe that. I do not believe his values reflect what the values are of what we have here in Bermuda. And, you know, I went on the State Department website to look at his portfolio and to look at his biography. And the State [Department] website, if you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, said that "[Mr. Rizzuto] will lead a team whose mission is to protect U.S. citizens in Bermuda and deepen the strong economic and cultural ties between the United States and Bermuda."

Now, his résumé does not line up with the responsibility that he [INAUDIBLE] his job in Bermuda. So, I believe that this is probably [INAUDIBLE] a favour [INAUDIBLE].

COVID-19—SERIOUS ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AHEAD

Ms. Leah K. Scott: But, Mr. Speaker, let's [INAUDIBLE] many things to talk about and think about. And while we have been focused on the global stage, I would like to come back to Bermuda and talk about the challenges that we are facing. The Premier has done a good job with his press conferences in disseminating information and keeping the public up to date about the things that are going on with the virus. We have now . . . we are now in the process of entering phase 3 and we have been very fortunate that we have not had the drain on our health care system in terms of the virus that other countries have had.

But, Mr. Speaker, the real test in measure is going to start on June 13th when the economic support is coming to an end. What are we going to do about the joblessness and the jobs that are just not going to come back? You know, this week the unemployment numbers came out and US unemployment fell by 13.3 per cent in May.

Mr. Speaker, we were already facing financial challenges as a country. We were in financial decline, our retail sales index, which is a major economic indicator, has been in decline for a while, and we have had businesses close up prior to COVID-19. Our economic woes actually began in 2017, 2018. We have had businesses who have not been able to give their employees a raise. We have had businesses who have downsized. And we have people now who are wondering how they are going to get from day to day, let alone week to week, trying to pay their rent and trying to do all the of the things that they need to do to run their household.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to think about what is going to happen on July 1 when Mrs. Smith's rent is due, or mortgage is due, and her tenant cannot pay her the

rent, so Mrs. Smith is at home with no lights, no food, cannot get her medicine because her tenant cannot pay her rent. Her tenant cannot feed her children because she does not have a job, The Government assistance programme has run out. Financial assistance is going to be completely burdened. You know, people actually think that the government has an endless pot of money. They have no understanding of what it takes to run a country. And, unlike the United States, we can't just go print money if we run out. So the challenges that we face are going to be grave. Six months down the road is where the test is going to be, and that is where the rubber is going to meet the road. And it is going to be a challenge.

You know, there was a survey by the non-profits and they are anticipating that 60 per cent of charities are going to close because they cannot receive the donations that they need to support the third sector of our community.

And if I can just read you some statistics, Mr. Speaker: The 83 non-profits that we have in Bermuda have contributed \$39,169,975 to our economy. Most of the volunteers are the seniors and they have had to cut back on volunteering because of the virus and because of the risk as a vulnerable person. In 2019, [a full] 52 per cent of the charities did not meet their fundraising goals. And that was because we were already facing a decline in our economy. [Also,] 42 per cent anticipated that they had a three-month surplus; 65 per cent anticipated they had a six-month surplus; 29 per cent had to let employees go, or they had to implement a hiring freeze; and 4 per cent had to reduce their health benefits and other benefits.

So we are going to face some serious economic challenges, Mr. Speaker. You know, did we ever really come out of the 2008 financial challenge? You know, there were some steps taken. The OBA did things and put economic measures in place with America's Cup that contributed \$335 million to the economy. And I know Members on the other side will argue that we had to pay money to make money, but at the end of the day it was still \$335 million that was injected into our economy. We had the World Triathlon association that was also a contributor to our bottom line. We have got the airport project that is going to finish soon and we have got, I think it is the St. Regis that will finish soon, but what do we have on the horizon, Mr. Speaker?

And I understand that COVID-19 has put a spanner in the works, but that is in 2020. The Government was elected in 2017. FinTech has not blossomed into the business line that we all hoped that it would. And where are we going to be with that? And in addition to not being able to develop a business line, we also now have the challenge of how are we going to open up our borders. How are we going to get people into this country? How are we going to get foreign investment into this country?

We have to look at international business [IB] which has been a huge sustainer of our economy, Mr.

Speaker. Right now our economy is dependent on tourism and international business. Approximately 75 per cent of the 500 top American companies have captive insurance companies in Bermuda. That is a lot of companies. That is a lot of business. That is a lot of revenue. And IB will stay here as long as they believe that Bermuda has advantages and as long as those advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

And I could give you some statistics, Mr. Speaker: In 2019, international business contributed an estimated \$1.97 billion into the country last year. The largest single contribution was salaries, and they paid a staff a total of \$473 million. And they also paid \$47 million to the government through payroll tax; \$10 million was paid in other taxes, and rents and services amounting to more than \$50 million came from international business. In addition, charities got \$8 million in donations and scholarships. So, the third sector is an area that is really going to suffer from the struggles of the economy, and we have got to figure out a way that we can support that third sector.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that with the Cabinet shuffle the other day the Premier is now going to take over casino gaming. Mr. Speaker, that legislation passed in 2014 and we have not seen any successful movement since 2017 in terms of getting a gaming commissioner. I mean, Mr. Speaker, that horse is so dead that the flies won't even touch it. So, what are we going to do to jumpstart our economy? I know that the casino gaming is not a panacea, but it is an amenity that when people travel it is something that they look forward to. My concern is how much money has been spent in salaries and rents and other overheads to keep the Casino Gaming Commission going and we are not getting any return. So, I would like to know what we are doing with that, where we are going with that.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda is a country of "no". We have no natural resources: no oil, no gas, no petroleum. We are also a country of no in terms of our policies so people here do not necessarily have security of tenure, they cannot get citizenship, the opportunity for them to buy a house has to be at an inflated level. We have got to make some new decisions and we have to be open to new ideas.

Immigration is a very, very uncomfortable topic. I know that it is. And I know that there are things that we are going to have to do that we are not going to want to do. I get it. I believe that Bermudians should be employed in the jobs that they have the skill sets for and the qualifications. Absolutely, they should be first. But I also think that we have to have an understanding of the fact that we have an immigration department and a work permit policy, because we actually do have jobs that cannot be filled by Bermudians.

Now, I am not saying that there are not foreigners who are preferred over Bermudians. There are and that is wrong. I have seen the immigration ads that are written specifically to exclude Bermudians. And that is wrong. But we also have to acknowledge that we just do

not even physically have the number of people on this Island, the number of Bermudians, to fill all of the jobs that we have, and we have to reconcile ourselves to that. Not only that, a lot of times the jobs that foreigners fill are complementary to jobs that Bermudians have.

So it is not . . . yes, I agree that foreigners in some instances do displace Bermudians. Absolutely! But I also think that we have to come to terms with the fact that we just do not have enough people for all of the jobs that we have here. We have to ensure in terms of our immigration policy that companies are training up Bermudians and apprentices. We have to! A lot of these insurance companies get these people in here and they do not want to train up Bermudians. I have had people come and talk to me about the people who are their supervisors and the things that they do and the way that they treat them, and it is unfair.

You know, I have said before that an insurance firm will hire somebody so they will hire me and a white person that is an expat and they will get a different salary, they will get a housing allowance, they will get all kinds of benefits that I do not get. I actually got into an argument with a gentleman because when I made the statement that expats come here and get better benefits and live better than Bermudians and that has to stop, and he tried to argue with me and say that that was not a fair statement. Well, if somebody is getting more money, a housing allowance, and all kinds of other benefits and I am getting the standard benefits, by default that person is going to be living better than I do. That is a no-brainer. So I am not saying that there are not issues that we need to address with immigration, but I also think that on balance we have recognise that we do not have an economy that we can sustain ourselves.

You know, we have looked at Caroline Bay and I have been approached by Brian Duperreault and Tom Lawrence about, *Why can't we get this thing going?* And, you know, I do not know what the challenges are with the numbers, but if there is a way that we can make it work and we have people who are willing to invest in our economy which will create jobs and which will assist with the deficit, then why not look at it? I am not saying that that has to be the answer, but we are going to have to consider some things that we are not going to like.

You know, they say in *Mary Poppins* that a spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down. And we might just have to take that spoonful of sugar while we take this medicine. It is not going to be easy. But the times that we are facing and the challenges that we are facing are not like any that we have ever faced before.

And the reality is, Mr. Speaker, I am 61. And any policies and legislation that we are enacting now should be for the benefit of our children's children who are not concerned about the same things that we care about. They are not so concerned about gender or race or, you know . . . our children want to be transient, they do not even want to buy houses. They want to be able to buy computers and to go wherever they want to go. But we have to be forward thinking in the things that we are

doing as we are trying to create a sustainable country and economy that our children and their children's children's children can enjoy.

The Speaker: Member, let me remind you that you are in the last minute of your allotted time.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: One minute! What? Okay.

The Speaker: Yes, one minute left, dear.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay. So, Mr. Speaker, now I do not know if the Premier—

An Hon. Member: One black minute.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: —if he does like to quote [Mr.] Spock. So, I am going to quote one of the favourite things that he says, and it comes from the Wrath of Khan episode where Khan has set off a device and the space ship is going to blow up. And Captain Kirk says to Scotty, *We need warp speed or we are all dead.*

And then [Mr.] Spock leaves and goes to this radiation room and he gets radiated and Captain Kirk says, *Why did you do this?*

And [Mr.] Spock says, *Don't grieve, Admiral. It is logical. The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.* Or the one.

So we need to look at the needs of the many and figure out how we are going to support them.

Live long and prosper!

The Speaker: Thank you, Member. I didn't realise you were such a Trekkie fan.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Mr. Famous, it sounds like my friend from the east who likes to talk from the west side of his house.

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I am sitting on the west side of my house which is in Devonshire East. Anyway—

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

The Speaker: You have a clear reception as long as you stay on the west side of your house we all will hear you nice and clearly. You have the floor.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, good afternoon.

I listened to the previous Members' impassioned speeches, and forgive me if some things sound like they are echoing what they said, but I guess we are on the same tip today. Let me address something: Black Lives Matter.

I want to start off about two men who get, I don't want to say murdered, but two men who get vilified in the press; two black men who stand up for black people. I want to talk about Junior Minister Jamahl Simmons, and now Labour Minister Jason Hayward. I want to thank Junior Minister Simmons for his years of service, especially over the last three months bringing communication to the people during this pandemic, and now Labour Minister Mr. Jason Hayward for his years of service to the labour movement in this country. They both get vilified by the press and in the press. So let me start off by saying thank you to those two black brothers.

Let me move on to something the last speaker said, Mr. Speaker. We talk about Black Lives Matter, but when we look at our possible economic solutions, the first thing we are looking at is how to let more white people in this country. It says something about our economic structure that the only way we can save ourselves, or save ourselves economically, is by, *Well, we better look at bringing in white people.* Let's be real. When people talk about opening the doors of immigration they ain't talking about letting people from the Caribbean come here. They ain't talking about letting people from Africa come here. They are talking about one set of people.

So, we have structural racism in this country where even our own black people think the only way to save ourselves is to get more white people here. That is a problem.

Mr. Speaker, like everybody else, two weeks ago [I] watched a black man get slaughtered in front of [my] eyes. For some of us it was shocking. For some of us it was like, *Oh, okay. Another black man slaughtered. Oh, we've seen this before.* Emmett Till, anybody remember him? We did not see that on video, but he got slaughtered because a white woman lied and said, *Oh, he whistled at me.* Two weeks ago, three weeks ago, a black man was bird watching. A black, educated Harvard man was bird watching and a white woman on camera went into method acting, *Oh, an African American man. He is attacking me. Come now!* If that man did not have that video, he would have probably been slaughtered too. So, we are used to black men being slaughtered. It has been happening for 400 years.

Mr. Speaker, I got a text from one of my constituents that said her children wanted to go to the demonstration. Well, okay, nothing shocking. But these are people [about whom] on the surface somebody would say, *Hey, they wouldn't be at a Black Lives Matter demonstration.* You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because we have historical racism in this country.

Allow me to read something from the ³*Royal Gazette*, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go ahead, Member.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Something brief. In Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, anytime we have had mass protests including white people, [it has] been when they protest against the PLP.

- “• 2003: mass protest at Government House against constitutional changes to ensure ‘one man, one vote’
- “• 2009: mass protests at Cabinet grounds.” (Remember that, Mr. Speaker?) “[This was] against four Uighurs being brought to Bermuda”

(A year later, 10 years next month.)

- “• [2010]: mass protests at the House of Assembly against the proposal for municipality reform”

People spit on the car being driven by Minister Zane De Silva. I remember distinctly former Attorney General, Mr. Mark Pettingill, saying *that day he was ashamed to be white*.

So fast forward, we have got some white people saying they are going to this march because black lives matter. Well, I am a little concerned. And like the Deputy Speaker, I hope this march is not solely about Mr. George Floyd, brother George Floyd. Because you know why, Mr. Speaker? We have a long list of things of why black lives matter in this country. Allow me to read these out, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue, Member.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Black lives matter when people of equal qualifications cannot get a job in our country. The Honourable Member from constituency 30 just spoke about her own experiences, or people’s experience in insurance where you get one black person hired and you get a white person hired but the white person gets a housing allowance, the white person gets this, the white person gets that and the black local does not get that, but they are equally qualified doing the same job.

Here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. We have unions for a lot of things in this country, but we do not have a union for people who work in IB. But we have our black people in IB who tell us what is going on in this country. Right? Now, I am not trying to jump on IB. But let’s be real. We have to be honest. If we are going to march, let’s be honest. How many . . . the ratio of black men in IB is not that great. Qualified black men cannot get a job in IB, but somehow they end up in the civil service and then they end up being called *lazy civil servants*. You see, black lives mattered then too, right?

Mr. Speaker, black lives matter when blacks are in the corporate world and cannot get promoted, or do not get decent promotions. How many black CEOs do we have in this country? I do not want to hear, *Oh, look at Patrick Tannock*. That is just one. How many?

Anybody?

Don’t tell me about Mr. Phil Butterfield, because he has come and gone.

Can anybody else call out a black CEO in this country? In a majority black country, we do not have too many.

How many heads of banks are black? None.

So, black lives matter too. So when you march on Sunday, march for that as well.

Mr. Speaker, black lives matter when we talk about property value. Mr. Speaker, you are a young man after my own heart. You are one of my mentors because you like to do home renovations.

Correct, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: It gives you something to do when you got one.

Mr. Christopher Famous: All right. When you go to Gorham’s or SAL, or wherever, for supplies, do they charge you a different price because your house is in Heathcote versus the guy’s house who is over, let’s say, I don’t know, Riddell’s Bay?

The Speaker: I hope they don’t.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Oh? You pay the same price, right?

The Speaker: I would think I did.

Mr. Christopher Famous: You pay the same price for that brick. You paid the same price for the paint. You paid the same price for that wiring. You paid the same price for the PVC. Well, how come the guy in Riddell’s Bay, his house is valued more than yours?

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Even the guy in Fairylands or Point Shares, his house is valued more than yours.

Did he pay more for that brick than you?

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: How come the houses on North Shore ain’t worth the value as houses on South Shore?

We all know who lives on North Shore and we all know who lives on South Shore. So you see structural racism. So when you march on Sunday, march for that too because black lives matter when it comes to economics.

³ [*Royal Gazette*](#), 5 June 2020

Mr. Speaker, here is the thing. I have been to New York a lot of times. I have had the police stop me for alleged traffic violations. And for an alleged traffic violation their hand is on their pistol. And I have to slowly reach in and show them my driver's licence, knowing, *Maybe I ain't going to make it back to Bermuda*. So, on December 2nd, how many of us were pepper sprayed? How many of us had police hands around our necks? How many of our black women were thrown to the ground? So when you are marching on Sunday, march for that too, because black lives mattered on December 2nd, 2016.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I hear people from the OBA get up and say, *We have to eradicate racism. We have to address this*. That is all well and fine. But somehow I never saw that legislation while you all were in power. Somehow I never see you all speaking out against bank rates that make black people hardly be able to pay their mortgages. Somehow I do not see you all talking about the insurance rates that make people not have any money at the end of the month, or when the PLP speaks out against it, it is a problem.

When we put forward possible legislation for health reform, who is the first in line to speak out against it? Black lives matter when it comes to paying your health insurance. Let's march for that too.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to read something, please.

The Speaker: Continue, Member.

Mr. Christopher Famous: From the *Royal Gazette* (so that way white people cannot say it is not true).

From the *Royal Gazette* of October 17th, 2012: "Black Bermudians with the same academic qualifications as their white counterparts are still earning significantly less, according to Census [reports].

"Median annual income for black residents holding a bachelor's degree was \$80[,000] in 2010—compared with \$105[,000] for white residents.

"With expatriates filtered out, the figures are less stark: \$80[,000] versus \$95[,000] respectively"

So, even when we take out the high-paid expats, white people with bachelor's degrees are making \$15,000 more than a black person with the same degree. So I do not hear anything about qualifications. For the last 20 years black people have been sending their children to private white schools. So I do not want to hear anything about quality education then. They take more money and send their children to the same universities that these white children go to. But somehow or the other [with] the same qualifications, whites are getting paid more.

So if we are going to march, do not march for George Floyd, because that brother is going to be buried by Sunday. March for the black people who are getting paid less money. March for the black people who cannot get a job with equal qualifications. March

for the black people who cannot have health care because certain companies are saying, *No, we can't lower our rates*. March for the black people whose properties values are less than white peoples'.

We cannot just have a singular march that *Black Lives Matter; Save George Floyd!* No, we have to march for everything about racism in this country. Outside of that, it is just a farce.

So, I challenge every person who is going to show up on Sunday to address these issues and many more, the gender issues that MP Ming spoke about as well. Address those issues. The next time somebody . . . when they start talking . . . oh, sorry, they already have. As the continue to talk about immigration, ask them how many people from the Caribbean they want to come up here, because they pay for rent, they pay for groceries, they pay electricity as well. So why ain't they talking about that?

"Black lives matter," Mr. Speaker, is more than just George Floyd. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now call on Honourable Member Dunkley. Would you like to speak now?

Honourable Member?

[Feedback]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, Mr. Speaker, my honourable colleague Patricia Gordon-Pamplin was going in front of me.

The Speaker: Okay.

[Feedback]

The Speaker: Honourable Member, I gave those [INAUDIBLE]

[Feedback]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: [INAUDIBLE]

The Speaker: We are having a problem with your microphone. Can we sort that out?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I don't know. Can you hear me now?

The Speaker: We can hear you now. There was some background noise, but . . .

MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE (SALARIES AND PENSIONS) ACT 1975 MOTION TO REVOKE—CORRECTION TO DEBATE

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay. Thank you. No, I just said that I was an equal . . . that you were an

equal opportunity Speaker, so I am appreciative of you choosing me at this point.

Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence I would like to just go back on a statement that I made a few minutes back. While I am not trying to reflect on a debate, [INAUDIBLE]—

The Speaker: I was about to remind you but I am sure you are skilful enough to get around that.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, sir. I just wanted—

The Speaker: Remember the guidelines.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I wanted to correct something that was said.

I had mentioned, when referring to a comment that was made by the Honourable Member who just took his seat, that I never got paid a full ministerial pay while we were in the Government. And it is important for me to correct that, because the reminder came to me as I was thinking back on it that for January, February and March of 2013, before the resolution was put in place, we were all paid at full ministerial salaries, and the partial salary came into effect with the resolution that was passed for March 31.

So I just wanted to make sure that information that I had given that was inaccurate is put correct for the records. That is important to me.

What also is important is that sometimes we have to understand that people who work, especially in the international business arena, have some flexibility. So while I was able to have the benefit of working and . . . within a Ministry, I still had to go to my office, and I still had to work, and very often I did not get out of there until one or two or sometimes even later in the morning. So I have never tried to short-change any paymaster under any circumstance.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And that brings me back, Mr. Speaker, to the topic of the motion that we are discussing today. And that is in respect of people who perform various functions and are deemed to be less than, or are paid less than others who have the exact same qualifications and the exact same functions. Honourable Member Leah Scott spoke to it. The Honourable Member Famous just actually supported what the Honourable Member said.

However, I was a little disturbed because the Honourable Member who just spoke indicated that he gets upset and distressed (my words, not his, not verbatim but he gets a little distressed) when Members from the OBA start speaking out about black people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that the last time I looked in the mirror I was as black as

the Honourable Member who has problems with us even mentioning the fact that—

Mr. Christopher Famous: Point of order. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Christopher Famous: I never once said I had a problem with them speaking out about black people. I said, if you are going to speak out about racism, let's talk about legislation, let's talk about the banks that are charging all this interest, let's talk about the health insurance companies that don't want to lower their rates.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am coming to that, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, those were my notes that I scribbled—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: [INAUDIBLE] anybody. But I certainly appreciate the clarity that the Honourable Member has offered.

But let me just say, Mr. Speaker, that having lived in the corporate world and having worked in the corporate world, in the international business world, I have seen all of those things that have been meted out against Bermudians in preference to foreigners. And the foreigners are not necessarily all, as the Honourable Member said . . . they are not all white people who have come here. There have been many people who have significant jobs in that international insurance industry who are getting beneficial packages. I do not know the numbers, I am just telling you from my experience within my company of people who do get beneficial packages because they are foreign—not because they are white, not because they are black. They just have to be foreign.

So the Honourable Member said he heard nothing about legislation coming out of our Government. But let me just say, Mr. Speaker, that for 4.7 years of the last 22 years [*sic*] the PLP has been in power. And I think that if legislation can come on any of these issues, they certainly would have had an obligation to bring that kind of legislation so that there is *real* observation of the criticism, and not just what ought or ought not to have been done over a 4.5 year period of time.

In terms of interest rates, I spoke this morning, Mr. Speaker, when the Finance Minister gave his Statement that we are having situations where people have savings in the bank and they are getting like 1, you know, [zero] point two per cent, 0.2 of 1.0 per cent, that is two-tenths of 1 per cent, when the Gov-

ernment is going out and having to borrow money at 4 per cent or 3.75 per cent.

I know that governments are not in the business of trying to compete with the banking system, but certainly if we want to start talking about bringing in some legislation and interest rates, yes, we have every right to not just be incensed, but to speak out about interest rates and how they are impacting mostly black people. We have every responsibility to speak out on the cost of health care, Mr. Speaker. But it is also important to understand that there are sometimes when you are looking at certain reforms those reforms may not necessarily get you to where you need to be. And the fact that we speak out about it is not knocking off the pedestal altogether the thoughts and the ideas of the Government, it is just simply saying that we need to ensure that we look at things a little bit more circumspectly and [we need] to investigate them far more deeply.

One of the things I have mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, that I would love to see is when you have retirees coming out of the corporate world, that corporation should be legislatively required to carry their retirees on their health insurance policies. And, Mr. Speaker, why do I say that? And I do not care whether they say that, you know, as a retiree you can . . . *We are not going to pay for your premium. You pay for your own premium.* But it is a known fact, Mr. Speaker, that there are group rates that people are able to obtain as a company that individuals cannot obtain once they have come out of that corporate environment.

It is a very simple exercise and a lot of things you can look at and say, *Oh, this should have been done. That should have been done. And the other should have been done.* For 4.5 years we were just trying to figure out how to breathe. And I say that with no pun intended. We were figuring out how to breathe, Mr. Speaker. And then once we get to the situation in terms of the legislation we can still continue to put our heads together and figure out how the seniors of our community are not so hard done by because they now have to go from a corporate rate for comprehensive health insurance to an individual rate of comprehensive health insurance, and in most cases, invariably, the only thing they are able to end up affording is the government's sponsored packages of FutureCare or HIP.

So there are things that the Government can take on board to help to equalise some of the disadvantages that our people are facing, and I am saying, all of our people, all retirees. And, you know, there are some times that you do not really have to care what colour somebody is. And I am not saying that colour is of no significance; but I am saying that when you are looking at principles and policies that need to impact people, those policies and principles should go straight across the board. And that is a very easy fix. We can bring in legislation in terms of debt, interest

rates that can be charged on outstanding debt and the like. There is no reason why we cannot force companies to carry their retirees so that retirees can continue to have a health coverage system that will allow them some dignity instead of trying to figure out how . . . or are they going to bankrupt themselves just by virtue of the fact of having to require health care because they have turned 65. That surely cannot be right.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are things that I would like for us to consider. If you want to look at constructive input, that is something that I think that we can look at and it could be looked at and it could be legislated in a relatively [brief] time to help to, you know, inure to the benefit of those people who find themselves in that position.

And then, finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak out in support of the comments made by the Honourable Member from St. George's, Renee Ming.

I know that we have a significant number of males in the House of Assembly. And I do not know, there is probably a handful of women in the House of Assembly who know what it is like to be the mother of a young black man. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, the men in the House cannot . . . I mean, your fathers . . . there is a different connection between a mother and the son.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that every mother of a young black man, and I say young from the age of 16 to 60, when your child goes out the door, he is always a child, no matter what. No matter how grown he is, he is always your baby, Mr. Speaker, as a mother. And you have to spare a thought every single time your child walks out the door to make sure that he is not going to be victimised by a system that does not place any value on life, you know, that thinks it is appropriate to snuff somebody out, the likes of which we saw on that video the other day, Mr. Speaker.

My honourable colleague, Leah Scott, indicated that she has watched it over and over and over again. And I find that that video was so disturbing, Mr. Speaker, that I could look at it and literally peek out of the corner of my eye because there is only so much of it that I can take. And that is as a mother of two young black men.

So, as a society and as a community, our responsibility is to ensure that we do not create a bitterness among ourselves that permeates throughout our children so that there is an attitude before they start that they need to go out and defend themselves.

You know, the Honourable Member who just spoke indicated that he has been stopped and you have to think, you know, *Keep your hands on the steering wheel.* You know, this is so painful to see that situation occur, Mr. Speaker, and it is not isolated. It is something that happens over and over and over again.

So when the Honourable Member started delineating those things against which we should march, or for which we should march, things that we should stand up to as a community, all of those things that the Honourable Member just spoke to are important, Mr. Speaker. And all I want to say is that if we are going to try to create a level of equity within our community then we all have equal responsibility. And that is everybody in our country.

And while the horrors of what we have seen on video is happening across the United States, and the worldwide support that has come to support the Black Lives Matter movement, Mr. Speaker, I think it is also very important to recognise that in our small community it should be a lot easier for us to be able to reach out and embrace. Some of the worst offensive comments and behaviour that have been meted out to a lot of us, and certainly even me in particular, I can speak to, have come at the hands of other blacks.

Mr. Speaker, so if we cannot begin to respect one another, we cannot want to stamp out man's inhumanity to man, our inhumanity to each other, then we cannot in all goodness, in all fairness, and in all clear conscience go out and start marching and say that we want to march for this and march for that.

We need to check ourselves first and foremost. How are we responding? How are we respecting, or lack thereof, other people? If we cannot respect people who are own race, Mr. Speaker, we are never going to respect people outside of our race. It is just not going to happen. But what is interesting, when we adopt an attitude and a stance that says that *I am important*—

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Sorry?

The Speaker: Point of order.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Oh.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Mr. Speaker, this is Rolfe Commissiong. Point of order.

The Speaker: Yes. Point of order.

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: The Member is misleading the House. This phenomenon that she talks about . . . some have called it *black-on-black* when it comes to crime, and *your own fleas bite the hardest*. This too is a by-product of white supremacy. But she is trying to make a point to get away from the real point. That behaviour that she is talking about, that too is a by-

product of white supremacy on the black psyche over generations.

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has a right to his opinion. I am giving you mine, Mr. Speaker. And I am giving you my personal experiences. And it is not . . . it is not a trauma, it is not a generational trauma for me because, Mr. Speaker, I come from a background in which I have seen a struggle for equality since I was four or five years old, early enough. It happened before I reached that age, but certainly early enough that it was able to impact how I have grown up.

And in that growing up process, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take up the burdens that I believe were fought 40, 50, 60 years ago. I am going to do as the Honourable Member Ms. Ming indicated, [and that] is that we want to look at how can we have a positive and significant impact today for the things that we do going forward so that our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren do not have to suffer such traumas, Mr. Speaker.

I understand what the Honourable Member is saying. I am not discounting his determination that some of the attitudes to which I spoke of are as a result of engrained racism. I am not arguing that point at all. But what I am saying is that our responsibility is to be able to move forward in such a way that our kids are not going to continue to be traumatised by the things that traumatised our grandparents and our parents.

So that is what I am saying here, Mr. Speaker. I am not disagreeing with the Honourable Member who just took his seat. I am just approaching it from a slightly different perspective. And in that perspective, Mr. Speaker, I am going to say that, you know, as your children walk out the door the importance of embracing and the importance of not being afraid to tell your children or your significant other or your neighbour how you honestly feel about them; to show love, to show an attitude of embracing, Mr. Speaker, because we never know when that person walks out the door whether they are going to come back home. Is this the last time I am going to see my loved one? And I do not want, Mr. Speaker, for us to be in a situation where we are able to pass various types of legislation, that we are able to support various causes and at the end of it all we do is come back next year supporting the same cause and there is no real or significant change. I am saying that our ability . . . Mr. Speaker, you have heard me say [this] before. If you have the ability to positively impact individuals, you have the responsibility to do so.

And that is one of the reasons that each of us serves in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, because we all have that responsibility that we are going to make things better for those coming behind us. We may not make sufficiently positive impacts on the people today, on our peers. And we certainly may not be able to put in place anything that is going to reduce or minimise the traumatic experiences that have been had by our forebears. But we can certainly do something, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that is going to impact positively on the young people who are coming behind us. And whether they are ours personally or ours from a community perspective, then we still have that obligation to do so, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I join colleagues who have spoken today who mourn with the families of people who have been treated so horribly and have been the victims of man's inhumanity to man, especially when you are dealing with police officers in the case in which we look to the police department to help protect us. And if that comfort and if that confidence disappears, Mr. Speaker, what do we have left?

So I am suggesting that we have each other. And while some Members may believe that Members of the OBA, they do not like us because we do not speak out the way you want us to speak out. As I said, we are as black as you are; but we represent everybody in the community. We represent our blacks, we represent our whites, we represent our mixed race individuals. We represent everybody. So we cannot continue to have the attitude that says we are only going to look out for one segment and one demographic in our community.

I am just hoping that we are bigger than that as Members around this table, Mr. Speaker. I am not saying we are going to change the psyche of everybody in the community all at once. But we can certainly by our own attitudes and our own input try to do so one person at a time. So those are the contributions—

The Speaker: Member, you are actually on your last minute now.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, that was my contribution, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I now call on the Honourable Member Tyrrell.

Honourable Member Tyrrell, would you like to make your contribution now?

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for recognising me—

The Speaker: Continue on, MP.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: —good day colleagues and the listening audience.

Mr. Speaker, as a lot has already been said on part of the subject [which] I wanted to talk about, I will definitely be brief as I normally am. But please allow me to start off with a quote, if you do not mind.

The Speaker: Go ahead, [Member].

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you. I quote, "Happiness is a simple game of lost and found: Lose the things you take for granted, and you will feel great happiness once they are found." Mr. Speaker, that was a quote from Richelle Goodrich from the book *Making Wishes*.

I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, based on that quote you would probably be right to guess that I want to talk about how, generally, we can take everyday things for granted. And, again, those are my personal views.

So, we may not mean to take some things for granted, but it happens, especially when we take things at face value. I was sort of moved to speak about taking things for granted after earlier this week [when] I was in the earshot of a conversation going on in the house between my daughter and my grandson. I became very interested.

But, Mr. Speaker, before I forget and I go on, allow me to make a shameful plug. I did not actually do it when I probably should have done it earlier in the day, but I want to give my grandson an early shoutout for his birthday on Sunday. It is on June 7th and I want to say *Happy Birthday Nylan*. [PHONETIC] *I love you and wish you all the best*. I did digress there, Mr. Speaker, and I apologise for the shamefulfulness.

The Speaker: You are doing it to somebody who has a June birthday, and all of us June birthdays stand together, so I gave you permission to be able to do that. How is that?

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I thank you for allowing me to do that.

Pretty soon I will probably going to be worrying about him getting his first bike because time moves on real fast.

But back to the conversation that he and his mother were having earlier this week, which surrounded the incident of George Floyd losing his life very tragically to the white policeman. My grandson took it for granted, and obviously on face value, that Mr. Floyd lost his life only because he allegedly used a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill, and, you know, he was a little concerned about it. And of course, his mom had to give him a history lesson on racism and white privilege that goes on in the US, but also mentioning that those same things happen here in Bermuda.

Now, I am not going to say a lot of what she taught him in that lesson because a lot of it was basically spoken by the Honourable Member, Leah Scott,

and certainly my honourable friend, Mr. Famous, already. But those are the things that she laid out to him and being the bright 11 year old that he is going to be on Sunday, I certainly felt that the lesson sunk in because he did ask a few probing questions right after that.

One of them was, *Why was the police treating him so harsh if it was just a twenty-dollar bill?* And so, again, as I said, she explained to him the way things took place.

I actually felt proud that he was able to grasp the lesson because he and I had a chat right after he relayed some of the things, you know, from his mom. So he actually learned a valuable lesson at such a tender age.

My grandson had actually done something in my opinion that even we as adults tend to do, you know, take things for granted. Mr. Speaker, for instance, we have all been tested by this new way of living under this coronavirus that we are now calling *the new normal*. Many of us have taken for granted the different quality of life that we actually have been gifted, I would say, to bond more often with our family members while we are living under the same roof for 24 hours a day. So, you know, to me, it is a blessing that we have actually been able to do that.

I mean, we even have found that taking up the phone more often and calling those members of our family who live away from us just to say hello. I have even got into the habit of calling my next door neighbour and asking him if they are okay, and I think that this is a refreshing change. Again, something that we just take for granted.

Again, my opinion is some of us have really taken for granted that special group of people, those who are putting their lives on the line, daily, as workers fighting to keep us safe from this dreaded virus. So, at this time, I certainly am going to say thank you to all of them for whatever role they play, whether they be doctors, nurses, cashiers, delivery persons, bus drivers—*thank you, thank you, thank you*. Because all those jobs are jobs that we in this Chamber do not even have to do on a daily basis. So again I say, thank you to the frontline workers. It is because of you because I feel I see the skies beginning to clear for our Island home. So continue doing what you do. Again, we thank you.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in talking regularly now to my constituents I keep reminding them that this pandemic will pass; it will definitely pass. And Bermuda will come out of it hopefully in a better place. We have actually dealt with the pandemic in a way that has made us proud. And I would certainly at this time like to share with the Premier that (and I think I spoke to him about it) a lot of my constituents have been pleased at the way that he and his Cabinet have been dealing with this pandemic. I have received those accolades, so I just want to pass them on. Those accolades that have come to me over the last three

months are after press conferences and [whenever] we have put out guidelines and things like that.

Mr. Speaker, what I will say while I have the floor . . . let me digress slightly. I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Carika Weldon while she was in Bermuda home last summer. At that time she gave a group of us a bit of a background of her studies. Mr. Speaker, I have to confess, much of what she was describing really went right over my head, but I got the impression that she was a competent person and knowledgeable in what she had accomplished. And I concluded that she would have a bright future. Well, Mr. Speaker, little did I think that just seven or eight months later after that meeting, Bermuda would have the opportunity, and I say privilege too, to receive the benefits of Dr. Weldon's work by running the Government's test facility at Southside. Certainly from the feedback that I have been given, Dr. Weldon and her team are doing a great job. So, again, I would like to say thank you to Dr. Weldon for certainly sacrificing [by] coming back here and helping us.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that really bothered me, you can imagine my chagrin when I heard people questioning Dr. Weldon's qualifications. I really could not believe it. But at the same time, they were having no problem accepting the word of someone foreign, you know, foreign to us. I see this as another example of taking things for granted.

Dr. Weldon is one of those bright, young Bermudians who has gone away and studied and has been successful. I really feel that we need to give our people the chance that they deserve. Again, I say thank you for coming home, Dr. Weldon. I am sure you and your qualifications will be welcomed anywhere else in the world, so I certainly wish Dr. Weldon well.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, a lot of what I wanted to say has already been spoken, but let me just sort of end by encouraging all of us in these Chambers and those within the sound of my voice, to look to do something kind for someone in need during these testing times that we are going under. It is not easy for a lot of people. As I said, I am speaking to my constituents and some of them are hurting. We are doing things to help them. So, I am saying, let's not take for granted that everyone is okay, even if they have a smile on their face. That is the Bermudian way. We all smile. *We're okay*. You know, that kind of thing, but they could be suffering. Even the fact that they do not even ask for help, lots of people are still suffering. So I would say, let's all use some acts of kindness to get us, and other people, through the day.

Mr. Speaker, as I bring my brief comments to a close, again I thank you for allowing me to speak. But let me again end with this quote.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: I say it very sincerely. "Don't take me for granted. I know more than I let on, see more than you realize, and care more than you can imagine."

Mr. Speaker, that quote was taken from Charles Glassman's book, *Brain Drain—The Breakthrough That Will Change Your Life*.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP Tyrrell.

MP Dunkley, would you like to make your contribution now?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: [I think] that Ben was next. Yes?

The Speaker: Okay.

I am just going by what is written down here and I am trying to work people in. Okay?

Mr. Ben Smith: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good evening.

COVID-19 ECONOMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you for this opportunity and good evening to all my colleagues.

The Honourable Premier announced last night that we will be moving to phase 3 next week, on June 11th, as long as everything is staying at the same level that it is now and we do not see any spikes in cases. This news will be welcomed information to our population as we should see more of our population going back to full employment; some of them going back to partial employment as businesses cautiously reopen to see what the economy will look like under the new guidelines, under the new normal.

This should also see people start to collect wages and salaries and potentially more people being able to move off of the government benefit which, even though it is an extremely important benefit which has been given [while] we are in this pandemic, it is also having a drain on the government purse which we have spent [part] of today trying to figure out how we are going to have to deal with it.

As we go through this process, we will begin to see what the new unemployment number will be and what decisions will need to be made to solve the issues with our economy. It is important to point out that the Bermuda economy was not in a healthy position prior to COVID-19 forcing the Government to shut down everything. There were difficult decisions that needed to be made prior to COVID-19 because of our debt, increase in taxation, slow growth of the economy and, in some cases, no movement at all in the economy. But what COVID-19 has done is move that timeline up and force us into thinking about and making decisions now. The time for just discussing and com-

ing up with plans that we were going to do in the future . . . we do not have that luxury because we have to figure out a way to save our economy.

Mr. Speaker, the committee formed by the Honourable Minister of Finance will be looking for solutions on how to jumpstart the economy and move Bermuda toward recovery. We must remember that there were solutions put forward prior to the emergency to help get Bermuda out of the economic struggles that they were already going through.

One area came from the BermudaFirst National Socio-Economic Plan. In there it was stated that Bermuda needed immigration reform. It needed population—our talent pools were decreasing, and we could potentially compromise our economic growth if we did not have solutions to those issues. The report said that we would need to develop a plan and legislation to attract international talent into Bermuda. Because one of our issues is that with a low birth rate and with many of our young people, after being educated, choosing to not come back to Bermuda, it does not mean that we do not still need talent to come back to our home. And we need to encourage not only our Bermudian talent but we are also going to have to encourage talent that is not Bermudian.

That has been part of what we have done in our history. A lot of the important figures in our history were not born on our shores. They came from somewhere else. Somebody being intelligent, working hard, striving for what is best for the country does not always have to do with the colour of their skin, it just has to do with what their heart tells them to do and whether they believe in the country that we all call home.

I feel that it is important to bring this up now when there have been public statements around immigration and there have been some policies or potential policies that have caused a little bit of anxiety within parts of our population. But I understand that immigration is an emotive subject due to the way that immigration was used as a racist tool in the past. This is something that I brought up in the House before.

In the current climate, worldwide, that is racially charged due to the continued way that black people are treated, as lesser than human, and in far too many cases that have led to the death of black people. As other Members have spoken tonight, I also watched the death of George Floyd. It is difficult for you to say that you do not change when you watch someone's life snuffed out in front of you over an eight-minute period.

I would say that every person who is in the House has had at some point to deal with a racially charged situation and been treated below the level of what every other human is expecting from the rights of all human beings. We have all had the stops overseas or had somebody follow us from aisle to aisle in a store because they believed that we were going to steal from the store because we are black. All of these

things happen and they are scars that we carry with us.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I am fully aware of the experiences of black people, not just in Bermuda but worldwide, but specifically how they have been treated locally and overseas, Bermudians treated locally and overseas, we cannot ignore what impact a failing economy will have on all the people in Bermuda. We must continue to strive to change the system that has engrained systematic racism that has kept some hard-working Bermudians from progressing in their fields and others who have been pushed out completely. Many have decided that they are going to leave Bermuda because they do not see the opportunity.

But we also need to be mindful that there are some who have been able to flourish in the Bermuda economy. Not all of these people are black and not all of the people are white, but some of the people that have flourished have been Bermudian: black Bermudians, white Bermudians, Portuguese Bermudians, mixed-race Bermudians. They have been able to survive and thrive in the economy that we have in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, we must not cut off our nose to spite our face. We can work together to change the system so that all Bermudians are given proper opportunities for employment in their country without tearing down our economy. We have seen large numbers of guest workers leave our shores in the past due to policies that have shown them that they are not welcome.

Have we analysed what impact that exodus has had on the overall economy? What was the reduction in the taxes collected by the government once that number of people left the country? What was the impact on the rental incomes for Bermudian homeowners? What was the impact on retail with the reduction in customers who were available to buy their goods? Were Bermudians better off after so many non-Bermudians were pushed out of the country?

Mr. Speaker, we must remember the positive connections which happen with immigration. Every guest worker in Bermuda made a choice to come to our community. We, as Bermudians, have always embraced our tourists, the people who make a choice to come to Bermuda as a destination when they have so many other places in the world that they could choose. As a community, we make sure that they are enjoying their stay in Bermuda with the hope that they are going to return.

But, Mr. Speaker, do we know how many tourists it takes to generate the same amount of money that is spent in our country by having one guest worker here? I know everyone has heard the statistics that one IB job creates two to three jobs for locals. But, Mr. Speaker, shouldn't we embrace those people who help Bermuda to keep our economy working? I believe that when someone owns a business they are reaching out to find the best minds that they can in order for them to maximise the effort of their company.

Now, yes, there are a lot of cases where the person at the top of that pyramid is going to be a white male and they are only going to reach out to the people who make them feel comfortable, which creates a large management of other white males. But that does not mean that the only people in the world who have abilities are going to be white males. So everybody is going to have to understand that as we are trying to attract people to Bermuda . . . and it is going to be important that we have to attract people. Not everybody has always agreed that we have to attract people, but I am going to give you a couple of examples.

So, if you are a Bermudian fortunate enough to own a house, an apartment, a condo that you have rented out, and you have rented out to somebody who actually is not a Bermudian, you will fully understand the impact of immigration to you financially. So, a specific example: A Bermudian family has built a house and rented it out with a mortgage based on a certain level of rental, and that is the payment that they have to make. Well, that only works as long as the person who is in that house has the financial ability to pay that rent.

So, you have heard other Members say that what we need to be doing is striving to have our Bermudians who are in IB to be able to make the same kind of money, to be able to have the same housing allowances. And I agree with that 100 per cent. But what we also have to understand is we need to get more of those businesses here so those opportunities increase so at the same time that we are trying to get our Bermudians on that level playing field we also have to increase the field.

If you are a Bermudian who has been working in IB in this pandemic time when we have been working from home . . . and there is a difference, because there are some people who work in IB who are able to work from home because they are working on the computer and they can work from any other place. But there are also people who do hands-on jobs for IB from a support level who right now have not had the ability to do their job [at home]. But in a lot of cases they have continued to be paid full salary while they are not able to work. The people who are in that situation are fully aware of what immigration means to them. Because if we do not keep the companies that we have now, and attract more companies into Bermuda, that person who has been in that situation may lose their job. And that is not what we are looking for.

Mr. Speaker, if you have been receiving support from the third sector during this pandemic . . . because there are a lot of people in Bermuda right now who are having to get their meals from churches and from all the organisations that have been coming together from the third sector in order for those meals to be provided. But you have to understand that what has happened in a lot of cases is that IB . . . it is not just non-Bermudians, but also Bermudians have been donating their time and donating their money in order

for the third sector to have the money to feed people at this time. But immigration has also allowed for that to happen.

Mr. Speaker, if you are working in construction and you have guest workers who are working alongside your Bermudian crew, we have to make sure that both sides of this equation are taken care of. Because there are times, like where we are right now, where you might have three or four masons who you have brought in from overseas and they are on work permits. They are also training up a junior mason to get them to that point where they can be in that role. Because most people will tell you, a hard-working Bermudian is always going to be a preference because they do not want to have to deal with the work permit process and they do not want to have to continue to do that.

But the job still has to get done. So if they do not have an option to turn to, to hire somebody else, and those work permits are denied, we have to make sure that we have denied the four work permits because we have four skilled masons to take those jobs. If we do not do that, what ends up happening is those projects do not get done and now all the rest of that crew gets laid off. That is not helping our situation; it is making our situation worse.

So, Mr. Speaker, if you are a Bermudian who owns a business right now, things have been very difficult. As we go through this pandemic and we have gone through the phases, many businesses have struggled to try to return. But all of them are hopeful that we can get back to where we were prior to January/February of this year. They were struggling then, but they were surviving.

But, Mr. Speaker, if you are a business that is hiring guest workers and Bermudians and they are working side by side it, it takes all of that staff working together as a team in order for them to be a successful business. If we are denying those work permits and sending those people home, and now you have put yourself in a situation where potentially that job cannot get done at the level it was, are we now putting those businesses in jeopardy?

CABINET CHANGES

Mr. Ben Smith: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I am talking about immigration, I think it is important that we look at how we can make sure that we are providing for our Bermudians, making sure that we are supporting our Bermudians while also trying to encourage people to come to our shores and trying to encourage people to invest in Bermuda because we need money to come from outside of the country. It does not matter whether that person is black or white. What matters is that they actually have the money and believe in Bermuda and they want to invest in Bermuda.

So, Mr. Speaker, the announcement yesterday that there has been a change in Immigration I

thought it was important that I take this opportunity to thank Minister Caines for the work that he did once he stepped in for Minister Walton Brown and the progress that we were able to make. I know it was a struggle. We were not able to move as quickly as we wanted or as quickly as other people would have wanted us to move, but I would like to thank him for the hard work that he put forward in order for us to get that point.

But I also want to point out some of the people who I have had an opportunity to work with since I have been on that committee. I would like to reach out to MP Famous. Over the two-plus years that we have been working on that committee I have seen the way that he can look at both sides of the equation. Not all the time is he going to get credit for the things that he was doing in that room because sometimes that would not be popular out in the public. But the truth is you have to look at all sides in order for you to make right decisions. And it is tough when you see somebody who has been doing that work on that committee and they potentially did not have the opportunity to get a chance to step up to a leadership position once that new Ministry of Labour was created.

But I think that it is also important for me to reach out to MP Renee Ming who is not only sitting on that reform committee but she is also the chair of the immigration board. So what you have there is somebody who has been speaking out on an ongoing basis and has the experience of not just the reform committee but also the working through of what work permits look like. Well, here we have an opportunity for a black Bermudian woman with experience to be in a leadership position. She actually spoke to it just now in her speech. But [she is] another person who potentially was passed over. I understand, but there is a brand-new person who has been brought in and moved into that position. It is up to the Premier to make those decisions, but I would just like to point out that there were people who I have seen work toward making changes and be balanced in what they are doing when we are in that room.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity—

The Speaker: You have a minute left.

Mr. Ben Smith: I would like to take this opportunity to wish the new Minister, Honourable Jason Hayward, good luck in moving forward. I look forward to his resumption of the Immigration Reform Committee and carrying on what we were working on and moving toward what is going to happen with work permit policy, what will happen with status in Bermuda, what will happen with PRC in Bermuda, and work toward how we as a country can start to encourage people from outside to come here and work here the same way that we encourage tourist to come to Bermuda and have our local international business want other inter-

national businesses to come to Bermuda because of the experience of Bermuda being welcoming instead of the “country of no” that tells them that we do not want them here.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP. Your allotted time has expired.

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you for your contribution.

I will now call on the Honourable Member from St. George’s. Honourable Member Swan, would you like to make your contribution now?

Mr. Swan.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. Would you like to make your contribution now?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Is that MP Swan?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, you may start your contribution.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I am not speaking, sorry.

The Speaker: Oh. You are not speaking now. You are on the list here. Okay.

MP Commissioning, would you like to make a contribution?

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay. Go right ahead, sir.

COVID-19—TOURISM SECTOR’S QUIET DESPERATION—CORRECTION

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, firstly, I would like to offer a correction from two weeks ago.

I had mentioned the potential range of deficit that the Finance Minister was looking at when I cited the figure that started ⁴between \$275 million, over a quarter of a billion dollars, and I cited the upper range at \$375 [million].

I want to correct that.

It was not \$375 [million] at the upper end, it was \$315 million. So the range was from \$275 [million] to \$315 [million]. And with the mitigations that the Minister is putting in place, we saw a part of that today in terms of the Government pay/pension issue, it was

part of those mitigations to get the end product in terms of the deficit down to, I believe he said \$150 [million], Mr. Speaker. And it is our hope that the Minister and the Government are able to achieve that.

You will also note that the rating agency today gave a qualified thumbs-up to Bermuda. So there is some positivity out there, but we still have a long way to go.

DOCTOR EVA HODGSON

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that I was going to talk about the life of Doctor Hodgson. But in this presentation talking about the woman who was a woman of action, who not only thought about racial justice but how we could put in place at the Government level public policies to address that.

Certainly, every Member here has talked about the explosion of interest around racial justice issues globally. And I will say this here again, in America they talk about the original sin (I might be paraphrasing). In America it was slavery and racism, and racial oppression. That seems to us too narrow of a definition, because, Mr. Speaker, I think I can say without fear of contradiction that is the original sin of what we know as “western civilisation.”

That is why throughout the diaspora they have latched onto the horrific end of Mr. Floyd’s life. But in all of these western capitals, as I mentioned earlier, from London, other cities in the UK, Paris, Germany, major cities throughout Europe, members of our diaspora and with whites secure about racial justice, have also talked about the systemic changes that are needed even where they live. And Eva was always about that. She saw things at the systemic level that would deal with the underlying causations that were played that so powerfully disadvantaged black Bermudians right up until the present period.

I think in Bermuda we have been, what I call, normalising racism, institutional and otherwise, the racial disparities that stare at us right in our faces. I will give you an example. We have the comments by Mr. Juan Wolffe today, *better late than never*. And we need to understand that in all of the key institutions of Bermuda, especially even in terms of criminal justice, that the disparities are glaring, intolerable, but we have learned to tolerate it. To us it is normal, and that is the way it is.

This incident with Mr. George [Floyd] and everything that has come out of that now is causing us to have a long overdue, perhaps 30-year return to issues that our parents were addressing back in the 1960s and 1970s.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, there were some like Eva that did not need permission, did not need it to be fashionable to talk about these issues. These are the real racial justice warriors. You know, it is fashionable now, to some extent (and I hate to use that word, but I can’t find another one right now). But for Eva to take

⁴ Official Hansard Report, 22 May 2020 page 4080

these positions back in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to the early 2000s, you were routinely demonised, ostracised, and in the case of persons like Doctor Hodgson, and someone said Doctor Muriel Smith, denied opportunities and had their lives on a personal level terribly affected. Their life chances suffered. Let's be real about this. All because they and so many others were determined to deconstruct, as I said, white supremacy in Bermuda, and one of its chief and most pernicious by-products, white privilege.

I heard Mr. Ben Smith talk about immigration. And he alluded to the fact that the way racialised policies were used in an effort to maintain white dominance, particularly Anglo-Saxon dominance, and a hegemony hold in this society coming out of the post-World War II era, in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, how white privilege was enshrined in our Constitution Order of 1968 as the British turned a blind eye. Not much has changed.

I heard the Honourable Member Patricia Gordon-Pamplin [say] *We get votes from everybody. We are a diverse party.* Unlike the PLP. She did not say PLP; she did not say "unlike the PLP." But that is implied. And she need not get up on a point of order here.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: To go back to that same framework designed by—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: —their founders, Sir Henry—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I did not—

The Speaker: MP, do you have a point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I do have a point of order, sir.

I just wanted to make sure that I was not misunderstood. I have never talked about getting votes. So I think that the Honourable Member may have misheard or inadvertently recalls what he did hear me say.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: I do not know what that was supposed to mean, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry.

The Speaker: [INAUDIBLE]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: May I proceed, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Just be mindful of the MPs point of order. Continue.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Mr. Speaker, she spoke about the fact that . . . my view of that was that they got a diverse group of people voting for their party. Was that not what she implied?

[No audible reply]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Okay. Thank you.

But Mr. Speaker, the reality is that that degree of white privilege enshrined in that Constitution Order in 1967, which became operable in 1968, established a framework for Bermudian politics that is still here today.

You see, we want to talk about racism and white supremacy, how some of us . . . and how it can exist is so many areas in Bermuda but ignore how it still beats at the heart of Bermuda politics, how in every election white Bermudians to the tune, on average, as per polling data over the last 20, 25, 30 years routinely show that the PLP has never gotten more than about between 2 per cent to 3.5 per cent, at best, of that white vote.

So if that party does get some diversity it is not that much and will remain at probably 15 per cent of the vote that they currently get from black community and other groups. That party is a party that was designed to protect white interests in Bermuda, and still does, despite the fact that over two-thirds of its representatives, ironically, are black Bermudians. But that original framework that was established, again, in that period, the 1960s and 1970s, is still alive today.

As to the issues of immigration, we know that historically, even though we speak in code, Bermudians could not get jobs, and Bermudians are having a hard time. And they brought this Englishman in—and he is still here 50 and 60 years later, I might add—and displaced my uncle or my brother. But what we are really talking about, once we put aside the code talk, is black Bermudians.

Would Mr. Smith be prepared to back a plan that would get rid of the pretence and put a public policy in place similar to the Workforce Equity Bill (but with a little more teeth, I might add)? That would specifically be a race-specific remedy to ensure that Bermudians, black Bermudians, are going to get that shot that we all say they deserve—the educated ones, the qualified ones within the established white dominated workplace, corporate, at the highest levels.

You see, we can have affirmative action, with all due respect to sister Renee, being touted by the new commanding officer of the Regiment. Nobody is going to complain about that, because that is affirmative action for women. And when many people hear that, particularly these transfers back to IB, and usually you are talking about white women, there are a lot of black women as well. There are more black women

doing fairly well, but still a minority, than there are black men in that industry. Notwithstanding every time we talk about brother Tannock.

But it is all right, see? But suddenly it is taboo, and it is worse than that, to talk about affirmative action to deal with this question of racial inequality. Can't do it for blacks. I say we must.

Eva Hodgson has been talking about that for years and that is just one potential programme. See we can get rid of the pretext, like I said. Acknowledge that the issue has been black opportunity within, particularly, our leadership in our corporate world, both IB and local. Let's address that.

My view is . . . and I am going to say this a little sarcastically. You know some of us Bermudians are Canadian Bermudians? I am like a New York City Bermudian. That is where I went to school. So when you hear me talk like this that is Brooklyn coming out and a little bit of Manhattan in the 1970s. Get rid of the pretext. Do that, and . . . personally, if I was the Minister, I would give you all the work permits that you want. As long as something like that is in place as an insurance policy for my daughter, your son, your nephew, your younger brother, whose parents have spent so much money to educate, to give them all the tools they needed to be successful in that domain.

I heard brother Chris Famous. I might as well call him my younger brother now. I mean, the things he was saying so much reminded me of myself on many of these issues. I never knew that about Chris Famous until today. But I am liking what I am hearing. But that is what we have to do.

Eva Hodgson would also talk about affirmative action in other areas. When it came to procurement, we know the Government has made some baby steps in that direction to ensure that black businesses are going to get a share of that action. I think it needs to be expanded and if it even needs to be legislated, it needs to happen. I believe it should be codified under law. We have bipartisan support. Let's put this behind us. This is how you do it.

You see, once you show good faith to black Bermuda that all that wish list they have, [INAUDIBLE] wait now, do not . . . all that wish list they have, you know, about bringing in wealthy foreigners for this and giving them permanent . . . no, you take care of your own first. And I am telling you if we can get past the racism within that other community, and we can get buy-in to things like this, oh, you would bring a smile back to dark Bermuda. And once you also know this is the right way to go. I heard people talking about reparations, but in terms of an immediate basis, this is the way to go.

So you have a procurement piece. You also would have . . . I think every major company that comes here that wants to do a construction, development project. For example, like down at St. George's. Or a company that wants to relocate here. Every time they need a permit, a licence, or whatever, on the

other side of that table is a codified programme that would ensure that the company is going to use black vendors, maybe 50 per cent of all the vendors that they require for goods and supplies. And maybe the company is going to have a mandate where it must employ 30, 40, 50 per cent black Bermudians. If it was a big construction project the same thing would apply. Now that is the race-specific remedies that we need.

Mr. Speaker, I dare say that there are some non-race specific remedies that, if enacted, will also proportionately improve the lives and life chances of black Bermudians.

Heath care reform. Have we forgotten that pre-pandemic . . . and I made mention of this two weeks ago, and I am coming down again. We had around 5,400 people without health insurance in Bermuda. Oh, what a statistic! Of course, remember, I said it is normalised, so we do not really focus on that; that is unpleasant. But over 91 per cent of those people were black Bermudians. This is pre-pandemic; Lord knows what it is now. And amongst that number were children without health insurance.

Health insurance needs to be a human right and not a privilege. When John Swan . . . and I will repeat again, I was happy. I was a happy camper. Mr. Speaker, you know he didn't have to take some responsibility for some of the stuff not being done 30 years ago, or 25 years ago, or 20 years ago when he said, *Hey, maybe we need to get away from this sort of wild, Wild West sort of capitalism that we have here, and we go toward a more Scandinavian model.* Something a little bit like Bernie Sanders. Or maybe what he felt may be a little bit more humane model.

He talked about the fact that . . . you know, I took it as he was alluding the fact that even our social safety net is frayed, or it is not one in which we can overly proud of, considering how wealthy Bermuda has been, and still is. But most of that wealth now is in the private sector in the private hands, certainly amidst the fact that we have a poor government because in part we have not collected enough taxes. But I will get to that in a second. But health care has to be addressed and this is bringing me now to the second as well.

We need to reform our tax system. We do! And it has to be on a progressive model to take the tax burden off of working poor, lower middle, and middle-income people. Especially, when I am talking about the working poor and lower middle, that is overwhelmingly, unfortunately, black Bermudians. I am not making this up. That is what the stats tell us. So if you have a more progressive tax system, which shifts more of that burden onto the wealthy and the rich—some of whom are my colleagues in this House of Assembly, I might add (and you know who you are)—that means then we can . . . to use that term again which the Premier . . . I am happy he used that term. That is my term. We can begin to “re-engineer”

our economy in a way that creates more [INAUDIBLE]—

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

The Speaker: You have one minute now.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Oh, you are finished? I was saying you had a minute.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: No, no, I thought you were trying to tell me I am finished. What were you saying?

The Speaker: You have your last minute now.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Well, Mr. Speaker, the last time you told me I had a minute it went by in like 10 seconds. I am not going to even attempt that. [INAUDIBLE]

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

An Hon. Member: Ooh!

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: I am just joshing.

[Crosstalk; Feedback]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: I am just joshing. I am saying that I am not going to attempt that. I just want to say thank you. It looks like I am going to have to do a part three when we come back and resume. And I hope people will take some of the thoughts I have conveyed tonight, because Doctor Eva Hodgson was about action.

How can we translate those ideas into actual action and actual public policy to give a greater equity and equality? And as the Premier said all economists tell us that if we do these things, we will have a healthier economy. It is good for business, and it will be good for all Bermudians, both black and white. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP Commissiong.

MP Dunkley, would you like to make your contribution now?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good evening.

The Speaker: Good evening.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I would like to thank colleagues for their contributions tonight and certainly I would like to thank my colleagues Leah Scott, Patricia

Gordon-Pamplin, and Ben Smith for very sound, well-thought-out and reasoned comments on the motion to adjourn.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, in the 20 minutes it is sometimes hard to get it all in and we have seen that tonight.

Let me start out by one of the main topics of conversation tonight, very sadly, Mr. Speaker, and tragically the pursuit of justice and equality is continual, very slow at times, and marred often by abhorrent situations, such as we have seen just a week ago last Monday in Minneapolis, where Mr. Floyd was murdered by four police officers.

I, too, had a hard time watching the video on the numerous times it was played, because I got so emotional. I started to feel, in a way, that I had to turn the TV off because I was starting to get emotionally violent about the whole situation. And, sadly, what we have seen since that time is, on a positive front, we have seen his family be so (what I would say) proactive above the situation in appealing for calm, remembering the life, and talking about the man and the need for progress.

But it has been unbalanced by protests across the United States that have turned into violence and looting. And we have seen more people die because of the death of one man which was tragically wrong. And let us hope justice has its day, as I am sure it will. We have seen people die, like Police Captain David Dorn in St. Louis who had many years of service in the police and was shot by . . . I guess it was looters in the area.

So, you know, out of this very, very dark situation, let's hope that we can continue to make progress and let's hope that our protests here on Sunday are productive, and it appears by the comments from both sides of the House today that there is a firm resolution to continue to enact change.

Mr. Speaker, the first person who spoke tonight was the Deputy Speaker, and he spoke about the behaviour of the police commissioner. And as someone who has watched very closely the work of the police over the past couple of years, obviously as a Shadow Member and as a former Minister and a Premier, I obviously have a close concentration in that area. I believe that the police commissioner and his team have done a good job over the past couple of years.

The commissioner has tried to build trust within the community. The commissioner has tried to build support within the community. He has tried to build the relationships to allow that to happen. And I think it is a bit unfortunate that a Member takes the podium in the House of Assembly to criticise the behaviour of the police commissioner. While it is his opinion, I believe the Honourable Member has overlooked a lot of the

good that has happened in that regard. And so, I support the commissioner and what he has done. Has he always got it right? No. Have the police always got it right? No. But he has been a breath of fresh air in the approach that he is taking in trying to build trust in the community, and I think we have seen those great strides, and I hope the current Minister of National Security and the Shadow Minister of National Security would recognise that.

CABINET CHANGES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, before I get into the main body of my comments tonight, let me take this opportunity to thank the Minister of National Security for his time as the Minister responsible for Immigration. I thought that he did try to build a consensus by being bipartisan in what he did. It is disappointing that there is a Cabinet change at this time, and I realise it is firmly the prerogative of the Premier. But I think it sends the wrong message at this time—with people out of work, with cuts in hours, with people struggling—that we still have a large Cabinet that is increased with a Shadow Minister now. So that wrong message has been sent when the former Minister *by all appearances* seemed to be doing a good job of moving forward the very thorny issue of immigration reform.

So, now the new Minister comes into a very difficult situation. We have had three Ministers of Immigration in less than two years, and we need to have some stability because it is a critical area of immigration, not only for the protection of Bermudians, but for the strength and the growth of our economy.

COVID-19—SERIOUS ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AHEAD

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And that brings me to the tough times we face here in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, and clearly, COVID-19, the pandemic that hit Bermuda has caused a real crunch on Bermudians. The Government generally has done a decent job, Mr. Speaker, on the handling of the virus today. But now the question has to focus in on, *So, where do we go from here?*

Where do we go from here? The Government has laid out the various phases. We are in phase 2, and at the press conference on Monday the Government signalled that we would move to phase 3. Now, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the phases being left out, but in my view, the change from phase 2 to phase 3 is not that instrumental, in the fact, that is, if you take a look at phase 3, we are looking at schools and childcare. We have already heard that schools are going to be closed, so we need to know what is going to happen to childcare through the summer. We know that the full government opening will certainly help with—

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order. We will take the point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Yes, the Member might be just inadvertently misleading the House. Schools are not closed. School *buildings* are closed. School is still going on, and school will continue until the end of term. Just a slight clarification there.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Sure.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I accept that, Mr. Speaker. Sorry. I accept that 100 per cent, yes. School buildings will not open; the school learning will continue on and the school year closes a bit early. So, I appreciate the Minister for correcting my wrong choice in the language there.

Public transportation will get into the full mode. There will be an end of the mandated work from home, churches will be allowed to open, gyms will be allowed to open, there will be a limited number of gatherings. So, why do I read that out? Because what we need, Mr. Speaker, most importantly as we rebuild Bermuda's economy, is we need jobs. We need jobs to be filled again, we need jobs to be created. And in phase 3 I do not think we are seeing an overbearing of jobs being created at this point.

As the Honourable Premier said when he spoke in the press conference on Monday night, “⁵We can't keep the country shut down for ever *[sic]* and we must find ways so we can balance safety with economic activity and bringing dollars to our shores.”

I say *Amen*, and I am sure all Members of the House will say *Amen* to that.

Mr. Speaker, our economy and thousands of Bermudians and residents are struggling daily at the present time because many businesses are still closed, many jobs are still unable to be filled because those businesses are closed. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to reflect that COVID-19 has had a severe impact on the Island, the extent to which will not be able to be measured in finality for some months down the road, or maybe even a year or two down the road.

But, Mr. Speaker, I say with all respect, the Bermudian economy and many Bermudians struggled *before* COVID-19. It is a fact that retail was struggling many months of the downturn. It is a fact that 2020 tourism was going to be much weaker than 2019. It is

⁵ [Royal Gazette](#) 5 June 2020

a fact that the big construction projects that are currently going on in Bermuda are coming to a close or may be closed already, when you look at BELCO, the airport, and St. Regis.

The PLP has tried to build a third pillar as the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition said on FinTech and that has not met all the whistles and bells and hoopla so far. So, there has been a dearth, there has been a tragic, tragic shortage of investment in inward capital into the country and people are asking, *What's next?* Our situation was weak before and now it is getting to the point where it is very dire.

So, we must start as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker, in a calculated way—and I cannot emphasise that enough, we must start in a calculated way—to rebuild our economy. And we need to in [phase] 3, Mr. Speaker—not in [phase] 4; in [phase] 3—to focus on hospitality and tourism, and why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Because hospitality and tourism is the largest employment sector of this economy, almost 5,000 jobs. And many of those jobs are underemployed, but the vast majority of those jobs at this point are still unemployed.

We need to focus on rebuilding transport and communications because there are 2,000 jobs in that area and transport and communications go closely with hospitality and tourism. And if we can rebuild hospitality and tourism in the near term with transport, then we can help rebuild retail, which has over 4,000 jobs in our community. While retail might be back to work to some extent, people are not spending money at the present time because there is a lack of confidence in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have thousands of jobs at the present time which are in limbo, and without a definitive plan, the struggle and pain experienced by Bermudians and thousands of people from one end of the Island to the other will continue and it is already at that acute level.

Now, we have seen positive job reports from the US. And I raise that only to reflect on the fact that they have aggressively tried to open their economy, they have more . . . I guess I would say a more timely frequency of reports where they can measure that. And, interestingly enough, the experts in health care such as Dr. Fauci, have said as late as today that there does not have to be a second wave of the virus.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to try to rebuild our economy with jobs, it is important that the airport is open. I am not saying rush into it; I am saying do it calculated. And without the airport being open, it is hard to say how we can rebuild tourism and hospitality. Without people, without visitors, why would hotels and many restaurants want to open when they have no critical volume to even break even at that point?

Mr. Speaker, what do we do for taxi operators for the rest of the year? How do we keep them gainfully employed? How do they pay their bills? What do we

do with minibus operators for the rest of the year? How do they bring home money to take care of their families? How do we allow them to be productive and pay for the basic necessities in life, not even try to turn a profit for a vacation? How does Dockyard survive for the rest of the year? There are dozens of businesses in Dockyard that are struggling and need to have some hope for the future.

How does St. George's survive for the rest of the year? It is unlikely, Mr. Speaker, in my view (and the Minister of Tourism can speak later) that cruise ships will come back to the Island until the end of our summer season, at best.

Now, I was certainly interested, Mr. Speaker, and it caught my ear when I heard the Minister of Tourism say at the press conference on Monday night, *We are closer than ever to opening our borders.* Well, Mr. Speaker, it caught my ear because it is a leading comment, but really, what did it mean? Yes, we are closer than ever because the airport is closed, our borders are closed, no cruise ships coming in, just freighter lines that are coming in. So, yes, I guess Monday was closer than the day before and Tuesday was closer than Monday. But, what does that mean?

What is the plan? How are we going to open our borders to Bermuda? How are we going to put people back to work? How are we going to create jobs in hospitality and tourism? And the Premier said on Monday as well, *We will welcome tourists this summer.*

So, I say respectfully to the Honourable Premier, amongst all the challenges that he has, and I am well aware of the responsibilities and challenges, the people of Bermuda want to know how this is going to be the case. Summer in Bermuda is not as long as many people think. Our tourist season is April to October, and it starts to peter out quite quickly, and often we get hurricanes which impede any good bookings for the end of our summer season. So, April, May and June are washed out. July is likely to be washed out.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need a plan, and I will say again that I am not standing here tonight and saying that we need to throw caution to the wind, because it is evidently clear to me and my colleagues that for the foreseeable future we must continue to wear a mask. We must continue to practice physical distancing. We must continue to protect our vulnerable. We must continue to protect our seniors. We must continue to test aggressively now that we actually can test aggressively. We must continue to contact trace, and perhaps, Mr. Speaker, more critically than all of that, we must now also rebuild the Island so the economic pain is not as bad as it could be. So, Mr. Speaker, what is the plan?

The Minister of Finance has formed a committee of some good talent to make recommendations. But time is not on our side. If we are going to go from phase 3 to phase 4, that committee is not going to have many recommendations back, with all due re-

spect, in my opinion. So, what is the plan? We need to have a plan, communicate a plan. And not, it does not have to be a one-, two-, three-year plan . . . It has to be a plan of how we get the jobs that are lost back to work.

That is the triage that Bermuda needs quickly. Without a plan, without communication, confidence will remain low, consumer confidence will remain low, business confidence will remain low, which means there will not be investment, and spending will remain low. But the first step for recovery is a plan. The second step is to rebuild that confidence and hope, and then we can get people back to work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I close off my comments, it is very clear to me that there are some fairly quick and easy wins that we can have in this situation. I would ask the Honourable Minister of Tourism, are the billfish tournaments that normally come here in July . . . are we going to be able to host them again this year? That has, as far as I am aware over the past couple of years, led to millions of dollars being pumped into our economy. That is money . . . I know all of those boats really look forward to coming to Bermuda and they want to come back again.

And so, will we be able to bring them back to maybe jumpstart some of our season and put Bermuda back on the map, with proper precautions along the way? Because my fear, Mr. Speaker, is not only losing it this year, but losing it next year and the year after. Because if they go somewhere else, more than likely that other jurisdiction will do everything they can not to make them change. I think we have the ability to get the fish on the hook and keep the fish on the hook here in Bermuda.

And Mr. Speaker, it is critical we get our people back to work safely. Bermudians have proven since the start of the lockdown in March that we can do it. Seven hundred people have not died. Tragically, we have lost nine people in Bermuda. But we can open up; we can put people back to work. We can do so in a calculated way and we can save Bermudian lives. And along the way, Mr. Speaker, we can take big steps into bringing more equality back to this Island, the Island that we all love.

We have a tremendous challenge in front of us and I know my colleagues in the Opposition are willing to work to do all we can. But now is the time, Mr. Speaker, to take a look at phase 3 and make sure that it creates jobs and puts people back to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good evening.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, if it pleases you, I would like to speak on the motion to adjourn. Minister Caines.

The Speaker: Sounds like Minister Caines. Yes, Minister Caines.

CABINET CHANGES

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, this evening you are aware that there was a recent shuffle in our Cabinet—

[Feedback]

Hon. Wayne Caines: And somebody . . . a microphone is still open, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, I am going to now . . . You have left your microphone open.

Continue.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, yesterday there was some movement in our Cabinet and Mr. Jason Hayward now has the responsibility for Immigration. Mr. Speaker, with your leave I would like to review the work undertaken during my tenure as the Minister responsible for Immigration.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we undertook the subject of comprehensive immigration reform. On the committee I had with me: MP Renee Ming, MP Christopher Famous, MP Ben Smith and MP Leah Scott and the late MP Walton Brown. We were given yeoman task as it relates to overall immigration reform. I also had the benefit of PS (Permanent Secretary) Colin Anderson.

Before I go on, I would just like to simply say, Mr. Speaker, it was a privilege to work with the Immigration Team, to work with everyone involved in immigration, the team that is led by Dr. Danette Ming and her second-in-command, Ms. Marita Grimes. It was a privilege to work with them and spend time at the office and review files and put together a strategy. I learned a lot from the team. They give yeoman's service to the country of Bermuda and they often do not get the lauded applause that they deserve. And tonight I would just like to acknowledge the team at Immigration for the work that they do on behalf of the people in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, there were four phases of reform. We attacked comprehensive immigration reform in distinct phases. We did not attempt to fix everything at once.

Phase 1 addressed the operational backlogs in the Department of Immigration [DOI], including work permit processing. This resulted in us closely monitoring this area to ensure we had no slippage going forward. For about the past 18 months, I have regularly visited the Department of Immigration to review applications and to approve requests and to maintain momentum.

Phase 2 involved process improvement to improve the processes and the procedures within all

sections of the Department of Immigration, to remove bottlenecks, to eliminate waste and to improve efficiency. We worked hard to improve the efficiencies of decision-making, having more consistent outcomes and to improve turnaround times. For this phase we partnered with the private sector through the Association of International Companies, or ABIC, the association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers, ABIR, to fund the lean process and improvement process. And KPMG came in to help us.

For this partnership, we are grateful. From July, excuse me, from April 2019, KPMG worked for several months in the department by facilitating Value Stream mapping workshops that engage a cross section of the Department of Immigration's team and other stakeholders to build a common understanding of the current state. KPMG utilised the "Lean" Process Improvement methodology to identify and triage high level issues and areas of focus for analysis and improvement.

KPMG assisted our Ministry by providing the following process improvement services: diagnostic services; process analysis [INAUDIBLE] opportunity services; and implementation of planning services.

In January 2020, the department collaborated with Clarien Bank to engage a business analyst, a Six Sigma Black Belt and Lean Process Improvement expert to continue the work of KPMG. The business analyst continues to assist the department in process reengineering and has completed, among other things, the following tasks: Interviewed staff for the document process workflows; documented as-is process workflows; hosted and reviewed management silo . . . as-is process workflows; designed and rolled out and analysed client surveys.

He redesigned the DOI key processes. He hosted workshops for the Department of Immigration management team to get the sign-off for all of our process recommendations. The process improvement work that was undertaken included workflows for all major areas within the department, but is not limited to the following: Work permit applications; Bermudian status application; naturalisation applications; permanent resident certificates, alien land licences; Bermuda passport applications; Bermuda passport applications for emergencies; and electronic payment and application fees.

Phase 3 that we worked on in the last 18 months involved policy and legislative reforms and again, we partnered with the private sector and with KPMG to augment the internal government team. In addition, we worked collaboratively with other government ministries on legislative amendments. This is the area most often referred to as immigration reform. However, it represents only one phase of the wide reform. KPMG augmented the Ministry's team to provide a five-month program of project management, office support and other services for Immigration Reform. The team developed a project plan, researched

and provided data analysis and developed options and recommendations for consideration. KPMG provided the following support initiatives: Project management and office services; research and analysis; report writing; and logistical arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, we did not discard the existing Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act 1956 in an attempt to write a new Act. We believed that the approach would be divisive and inconsistent with the Government's pledge to execute immigration reform in a collaborative and bipartisan way. A new Act would also have no case law behind it and would lead to legal uncertainty. We did not rush or take our responsibility lightly. We proceeded cautiously, fully considering the racially charged history of Bermuda and how immigration affected the diaspora in our country. This, we knew, was an emotive issue.

Mr. Speaker, the full scope of the policy and legislative changes required under phase 3 was vast and included: Permanent resident certificates, Bermuda status belongers; job makers, mixed status families; work permit policy; land policy and governance.

Mr. Speaker, as the policy and legislative changes were so vast, in order to be successful, we focused our attention on passing legislation to address the issue of mixed status families as the first step. We took the problems and solutions identified in the report of the Consultative Immigration Reform Working Group, also known as the Madeiros report, under the Mixed Status Family section. The team used this as a foundation for mixed status families.

Under the leadership of the late Walton Brown JP MP, a bipartisan parliamentary committee on immigration reform was created and met throughout 2018. This bipartisan committee continued to meet under my leadership through 2019 until 2020. We developed the proposals in a collaborative and bipartisan manner. Again, MP Ming, MP Famous, MP Scott and MP Ben Smith . . . it was a bipartisan committee, Mr. Speaker. These Members that I just [mentioned] worked diligently, fastidiously, and they should be thanked for their contributions.

We engaged key stakeholders as a part of the process and took time to listen to the feedback and the comments. We included a wide cross section of leaders across Bermuda including the People's Campaign, Bermuda Public Services Union, the Bermuda Industrial Union, the Association of International Companies, the Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers, the Bermuda's Employers Council, the Bermuda Chamber of Commerce, the One Bermuda Alliance members, and the Progressive Labour Party members.

Mr. Speaker, this collaborative approach was most significant in that the bipartisan committee and the matter which the repatriation and the ⁶mixed sta-

⁶ Bermuda Immigration and Protection Amendment Act 2020

tus family Bill was received as it received wide support from both sides of the aisle and the community at large in April 2020. I am thankful to that list above and to the members of that committee for our combined achievements.

Phase 4 is the implementation phase, and this includes the work to update the IT systems, the training of staff, the examination of the organisational structure in light of the procedural and legislative changes. This phase also includes the implementation of a new Border Management System that will be scheduled to go live later this month. Yes, Mr. Speaker, our Border Management System is scheduled to go live at our airport later this month.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is standing strong to ensure that there will be fair opportunities for Bermudians in their own land. We are taking steps to ensure that through our policies and practices, we have good jobs for our people. We have ever more vigilant compliance; the Department of Immigration has 14 compliance officers. We have advertised email and telephone hotlines for compliance. We have revisited open and closed restriction category work permits. We are insisting that employers have frontline workers speak English in the country, and will take the correct steps to rectify that if they do not. We are reviewing the work permit policy to make sure it is more equitable. The department is requiring employees to have robust training and evaluating plans for Bermudians.

Immigration reform is about a number of things, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity today to be on a call with some key stakeholders: ABIC, ABIR, the Chamber of Commerce. And Minister Jason Hayward shared his thoughts with the various bodies and the various bodies shared their thoughts with Mr. Hayward and myself. We were able to say, and I will say it again tonight: the Premier highlights something called “collective responsibility,” and so when someone says, *We were so happy with the work you were doing as Minister of Immigration*, that is not anything for Minister Caines to thump his chest at. That is how our party works. We work as a cohesive unit.

Minister Hayward will carry on the work and the vision that is laid out by our party platform that is advanced by our party leader, that is supported by the Cabinet, that is undergirded by our backbench—we are one Government. And when Mr. Hayward goes forward, he just does not go forward on his Jack Jones, or on his own. He goes forward carrying on the vision of the Progressive Labour Party Government.

We believe that there must be a direct symmetry with business, understanding the nuances of international business in our country, understanding its importance in the rebirth, in the re-emergence or the renaissance in the business sphere. But it is also balancing the opportunity for us to have young Bermudians coming home and able to find spots or employment in their own country.

We are excited about the opportunity for Mr. Hayward to jump in and to use his MBA and his experience as a statistician to get in and help us with workforce development, tying the two together, finding the strengths of leadership within our untapped market, marrying them with opportunity, finding opportunities in international business, in local business.

This is a beautiful time because, guess what, Mr. Speaker? We get it. We get that we need a country that has guest workers. We get that we need a country that needs to train and develop Bermudians, and we want to share our vision with the young Bermudians to tell them that they have to work hard for their spot, that they have to push hard for their spot.

We want to tell a medium-sized local entity, *Do you know what? We know you have nuances around your business, and we know that you might need one or two guest workers. But show us, allow us to develop your training and develop your programme. We don't want to see your business go out. Mr. Hayward wants to see your business thrive, but he is passionate about Bermudians having opportunities.*

International business . . . we understand. Mr. Hayward shares our vision. The Premier cascades that vision to all of us. We understand that we need international business. However, the Minister of Finance shared with us that we have over 2,000 people who are benefiting from the unemployment benefits. We understand that there were a number of people who were seeking permission to reside and seek. That is something that we have to consider in our minds. And we have shared that with some of our employers. Many people have seen that as a difficult set of circumstances and have misread it as xenophobia.

Next week, the Minister will meet with key stakeholders, again to reassure them that this is not xenophobia, that we have to make sure that our people have opportunities in their homeland, that they are given the opportunity to be trained and to develop, to undergird and to reassure the business community that we hear you, we know what you need and want to continue to work with you. It is not lost on this Government that a good portion, \$500,000 . . . \$500,000 of the process improvement piece was paid for by international business. And we have a responsibility to each other. We have a responsibility to business. We have a responsibility to the young people of this country. And we must continue.

And when we say *put Bermudians first*, oftentimes people are unnerved by that. And I have to say we will put Bermuda first, but we will not disadvantage anyone. We will not hurt international business. We understand where they play in the importance of our country. But make no mistake about it: We want to have a country where Bermudians can thrive. And I know that the vision that the Premier has given for immigration in this country is shared by Minister Hayward, is shared by the back bench, is shared by the

Cabinet. And together we will continue to allow this country to grow from strength to strength.

I smile to myself, Mr. Speaker, when people say, *You guys are doing good! You are managing this really well!*

And I say to myself, *All of us on both sides of the aisle, my back bench colleagues, who are our support, who, when I get off track, email me and say, 'Minister, I would do differently.'* Having someone like Renee Ming, who understands the nuances of our country; having someone like Christopher Famous giving me guidance with reference to immigration; Ben Smith as one of the people on the committee, having him as a sounding board; and Leah Scott. I believe that we understand as a country that this can be done, and we continue to do it.

All of the naysayers said that we would not get the mixed-status family Bill through. If I were a betting man, Mr. Speaker, I would have had my pockets lined with gold because people did not think, number one, that we could work together and we could look past all of our differences and find an opportunity to make our country stronger.

At this time in our country's history, Minister Jason Hayward is best poised to carry out the objectives, uniting our Financial Assistance, taking Workforce Development, taking the Department of Education, taking his master's in business administration, taking his role as a statistician, using his experience as an industrialist, as a father, as a man from Parsons Road, as a man who was educated in the public school system, as a man who was educated in university, a father, a husband, bringing all of those things together. He is best positioned to finish the last baton.

I was a sprinter, as I am sure you know, Mr. Speaker. And as you know, if it was not for most races being held on my Sabbath, I would have been in the Olympics for sure, Mr. Speaker. But I oftentimes was the third leg out of four. And I was fast coming around the track into the bend. And as I took the baton, I knew I had but one responsibility. And you know, Mr. Speaker, on the turn, what do they tell you? Keep your head down and your arms moving! When you get past the corner, look up and push the baton in front of you.

And they tell the man with the baton, when you hear the footsteps in front of your block, do not look back. Stick your hand out and keep running. Well, the baton has been passed directly into Mr. Hayward's open palm as he runs. And the finish line is immigration reform for the people of Bermuda, for a stronger Bermuda, for a better Bermuda.

This is a time for us to celebrate. This is a time for us to celebrate all of the possibilities with reference to immigration, all of the Bermudians who will get jobs, all of the companies that will thrive. There is no need to have any reticence. It will continue to grow. How do we know it will grow, Mr. Speaker? I spent 13

minutes going through the success, the benefits, the challenges, the movements, talked about what—

The Speaker: Minister, you have a minute left on your time, just to let you know.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, without getting caught in mid-sentence, it is a privilege to serve in this country. I am honoured to do so. Thank you to the people of Bermuda. Thank you to Immigration.

And, Mr. Hayward, this country is proud to have you as our Minister with responsibility for Immigration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now call on the Opposition Leader.

Opposition Leader, would you like to make your contribution now?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess now at this time, good evening to everyone.

The Speaker: Yes. Good evening.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, good evening.

I have heard a lot of things this evening, mainly speaking to Black Lives Matter and immigration. And I will get to eventually the comments that were just given by the Minister, Minister Caines. I am actually grateful that he spoke, because up until that time, I was becoming very, very, very concerned about some of the things that I was hearing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I did an interview. I put out a statement concerning the issue of what was going on around the world outside of COVID, meaning the unfortunate circumstance of another black man losing his life. And it was interesting the varying responses that came from that. I received accolades about the support. I have also been talked to about the fact that, *Well, does racism really exist in Bermuda?* I have heard some people say that, *Well, you know, I am holding out my verdict. You know, I am not sure whether or not this was racial profiling.* And then of course I must give kudos to the Premier. He called up and he basically said, you know, *That was a good statement. I appreciated what you had to say.*

The protest over George Floyd's brutal and inhumane and senseless death, quite frankly, has opened many eyes. When I look at the protest that is going on around the world, I recognise that there are a lot of faces that do not look like mine and many of our colleagues who are in the House of Assembly, but of a completely different persuasion. And I recognise also, as I was on social media and listening to the TV

and glued to [it], exactly trying to understand all of what was going on, I saw something by a Bermuda black woman business owner. And I just want to read, quote what she had to say.

And I want to first start off by saying this, that I think it is important to have a fundamental belief in why we say Black Lives Matter. Now, this business owner in Bermuda is owning a business from generations in the past. And they are a business that we all look up to. And she goes on to say that, "We say black lives matter, not because we are unaware that all lives matter, but because BLACK LIVES HAVE NOT MATTERED ENOUGH . . .

"Black lives will matter most when black education rises above political power plays, when black health outcomes are of paramount concern, when black economic access to capital is made more equitable and when black hope returns to our communities."

I thought that was very, very powerful and very, very, very insightful by this black business owner, who yes, has inherited a business passed on from family members. We are fighting, Mr. Speaker, to get to ground zero. I am not focused on the progress we have made. Because a lot of people talk about the progress. *Oh, you know, a lot of progress has been made.* I do not want to hear that. I am concerned, and I applaud the progress, but I am concerned about not being on a level playing field. And so I go back to many of the comments that were made to me about the statement that I gave and references to the statement that the Premier gave and the likes. With all these varied responses—and the one thing that I understood very clearly, rather than getting upset and getting mad, I realised there are far too many *who do not understand*. They simply do not understand when we say *Black Lives Matter* what that means.

But looking at the progress . . . and I appreciate some of the comments that the Honourable Member Commissioning made. We have become accustomed to the fact that, you know, we have acquired a certain amount of economic powers. And in that, we have become lazy—whites and blacks—to the fact that we are still not at ground zero. We are still not at the point where there is a level playing field.

Now, what I also recognised by looking at this matter, and it is the first time that I have seen this, what I am seeing and what is new to me is there appears to be a worldwide acceptance that black lives matter. But I cannot speak for the sincerity of those around the world and personally why they are marching. I cannot speak to why many of those who are Caucasian are marching. But they are marching in unison, speaking to an opportunity to say black lives matter. And in that lies an opportunity for us as blacks, who have experienced it, to be able to use this opportunity to get involved in some of the finer details of what is going on in this world, and including Bermuda, and the system that continues to hold many behind.

What I will not accept is this, Mr. Speaker. And you know, we all get on social media. And, you know, we all have the opportunity to listen to what people have to say. And I cannot believe what I have just read on social media . . . appreciating what Minister Caines has had to say, one of his staunch supporters, a former Senator of the PLP, gets online and says this here: "So far we have heard from Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, Leah Scott and Ben Smith of the OBA on the motion to adjourn. Their common theme, yes, *Black Lives Matter*. But Bermudians need to realise that foreign workers matter more to Bermuda than black lives matter."

This does not help the cause of allowing people who do not understand to understand, when you get online and you are known politically and you make . . . put . . . I almost said the wrong word, but *misalign* what people have said and do not tell the truth, then we have got a problem. We have got a serious problem.

And I am going to speak to the Premier because he needs to rein this lady in. It is a boldfaced lie to get out there and to make comments like that when you are a politically affiliated person! Now, I have seen even with Members from the OBA where things have gone wrong, and we had to pull people aside, *Hey, you're out of line!* This is a boldfaced lie!

When Ben and these guys, Leah and all of them, get up and they speak to the issue of what it is that they believe that we should be doing, and, might I add, black people, and we have seen far too many times, even in the House of Assembly, of black Members within the OBA being referred to, as they say, *Well, we know who she's carrying the water for.* But if you spent a little time just talking to the individual, you would know that they have suffered under a system that has held black men, black women, whether you are UBP back in the day, whether you were PLP back in the day, OBA today, PLP today, we are still under a system that is holding blacks back.

And I want to remind everyone what was said by that business owner: Black Lives Matter. You want to know why? Black lives matter because we are still trying to get to ground zero, to a level playing field.

Now, I agree with some of the comments that the Honourable Commissioning has made on how we get there. Some things I do not agree. I see it a different way. But if someone of black persuasion sees a slightly different way to get to somewhere, how dare any other black person say, *Well, we know who you carry the water for!* I understand where they are coming from and what they are trying to say. But if you are trying to set an example, then take this opportunity where a man's life was brutally taken and the rest of the world is chiming in, including Bermuda, we have an opportunity as blacks to be able to get people to understand.

Now, listen. There are good and bad people amongst all races. Not all of them you are going to be

able to convince. But I am not worried about them. I am concerned about the ones who do want to understand. And we as leaders have got to stop, in the House of Assembly, making these assumptions that just because something is questioned by the Member or a Member of the OBA, whether they be black or white, that it is coming from a persuasion of supporting black enterprise, black business. How dare you say that? The Premier right now is trying to get business back up and going. And it ain't just for black business. It is for white business as well. So when does it stop?

And so I appreciate Minister Caines and the opportunity that he presented to make his comments on how he felt about things. But how dare one of his Members completely misrepresent what is going on in this House of Assembly! It is uncalled for. As a black man, I had to watch police officers beat my father for no reason other than he was suffering from schizophrenia. And beat him and beat him down! Breaking his bones! And then we are going to put up with some of the nonsense that I have been hearing tonight?

Maybe we need to do some more studying. I was given a tape the other day by Mr. Thompson. I hope he does not mind me using his name; I have said it already. And it is about the real Eve. And scientists have now found through genetic tracking that we all came from the same mother. And that mother was a black woman from Africa. And they have used this thing called mitochondrial DNA, structures within the cells that are passed on by women only so that they can trace back clearly where your lineage came from.

Well, I am not going to accept the kinds of things that I just read on social media, some of the things that I have heard from some of our Members. And so it is almost as if we did not know what it means to negotiate without giving up or selling our souls. We are in a position where the only natural resource we have is our people. And we invite business into this Island. There is no Bermuda dollar; that is all fake! We trade in US dollars. And so we need to invite trade to this Island and invite people to invest in black enterprise. I say this: How many of us blacks, both OBA and the PLP, have a personal loan from a white man? Many! So there are some good out there who want to do good.

And for us to be out there making comments almost as if—and I say *almost* as if—a blanket statement across the board (and I know many do not mean this) that there is a white evil out there that wants to snuff us out . . . Ah, I believe that is true in many cases. But the only counteraction to that is we must stand, stand together as blacks and stand with the whites who wish to ensure, just like we see marching around the world, whites and blacks . . . My goodness, I have seen more whites in some of the protests than blacks, with placards up, *Black Lives Matter*.

It does not get away from some of the realities that we are experiencing here. We are a blessed peo-

ple, yes. But we are not at ground zero yet. And so more has to be done. I agree. And one of those things is that we have got to take the opportunity to stimulate this economy. I have been talking about it over and over, before COVID. PLP, Premier, I need you to stimulate the economy, and preface it by saying too many businesses, the local businesses—not the international business; they will take care of their business, but the local businesses—are going to suffer. That is where the majority of the blacks are working. And we have got to do everything we can to stimulate incoming investment into this country. Because until we find that pot of gold, we have got to work with the world to ensure that we keep the standard of living that we do have.

Now, if the PLP has got another idea on whether or not, you know, they want the democracy that we do have and the system that we do have, or if they want to go with socialism, I do not know. I am just saying, *Say what it is that you believe it should be!* But we are seeing far too many blacks who have been calling for bold moves year after year after year. And we are still waiting for those bold moves. And so each party has played a part in not doing enough. Not doing enough to ensure that we get to ground zero, that there is a level playing field.

I heard Members go on about, *Many people, you know, are Black Lives Matter*. And this leads me to this part here that I am going to close out on. It may take me a minute or two. And that is this. Well, sorry, Mr. Speaker. I want to go back to—

The Speaker: You have three minutes, though. You have got three minutes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Okay. Let me just go back to the economy. We have an opportunity right now that I am looking at. You know, Hong Kong is under some serious stress. We have got an opportunity for many of those businesses to move them to Bermuda. And I have heard over and over from PLP Members about, you know, *OBA Members, you need to be careful what you are saying because international people are looking*.

Well, let me use the words on many of the PLP . . . some PLP Members. Be careful for your words! Because that investor who wants to bring their money here so that you can maintain a middle income or even upper income, whatever it is, or you can realise your dreams, they want to come. But why would they with the wrong rhetoric? That is why I appreciate Minister Caines taking the time doing what he just did. I appreciate it, because some of the rhetoric has been scaring people away for far too long. We saw it before!

When we became Government, we were going out and trying to get some of these people to please come back, invest back into Bermuda. And so I am calling at this time as we go through COVID. I

agree with the Premier. We have got to get this economy back up and going. But, Mr. Speaker, it will not happen with just Bermudians. We are already a dying species. We are a dying species! We are a dying people. And so we have got to reach out, without selling our souls, and ensure that we get to ground zero and we make things right. That is the way forward.

And the system that is holding back these things from happening needs to go! And the race-baiting, whether it be black side, white side, all of that has got to go. Racial politics—got to go. We have got to do what is best for blacks, whites and any visitor who comes to this Island to help improve the lives of Bermudians. That is what we need to be doing.

Now, I recognised in talking to the Premier that one of the fundamentals of getting the economy going is to ensure that we can get our kids back out into schools and the likes so that the parents who do work can get out to work.

We have been calling for a long time now, and I am seriously concerned about what I read in the paper. I was kind of . . . trying to . . . basically getting over it, where I see DCFS, the Department of Child and Family Services, back in the paper again. We have been calling for answers. We have been calling for a restructuring of this area. Over and over and over. And if black lives matter, then we need to be appealing to the restructuring of DCFS so that it gets it right because that is our young black men and women! And unfortunately, over the last year we have seen how some have even been lost eternally, not to come back! Because we have not got it right.

Now, I am not blaming any administration. But what I am saying is that you are in the hot seat. You need to do something about it and fix this thing and get new leadership in there so that we can move forward. That is what I am looking for. Because the rhetoric has got to stop, and action has to be taken.

And so I appreciate all the sentiments. I appreciate many of the sentiments from the PLP Members. I appreciate the sentiments from OBA Members. As we move through this trying time, we have a new phase of working together, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You have one minute. You are inside the final minute now.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We are moving into a new phase, Mr. Speaker.

And with my last minute, I will repeat what I said before: We say *black lives matter* not because we are unaware that all lives matter, but because black lives have not mattered enough. And we need to remove . . . Black lives will matter most when black education and all these other things rise above political power plays. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Opposition Leader.
Premier, would you like to close us out?

Hon. E. David Burt: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go right ahead, sir.

Hon. E. David Burt: I just want to make sure you can hear me loud and clear.

The Speaker: I hear you loud and clear.

IMPORTANCE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Hon. E. David Burt: All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an eventful day in our virtual House of Assembly, where we passed a number of pieces of legislation and had vigorous debates on the reduction of salaries and had a motion to adjourn which has featured a number of passionate contributions from the Members.

Before I start I am going to reference, I think, a place where the Opposition Leader left off, I think that it is important for us to recognise—and I want everyone to know this, and I am just going to be very clear: I am not ever in this country going to tell other people what they can say or what they cannot say. Because I believe that everyone must be free to speak their mind. And when we start going through the slippery slope of trying to censor what people, whether the PLP or others, can or cannot say, we are going to be in a very difficult place, Mr. Speaker.

And so I recognise that what some persons who are supporters of my party may say may not be nice to other persons, I recognise clearly that what persons may say under the veiled cloak of secrecy and *Royal Gazette* blogs who may be supporters of the One Bermuda Alliance may not please me. But they have the, I guess, right to say it because the *Royal Gazette* gives them the condition of anonymity they get. But the fact is that everyone's voice is important inside of a democracy, Mr. Speaker. And I am not going to trample on people's wishes and desires to speak their mind in any way, shape or form because I think that when that starts, we have a challenge.

What I want to, however, say, Mr. Speaker, and I think that it is particularly important when we say this—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: That I think that—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Premier, hold on one second.
Opposition Leader.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: My inference was never to suggest . . . and I believe he is inadvertently—I know he is not purposely doing it—that we stifle people from freedom of speech and the likes. But I do not appreciate people telling mistruths.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much.

I certainly appreciate what the Honourable Opposition Leader has said. And the fact is that persons . . . but my quarrel was certainly not with the Leader of the Opposition. My quarrel in this particular instance, and I am just making the overall comment that I think that it is important, Mr. Speaker, that in a democracy we have to have tough skin. And it is really difficult sometimes. It is really particularly difficult. So from that perspective, I do not want to be fixated on that.

I think that what is also important, Mr. Speaker, is that in saying that, is that there is a time for persons who are free and regular citizens to have that debate in public. But when we are engaged inside of things which should not be in the public sphere and attempting to gain, I would say, advantage on certain things, whether it be negotiation or discussion with the Government, that we do things and keep those things private.

And I understand that I have come up for some criticism for that, Mr. Speaker. But I do not back down from those positions. Because the fact is that when you try to make public policy in the lens of the media glare and the spotlights, you are not going to get the best policy. The reason why Cabinet is a confidential place is so that persons can express their ideas freely and fully so that we can arrive at a place with a good decision. And the same principle must apply when we are speaking about the negotiations that are taking place, whether it be the public sector and the private sector . . . sorry, the Government and our union partners and colleagues ; whether it be the discussion and conversations between the Government and the Chamber of Commerce, or the Government and the Bermuda Hotel Association. I think that it is critically important, Mr. Speaker.

And I say that because I want to arrive at a good solution, Mr. Speaker. And we are not going to arrive at a good solution, Mr. Speaker, if we are attempting to negotiate through the media. And that is my point, and that is where I will stand. Because as we go through this period, Mr. Speaker, we must recognise, as many Members are saying, that the paradigm is shifting. And if we are not able to trust the spaces of which we are in and have honest and frank dialogue that is not going to be fettered by political miscalculation or calculations or those type of things

in the public, then that is what is needed to arrive at the best decision for the country, Mr. Speaker.

And so in the conversations, discussions that I have, whether it be the Opposition, the conversations and discussions that I have with my Cabinet, the conversations that I have with my caucus colleagues and others, we have to feel comfortable to be honest with one another. And if those things are then put out inside of the media, we are not going to be as honest as we would, Mr. Speaker. And I think that it is important for us to recognise that this basic principle must apply.

There is a reason why we do have that level of (I would say) secrecy in discussion, so that we can be frank and honest in those particular spaces, and explore spaces which [we] may not be necessarily comfortable doing, but arrive at a very good consensus on the issue. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we are making progress in those regards.

CABINET CHANGES

Hon. E. David Burt: And so when we talk about the Government and the Cabinet shuffle which took place this week, I am grateful for the words of the Minister of National Security, who spoke about the mantra of collective responsibility. The work of the Government will continue. And the agenda itself, though impacted by international events, is unchanged insofar as its direction, making sure that we continue to reform our education system; provide fair and equitable health care access to persons of this country, which is more important than ever; and continue to make sure that we have a fairer economy, meaning that those who can afford to pay more actually do pay more, Mr. Speaker.

And it is important for us to remember that this Government was the first Government that actually started taxing unearned wealth inside of this country. It is important for us to recognise and to understand, Mr. Speaker, that we are making progress. Some want us to move more quickly. And I must say that in many cases I want to move more quickly as well. But we are making progress in these regards, Mr. Speaker.

So I certainly want to say that the work will continue. I want to pay tribute certainly to the work of all of the Cabinet Ministers to date. Certainly they are supported by a very strong and able backbench.

I want to thank Minister Jamahl Simmons for his contributions to the Cabinet, and I want to thank him very much for his work and effort especially over the last few months where we have seen a government communications apparatus that has gone very well to keep our persons informed. And I want to thank him without question for his willingness to stay on as a Junior Minister to continue to assist the Government at this time with communication.

I certainly want to welcome Minister Hayward, [as Minister of] a Ministry that combines items which are needed for our recovery—Workforce Develop-

ment, Financial Assistance, Labour, of course, and questions of immigration. And the reason why we are splitting up the Department of Immigration, Mr. Speaker, is because I think it is particularly important that we change the conversation around immigration and recognise that the work permit function of Immigration is the regulation of labour inside of an economy.

Labour is a very important factor of production into making sure you have a successful economy. And the marrying of that with Workforce Development, tighter and better integration, and certainly with the aspects of Financial Assistance, as we are going to expect there are going to be a number of persons who may be finding themselves on financial assistance as the unemployment benefit expires, is to make sure that we can move those people, involve those persons in training and be able to adequately match them to the particular jobs.

But here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to get around to counting the percentage of Bermudians who are employed inside of the economy versus the percentage of non-Bermudians who are employed inside of this economy. I want to focus on the total number of Bermudians. Because it makes no sense for there to be . . . we are going to say that we have 80 per cent Bermudians and only 10,000 jobs. But I am perfectly happy to have 60 per cent Bermudians and have 100,000 jobs inside of our economy. And so we need to grow the pie and have a Ministry of Labour that is certainly making sure that we continue to match the efforts of Labour and Workforce Development to be helpful in that particular regard.

So I am grateful for the contributions of Honourable Members and their continued views and ideas on the economy. And those ideas are always welcomed, and those ideas we are taking into account, whether it be the suggestions that we have gotten from our caucus colleagues in putting forth the various policy perspectives, or whether it is suggestions which are given to us by Members of the Opposition, as I continue to communicate with the Leader of the Opposition, those are things which are being factored into our move going forward.

What we are talking about in the very near term, Mr. Speaker, about our COVID economy and making sure that we can rebound as quickly as possible, we are focused like a laser in reopening our economy with paying jobs as quickly as possible. And I think it is good to note that we have had a number of days of positive results. Our real-time reproduction number has remained low. We are certain that we are going into phase 3 on Thursday.

I do not agree with some Members that it does not necessarily make a big difference, because I do think it makes a big difference, especially when we are talking about the aspects of child care not just in schools, but as schools are required to close, summer camps and child care for persons who are not of

school age, certainly when we are talking about nurseries and others. That is a very large employer in Bermuda. And the figures show that there are a number of persons in child care who have been unemployed. So getting them back to work, I think, is going to be something that is going to be particularly welcomed.

Our scientists continue to work to refine what our eventual move to phase 4 will look like. There was a test run which took place today where the flight which arrived from Canada had all hundred persons who arrived tested, Mr. Speaker. Great news tonight that all 102 tested negative, Mr. Speaker. And from the time that the testing was finished to the time that the emails were sent out to the persons with their results took five hours, Mr. Speaker. So our team of scientists are working very well and are getting ready to refine the processes made.

Now I know that there are a number of persons in the tourism industry and others who want to know when we are going to open up. The Cabinet committee led by Col. Burch is continuing to work with those particular processes. They are focused on making sure that the items for phase 3 are laid out.

But we are also going to make sure that we are beginning to signal what phase 4 looks like, when the borders [will] reopen, and what will be a part of that. And that means that we have to make sure that we keep our economy and our country and our health biosphere safe. And I am certain that with the increased testing capacity, with the increased amount of output which is coming from our government lab, of which we have started and set up, I think that we are certainly going to be in a very good phase and space for that, Mr. Speaker.

But as a lot of Members have said, Mr. Speaker, there is going to be a need for a rebalancing of our economy. And some persons say it might be a new social contract with the international business community, because we cannot continue to exist in this space that we are right now. And I think that we can not only evolve the relationship with the international business community and our local business community, but we can focus on what does it mean to collectively grow together.

We have made a number of significant legislative changes, Mr. Speaker. And I think that there are more legislative changes to come. But if we are not willing to say that what we have done over the past 25 years, though it has made us wealthy, is not fair and equitable for a society, and unless all persons can come along with that message, just like all persons are seeming to finally awaken to the fact that racism exists in Bermuda and around the world, Mr. Speaker, then we will get nowhere. And I think that it is important for us to recognise and remember that.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Hon. E. David Burt: So I am going to close there, Mr. Speaker, on the fact that the events in the USA have seemed to affect many. And I am pleased that this Government saw fit to change the laws so that a legal and peaceful protest can take place this Sunday, Mr. Speaker. But as I said in my remarks on Monday and as I have said before, racism in Bermuda is not new. And racism and racial attitudes and structural racism and structural inequity exist in Bermuda, and it has always existed, Mr. Speaker.

But what I want to say, Mr. Speaker, and this is particularly important: We must not lose this energy, because it will be all for naught if we are just going to give platitudes to the plight of a racist society and structural racism and not continue to work to address the problem.

Mr. Speaker, when I was Opposition Leader, during the election campaign I went to the Hamilton Rotary (I think it was Hamilton or Pembroke; I cannot remember) to give a speech on racism in Bermuda. And I almost did not get to give that speech, Mr. Speaker, because there were persons inside of that room who were of an older generation, who may have actually been people who were part of segregation where they were white and they could go places where my father could not go. And they did not want me to stand inside of that room and give a speech on race—the Opposition Leader of the country. And this, Mr. Speaker, was three years ago. So I do not need to be told that Bermuda is a racist country. But I am happy that more persons are waking up to it.

And here is the other thing, Mr. Speaker. Police brutality in Bermuda is not new either! And neither are police . . . and I have said it before, and I have said it again, because it is something that was a matter of concern. And neither are police in this country who may hold racist views and attitudes towards law enforcement. That is the truth, Mr. Speaker. And it is not enough to talk about it; we have to make sure that we act on it.

Our justice system in this country is not colour blind, whether it is the unequal treatment of black persons versus white persons, whether it is on a very plain and simple issue, which I have spoken about in this House before when speaking about the drive for the Government to decriminalise small amounts of cannabis, recognising that the same number of white people and black people smoke weed, Mr. Speaker. But why is it that 95 per cent of the people who are arrested for cannabis possession are black? It is the very outline of recognising that structural racism exists in Bermuda.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am happy that more persons are coming to the realisation. I am happy that there are more and more persons who are saying that we are going to be very fierce and not let this energy die. And, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that this ener-

gy does not die. And I hope that all of the white persons—Mr. Speaker, listen to me very clearly—who are supporting, who say that black lives matter, who say that we have to end racism, will not complain when there is actually legislation that may be brought to this House to address issues of structural racism in this country.

Because you can't just give the hashtag. You can't just say, *Oh, it's bad*, and then benefit from the system that continues it, Mr. Speaker. So if we are going to have those real conversations and we are going to have those real talks, then we should not be afraid when the Government of the day brings legislation to bring what you want to happen into effect through law, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I wish that everyone has a wonderful and safe weekend. I look forward to seeing persons inside in the next two weeks. And I look forward to seeing persons at a peaceful protest, which has been permitted by the Government on this Sunday afternoon, where I hope that we can proclaim that we are going to turn the page on structural racism in Bermuda. And every single person who is protesting on Sunday, I hope that they will support the moves to make sure that we can, through law and this Parliament, put in place things that will end structural racism in this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and have a good night.

The Speaker: Mr. Premier? Mr. Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: All done, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: All right. You are down to your last minute.

Hon. E. David Burt: All done, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: All done! Oh, good.

Well, Members, we thank you for your contributions this evening . . . well, today. I was about to *this evening*, but for the entire day. It has been fruitful, as always. And the Premier has indicated that we will sit again on the 19th of June. And based on where we are in things, I will assume that we will be using this format. Members should continue to listen out for how we will sit.

And with that, the House stands adjourned until the 19th of June. Members, be safe and continue to be well.

Take care now. Good evening.

[At 8:13 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 19 June 2020.]