



**2018/19 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

May and June 2019

*Sittings 19 through 23 of the 2018/19 Session
(pages 1475–1932 and INDEX)*

**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****10 MAY 2019****10:05 AM***Sitting Number 19 of the 2018/19 Session**[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Mr. Clark Somner, Deputy Clerk]*

The Speaker: Good morning, Members. Welcome back. I trust everyone had a good recess.

*[Gavel]***CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES***[Minutes of 18 and 22 March 2019]*

The Speaker: Members, the Minutes of March 18th and March 22nd have been circulated. Are there any omissions or corrections?

No omissions, no corrections.

The Minutes are confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 18 and 22 March 2019 confirmed]***MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

The Speaker: There are none.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING**

The Speaker: Yes, there are three this morning.

MOMENT OF SILENCE*[In memory of Mr. Lloyd James, former MP]*

The Speaker: First, I am going to ask all Members to join me in standing to give a moment of silence to one of our former Members, the honourable Lloyd James, who was laid to rest while we were absent from this place.

I think it is only due that we recognise a former Member in this way. So, we will have a moment of silence beginning now.

*[The House rose and observed a moment of silence.]***APOLOGIES**

The Speaker: Thank you, Members.

The second announcement is that of Members who are absent. And you will note on the Order Paper that we have received notice that the Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin and the Honourable Member Ben Smith will be absent. We have Mr. Pearman included on that, but we note that Mr. Pearman is actually with us this morning. Thank you.

PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING SEMINAR

The Speaker: The third announcement this morning is a reminder to Members who attended the Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar, that all Members who attended are required to sign a consent form, meaning as you know, the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] likes to take photographs to put in their regular publications of the different CPA events that take place. And it is a requirement of the CPA that you have a signed-off consent should you show up in one of those photos. We do not know which photos will be used, so all Members who attended, if you have not already signed the consent form, please see Mrs. Place or Mrs. Bowers, and they have the forms in the office here for you to sign. Thank you.

And, let me say "thank you" first to all Members who did attend. It was greatly appreciated that we had the support of Members, and we trust that it was most beneficial and enjoyable to all Members who were present.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: There are none.

**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

The Speaker: We have, I believe, four Ministers today who have papers and communications for the House.

The first is in the name of the Premier.
Premier.

**LABOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE (LAC),
SUB-COMMITTEE: REVIEWING THE RETIREMENT
AGE 2018 REPORT**

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the [Labour Advisory Committee \(LAC\), Subcommittee: Reviewing the Retirement Age 2018 Report](#).

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

The [next] papers or communications this morning are in the name of the Minister of Finance. I believe he has six negative resolutions he would like to do.

Minister, you can do them all together.

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

**ECONOMIC SUBSTANCE AMENDMENT
REGULATIONS 2019**

**ECONOMIC SUBSTANCE AMENDMENT (NO. 2)
REGULATIONS 2019**

**COMPANIES AND LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
(BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSITIONAL
PERIOD EXTENSION) ORDER 2019**

**PARTNERSHIP, EXEMPTED PARTNERSHIPS AND
LIMITED PARTNERSHIP (BENEFICIAL
OWNERSHIP) (TRANSITIONAL PERIOD
EXTENSION) ORDER 2019**

**CUSTOMS TARIFF (APPROVED BUSINESSES)
NOTICE 2019**

**CUSTOMS TARIFF (APPROVED ORGANISATIONS)
AMENDMENT NOTICE 2019**

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

- Economic Substance Amendment Regulations 2019;
- Economic Substance Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2019;
- Companies and Limited Liability Company (Beneficial Ownership Transitional Period Extension) Order 2019;
- Partnership, Exempted Partnerships and Limited Partnership (Beneficial Ownership) (Transitional Period Extension) Order 2019;

- Customs Tariff (Approved Businesses) Notice 2019;
- Customs Tariff (Approved Organisations) Amendment Notice 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next paper/communication this morning is in the name of the Minister of Health.

Minister Wilson, you have the floor.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

**BERMUDA HOSPITALS BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT 2014**

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I would be honoured to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the [Bermuda Hospitals Board Annual Report 2014](#).

The Speaker: Thank you.

The next Minister who has papers and communications this morning is Minister De Silva, who actually has some 25 negative resolutions.

Minister, please do them all together.

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

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

**MERCHANT SHIPPING REGULATIONS 2019
[Various]**

**MARINE BOARD CONTROL OVER MARITIME
TRAFFIC (NO. 2) NOTICE 2019**

Hon. Zane. J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the following:

- Merchant Shipping (Anti-Fouling Systems) Regulations 2019;
- Merchant Shipping (Compulsory Insurance of Shipowners for Maritime Claims) Regulations 2019;
- Merchant Shipping (International Safety Management (ISM) Code) Regulations 2019;
- Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-Operation Convention) Regulations 2019;
- Merchant Shipping (Port State Control) Regulations 2019;
- Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019;
- Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Oil Pollution) Amendment Regulations 2019;

- Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution from Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping (Repatriation) Amendment Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping (Ship-to-Ship Transfers) Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping (Seafarer's Employment) Amendment Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping (Survey and Certification) Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Vibration at Work) Regulations 2019;
 - Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) (Artificial Optical Radiation) Regulations 2019; and
 - Marine Board Control over Maritime Traffic (No. 2) Notice 2019.
- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

That brings us to an end of the Papers and Communications.

The Deputy Clerk: Did he do the Marine Boards?

The Speaker: Yes, he did all 25. He did the Marine Boards, yes.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND JUNIOR MINISTERS

The Speaker: I think we have seven this morning. And the first is in the name of the Premier.

Premier, would you like to put your Statement? Copies are being circulated now, yes?

An Hon. Member: Yes, sir.

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

The Speaker: Yes.

REVIEWING THE RETIREMENT AGE—A REPORT OF THE LABOUR ADVISORY (LAC) SUBCOMMITTEE

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, there is a growing tendency to use statistics around our declining birth rate and what is referred to as the “greying of our

population” in support of arguments that mitigate against innovation or economic success. Make no mistake, the trends are challenging and are not unique to Bermuda. However, the responsibility of leadership is to convert challenging trends into opportunities for growth and sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall this Government's 2018 Speech from the Throne in which we noted the following: “The time has come to revise the mandatory retirement age to take account of our longer lifespan, the necessity to add stability to pension funds and to promote greater choice among the working population about when one retires from full-time employment.”

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the promise to invite the Legislature to “discuss options for such revisions to the age of mandatory retirement from the Public Service,” Honourable Members and the public will have noted from the Order Paper that I will today table a motion inviting this Honourable House to agree to the recommendations of the Report of the [Labour Advisory Subcommittee entitled *Reviewing the Retirement Age*](#).

Mr. Speaker, as was observed in November's Throne Speech, “in many cases, the designation ‘senior citizen’ does not describe our energetic men and women aged sixty-five and older.” The report now tabled for the consideration of Honourable Members provides useful details and a sound rationale in support of its recommendations. There is a need to stabilise pension funds, to allow working men and women the benefit of greater capacity to earn and therefore better prepare for their eventual retirement, and to use the longer lifespan in the modern era to the benefit of society and the people of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, following the debate on the report and what I hope will be the unanimous support of this Honourable House and the other place, the Government will revert with amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Act to give effect to some of these recommendations. I wish to be clear, Mr. Speaker, this initiative is part of a series of measures which will be implemented by this Government to promote more economic activity in Bermuda. The reality of the trends in many societies has caused several countries to take similar steps while concurrently pursuing economic diversification and other growth strategies. We must do the same.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

I believe the next Statement is in the name of the Minister of Finance.

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

The Speaker: Are copies being circulated?

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: You have them? Okay.
Yes.

EUROPEAN UNION TAX LISTING

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide additional background information regarding the actions which Bermuda has taken to be removed from the [EU List of Non-Cooperative Jurisdictions in Tax Matters](#) as adopted by the EU Finance Ministers (ECOFIN) at their March 12th meeting.

I can report that Bermuda has acted promptly and effectively in order to be formally removed from the EU list, mostly likely at the May 17 meeting of ECOFIN. On March 28th, Premier David Burt and I met with EU Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, responsible for economic and financial affairs, as well as taxation and customs. Thereafter, on April 1st, I met with Mrs. Lyudmila Petkova, Chair of the Code of Conduct Group on Business Taxation. These meetings, together with visits to the German and French Ministries of Finance, were open, transparent and cooperative. They permitted Bermuda to further explain in detail the source and reasons for which there was a technical omission in our economic substance regulations submission. This omission was addressed and corrected to the satisfaction of the European authorities.

Subsequent to these meetings, we understand there was a meeting of the Code of Conduct Group on Business Taxation on April 11th. Following our meetings and the assurances we received, we have every reason to believe that the EU Finance Ministers, on May 17, will remove Bermuda from the Annex 1 of the List of Non-Cooperative Jurisdictions in Tax Matters, the so-called “blacklist.”

Mr. Speaker, I can add that when Bermuda is removed from Annex I, we will be placed in Annex II of the EU list with three other jurisdictions—Bahamas, British Virgin Islands and Cayman Islands. This is because of EU concerns regarding the need for legislative framework for collective investment funds (CIVs) that meet their expectations.

Mr. Speaker, we have already committed to continue to cooperate with the EU with respect to the adoption by the end of this year of a proper legislative framework for collective investment funds. Bermuda officials have already engaged, last month, in a positive dialogue with EU representatives to finalise the scope of the required adjustments to our legislation. We want to ensure an efficient implementation of our commitments and will carefully address certain concerns raised as they relate to the substance criterion in the CIV’s sector, as required by Annex II jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda/EU relationship is well developed. For example, our industry sectors have many clients in the EU, and economic studies indicate that the value of Bermuda’s financial contribution to the EU is significant. More than 10 European

Union countries export about \$6 billion in goods and services, and annual two-way trade is normally \$30 billion between the EU and Bermuda. Bermuda’s economy supports almost 150,000 jobs in the European Union market through trade, foreign direct investment of its multi-nationals and its portfolio investment capacity, mostly in the UK, Germany, France and Ireland. Mr. Speaker, most of this trade between Bermuda and the EU is in the areas of reinsurance and finance.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to recognise the cooperation the Government received from industry stakeholders throughout the process. It was remarkable. I want to thank all stakeholders for their support and show of unity. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Statement on the Order Paper this morning is in the name of the Deputy Premier.
Deputy Premier.

STREAMLINING PLANNING PROCESSES

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform this Honourable House about new initiatives the Department of Planning are expecting to introduce to [streamline processes](#) to support the construction and development industry over the course of this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members would most likely be familiar with the required planning process one needs to navigate in order to obtain permission to build. It is a widely held belief that the process is slow and cumbersome. There are some who would even suggest that Planning is impeding opportunities to encourage and attract investment. This Government does not desire any department to be perceived in this fashion. This Government recognises the crucial role that the Department of Planning plays in facilitating and supporting new investment and, as such, is desirous to improve procedures that will result in more efficient decision-making and, overall, unburden the process.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of initial steps that will be taken in order to achieve improvements. First and foremost, as Minister responsible for the Department of Planning, I will be engaging with key stakeholders from the construction industry on a periodic basis to understand first-hand the range of concerns. Through this dialogue, it is expected that we will be able to discuss the proposed changes and obtain valuable feedback.

Mr. Speaker, I must inform you that the department has invested heavily in a new EnerGov system, which will allow for the electronic submission of applications and provide for an automated and electronic workflow, which will eliminate the generation of paper. It is being tested by staff and stakeholders and will be fully implemented in September.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of areas in which changes are recommended. Firstly, starting with the planning application process, the team has commenced exploring those types of proposals that can be processed administratively and not required to be presented to the Development Applications Board (DAB) for a decision. This procedure, known as the “delegation to director,” is a process that section 5A of the Development and Planning Act 1974 enables. It is anticipated that this mechanism will greatly reduce processing times in respect of allowing internal approvals for those fully compliant applications and those requiring only minimal discretion.

Mr. Speaker, the department will also be producing guidelines and procedures to (1) handle emergency applications, and (2) fast-track applications for structures that are temporary in nature such as seasonal concession stands. The latter process will assist small business entrepreneurs to obtain permission quickly, provided that they meet certain guidelines that will be made available to the public as soon as they are produced.

Mr. Speaker, it has also been acknowledged that there are a range of development types that, under the Act, require permission, but are considered *de minimis*, which means minor in scope. These types of applications, if eliminated, would free up additional resources to delegate to the processing of applications that are more complex in nature. It is the intent to apply a more common-sense approach for minor development matters.

Mr. Speaker, it is acknowledged that, during construction, it is commonplace to make on-site changes. For those minor types of changes, it is currently a laborious route in which to authorise these desired alterations through an “application for revision” process. Oftentimes, construction has to cease on-site whilst approval is sought, thereby adversely interrupting construction time frames and impacting jobs on the ground. Criteria will be [developed] for the most common types of alterations to enable a sign-off in the field by building inspectors, thereby avoiding the time-consuming revision process. We hope this will assist developments that find themselves in this situation to avoid disruption and Planning infractions. It will also facilitate a cooperative approach between the department and the developer.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Planning does have greater enforcement tools. These will be deployed where evidence shows that enforcement is necessary. The department intends to provide as much support to agents, contractors and their clients as is needed to prevent potential infractions as circumstances arise.

Mr. Speaker, in the interests of public outreach, it is proposed that the Department of Planning will hold a series of planning clinics in different areas of the Island on a quarterly basis where members of the public can obtain planning-related advice and

guidance on the submission of applications. It is the aim through this initiative to bring greater public awareness of planning requirements and also to raise the profile of the department.

Mr. Speaker, whilst unfortunate to mention, it must be acknowledged that the department has been often used as the classic scapegoat by agents, which has resulted in unnecessary confusion and frustration, for landowners in particular. To this end, the department will be amending its communications structure so that all parties—and I repeat *all parties*, including the applicant, agent and contractor—will simultaneously be in receipt of all correspondence. Concurrently, the department will endeavour to improve its internal communication strategy.

Mr. Speaker, we will be introducing legislative changes to allow the Bermuda Plan to become a more fluid document whereby landowners will not be required to wait every five-plus years to request a change to the zoning of their land. At the same time, legislation will also be introduced to give protection in perpetuity to those areas of conservation value which are increasingly under threat from development, such as woodland and agricultural reserves.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is pleased to report that following the culmination of the Draft Bermuda Plan 2018 process technical officers will dedicate resources to community planning initiatives for the Island’s nine parishes. It is this initiative that will focus on more of a grass-roots approach to planning, where residents will have a greater influence over the future of their community.

Mr. Speaker, since becoming the Minister responsible for Planning I have spent time listening to a cross section of people about their interaction with the department. Generally, Planning does a good job. But there are instances where it is clear that the department needs to examine and change, where necessary, its policies and practices. This is acknowledged and is currently being worked on. We will engage regularly with stakeholders in the community to ensure that we are being responsive to their valid concerns. We have listened, Mr. Speaker, and we are prepared to act.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged that the Department of Planning is committed to making the necessary changes for the ultimate betterment of Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Minister who has a Statement on the Order Paper this morning is Minister Caines.

Minister, would you like to put your Statement?

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide this Honourable House with an update on the Department of Corrections. I would like to say from the outset that we appreciate and value the work of our corrections officers.

Mr. Speaker, the health and safety of our corrections officers is paramount. I would also like to highlight that I have full confidence in the Bermuda Department of Corrections senior leadership team, led by Acting Commissioner Keeva-Mae Joell-Benjamin.

Mr. Speaker, most recently, the Prison Officers Association [POA] raised significant concerns. The concerns centred around (1) the conditions of the correction facilities, (2) security, and (3) health and safety.

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the Bermuda Department of Corrections produced a strategic plan. The aforementioned plan articulated a systematic method for (1) security upgrades, (2) personnel development, and (3) facility upgrades.

Mr. Speaker, most recently, there was an impasse between the Bermuda Department of Corrections senior management team and the Prison Officers Association (POA). Mr. Speaker, as a result of the aforementioned impasse, a number of prison officers called in sick. Consequently, there were not enough officers to handle the day-to-day operations within the Department of Corrections. Please note that the senior officers were drafted in to carry out the day-to-day operations in the housing units within the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda Police Service was used to transport inmates to and from court and to medical visits. The impasse reached 'fever pitch', and in turn the Prison Officers Association, the Department of Corrections, the Labour Relations Manager and Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of National Security, Colin Anderson, met in an attempt to solve the outstanding issues.

Mr. Speaker, there were concerns with reference to the corrections officers dealing with mentally ill prisoners and the training required to manage prisoners with mental health issues. There are ongoing discussions with the Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Health, and the Bermuda Hospitals Board, to establish a mental health forensic unit here in Bermuda. There is no official timeline as of yet.

Mr. Speaker, the [Westgate Correctional Facility](#) had limited hot water supply. The budget for the new industrial water heater was recently approved by Cabinet. The industrial water heater will be shipped to the Island and will be operational by July 2019. The facility was also in need of two industrial washing machines. One washing machine was purchased in 2018 and is currently in operation, and the other industrial washer was recently approved by Cabinet and will be

on Island and in operation in July 2019. There were major leaks in the Westgate water tank. The repairs to the water tank have commenced.

Mr. Speaker, the Prison Officers Association are deeply concerned with reference to the health of the corrections officers as a result of mould in the corrections facilities, and rightly so. The Acting Commissioner has implemented a mould remediation and cleaning regime. An air-quality assessment is to be completed prior to the end of June 2019. Industrial cleaners will be used to assist with mould remediation in June 2019.

Mr. Speaker, the POA have concerns with reference to staff shortages. Please be advised that 25 new corrections officers were hired in September 2018. The recruiting process for 22 new corrections officers commenced in March 2019. Training and development of officers is paramount, as is succession planning. The new senior leadership team have been tasked with discussing the plan with the POA to ensure that the training and development programme is robust and fit for purpose.

Mr. Speaker, the security within the Department of Corrections was also a concern. A part of the 2017 Corrections Strategic Plan included a security matrix. There are significant elements within the security plan that have been completed or are indeed a work in progress.

Mr. Speaker, please note that the Duress System in all facilities was recently upgraded. The unified power system [UPS] was recently upgraded. The telephone system was recently upgraded. The fire alarm system was recently upgraded. The infrastructure system for the security system at the Farm Facility was upgraded. The infrastructure for the Farm Facility cameras was also upgraded.

Mr. Speaker, at the Westgate Correctional Facility, the CCTV system was upgraded. Cameras were replaced, and additional cameras were installed. There was a software upgrade to the Westgate facility camera system. Security fencing at the Farm Facility was completed. Security fencing at the Co-ed Correctional Facility has commenced and should be completed by the second week in June 2019. Please be advised, Mr. Speaker, that the Cabinet has recently approved a budget for a CCTV upgrade at the Co-ed [Correctional] Facility.

Mr. Speaker, there is a security plan in place for drone sightings.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Corrections have trained canine officers who use dogs to assist with drug detection at all of the Correctional Facilities on Island. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, representatives from the Ministry of Works and Engineering visited the Westgate Correctional Facility to tour the facility and to put together a list of priorities for maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, last week, the Prison Officers Association Executive, the Department of Corrections, the Labour Relations Manager and the Permanent

Secretary of the Ministry of National Security, Mr. Colin Anderson, met and distilled all of the outstanding issues with a view to agree upon a way moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, the first outcome was that they would create a working maintenance list of issues. The aforementioned maintenance list would be set in order of priority. The parties agreed to set a time continuum with an accompanying schedule including deadlines.

Mr. Speaker, the second outcome was that all of the elements within the strategic plan will be discussed as a standing agenda item at the monthly Department of Corrections and Prison Officers Association meetings. Also, action points will be discussed and the progress [will be] signed off by the Prison Officers Association at the end of each meeting.

Mr. Speaker, the most significant concerns centre around the POA's desire for an increase in pay and the POA membership payment into the Government Employment Health Insurance (GEHI). Please note that the requested increase in salary and the payment into GEHI are subject to the [public] sector negotiations. Mr. Speaker, the [Public] Sector Negotiation Team and the Prison Officers Association have struggled to come to a consensus regarding the terms of reference. Both sides have now come to an agreement. The terms of reference are now with the Attorney General's Chambers for sign-off. Once the Attorney General's Chambers have signed off on the terms of reference, both matters will go to the arbitrators and arbitration will commence.

Mr. Speaker, please note that in July 2019, personnel from HM Prison Inspectorate will be on Island to review all Department of Corrections facilities and will provide an independent assessment of all Department of Corrections processes and procedures.

Mr. Speaker, the Prison Officers Association's members continue to work to rule. This means that corrections officers will not work overtime, programmes and classes are restricted, and visits are restricted. Please note that dialogue between the POA, the Department of Corrections, the Ministry of National Security, and the Department of Labour and Training is bearing fruit. All sides are committed to resolving the outstanding issues.

Mr. Speaker, the corrections officers' safety and well-being is paramount. The Acting Commissioner is tasked with executing the 2017 Strategic Plan. The Prison Officers Association have highlighted their concerns, and the concerns have been taken seriously. The stakeholders must continue to work together to solve the challenges so that the Department of Corrections can get back to their work of regularly scheduled duties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Minister on the Order Paper this morning is the Minister of Health.

Minister Wilson, would you like to put your Statement?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

BERMUDA HOSPITALS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, I am very pleased to be tabling in this Honourable House today the [2014 Annual Report for the Bermuda Hospitals Board](#). This marks what is expected to be a process of publishing the next five outstanding annual reports to bring BHB in line with its legislated requirements over the course of the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, I can further provide an update that the 2015 financial statements have already been audited and the annual report is underway. BHB is working with the Auditor General's Office on completing the audits for 2016 to 2019 and will soon be completely up to date.

Mr. Speaker, this 2014 annual report provides a summary of activities during the fiscal year under review, along with full financial statements, salary information and statistics. During that year, BHB managed to end the year with a surplus, achieved by reducing budgets by 10 per cent and controlling costs. This resulted in a reduction in expenses from \$312.3 million to \$259 million. These savings were needed to pay for new equipment and to ensure that financial obligations could be met when the new Acute Care Wing was completed in the summer of 2014. This enabled BHB to financially prepare for the new wing without any additional funds or grants from Government.

Mr. Speaker, the 2014 annual report gives details of the operational readiness project, which included training and preparing staff and planning moving 90 inpatients over safely. It also highlights service and care improvements in all services provided by the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital, the Mid Atlantic Wellness Institute and the Lamb Foggo Urgent Care Centre campuses, as well as the various BHB-run group homes. To close, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to bringing the future annual reports as they are made ready and to see BHB move forward on its legislated schedule of financial reporting.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Minister who has a Statement this morning is Minister Foggo. Minister.

ROLE OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS SECTION

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you, to the House, and to the good people of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to provide to the Members of this Honourable House an overview of the [role and functions of the Labour Relations Section](#) in light of the various concerns and queries that the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports has received recently.

Mr. Speaker the Labour Relations Section sits within the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports Headquarters and comprises the Labour Relations Manager, an administrative assistant, and three Labour Relations officers. Mr Speaker, the role of this section is to:

- educate employers and employees on Bermuda's labour laws—that is, the Employment Act 2000, the Labour Relations Act 1975, the Trade Union Act 1965 and the Labour Disputes Act 1992;
- investigate and mediate labour complaints while remaining neutral;
- make appropriate referrals of unsettled complaints to the appropriate body for determination; facilitate the process of union certification and decertification;
- prepare, for the UK Office, International Labour Organization reports; and
- promote amicable and productive industrial relations within Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the Labour Relations Section has various functions under each of the aforementioned Acts, which I will now expound upon.

The Employment Act 2000—this Act sets out the minimum standards for the terms and conditions of employment for persons working full-time in Bermuda and comprises the majority of the work managed by the Labour Relations Section. The Labour Relations Officer conducts an investigation into a complaint made pursuant to this Act and mediates the parties to a resolution. If a resolution cannot be reached, the complaint will be referred to the Employment Tribunal for determination.

Under the Labour Relations Act 1975, the Act establishes and governs the procedure for the settlement of labour disputes within essential industries and essential services. The Labour Relations Officer conducts an investigation of a labour dispute pursuant to this Act and mediates the parties to a resolution. If a resolution cannot be reached, the labour dispute will be referred to the Minister responsible for Labour for consideration and referral to the appropriate board or arbitration panel. Those panels are the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal, the Essential Industrial Disputes Settlement Board, a mediator, a sole arbitrator, or an arbitrator and assessors.

The Labour Disputes Act 1992 establishes a Labour Disputes Tribunal where it is expedient for the settlement of certain labour disputes within a non-

essential service or industry. If a resolution cannot be reached and both parties do not consent to the referral of a labour dispute under the Labour Relations Act 1975, the labour dispute will be referred to the Minister for consideration and referral to the Labour Disputes Tribunal.

The Trade Union Act 1965 governs the certification and decertification of unions in the private and public sectors. The Labour Relations Officer reviews the certification application, assists the parties in determining the appropriate bargaining unit and conducts a secret ballot of the workers to certify whether or not a union will act as their sole bargaining agent. Parties have a right to appeal the order granting or refusing certification. The Labour Relations Officer, upon receipt of an application for decertification from the workers within a bargaining unit, enquires into the appropriateness of the existing bargaining unit and conducts a secret ballot of the workers to determine whether or not the certification of the union will be cancelled.

Mr. Speaker, as announced in the Throne Speech, the Minister of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports, working together with the unions and employer groups, will modernise the current labour legislation—that is, the Employment Act 2000, the Labour Relations Act 1975, the Labour Disputes Act 1992, and the Trade Union Act 1965—to ensure protections for employees whether unionised or not.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports has received a number of complaints from workers and members of the public pertaining to unfair contractual terms and the perceived disproportionate treatment of Bermudian and expatriate workers. Workers are urged to address any and all concerns and/or complaints with the Labour Relations Section, which is responsible for the investigation and conciliation of all employment- and labour-related disputes.

Mr. Speaker, the Labour Relations Section is located at 23 Parliament Street, Hamilton, in the old Magistrates' Court building. They are open Monday to Friday from 8:45 am to 5:00 pm and can be reached by telephone on 297-7714 or 297-7716. And the office welcomes walk-ins as well as appointments, Mr. Speaker.

The section will shortly be commencing an educational campaign to advise employees of their rights under the various Acts. I urge any employee who requires assistance or advice to contact the section. They are there to provide just that, advice and assistance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member Foggo.

The next Minister, the final Statement this morning is that of the Minister of Transport.

Minister De Silva.

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

The Speaker: Thank you. Go ahead.

PUBLIC BUS SERVICE

Hon. Zane. J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Public Transportation [DPT] implemented a new 50-bus schedule on the 18th of March 2019 to provide a reduced public bus service that could be reliably met with the available buses and no cancellations. However, the frequency and capacity of the new schedule was insufficient to meet the demands of our commuters, visitors and students. Additionally, there were challenges with the rest times between some trips, presenting health and safety concerns for not only bus operators, but also for the traveling public. As a result, it was decided to reinstate the previous schedule effective 29 April 2019. The 2019 bus schedule was closely monitored over a period of six weeks, consolidating feedback from bus operators and the public. The decision to revert to the former schedule was not taken lightly, but was the only recourse to address the concerns of our operators and passengers.

Mr. Speaker, implementing the 2019 bus schedule was a learning curve and is an advancement to build on as we move forward. The Ministry, unions and DPT have fostered stronger working relations, demonstrated in part by our ability to agree [to] the definition of “night work.” And I think that deserves repeating, Mr. Speaker—demonstrated in part by our ability to agree [to] the definition of “night work,” and collectively develop and implement work rosters. Once implemented, we consulted on the performance of the new schedule, and decisions were made in the best interest of the public and our employees.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is committed to delivering a quality [public bus service](#). As such, replenishing the bus fleet remains a priority for the DPT. Over the past year, the average in-service bus count has increased from 50 buses up to 65 buses. This was accomplished through a combination of new bus purchases, mid-life refits and out-of-service repairs. We have taken delivery of six new buses in the past year, with a further six new buses arriving between June and September this year.

In addition, DPT has recently concluded a request for information [RFI] for new buses, and is in the process of preparing a request for proposal [RFP]. We are taking this opportunity to review the bus market and available vehicle types that meet Bermuda’s needs, as well as international public transportation standards. This includes consideration for sustainability and the environment, appropriately sized buses, accessibility, on board features and the total cost of ownership. The information gathered during the RFI process is encouraging, and we are confident that there are solutions that can replenish the bus fleet in a

timely manner and improve the bus service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

That brings us to a conclusion of the Statements for this morning.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

PREMIER’S QUESTION TIME

[Standing Order 17(11)(i)]

The Speaker: Premier’s Question Time, yes. Members, just as a reminder, under Premier’s Questions, the Leader of the Opposition may ask three questions. Any other Member may ask one question only. And only Members asking the question may be afforded two supplemental questions.

Again, the time period for this is 30 minutes. And those 30 minutes are the first 30 minutes of the entire 60 minutes which are allowed for the full Question Period. So, with that, we will start our Question Period.

And, Mr. Premier, there are Members of the Opposition who have indicated that they have questions for you, as well as others. And the first question is in the name of the Opposition Leader.

Opposition Leader, would you like to put your question?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, and good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

QUESTION 1: MOU WITH PERSEID

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And to the House and visitors.

The first question I have for the Honourable Premier is . . . there was a lot of excitement around a particular company, Perseid, which won awards away for interesting technology that it was bringing forward to light. And, quite frankly, I think we were all excited about the fact that there was an MOU that was being signed by the Government with this particular company, in conjunction with another company, using Shyft.

So, I wanted to find out from the Premier, where are we?

We understand that it was supposed to kick off sometime in the first quarter. That passed in February. I would like to know where we are with this particular great opportunity that we understand would have even been lucrative for the Bermuda Government at some point in time.

Could you give us an update on what is happening?

The Speaker: Thank you, Opposition Leader.
Mr. Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the question from the Opposition Leader, I believe the Opposition Leader is asking about the Government's EID [electronic identification] project, which has been spoken about on numerous occasions. Last year, almost about a year ago, I believe, at the Consensus conference in New York City, there was a joint venture signed where a Canadian company, Shyft, invested in a Bermuda company, or formed a joint venture with a Bermuda company, Trunomi, to create a company, Perseid.

Perseid was to work with the Government of Bermuda on the implementation of an electronic identity pilot. I am not going to get into the details of it because I do not want to discuss internal issues with particular companies as they exist. But, needless to say, there were some particular challenges with the execution of this particular arrangement. Discussions continue with the Government of Bermuda. Discussions happened as recently as two weeks ago.

We will continue to do it. And the intent is to implement an electronic identity pilot this year.

However, Mr. Speaker, as honourable colleagues *may* know, but those persons who are familiar with the distributive technology space *do know*, in technology, as this is a nascent technology, happen very quickly. The Government is looking to adjust its approach to the electronic identity project, as opposed to having one vendor and/or one system being tied in which may expose the government to technology risk in the future, as we do not know how the system will develop.

We are looking at implementing a regulatory framework, which we are calling the Reliance Framework, which will basically allow multiple different companies to be able to attest to and verify the identities of persons. And that is sought as a process which will broaden this identity project.

Perseid will still be used to do the pilot of that, and that is a negotiation which we are currently doing. But the Government is working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on developing the Reliance Framework. And we look forward to updating Members on that once that has passed through the Cabinet.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Opposition Leader, would you like to put a supplementary or a new question?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, certainly. No, no, no, no. A supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary? Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I appreciate some of the updates. I just want to be sure so I understand correctly. The MOU then still is in place. We are still continuing with Perseid. And I guess the question then would be, Is the commitment still [there] to invest the \$10 million that they said they also would be investing in the next three years? Have any of the conditions of that MOU changed since the revelation of working with the university that you just mentioned, and the likes?

The Speaker: Thank you, Opposition Leader.
Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Opposition Leader may be talking about two different particular issues. There is the joint venture between Trunomi and Shyft, and then there is the MOU itself with Shyft. And so, there has been no change on either one of those processes. The Government continues to engage with those companies.

However, as technology moves very quickly (that [MOU] was signed a year ago), the space itself is evolving rapidly. The analysis that the Government has done, which is being spearheaded by the Chief FinTech Advisor, Mr. Denis Pitcher, working with MIT, is to look at a broader framework, which we believe can bring more adoption to electronic identity in Bermuda and advance the pace of, I would say, Bermuda as being a centre in this space.

This is very hard stuff to explain because it is incredibly technical. It is very difficult for me to understand. That is why I am fortunate to have someone like Denis Pitcher, who understands this particular stuff. But we are changing it. So, there has been no change in the MOU with Shyft. Perseid is the entity that is continuing to work with the Government to launch the pilot. And once we confirm the parameters of that . . . because what is most important, Mr. Speaker, is that the Government's interests and the country's interests are advanced in the best way.

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.
Supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes.

The Speaker: Second supplementary.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I appreciate that. And I just want to say, in asking this question, that I think it is a great idea, this whole process. And I am hoping that, as we move forward . . . the Premier mentioned that within the year. Are we saying that we will have something established as far as a digital ID by another year from now? Is that what you are saying?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond to that. As the Honourable Member would know from updates that were given by the Minister who was previously responsible, and myself, this is something that we wanted to have done already. But, as the old adage says, *Measure twice; cut once*. Things are advancing very quickly. And we do not want to have ourselves trapped in, what is called in IT, a “technology risk.” And that is the reason why we are making sure that we are analysing this carefully.

I would love to give the Opposition Leader a specific timeline on when this would be. I cannot present that at this time, as the Government is still working with Perseid to outline exactly the parameters of what the pilot would look like in conjunction with the budgeted amount that has been approved by the Cabinet of Bermuda.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Opposition Leader, you are done with the supplementaries for your first question. Would you like to put your second question?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I did three already?

The Speaker: There are two supplementaries.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Two? Oh, that is right. It is two. I was trying to cheat you and get three.

The Speaker: No problem.

[Laughter]

QUESTION 2: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. I would like to move on.

We had a Statement given to us concerning the negotiations and issues with the prisons. What I wanted to find out . . . and I adjusted this question just slightly. I was going to ask about the prisons and the police. But I wanted to find out from the Premier if he can give us an idea of where we are with the negotiations concerning the police department. We know that it has been ongoing. And in light of the fact that we have issues with the correctional services, where are we now with the police department negotiations?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I will just state that [off] the top of my head, I do not know the exact status of the negotiations with the police officers. I will seek to get with the Minister, the Opposition Leader, and write with clarity on that. The Minister for the Cabinet Office is the one who holds those particular responsibilities. And I am very sorry that I do not have that update; but I will look to provide it as quickly as possible.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary? Yes, your first supplementary.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, Mr. Speaker.
Taking that into consideration, we know that it has been a major concern with both departments, correctional services and the police department. I would hope that we can get an update, and, in addition, understand exactly what is going on, find out what are the major concerns so that we can move along in resolving this, understanding that both correctional services and police department work hand-in-hand with one another. We do not want a situation whereby we are having more sick-outs, sit-outs and that kind of a thing. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the sentiments expressed by the Opposition Leader. Clearly, this is a challenge that the former Government had as, according to this Government, one of the major sticking points with both the prison officers and the police was the issue with GEHI contributions. It is something that was inside of Throne Speeches from the former Government; it is something that has continued to be worked on under this Government.

And for the public's edification, there are about seven different public sector unions and negotiating bodies. And not all of them pay into the Government Employees Health Insurance Scheme at the same rate, and that is one of the major sticking points, as the Minister for National Security had mentioned, with the prison officers. And it is also one of the challenges and sticking points with the police officers, as well.

The Speaker: Opposition Leader, do you have a second supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, that's it.

The Speaker: Do you want to go to your third question?

QUESTION 3: MINISTERS AND/OR JUNIOR MINISTERS AS PAID CONSULTANTS

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We look forward to an update concerning the matter that I know that they are taking into hand.

Yes. The third question that I do have is, since the election of July 2017, could the Premier let us know if any Ministers or Junior Ministers have been hired as consultants, or are they being paid to do work in addition to being appointed as Minister or Junior Minister since that period of time?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I will try to get answers off of the top of the head. Outside of regular service on government boards, I do not believe so. The only thing would possibly be the Efficiency Committee, which I believe was shared by the Junior Minister for Finance, which had multiple members who were remunerated who did work. But I do not necessarily, off the top of my head, have any specifics on that.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I thank the Premier for being willing to take that in hand. Could the Premier could also let us know for what Ministries those were for and approximately what the amounts were for those contracts that may have been meted out?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there were any particular contracts which were stated. I believe, under section 61(4) the Bermuda Constitution allows all Ministers to appoint boards and committees to advise particular Ministers. I know the Efficiency Committee did excellent work. And with that excellent work, I know that there were a number of Members on it from both sides, from both places, including Independent Senators and others. And the work of which they do, hopefully we will be able to bring to this House in the near future.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Your second supplementary?

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

The Speaker: You are fine? Okay.

That brings us to a close of the questions from the Opposition Leader. The next Member who has questions is MP Jeanne Atherden.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: FINTECH DEVELOPMENT FUND

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier: Can the Premier advise, and this is relating to the FinTech Development Fund which was introduced in 2018. Can the Premier advise how much money has been deposited into the FinTech Development Fund? And in those monies deposited, what were the specific purposes for such sums received in the "Other Purposes" category?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, though there are two questions, I am happy to answer. As has been stated previously in both the media and in this House the last time I was asked, at this point in time—

The Speaker: I was pausing because I was going to see if I would make them into two separate [questions,] but being that you want to take them as one, go ahead.

Hon. E. David Burt: There have been no deposits to the FinTech Development Fund. And when there are deposits to the FinTech Development Fund, I can assure the Members of the Opposition that they will know.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I thought I had a supplementary. But—

The Speaker: You used it twice. See, you used up both of your questions.

[Laughter]

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: But, *but* I am going to make sure that this is clear. The other part of the Act envisioned that the Government could put some monies into the FinTech Development Fund. I just want clarity that the Government itself has not deposited any money into the fund.

The Speaker: Premier.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Government has not.

The Speaker: Continue on.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Another supplementary? You have two supplementaries. Would you like to use your second? Or we can move on.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: In it, you stated that you would surely invite Cabinet to approve amendments to relevant legislation to formalise Ministerial private offices. You also stated that you had invited the Policy and Strategy Section within the Cabinet Office to conduct a jurisdictional review of consultants.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I am going to use my last one.

Honourable Premier, can you please update this Honourable House on these two items?

The Speaker: Use your last supplementary, yes?

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: And I am doing this for clarity. Because the reason . . . when the fund was set up, it was envisioned that monies would be paid out for technical education for individuals and for sporting organisations. And I am just trying to clarify that, because no money has been paid into that fund, no money has been distributed to community organisations or for the purposes of technical education.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, [I am] happy to update the Honourable House on these two items. As has been stated by the Honourable former Premier's question, what was promised in the speech has been done. Reviews have been carried out, not only for a proposed code of conduct for Ministerial private offices, but also for revisions to legislation. And I would expect to bring that legislation to this Honourable House next week.

The Speaker: Mr. Premier.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I think that the Honourable Member has answered her own question.

Supplementary? No supplementaries.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

The next Member, Premier, who has a question for you is the Honourable Member, Mr. Simons.

The Speaker: Okay. Members, Members! Thank you.

Honourable Member Simons, would you like to put your question?

The next Member, Premier, who has questions for you is the Honourable Member, MP Dunkley.

MP, would you like to put your questions?

QUESTION 1: CLOSURES/MERGERS OF BERMUDA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

[Crosstalk]

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

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, good morning to you and to honourable colleagues.

Question to the Honourable Premier.

Mr. Speaker, during the 2018/19 Budget Debate press briefing, the Premier promised that there would be no closures or mergers of Bermuda's public schools. And he went on to say that this is not something that we are looking to do right now.

[Crosstalk]

Can the Premier give us an update as to his intentions for this year? Will he be closing or merging any public schools?

The Speaker: Members!

The Speaker: Premier.

QUESTION 1: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES/CONSULTANTS AND ADVISERS—A REVISED CONSTRUCT, UPDATE

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Honourable Premier, on the 11th of March, you delivered a Ministerial Statement to this House entitled Professional Services/Consultants and Advisers—A Revised Construct.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the first thing I can say is I do not fully recall saying that. But if the Honourable Member says that, I will take him at his word.

What I can say, however, is that this Government was elected with a promise to phase out middle schools. And we are currently engaged in that process. We are measuring multiple times so that we only have to cut once.

[Gavel]

But what I will say, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking on the topic of schools that have been closed, is that I think it is very interesting to note the issue of T. N. Tatem. And the reason why I say "the issue of T.

N. Tatem,” Mr. Speaker, is that it is very important to note that when the former Government was in office, they were provided with recommendations on what to do to fix the source of the problems at the school. And, guess what? They did not fix the source of the problems. They did cosmetic cleaning.

We have now received the report on the full extent of what is required to fix the source of the problems and prevent the problems from re-occurring. And those are the things of which we will be examining. So, the only school at this time which is closed, unfortunately,, is closed due to the negligence of the former side not following the advice of which they were given and fixing the problems at the source—

Some Hon. Members: Ooh!

The Speaker: Members!

Hon. E. David Burt: —as opposed to . . . as opposed to doing cosmetic work.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member, would you like to put your supplementary?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes. I have one question and two supplementaries, right?

The Speaker: One question, two supplementaries, correct. This is your first supplementary.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. Well, I will keep going.

The Speaker: This is your first supplementary now.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. My first supplementary: What was the source of the document that the Premier was referring to?

The Speaker: Premier, would you like to [answer] the question?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, there are a number. But the source of the reports . . . I have it here in front of me. [I will be] happy to table it for the Honourable Member’s attention. It was written to Mr. Dwayne Caisey, Facilities Manager for Bermuda Water Consultants. And it says, “In our opinion, everything that we observe is directly related to general and routine maintenance of a facility. The issues that we noted today are the same issues that we noted back in 2013 and the same issues that closed out in 2017.” And that was roof leaks which were not fixed, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Second supplementary?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Second supplementary.

During last year’s comments, the Premier also said, “¹[What] we are looking [at] right now” is ensuring that “we improve the outcomes of the public education system.” Can the Premier give us an update as to when he can expect for the public and the House to get the results of the Cambridge middle school exams that took place in early 2019?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I do not know the exact timing of that. But I will ask the Minister of Education to speak to the Shadow Minister to provide him that particular update on the timing of the release of those particular figures.

The Speaker: Thank you.

That brings you to a close of questions from that Honourable Member. Premier, you have another Honourable Member who has questions for you this morning. And it is the Honourable Member Pearman.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning. Good morning.

QUESTION 1: DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES INVESTIGATION RESULTS

Mr. Scott Pearman: Honourable Premier, as you know, there is an ongoing investigation into the Department of Child and Family Services being conducted by the Department of Internal Audit. Can the Premier show the House and the people of Bermuda when that investigation is likely to be concluded and a report produced?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there is an ongoing investigation. I believe that this investigation has concluded. That is to the best of my knowledge. But I am happy to check. But it is my understanding that this investigation has been concluded.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Okay. Honourable Member, you have a supplementary, yes.

¹ [Royal Gazette](#), 20 February 2018

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Scott Pearman: Honourable Premier, given the importance of this matter to the public and to Bermuda, will that be a report that you yourself will be considering?

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am going to try and go back from memory on internal audit reports. But I do not think that internal audit reports actually go to Ministers. The Department of Internal Audit and the Internal Audit Act, I think, specifically restricts the interference of Ministers in internal audit items. So, those items are administrated by the Cabinet Secretary. That is to the best of my knowledge regarding the Internal Audit Act.

The Speaker: Your second supplementary?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Second supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Given the importance of this report, is the Honourable Premier prepared to consider whether to make it public?

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I do not actually believe that this is allowable under law. However, I am happy to discuss the matter. And possibly, it might be something that a parliamentary committee may be able to request.

The Speaker: Thank you.

That actually brings us to a close of questions from the Opposition. I do believe that we have some questions from Government Members. (There are actually eight minutes and 25 seconds left. So, we have got some time there.) The first is from the Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker.

QUESTION 1: PLP PUBLIC EDUCATION REFORM UPDATE

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

Mr. Speaker, in 2017 the Progressive Labour Party election platform stated that the Government would reform public education by phasing out middle schools and introducing signature schools at the secondary level which focus on the learning styles and interests of our children, including academic, technical and other trades, business, sports, arts and special needs education.

Will the Honourable Premier please inform this Honourable House of the status of this election promise?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Deputy Speaker for his question.

The Ministry of Education has been reviewing the outline of this current system. As I had said in responses to questions from the Opposition earlier, this is something that we are making sure that we analyse fully, as these are our children, and we want to make sure that any changes that are done to the system are done in the best interests of our children.

The Cabinet recently had a presentation on the possible construction of new schools and a system redesign. And the Cabinet has asked for additional information, Mr. Speaker, as it is the Cabinet's view that we cannot deal with only the matters of buildings and facilities as we look to phase out middle schools, but we also have to look at accountability for teachers and administrators, as well. So, that is particular information. The Minister of Education, as he and I discussed this morning, said that he is aiming to have that information to the Cabinet as was requested in July. And at that point in time, I am certain that the Minister of Education will engage in public consultation on this particular matter.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I know many of my constituency voted for the PLP based on this pledge. When I go knocking on doors, what can I tell my constituency is the timeline to deliver this election promise?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

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

And I think that I am on public record saying this, and I will say that, ideally, the next school year, which is 2019/20, will be the last school year under our system, under the current system. The school year 2020/21 will be the first with signature schools.

However, Mr. Speaker, and I want to say this, the Government will not rush this just to make this particular timeline. These are our children. And, espe-

cially as my daughter will be starting in the public school system in the fall, I want to ensure that we probably do not measure two times, but three times, before we cut once. But it is my every expectation that this will be delivered before we go back to the polls.

The Speaker: Thank you.

No supplementary?

The next Member, the Government Whip.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: It has been asked.

The Speaker: Been asked? Okay.

MP Tyrrell, would you still like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: MEASURES TO MAKE GOVERNMENT MORE EFFICIENT

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, yes. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, can the Honourable Premier please inform this Honourable House what measures are being taken to make this Government more efficient?

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Member for his question because, oftentimes, we hear lots of particular issues about misinformation. And there is one thing that I want to certainly bring to the fore, because I think that it is critically important that people understand the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to read to you two figures. I am going to read to the total number of employees employed by the Government of Bermuda on the 31st of March 2015. That number was 5,039. On the 31st of March 2019, at the end of the last fiscal year, that number was 4,704, a decline of 335 persons.

Mr. Speaker, not only have we worked in making sure that we are constraining and making sure that the public service is efficient, but we have also, as I said, had the work of the Efficiency Committee, which was led by the former Junior Minister of Finance. They made a number of recommendations which have been implemented. One recommendation collected over \$4 million of taxes by [the examination of] departments.

There is another thing of which the Efficiency Committee has actually also commented on that will streamline the process for approvals for land. In addition, the Minister of Home Affairs just spoke about the efficiency measures which are going to be taken for the Department of Planning.

There are a number of things that we are making sure [are] efficient. But the most important

thing, Mr. Speaker, is that we live within our means. And it is important to correct the false narrative that is out there and recognise that, between 2015 and today, there are 335 fewer persons employed by the Government of Bermuda—not more, as the Opposition would lead you to believe.

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier. Supplementary?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Ah! Ah! You cannot add supplementaries.

Supplementary?

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Mr. Speaker, I think we should be sharing more . . .

[Crosstalk]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Members, Members! Members!

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Mr. Speaker, I think we should be sharing more of the good work that this Government is doing. Will the Honourable Premier look to be tabling any reports of the Efficiency Committee in the House?

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. What I will ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office to do is review that report, as it did go into a number of sensitive topics. And we want to make sure that there are certain things that possibly may not be suitable for public dissemination. But certainly, the report and any appendices which can be released, I think we should. Because it is important that people know the work of the Efficiency Committee.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Tyrrell, you used up your questions.

The next Member who has a question for the Premier is Honourable Member Famous.

Honourable Member Famous, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: BERMUDA COLLEGE MOBILE APPLICATION APPS, UPDATE

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

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the Progressive Labour Party election platform stated the Government would (and I quote) “²Collaborate with Bermuda College to promote mobile application development skills by having students design, maintain and enhance mobile apps that make government better and more efficient.”

Would the Honourable Premier please inform this Honourable House of the status of this election promise?

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member will, or the public should, know that we have delivered on that particular election promise. I was proud to announce a few weeks ago that we have launched the Bermuda Government’s first mobile application, which was designed by students at the Bermuda College in conjunction with an overseas firm. That app provided practical experience to students at the Bermuda College.

But the Government is not stopping there. We are upgrading the computer labs at the Bermuda College to provide more instruction and more allowance for students to have these experiences. And those persons are going to have the opportunity to work on that, [as well as] more persons who are coming to the programme at Bermuda College, as we continue to prepare Bermudians for a future of technology.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Is there a supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes.

Could the Honourable Premier tell us exactly how many times has the app been downloaded? Because that would be a true measure of its success thus far.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that the total number of application downloads . . . as of May 7th the total number was 300. So, we have some work to do to get that number up.

The Speaker: Thank you.

No more supplementaries from that Member.
There are 12 seconds left. I was going to call on Ms. Furbert.

Ms. Furbert, would you like to use your . . . well, eight seconds now? Or we can move on to the other questions.

An Hon. Member: Move on.

The Speaker: It looks like time is going to run out on you before you get—

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: I think the time has run out.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: We are now going to move on to the questions from today’s Statements. And the first Statement was in the name of the Premier.

And, Premier, you actually have a question from a Member. We call on the Honourable Member Simons.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: For the Premier?

The Speaker: For the Premier.

An Hon. Member: He forgot.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I did forget.

The Speaker: Well, would you like for us to move on?

[Crosstalk and laughter]

The Speaker: Okay. You came back the second time.
All right. We will move on, Premier.

The next Statement is that of the Minister of Finance. And, Minister, you have two Members who would like to put questions to you. The first one is from the Member Pearman.

Would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: EUROPEAN UNION TAX LISTING

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

Minister, you spoke in your Statement about the forthcoming legislative framework of changes for the collective investment funds. As per previous, are

² [Bernews](#), 25 April 2019

you prepared to give an undertaking that you will consult with the industry stakeholders, and additionally to provide draft legislation well in advance of the debate in the House?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: The responsibility for the legislation and regulations around collective investment funds rests with the BMA [Bermuda Monetary Authority]. As per their standard practice of consultation and drafting, I suspect that they will follow the norm, and consult and provide drafts as appropriate.

The Speaker: Supplementary? Okay.
We will move on.
Mr. Simons, you have a question for the Minister of Finance?

QUESTION 1: EUROPEAN UNION TAX LISTING

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: The Minister's Statement indicated . . . Mr. Speaker, I should add that when Bermuda is removed from Annex I, we will be placed on Annex II of the EU list.

Can the Minister confirm that, by going on Annex II, we will be going on the greylist and not the whitelist?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Annex II is the greylist.

The Speaker: Supplementary, yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes.
Can the Minister give a roadmap as to what we need to do to get onto the whitelist?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I have been informed that the resolution of the issues surrounding collective investment funds will be the issue that takes us from grey to white.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary? Supplementary?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thanks.
And what type of timeline will we have in place to have this brought to completion?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: We are anticipating getting appropriate guidance from the European Commission in June or July of this year, with an expectation that we will have our submissions made by the end of the year.

The Speaker: Thank you.
No more questions? Good.
We move on to the next Statement. And the next Statement is in the name of the Deputy Premier.
Deputy Premier, you have a question from the Honourable Member Simons (again).
Honourable Member Simons, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: STREAMLINING PLANNING PROCESSES

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. In regard to the streamlining of the planning process, how will this streamlining process impact the Development Application Board?

The Speaker: Deputy Premier.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
One of the things that one of the streamlinings will do is it will avoid certain types of applications that will no longer have to go to the board and will be administratively approved as long as they meet certain requirements, particularly if it is a standard application where all the boxes have been checked, it fits in all the development requirements, and it will not need to go to the board. So, that means that there is a considerable percentage of applications that will no longer be slowed by having to be prepared for the board process. And that should compact the development application process for those types of applications.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes.
So, will we be bringing amendments to the Planning Act [Development and Planning Act 1974] and Planning Regulations to facilitate this change in responsibility and function?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Deputy?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: It was outlined in my Statement, Mr. Speaker. Section 5A of the Planning Act already allows for this procedure.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Any further questions? No further questions.

Deputy, those were the only questions for you.

We now move on to the fourth Statement, and that was in the name of the Minister of National Security.

Minister, you have a few Members who would like to put questions to you. And the first is the Opposition Leader.

Would you like to put your question now?

QUESTION 1: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Honourable Member, for the Statement, which we believe is timely.

I would like to point out on one of the pages—it is not numbered, so I do not know which one it is. But he mentions that there is a security plan in place for drone sightings. And we recall some situations that happened in the past. Can he give us, kind of like, just an overview? Obviously, we want to leave out the details, but maybe an overview of what that might look like so that we understand what the security plan is?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I will take your guidance, Mr. Speaker. I do think that there is a security plan. I do not believe it wise to discuss the security plan in open, in earnest. There is a plan that deals with the reporting elements of it. There is a plan in place to get a technical device on Island to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if that proved helpful.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
You are okay?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Well, I guess what I wanted to point out . . . we did talk about getting something put in place and getting equipment here. Is there any timeline that you have given these guys to get that equipment here, considering the severity of this issue?

Hon. Wayne Caines: The Government has procurement processes. It is going through the procurement process, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: All right.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary? You are fine?

Minister, the next question would be from the Honourable Member Dunkley.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

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

To the Honourable Minister: On page 5 of the Statement, the Minister mentions, “The most significant concerns centre around the POA’s desire for an increase in pay.” In regard to that, what has been budgeted in this financial year for the pay increase?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I would have to come back to that. And give me two seconds. I need to look in the Budget Book. And I can get that and come back.

The Speaker: The Minister is indicating that he will have to retrieve that figure for you.

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

The Speaker: Supplementary, yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Carrying on from that, on page 5 and page 6, it says [that] the terms of reference have been agreed on both sides, and they are now with the Attorney General’s Chambers for sign-off. Once they are signed off, the matter will go to arbitration. How long does the Honourable Minister think it will take to get these terms of reference signed off so that it can go to arbitration?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: That is an administrative process. I have spoken to the Attorney General. That is to happen imminently, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Supplementary, sir.

The Speaker: Second supplementary. Yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, carrying on with that page, page 6, the Honourable Minister says that “Prison Officers Association’s members continue to work to rule. This means that corrections officers will not work overtime, programmes and classes are restricted, and visits are restricted.” So, the question to the Honourable Minister is, what is the meaning of “restricted”? Specifically, what programmes and clas-

ses are being conducted? And how are restricted visits conducted? Who gets permission to get in?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, it means just that. There is a regular schedule. Prisoners are allowed to leave their cells. Prior to this, the agreement, the temporary agreement coming into place, prisoners were under lockdown. Since the agreement has come into place, prisoners are no longer on lockdown. They are not having classes at the moment. They are restricted; [classes] are not taking place. The object in this enterprise is for both sides to get to the table and, as soon as possible, have all of the services ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, we know that it is not convenient for all of the classes which are now taking place. It is not convenient for all of the visits that are limited. The object is to get both sides back at the table forthwith so that we can have the business of [the prison] working as soon as possible.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary or new question? Actually, it would have to be a new question. You used your two supplementaries, yes?

QUESTION 2: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, sir. I was going to say that. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Next question: On page 3, the Honourable Minister says, "The POA have concerns with reference to staff shortages." And in that regard, the Commissioner of Corrections has been seconded under the PLP for some time now. Is it intended for the commissioner to return? And if so, when?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, we believe that the commissioner will not return. We believe that this commissioner is acting. She has all of the responsibilities. She has full access to the budget. She has full dominion over the staff. We believe that it is simply an exercise.

The civil service has a significant procedure with reference to . . . the substantive Commissioner of Prisons is working as a permanent secretary. There are plans afoot to regularise that. As soon as that is available, we will see specific administrative things taking place.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary? We will take a supplementary from the Deputy Opposition Leader.

SUPPLEMENTARY

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

I would like to ask the Minister, in his Statement on page 3, the recruiting process for 22 corrections officers started in March. Have you identified anybody to be hired from that date to this date, please?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, as we know, there is a period in place where people have the opportunity to put in requests. So, there is a position. When you do a recruiting process, the dates for recruitment are from the 22nd of March until the specific date. The officers now are getting all the applications in. They are vetted. They are doing security tests. They are doing physical tests. They are doing academic tests. At the end of that in-depth process, we get a feel for the candidates. They go through a battery of tests. And at the end of that process, we have what we believe is a starting cohort of officers who will commence the process to go through to become corrections officers, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary or new question?

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

The Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, on the top of page 2, the Honourable Minister says that most recently there was an impasse between the Department of Corrections senior management and the Prison Officers Association. Exactly what was this impasse over? And how many officers called in sick at that time?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Approximately 36 officers called in sick. The impasse centred around security concerns. I went through each one of the security concerns in the Statement. They centred around concerns around the physical plant. I went through each one of the elements that was considered in the Statement, as well, Mr. Speaker. Their issue, which we could not discuss because it fell under the public service negotiation parts, was the GEHI contribution and the salary increase.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Second supplementary or new question?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Second supplementary.

The Speaker: Go ahead. Yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, carrying on, on page 2, the Honourable Minister says the Bermuda Police Service was used to transport inmates to and from court and to medical visits. Then it goes on to say, “The impasse reached fever pitch” What caused the fever pitch (in the Minister’s words) to take place?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, dealing with the Prison Officers Association, things became . . . both sides became very concerned, because they were at a deadlock. They could not come to an agreement. And then cooler heads prevailed. They were indeed able to get around the table with the help of the Labour Relations Manager. And they were able, each side pulling together their viewpoints, and indeed, a roadmap to go forward [was attained]. I highlighted in the Statement what the key points were going forward, and they negotiated some key moving points going forward.

Mr. Speaker, issues centred around the security. It centred around the physical plants. And it centred around the health and safety, specifically the mould. The mould was a growing and a significant concern with the prison officers. They believe, and rightfully so, that their health is being affected by the mould in the facilities, number one. And I will repeat this from the Statement: We have looked at a mould remediation plan. We have an air quality survey that will take place in the not-too-distant future. Directly thereafter, Mr. Speaker, we will have the first element of it where we will have a professional team to come in and clean the prisons.

The health and safety of the corrections officers are paramount, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

New question, your third question?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Third question, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION 3: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: On the bottom of page 2, the Honourable Minister says, “the Westgate Correctional Facility had limited hot water supply.” When did this start, and what areas was it limited to?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, hot water is hot water, is it not? When you have a facility that is governed by two hot water heaters . . . the hot water heaters at the Westgate Correctional Facility were not working. This was something that was not budgeted for. It had to go through the procurement process. After it went through the procurement process, it had to go through Cabinet. It then had to be ordered. It then has to be shipped to Bermuda. Then it has to be installed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

First supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

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

I note the answers, but it did not say when it started and in what areas, Mr. Speaker.

The supplementary question.

The Speaker: Yes. Put your question.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: At any time, Mr. Speaker, was the facility without hot water?

The Speaker: Minister.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I apologise. Mr. Speaker, can I have the question repeated, please?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Most certainly.

At any time was the Westgate Correctional Facility without hot water?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I would have to confirm that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Would you like to put a second supplementary? Okay.

Supplementary? Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Considering that the Minister brought up having to go out to procurement and the like, does he have an idea of the cost of some of this remediation work that they have done?

The Speaker: For the hot water heater?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No . . . well, you mentioned that it had to go out to procurement. I am asking, with all of the remediation that he has spoken to here, and

it was not in the budget, does he have an idea of the cost?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I did not say that there was a remediation that was not in the budget, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to something specific. I was asked specifically about the hot water heater. When asked about the mould, I said that indeed a plan will be put in place and we will commence some of the remediation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to clear up something really quickly. With reference to . . . I was asked specifically by MP Dunkley about the hiring of a new Commissioner of Corrections. I just want to make the record clear, Mr. Speaker. The hiring of any civil servant does not fall within the ambit of any Minister. That is indeed 100 per cent the remit of the Public Service Commission [PSC].

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Just a point of correction, of clarification.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I did not ask about the hiring of a new commissioner. I asked if the seconded commissioner was coming back to the facility.

Hon. Wayne Caines: And that is indeed a matter for the PSC and not the Minister, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you for the clarification on the question and on the response.

If you can get one of your other Members to ask, because you have used up all of your questions (I allowed you to clarify).

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: You do have one supplementary, yes. Yes, yes, you do. Correct.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I saved that. It is like the last phone call you get to make, you know. It is a supplementary.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: It is your second supplementary, your final one. Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: My last supplementary question, yes.

Mr. Speaker, the Prison Act defines certain responsibilities that the Minister can take. And I would suggest that under the Act the Minister does have responsibility for some running of the prisons.

So, how long does the Honourable Minister think it will take to have the Acting Commissioner confirmed or to have a Commissioner of Corrections put in place?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: That is a matter for the Public Service Commission and not the Minister.

The Speaker: Okay.

Did you have a supplementary to your . . . no.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I think he misunderstood my question. I would clarify the question. Can I clarify the question?

Yes. What I said was, since he mentioned that he had to go to procurement involving the mould and the likes, and he also mentioned . . . I said, in mentioning in his Statement other work that had been done, I was trying to find out, did he have an idea of the total costs?

He has mentioned all these other things that they have done. Did he have an idea of the cost of all of these works that were being done? Upgrading, he mentions, of a power system, the telephone system, the alarm system, infrastructure system. He goes on about several things that were addressed.

The Speaker: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I would have to aggregate the cost of each one of those things.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, of course.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I would aggregate the cost. And at the earliest opportunity, I will come back with an aggregated cost of the things that were mentioned and present that to this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Moving on, Minister, you also have questions from the Honourable Opposition Whip.

Would you like to still . . .? Okay.

And the Honourable Member sitting next to you, would you like to put yours?

Honourable Member Atherden?

QUESTION 1: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister: On page 3 (or the third page, even though it is not numbered), there is an indication that 25 new corrections officers were hired in September of 2018. And the re-

cruiting process for 22 corrections officers commenced in March 2019. Could the Minister indicate to us what has been the attrition level in the past couple of years?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak to the attrition levels. But what I can tell this Honourable House is that currently there are 186 corrections officers—186 corrections officers. Let us do some numbers here. We have, as of this morning, 166 people incarcerated in Bermuda, totally. Of those, 129 are at Westgate; 11 of those are at the Co-ed Facility, and 26 of those are at the Prison Farm.

Now, let us look at the other end, with prison officers. There are 186 corrections officers. In September of this year, we hired 25 prison officers. We had a vacancy of 32 prison officers. In the next two months we will have an intake of 22 new officers. I do not have the numbers of people at the attrition, but the attrition, obviously, with people retiring, is a number that we have to factor in. But the ultimate aim is that we have a very high ratio of prisoners to officers. We have officers who are rightly trained. We have a clear indication that people are still trying to come to the prison service, because we have people who are coming here every year.

There is a training and development programme that is in place by the Commissioner of Corrections, and we plan to continue to train and develop the Bermudians who come in there for service for the Department of Corrections, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or second question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Could the Minister indicate to us what has been the retirement ratio? Because, obviously, on the one side it is recruitment, the other side is retirement. Could he indicate to us what has been the retirement ratio over the last couple of years?

The Speaker: I think he made some reference.
Go ahead. Continue.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, we would have to get the retirement ratio. This is the first I have ever heard of a retirement ratio, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: If the learned Member could explain what she means by “a retirement ratio” . . .

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I can clarify that.

The Speaker: Clarify it for us, please.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: And perhaps it will make it very simple. If you say that 20 people are retiring that year, and you have 186, well, you are going to end up having a retirement ratio of 12 [per cent] or 13 per cent. And the retirement ratio, obviously, is relating to the recruitment ratio. So, can the Minister say how many people have been retiring on a yearly basis in this department?

An Hon. Member: From when?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Over the last few years.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I cannot, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: The last three years will be sufficient.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I cannot speak to those numbers, Mr. Speaker. That is something that I can look into.

Mr. Speaker, with your leave, the Department of Corrections over the last year has spent no more than \$200,000 on repairs. The prison was completely without hot water for approximately nine months.

Some Hon. Members: Whoa!

An Hon. Member: What? Nine months?

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Supplementary.

The Speaker: This is your second supplementary.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Second supplementary.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated, in terms of he told us how many prisoners were there, and he told us how many prison officers were there. But if the Minister would indicate that . . . my understanding is that the numbers of prisoners has been going down. So, could he relate the numbers of prisoners that we are having in Westgate to the numbers of prison officers that we have, what the ratio is? Bearing in mind, I am understanding that it has been going down.

An Hon. Member: What?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I seek your indulgence. I am actually not clear with the questions. I was not clear on the question, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member, could you clarify your question a bit for the sake of the Minister so that he can respond to it?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: My question was, based on the numbers of prisoners whom we have had over the last, say, three years, the number of prison officers who have been, in terms of the establishment, I just wanted to understand the ratio. Because if you are having fewer prisoners, then you possibly would need fewer prison officers to manage them.

The Speaker: Minister, did you . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, could you translate the question, please?

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Minister, I suggest that you just clarify it if you can, and answer that you will try to get information for her at a later point.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what I am getting information for. I do not understand the question fundamentally. And I say that respectfully. I do not want to promise something I do not understand the basis of the question. We have given an indication that we have 166 prisoners incarcerated at present, totally, in the Island, and that we have 186 prison officers. I do not understand what the question is. She asked about how many officers have retired year by year. I said I will get that number. I do not understand the essence of this question, Mr. Speaker. And that is basically—

The Speaker: Well, Member, for the sake of clarity, I will allow you to get to your feet again if you want to clarify one last time.

Would you allow your colleague to put a supplementary and clarify it?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I am going to try to clarify it.

Over the past three years, what was the number of prison officers employed in 2016, 2017, 2018? And what was the number of prisoners in 2016, 2017, 2018? So, it was the ratio per.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will get those numbers, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Now, do you have a second question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Second question.

The Speaker: Yes, your second question.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Second question.

The Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION 2: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: On the next page there is an indication of a lot of upgrading that was taking place. And there is an indication that the telephone system was recently upgraded. Could the Minister indicate whether there are any old analogue systems still in the department?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, clearly, you cannot . . . there are two types of systems. There is a fully digital system, and then there are very few places on the planet that are still using analogue systems, Mr. Speaker. I know when people try to sound as if they understand telecom . . . it is a digital system. And it is a non-digitised system. But there are very few people using analogue communication. They have a PIN system, and they have a regular telephone system in the prison, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Nobody uses analogue.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Just to clarify then. So, there are no different systems that need to have seamless communication there?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, all communication systems have to talk to each other. Sometimes if communication systems . . . the officers have duress systems that operate under a frequency. And so, that will be a telecommunications system. The officers use radios. That is a form of telecommunication system, has the ability to use a frequency. There are PIN phones in the system which are used by the prisoners. That is a specific system. There are telephones which are used by the officers; that is a specific system. Those systems do not necessarily have to com-

municate with each other. They all have to be operable at the same time, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Any further? No further questions?

Okay. Minister, that brings a close to the questions for you. We have one further Statement that has questions, and that is for the Minister of Transport.

Minister, you have a question from . . .

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: You had a question for . . . yes, I did overlook you. I had you down for Transport, too. But you are still doing your transport one, right?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Okay. Minister Caines, the Deputy Opposition Leader has a question for you, as well.

QUESTION 1: WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

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

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, my son is incarcerated. And a couple of months ago, one of the inmates attacked his roommate and bit his ears off, wrapped them around his neck in a necklace and went to chow hall. And I am telling you this story because I am concerned about the corrections officers having to deal with mentally ill patients (on page 2). And I know that there is going to be a Mental Health Forensic Unit established, but what is being put in place in the interim to protect the prison officers and to assist them in dealing with the mental health prisoners who are currently there? So, there is going to be a Mental Health Response Unit, but what is in place in the interim to help the [officers] deal with mentally ill [prisoners]?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, therein lies some of the challenges, the teams. A number of the prison officers have challenges in dealing with them. And, Mr. Speaker, I will not go too far off. That is a challenge that we are having in our country, dealing with mentally ill people all through the Island. The prison is no different than what they are having in the courts, what that they are having in the Department of Social Services. As an aside, we have people who are incarcerated with mental health challenges. We do not have the right training and we do not have the number of people that we need to help in these facilities. The team is desperately putting together a plan to manage this.

When it is needed, they get the help from the MAWI [Mid Atlantic Wellness Institute] team. The MAWI team are overworked based on the challenges that they have. And it is about finding balance.

What we have realised is that we need a forensic mental health unit in Bermuda and that there is an effort to put all of the teams here together to put together a plan. In the interim, they have a team at the Westgate Correctional Facility that is dealing with it. When inmates are significantly in need of mental health treatment, they are sent to the Mid Atlantic Wellness Institute for treatment.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I just had some answers to a few of the questions. I seek your leave, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Well, there are still other questions that need to be put in relationship to other matters.

Supplementary on this? Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: The Minister made reference to the plan that was being put together. If the Minister would reflect that there was a plan that was put with respect to having those persons who needed mental health [treatment] assessed and going off the Island, I just wondered if he could indicate where that plan is. Because that would obviously alleviate some of the issues at Westgate.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: That plan is a plan in progress. We have one particular person who has been sent overseas for treatment. We do full assessments. And based upon the need, if the requisite need is there we do send people abroad for treatment overseas.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary? Supplementary?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay, we have got nine seconds, seven seconds.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Supplementary. Nine seconds?

The Speaker: Two seconds left now.

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: That is it. That brings us to a close of the Question Period for today. And we now move on.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: Would any Member like to speak to this matter?

I recognise that the Honourable Member Brown is on his feet.

Honourable Member.

Mr. Walton Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, colleagues.

The Speaker: Good morning.

Mr. Walton Brown: I would like to ask this Honourable House to send condolences to the families of three individuals. The first is Ms. [Joan] Alsace Trott, from Somerset, whom you will know, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes.

Mr. Walton Brown: She lived a full life, and she is sadly missed by her children, including Cookie Brown, Steven and Dennis Brown and Joan [sic] Brown. So, I would like to ask the House to send condolences.

The Speaker: It is Judy.

Mr. Walton Brown: Judy.

An Hon. Member: Include everyone.

Mr. Walton Brown: I include the entire House on this.

Secondly, it is also sad to announce the passing of her daughter, Ms. Deborah Brown, who served over 30 years in the Bermuda Police Service. And she is also sadly missed.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Jean Holder, my aunt as well, who passed away a few weeks ago. I would ask this Honourable House to send condolences to her family.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Loretta Morton, who passed away last week. I associate Mr. Neville Tyrrell and Jeanne Atherden. Ms. Morton lived a full life. She is the mother of my brother-in-law, Randolph DeShield. And I would just like this House to send condolences to her family, as well, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member . . . I recognise the Honourable Member, Minister De Silva. Minister.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to send congratulations to a young man, Mr. Zeeko Johnstone. He is a mechanical engineer trainee at Public Works. I am sure that the Minister, Colonel Burch,

would like to be associated. This young man, Mr. Speaker, graduated last year with a distinction, *cum laude*. He also introduced robotics engineering to middle school students. And he is the son of a proud mother and father, Ernest Johnstone and Yolanda Johnstone, who both happen to work for the Department of Transportation. So, I am very happy to have the House send congratulations to not only him, but to the family.

Mr. Speaker, whilst I am on my feet, I would also like the House to send congratulations to Mary Louise Darrell, who lives in Sunnyside Park and turned 104 years old last week. And she is the mother of Glenda Todd, whom I think you know, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Zane. J. S. De Silva: And being the family that they are, I remember when she turned 100 and they preferred not to have any fanfare whatsoever. And they would like that tradition to continue. But I did get permission from the family to at least acknowledge. And I associate Mr. Kim Swan with this. It must be the water up in Southampton, Mr. Speaker, because you will know that the mother of former Member, Mr. Reggie Burrows, lived until she was 104, as well. So, it is nice to see that that Southampton tradition continues.

Thank you.

The Speaker: We recognise the Leader of the Opposition.

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

I had the opportunity to celebrate, with the Premier and with the Governor, to celebrate Christ Church of God, Christ Church, Church of Scotland in Bermuda, their 300th anniversary in Bermuda. And so, we had a wonderful service that we were treated to.

What I would like to say about this particular church and its 300th anniversary was that there was a gentleman who came to Bermuda back in the 1930s at a time when the churches, quite frankly, amongst the Island, were pretty much segregated. And he had gone to a particular church, and he got there, and because of the segregation he was told—coming from the sister Island, he was of colour—he was told where to sit. And after they told him where he could sit in the church, they then proceeded to take up an offering. And, of course, he had brought his offering and gave it. But the church decided to take up a second offering, which pretty much vexed him at that time because he had only prepared for one offering.

And so, he wound up at the Church of Scotland up in Warwick, that we are celebrating the 300th anniversary of. And that member, well, he has passed now, the Honourable Member then became the first black Premier of Bermuda, Mr. Edward “ET” Richards. And so, we have the delight, and he wound up serving at this church. And the reason he served at this

church is because he went there and it was not segregated. Back then it was not segregated. And so, we celebrate the fact that there were many, even back then, who were attempting to be progressive at a time when segregation was at its height in Bermuda. And so, I congratulate the church on its 300th anniversary and its willingness to integrate even back then.

I would also like to congratulate the Bermuda Outstanding Teen Awards. I must say that there were several Honourable Members there, the Minister of Education, the Premier, the Governor, and the likes. We had the opportunity—yes, Minister Weeks was there, as well. And our Shadow Minister of Education was there, as well, Cole Simons. And, my goodness! Bermuda is in good hands. We have some very talented young people within the Island. And I believe that the Premier was able to get up, and when he gave his speech, to reiterate the fact that we are looking good. And I appreciate that.

I also would like to congratulate . . . I had the opportunity up at Southampton Princess, and there were so many people, I cannot recall who else was there. I know that Cole Simons, the Honourable Member, was there. I cannot remember any other MPs.

[Timer beeps]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: But I want to congratulate Deepak [Chopra] for coming to Bermuda and telling us that we should walk around barefooted.

The Speaker: I recognise the Minister of Education. You have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I will speak very quickly. Mr. Speaker, could the House send its condolences to the family of Leroy Simmons, a well-known musician, who passed away (and would you associate the entire House with that) . . . a well-known musician who was a constituent of mine, and also a teacher in the public school system?

Again, I want to join in with the former Premier congratulating the Outstanding Teen Awards, once again another successful event.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to send congratulations to the organisers of Spring into the Arts, which is done by the Department of Education, Dr. Durham-Thompson, Education Officer for Arts and Leadership. This is a performance that has been going on since 1995. And this week, last night it was the Dellwood Middle School portion of it that was held at Ruth Seaton James [Auditorium]. I would also like to have a special mention made to the students of Dellwood Middle School and West Pembroke Primary School, who did a tribute to the 60th anniversary of the Theatre Boycott. It is something that I did ask the department to put out to the schools, and I was very

happy to see that two of the schools took the mantle up and did a performance dedicated to that.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to send congratulations to the staff and students of Francis Patton Primary School. And I would associate MP Wayne Furbert with that. Mr. Speaker, we were treated to a very special performance. By way of explanation, Francis Patton is a school that has a Lighthouse School certification, which is a certification that is obtained through the Franklin Covey's *7 Habits* education arm. Mr. Speaker, Francis Patton is the only school in the Caribbean to have achieved this certification. It is a certification that requires a minimum of four years prior to being even considered. So, it is a phenomenal accomplishment that the school has done.

I also want to send congratulations to the former principal, who started the initiative, Ms. Garita Coddington, and a shout-out to the rest of the principals. The principal who is there now continued on with that and put it in place.

The one thing that I do want to make a special notice of is that the students gave performances on the day. And I want to talk about a P2 class that did a performance dedicated to standards-based education. They did a performance that showcased what standards-based education is and showcased why it is important for us to move towards that and how its implementation will improve our education system for the better.

So, I find it very interesting that a P2 class can articulate and put out there exactly what standards-based education is, while some persons within these Chambers cannot seem to understand what is going on there, Mr. Speaker. But I will endeavour to get that—they filmed it. I will endeavour to get a copy of that film and pass it on to Members further.

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member Richards.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer condolences to the family of June Audrey Gwendolyn Swan, more fondly known as "Granny Swan" by my family. She was actually the mother-in-law of my sister, Sherry Swan, and the mother of her husband, Brian Swan. I will associate the whole House with the passing of Granny Swan. Granny Swan lived a full life. She enjoyed traveling. She cruised to all sorts of different places around the world. And she always had an enthusiasm, a very youthful enthusiasm for life, even though she passed at 92 years old. She was the backbone of the Swan family. She is survived by her son, Gerry Swan, whom many in this House will be familiar with from his sporting activities; Mrs. Velma

Anderson; Gavin Swan; and my brother-in-law, Brian Swan.

Granny Swan also had a very close relationship with my nephew, Sean Swan, and it was always amazing to me to watch him, [as] he is young, and her, obviously an elder, interact, dance and laugh. And I know that he is going to miss her. So, I just want to extend condolences.

I would also like to extend condolences to the family of another young, beautiful lady who passed, Giovanna Watson. Ms. Watson was very well known in the Salsa community here. She loved to dance to Latin music. And she was also the author of a book detailing her battle with cancer. The book is entitled *Let Me Introduce Myself*. She was also rewarded the Global Relay for Life Hero of Hope Award last year. Ms. Watson carried herself in a very dignified manner, dealing with a very difficult disease. And many people in Bermuda are feeling her loss. And she will always be remembered. She had a very vibrant, very sparkling personality. Once again, I would like to extend condolences to the family of Ms. Giovanna Watson.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I recognise the Honourable Member Commissioning.

Honourable Member Commissioning, you have the floor.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is great to be back in your Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, they say that the good that men do is often interred with them upon burial, in their graves, their bones. Well, certainly, that does not apply to Mr. Lloyd James. And it was fitting that we took a minute of silence to honour him for his work as a former Parliamentarian, as a sitting Member of Parliament for Warwick East. I remember, as a young teenager, when he and Mr. Brangman took those coveted seats in Warwick East. It did provide some sense of optimism for us in the PLP, even the young persons like myself, that a better day was coming.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. James represented that area of Warwick East and the people of Bermuda very well. He was a man of integrity, a gentleman giant if ever there was one, and he is sorely missed. Of course, I cannot sit down without also acknowledging the role he played as a leading cricketer in this country. At an even younger age, I guess by the time I was two, three—well, no, three, four or five years old and the family would take me to Cup Match, I always marvelled at him when he came out. And, you know, the damage he did on successive Cup Matches to the Somerset team—

The Speaker: You were on a good wicket, you know. You *were* on a good wicket.

[Laughter]

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: But again, I mean, that man . . . can you imagine when we were like four, five or six years old, and to look up at that man?

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: And then to witness the damage he would do with that bat. I actually loved Mr. James. And again, I knew him personally.

The Speaker: We will not forget those eras. That is for sure.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: We will not forget that era, and we will not forget Mr. James. He has cemented his reputation as a true legend on so many domains of Bermuda.

Last, Mr. Speaker, before I go, before I sit down, I just want to also acknowledge a constituent, Ms. Sybil Perinchief, Ms. Perinchief who spent her final days at the Elizabeth Hills Park senior residences up on Happy Valley Road, just off of there. She was born in Jamaica but had lived here for a number of decades. And she passed away only recently. People may remember her son, Paul Pearce [Perinchief], who graced our football fields, I guess back in maybe the late 1980s, early 1990s. He predeceased her. And again, I just want to offer my condolences to her family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the remarks concerning Lloyd James, who will be fondly remembered by the Somerset fans.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: He threshed their boulders to all parts of the field with some of the biggest sixes in the world, Mr. Speaker. You know Mr. James also leaves to mourn his wife, Betty, and his brother, a former Minister, Elvin James.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for this House to send condolences to the family of Rowena (Smith) Riley, from Heritage Bay, who died and passed. She was the mother of Cordell Riley. I would like to associate the whole House with these remarks.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: A wonderful lady from Heritage Bay, and she had five children—Fred, Delwin, Robin and LeeAnne.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like this House to send condolences to the family of Ms. Dorothea Horton, the mother of Bobby Horton, former Speaker Randy Horton, Ellen-Kate Horton, and June Dill.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: The whole House.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I associate the whole House with those condolences.

Also, to the family of Ms. “Pinky” (Phillips) Dixon, a cousin of mine, mother of Gary Phillips. I would like for this House to send . . . associate the House with the condolences sent to her [family].

And Mr. Lloyd Walker, better known as “Sonny” Walker, from Bailey’s Bay, Hamilton Parish, lived in St. George’s. He leaves to mourn his wife and some children. One of his children, Damon, works for Planning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Now I recognise the Deputy Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer congratulations to all of our young athletes who participated in the CARIFTA games and represented Bermuda very well. And they brought substantial medals home. So, I would like to congratulate all of those athletes.

And I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bermuda Pilot Gig Club, who represented Bermuda over in the Scilly Isles in the UK. I do not have all of the statistics, but the women came 80th place out of a group of over 160 boats. And the men came 88th out of, I think, 163 boats. And in particular, I would like to congratulate the members of my club, Laura Lyons and Nives Filice, who also represented Bermuda over in the Scilly Islands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Premier.

Honourable Premier, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, before I begin with my remarks, I would just like to be associated with the condolences to the family of Ms. Giovanna Watson; the former Member, of course, Mr. Lloyd James; for the mother of the former Speaker, Ms. Dorothea Madeline “Peggy” Horton; and also to be associated with the remarks that were given to Brother Leroy Simmons.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to send my condolences to the family and friends of a constituent of mine, Ms. Janet Stuart, who passed away last month. Ms. Stuart leaves to mourn her husband, Toby Stuart, and her daughter Tanya Stuart. She was in her 81st year, of West Park Lane. And I fondly remember when I first started canvassing in Pembroke West Central, she always had a sharp wit. But she would always make sure that she would willingly give vegetables from her garden, which she tended to all the time.

The second thing, Mr. Speaker, I want to send heartfelt sympathies, and I will associate the whole House with this, to the family and friends of Ms. Rosheena Beek, who sadly passed away last month.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Ms. Beek was well known for her cultural bookstore, Nubian Nook, and gladly assisted members of the Progressive Labour Party with African garments for the PLP’s Wakanda Royalty Gala last year. Her big and infectious smile will surely be missed, and we pray that her parents and her three children will find comfort during this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend condolences on the untimely passing of Mr. Antoine Hugh Fleck Seaman, son of Rudolph Seaman and Angela Seaman, who was in his 22nd year, of Granaway Drive. And I will certainly associate the whole House with this, Mr. Speaker. It was without question an unfortunate accident. And I know that the thoughts of the entire House are with this family during this loss. The young man on that day was actually on the carpet at National Stadium, and it is very sad what happened during that instance.

The final thing, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to be associated with the congratulations to the Outstanding Teen Awards. And I just want to send a special note of congratulations to the overall winner and Outstanding Teen, Miss Madison Quig. She is without question an exceptional young Bermudian, and we are looking forward to excellent things from her in the future.

The Speaker: Youth Parliament Member.

Hon. E. David Burt: And a Youth Parliament Member, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Simons, here. He jumped up pretty quickly that time.

Honourable Member.

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

I would like to associate myself with the comments made in regard to the CARIFTA Games and Mrs. Horton, Dorothea Horton. I would like to also as-

sociate myself with the comments made in regards to the Church of Scotland and its 300th anniversary. I actually went to Sunday School at the Church of Scotland, and I met many, many long[-time] friends at that school. In fact, I think that the church was a fertile ground for politicians. Now, I did a quick list of the politicians who went there: E. T. Richards, his son Bob Richards, John Patton, Quinton Edness and myself, and others. So, the very political church.

I would also like to associate myself with the comment in regard to Lloyd James. He was a neighbourhood mentor to boys of my age at the time. At the time, he was a teacher. He was a giant of a man, a gentle man. He also took us youngsters fishing and taught us about life and cricket. And it was because of him that I became a member of the St. George's Cricket Club. Because he was our mentor, and he played on behalf of all of South Shore.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Well, well . . .

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I would also like to send congratulatory remarks to Union Square Productions and the Child Development Programme. They hosted the Early Childhood Symposium, back in March, Mr. Speaker. The theme was *Laying a strong foundation. Teaching the whole child.* They had over 100 people there, and it was probably the most informative seminar I have ever [attended] on the development of young people. It was timely because I have a young grandson who is only 10 months old. And they gave me lessons on how to raise a young boy and how to get the best out of them from an academic and a developmental point of view. So, I would encourage people to attend the next workshop that they have, because it is educational and it would help with the development of our young people.

I think that is all I have, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I recognise the Honourable Member, Ms. Furbert. Honourable Member Furbert, you have the floor.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to send condolences to the family of a matriarch of Hamilton Parish, Hilary Richardson. I would like to associate Hamilton Parish MPs and anyone else who knew Aunt Hilary, who was the aunt of Laverne Richardson and Marva Bridgewater. She did not have any children of her own, Mr. Speaker, but she was a mother to many in the area of Hamilton Parish. And I just want to share a funny little story in regard to Aunt Hilary. She got her driver's licence at the age of 65. And so, also, Aunt Hilary was also the wife of the late Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. William Richardson. So, she got her licence at the age of 65. And

Aunt Hilary drove really slowly. So, if she would offer the neighbourhood children a drive in her car, they would tell her no because she drove really slowly. I would like to send condolences out to her family.

Also, condolences to the family of Ms. Beverley Holder, a constituent of mine. She leaves behind her daughter, Christy Taylor. Beverley Holder was known . . . I would like to associate with Minister . . . your cousin?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Okay. Yes. She is a known truck driver, yes. And they actually had a really nice procession where they drove her coffin out to Southside. And so, it was a really, really good sentiment to Ms. Beverley Holder.

I would also like to send condolences out to the family of Mr. Javone Henries. Mr. Javone Henries was a young gentleman who was an amputee, who experienced many things throughout his life. I wanted to send condolences out to his family, as well.

And also, congratulations to all of the teachers of Bermuda, because this week is actually Teachers Appreciation Week. So, if you see a teacher today, thank a teacher.

And I also wanted to send congratulations out to our Youth Parliamentarians, who wrapped up their sessions this year. I will associate the whole House with them. They did a spectacular job representing the issues and concerns of our Island. And I want to send a congratulations out to all of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is only because you are at constituency 35 that you recognised me, as neighbours.

[Laughter]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: I am grateful for that.

The Speaker: Well, it was a choice between you and a St. George's Member. How is that?

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Oh, there you go. There you go.

[Laughter]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: So, Mr. Speaker, I want to be associated with all of the warm expressions of condolences for the many noble citizens who have been transitioning. And they have been done in the House.

But I particularly wanted to be personally associated with the condolences to the mother of eminent Member, the Horton family. And the Minister of Health, the Honourable Member, Mrs. Kim Wilson, wishes to be associated. And I am happy to be associating her with the condolences to the family of Dorothea Madeline Horton.

I want to be associated with the condolences—I attended the service, the homegoing for Leroy Arthur Simmons. It was a fine service for a sad loss and a fine gentleman of our community.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, could I ask the House to send condolences to the family of Mrs. Dorothy Marie Bean, of Warwick, the mother of Mrs. Carol Stoneham, the grandmother of Mr. Marshall Barrett Blair Stoneham? Again, the Minister of Health, my colleague, wishes to be associated, Minister Kim Wilson. And certainly, a member of the Warwick clan and family, the Honourable Member, Mr. Cole Simons, wishes to be associated. I was saying that Mrs. Bean was the widow of Mr. Naurice Bean, a great family in the Warwick Parish. Mrs. Bean is the grandmother, as I said, of Marshall Barrett Blair Stoneham and Lady Justice Nicole Stoneham. And her homegoing service was one that was a lovely occasion to be present to say farewell to this dear lady. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, the Opposition Whip. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to get up and send condolences to the family of Clairann Moore. She was a resident at Summerhaven.

The Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: And she was one of the first members, residents, to live at Summerhaven. I want to associate my colleague, Leah Scott. And I am going to associate the entire House, because there are many hands that have risen today.

Clairann Moore was one of the first residents at Summerhaven. She was also one of the more outspoken residents, especially during a time of challenge at Summerhaven. And she was, I believe, the catalyst in bringing about a much better quality of life at Summerhaven. And she certainly remained a representative of Summerhaven, especially during our family and friends social events and such. So, she was an active member of the community at Summerhaven. She will be missed. And I would just like very much to send out condolences to her family and friends. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Ms. Foggo.

Ms. Foggo, you have the floor. That was a difficult choice. There was another Somerset Member who rose. You almost lost out that time.

[Laughter]

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to be associated with the comments regarding the congratulations to our CARIFTA teams, both the athletic team, as well as the swim team. The athletic team did achieve six medals and placed sixth out of 17 nations. And the swim team received 42 medals, as I think everybody understands. In swimming, competitors can take place in many events, whereas in athletics, they can only take place in two events each, outside of relay. And that was a great get for both teams. And the swim team placed second overall, especially after their last day, which brought in a few more medals, allowing them to push up to second place.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say congratulations to our men's football team for qualifying for the CONCACAF [Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football] Gold Cup. That is a great feat. I would like to associate Member, MP Weeks—well, our whole House, whole House, with those remarks. Mr. Speaker, again, Bermuda is punching above her weight, and she is showing the rest of the world her abilities. And that is great indeed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also highlight—I am pretty sure it was not while we were sitting before—our Special Olympians. They did a tremendous job also. We see that. I would like to associate—okay, the whole House. They did a spectacular job over there in Dubai. And again, it speaks to what we produce here in Bermuda, some fine, fine, superb individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the condolences for the James family, the Horton family, the Philips family, the Beek family. And also, I would like to point out the loss of the Pitcher family in St. David's and condolences to Ms. Carol Pitcher and her family, for the loss of her husband.

I finally want to [be associated with] the condolences for Leroy Simmons, who was a fellow, not classmate, but a graduate, a fellow graduate of both myself, Walton Brown and MP Weeks. And so, we all closely knew Leroy, and we will miss him.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

We now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 32, I believe it is. Yes. Mr. Simmons.

Mr. Scott Simmons: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and thank you.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to express my deepest condolences to the family of Ms. Dorothea Horton, who certainly . . . so, I associate myself, having been already associated to this with my honourable colleagues to this honourable lady, who served our community in the constituency. And she was one of my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Horton represented an era in Somerset, an era in the West End that cannot, cannot be overlooked nor forgotten. I believe that she represented [herself as] a mother of fine children who have devoted a sincere amount of their time to serving the community, as she had served. And they were well taught. And their children have proven that they are willing to serve our community, as well. So, I believe that it is fitting that we recognise her contribution.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity on numerous occasions prior to joining this Honourable House of sitting down with her and talking much on politics, much on the ways of the party and also the ways of the community. She represented [herself] as a woman, a stalwart in our community, who saw the value of family, who saw the importance of making sure that she served her family, but also served her community. And she will be, like so many in our West End community, sorely missed. So, I join our House in giving this honourable lady certainly our tribute, and we appreciate her and appreciate her family for the work that they have done and the work that they continue to do in our community as they commemorate and serve her, her memory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Member from your neighbouring constituency, constituency 33. Honourable Member Simmons.

Hon. Jamahl S. Simmons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

I rise today to begin with a tribute to someone who epitomised the often-overused clichéd term “African Queen.” Rosheena Beek was an intellectual component of Bermuda’s Afro-centric movement. She was a spiritual component of that movement. And she represented the cultural movement through dance and art, and she will be truly missed. But I think one of the things I had the pleasure of was knowing Ms. Rosheena Beek since I was 14 years old. And a little anecdote she probably would not have ever shared, she taught me how to dance. And the last time I saw her was New Year’s Eve. She brought in New Year’s Eve at my house with my family and friends. And it speaks to the passing nature of life of how quickly someone should go.

And if nothing else I take from her life, it is to not only be conscious and be aware of who you are and love who you are, but hug and be precious with

the people whom you have close to you because you never know when they can be taken.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to be associated with the remarks related to the passing of Mr. Leroy Simmons, whom I knew for many years through broadcasting and have known for many years. But I first became close to him when we were both highly educated Bermudians who were required to work as night watchmen because we could not find full-time employment in our own country.

He served the Bermuda Entertainers Union with honour because he lived it. He lived what it was like to struggle as an entertainer in this country. He lived what it was like to be able to try and stretch that dollar to make it go further. And for that, he was a strong and uncompromising advocate for our people, and he will truly be missed.

Mr. Speaker, the late Honourable Lloyd James was my father’s neighbour in Parliament when they first got elected together in 1980. And I remember my father saying that Lloyd James said to him, *I have faced some of the toughest bowlers in the world, but none so tough as the catcalls and attacks that came from the other side.* But despite that, he overcame that. And during his brief time in this Parliament, he spoke for our people, he advocated for our people and he fought for our people. We owe him a tremendous debt.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer congratulations to David and Beryl Furbert on [their newest] Mr. Chicken [restaurant], who now have five franchises. And the House would like to be associated with that. Five franchises are now in the beautiful parish of Sandys. And I think that when we look at entrepreneurship as a path to economic empowerment, we look for role models of people who want to find a way to do for self and employ our people, they are a model. And I think that they should be commended and praised.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, and I am sure not everybody in the House will want to be associated with this one, I would like to wish my wife, Bermuda’s number-one talk-show host, a happy belated 50th birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

We now recognise the Honourable Member, Ms. Atherden. You have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to send condolences to the family of the late Rene Senegas, who was the husband of Pamela. When the Member was just talking about people and how quickly they go, I spoke to Rene very recently. And all of a sudden, when you look in the paper and you see it, you think, *Gone too soon.* So, I would like to have condolences sent to his family.

I would also like to be associated with the remarks to the family of Lloyd James. But on a different way in the sense that I am obviously a Somerset supporter. And, yes, Lloyd had lots of successes. But I got to know Lloyd as a golfer.

The Speaker: A golfer, yes.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Because when Lloyd stopped playing cricket, Lloyd started to play golf. And we started to go on a couple of trips together with—you know, the men go, and the women come along. And I realised that we got to . . .

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: We got to talk about things that are happening. And you suddenly realise that sometimes you have more in common than you think. And it is good to discuss things that you have differences on.

I would like to be associated with the remarks to the family of Loretta Morton, because I met Loretta a long time ago when I knew her husband, Charles. But her daughter lived right next to me. So, I would see her coming up, and she was looking out for her granddaughter. And I think we forget that there is always what I call the circles, the six degrees of separation, that if we look at people and we talk to them, we realise that we interact with lots of people in Bermuda. So, if I can be associated with those remarks.

And last but not least, the remarks with respect to Clairann Moore. I, as Minister of Health, had opportunity to be down at Summerhaven. But also, I knew Clairann when I was actually down as the Director of Finance at the hospital. So, you know, she was one of those persons who battled on and was not going to give up. So, I am really sad to hear of her passing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

We recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Tyrrell. Honourable Member, Mr. Tyrrell.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, all.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations have already been sent to the CARIFTA team, in general. But I would certainly like to ask for congratulations to be sent to a particular athlete, Nathan Armstrong, who, whilst he was at CARIFTA, was on the podium twice in his favourite events. He got a silver and a bronze. But he has followed it up this week, because he is at school in New Jersey. And he has certainly acquitted himself in the Passaic County Outdoor Track Championships by placing in [second place twice] in his favourite events, which is the 1,600 and the 3,200 metres.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Yes, 1,600 and 3,200. No, they are 1,500 in CARIFTA. In New Jersey, it was 1,600.

The Speaker: It is US calculation.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say that when we last recessed, I had the opportunity to attend the Kappa Classic. Let me say that I am particularly mentioning it because the Kappas have actually taken over an event that was, I think, run by the Heritage Association, which was the Peewee Soccer Tournament for young kids. And Kappa have taken it over. (I am sorry. I understand.) The Kappa have taken it over over the last 20 years. And it is the premier youth soccer tournament in Bermuda. And I certainly would like for them to be congratulated, and also the winners of those respective divisions, as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Swan. Honourable Member Swan.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like a letter of congratulations sent to St. George's Mayor, Sir George Dowling, III. And I wish him very well. I associate the Honourable Member, MP Ming, and Minister Foggo, with those comments, and anybody else who would like to be associated with that, his MP, MP Scott.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with many of the condolences that have been expressed today, but Mr. Lloyd James was a very close personal friend of mine, with whom I spent a great deal of time. And I just want to say that Bermuda has lost a giant of a man in many, many avenues of Bermuda life. And maybe something will be written to formally attribute to the greatness of this man, particularly his influence on the youth of Bermuda and his style of communicating and teaching through his talents.

Mr. Chester Wilkinson, from Ferry Reach, my cousin, passed away. And he was an ambassador for tourism in his later years, a great, great family man. [He was] associated with me through our common hall connection, which we often proudly talked about. MP Ming would like to be associated with that.

And also, Ms. Claudine Wilson, from Stokes Point, has passed on. And we send condolences to her family, as well, Mr. Speaker.

And I would like to be associated with the condolences expressed to the family of the late June Swan, whose daughter, Ms. Velma Swan—I know Velma Anderson very well, out in Ferry. And her son, Gerry, taught me at Berkeley. And I know she . . . MP

Sylvan Richards did a very good job in outlining her many attributes.

I would like to be associated with the congratulations offered to the CARIFTA [athletes] and the football team, the Special Olympians, as well as the swimming team. There has been a great deal of success. Our young people have done us proud, and we need to continue to invest in them so that we can lay the groundwork for future generations, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member, MP Ming.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker and listening audience.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Renee Ming: First of all, I would like to be associated with the comments for the Horton family, the Beek family, the Simmons family, and the James family.

And I would just like to add my own comments for the family of June Swan. I know that my colleague has already done it. But I happened to know Ms. Swan very well. We were part of a breakfast club for years that met every Sunday morning for breakfast. Her daughter, Velma Anderson, which she has been for 42 years, is married to my uncle. And we enjoy the craziness that she brings, and we understand it. We understood where that craziness came from as we got to know her mom.

One of her favourite sayings to us was, *I'll see you when I look at you*. And so, I am going to leave that on that one. She always left us with that.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend a heartfelt congratulations to the new Mayor for St. George's, Mr. George Dowling. We are encouraged.

[Desk thumping]

Mrs. Renee Ming: And we look forward to working with him over the next few years.

But on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say thank you to the outgoing mayor, Quinell Francis, for her four years of service and some of the things that she did and she brought to the table for St. George's. And one of the things that stands out to me at this time is the fact that we now enjoy a public participation part at the monthly meetings. So, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the new mayor, Mr. Dowling, to see what path and what footprint he makes within our town. And I think, like I said, be encouraged.

I would also like to send congratulations to the East End Mini Yacht Club for their annual seniors tea; also to the family of the Master Pilot, "Jemmy" Darrell,

on the annual service. Also, the St. George's Community Centre for their annual kite-making event. And a big shout-out to the organisers of the Walk to Calvary. I think, Mr. Speaker, you might even want to speak to that one this time, as you were down in the East.

The Speaker: Yes. I was there.

Mrs. Renee Ming: The annual Walk to Calvary.

And I would also like to close, Mr. Speaker, on just a happy birthday greeting to everybody's favourite Nana, happy 80th birthday, and that would be my Nana, Dorothy Peniston. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak on condolences or congratulations?

Mr. Famous, are you up for that?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay. Mr. Famous.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to give some condolences to some members from Devonshire. Ms. Jeanette Moniz, Ms. Noelette Fray, Mr. Carlton James and Ms. Ru-nette Hill-Brand.

I would also like to thank and congratulate the staff of the House of Assembly for the brilliant CPA conference, a strengthening seminar, last week. It was something that is well needed.

I want to thank the staff of the Works and Engineering who have designed and now are constructing a sidewalk in the Middle Road in Devonshire for the people of Sousa Estate and the children who go to Somersfield Academy.

And lastly, as hard as it is, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Liverpool and Tottenham football club.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

And with that, I believe . . . well! Minister, you almost lost out that time.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I am not in any capacity to be jumping up and down today.

The Speaker: All right. I noticed you did not have your little wheel with you today, your scooter.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: No, no. It is parked outside in my parking spot.

The Speaker: All right.

[Laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I will not be long. I would like to be associated with the condolences to the family of Lloyd James and Leroy Simons. I think in the case of Lloyd James, before he started putting licks on us at Cup Match, he was quite a distinguished teacher.

The Speaker: Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And so, in spite of the fact that he was a St. George's player, I do not think he discriminated against those of us who supported Somerset in the classroom.

[Inaudible interjection]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Biggest in the world, we heard. Talk about exaggeration. We will have the same exaggeration at Cup Match this year, I guess, when the cup stays, goes back to Somerset.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to be somewhat associated with the congratulations to Zeeko Johnstone. He has been in Canada, along with a colleague of his, Jamar Dill, on secondment since January. And I have been sending smoke signals to the both of them that I do not appreciate the fact that I have to hear on the street, word about their exploits, that I expected to get that information direct.

The Speaker: Directly. Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And so, I sent that message again this week, having gotten news on *Bernews* that he was doing well. But I am quite pleased that both of them are excelling in this experience and will come back to Bermuda with more experience and will be certainly well positioned for their professional engineering designations.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to also be associated with the congratulations to Youth Parliament on their 34th annual awards reception that was held earlier last month. But finally, Mr. Speaker, even though the tag day for the Salvation Army was on Wednesday, I would ask that we send congratulations to the Salvation Army. And I would encourage all colleagues, if they have not made a contribution, to do so for the great work that the Salvation Army does in Bermuda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I recognise the Honourable Member Dunkley.

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

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to be associated with many of the condolences and congratulations offered here this afternoon. Obviously, to former Speaker Horton on the passing of the matriarch from the West End of the Island, to Lloyd James. I can still remember as a child, much to my angst, and yours, I am sure, as well, when he punished our bowling.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And it simply was not score and runs and doing what he had to do. It was *punishing* the bowling. I have not seen the likes of that until very recently, until Mr. Cup Match punished the bowling quite often, of the East Enders, which those Members on that side do not like to talk about.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes, yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I would like to be associated with the condolences to the Swan family on June Swan's passing; to the Moniz family. And Cole Simons would like to be associated. Ms. Moniz from down in the Devonshire/Smith's borderline area, she would always call when there was a potluck supper or something going on. So, I could be sure to get the phone call from that. And to the Philips family.

And too, very recently, this morning, to a good friend of the Opposition Leader and mine, and many other Members of this House, "Cooley" Robinson, whose father, Burnell, passed away just this morning. So, condolences to the family. And I am sure that many Members would be associated. Deputy Opposition Leader Leah Scott, Sylvan Richards and Susan Jackson—

The Speaker: The whole House. Yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —and the whole House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: On a more positive side, congratulations to Mayor Dowling on winning the election. And thank you to Quinell Francis for stepping forward.

Congratulations to Bermuda and our Gold Cup team, our CARIFTA team, to the Kappa Classic. All of these events show that Bermudians compete at the highest level. And certainly, to the Triathlon Association for a fine event just a couple of weeks ago. Even though the World Champion was not competing, it was certainly good to see such a great show be put on at the time.

Congratulations also to the organisers of the Ag Show for doing a tremendous job when we saw

reasonable weather and a great turnout for the Ag Show.

I would like to be associated with Members who congratulated the Nurse of the Year, Janice Mullings-George. And I would like to be associated with the congratulations to Mr. Chicken on opening another outlet in spite of the challenges he had in making that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure Members would like to be associated, as well, with Mr. Chaka DeSilva winning the Johnny Walker Golf Classic. His father-in-law sits in this place, so I am sure Minister Furbert would like to be associated with Chaka winning a great tournament under good competition from very strong Bermudians. And the Honourable Member Kim Swan, as a professional golfer, would like to be associated, as well.

And finally, as my three minutes come to an end, Mr. Speaker, I would like to send a congratulations to Herbie Siggins on 50 years of working at the airport, most recently with 30 years working for United Airlines. And many Members would like to be associated with that. Fifty years working in the airline industry, and I hope that he has a happy and long retirement.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Weeks, would you like to make your contribution?

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: I would like to start my remarks off on a sad note in associating the remarks for Brother Leroy Simmons. Like the Honourable Minister of Sports said, Leroy and a few of us went to school together. But I was one of a group with Leroy that went to the same nursery, elementary and high schools. So, you can imagine the depth of our friendship. And Leroy was one who fought for justice for the musicians' industry right up until the end. So, my heart goes out to his mom, his wife and the rest of his family.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to be associated with the remarks to Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Seaman on the loss of their son, who was eulogised last week. I would like to remind the House and public that this week here is actually Road and Water Safety Week.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: And there is a vigil going on right now, as we are here in the House, at City Hall, to remember all of those who have died on our roads over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to be associated with the remarks for the Teen Services award. I was there, and it is always a pleasure to see so many of our youngsters who are doing so well. Because, as we know, we get a lot of negative stuff when it comes to our youngsters. But Teen Services is one [organisation] that shows that we have a lot of talent, and we have a bright future coming from our youngsters.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also be associated with the remarks that were made for the new Mayor of St. George's, Mr. George Dowling. And I would like to associate the Premier.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Yes. And I would like to associate the Premier with that.

But as I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, I have saved my association for the remarks of the Kappa Classic for last.

[Laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate the Premier and the rest of the Alphas in the House.

[Laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Other than Cup Match, Mr. Speaker, the Kappa Classic is the biggest sporting event in Bermuda, you know. And some may argue that it is bigger than even the County games. But we have 1,200 to 1,300 youngsters every year, you know, and we are looking to expand, Mr. Speaker, to have more foreign teams next year. So, Kappa Classic is good—the dedicated brothers who put together this event every year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I believe that that brings us to a close of condolences and congratulations.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: There are none.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

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

The Speaker: There are none.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Speaker: I believe we have one Government Bill to be introduced.

Minister of Health.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

FIRST READING

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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 Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

REVISIONS TO MANDATORY PUBLIC SERVICE RETIREMENT AGE

The Speaker: We have a motion in the name of the Honourable Premier.

Mr. Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I propose to move the following motion at the next day of meeting:

WHEREAS the Government undertook in the 2018 Speech from the Throne to “revise the mandatory retirement age to take account of a longer lifespan, the necessity to add additional stability to pension funds and to promote greater choice among the working population about when one retires from full-time employment”;

AND WHEREAS the Government undertook to cause the Legislature “to discuss options for such revisions to the age of mandatory retirement from the Public Service, which will preserve the right to retire at sixty-five but permit a post holder to work beyond that age without the requirement for permission to do so”;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House support the recommendations of the Subcommittee of the Labour Advisory Committee as contained in the Report “Reviewing the Retirement Age.”

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier. That takes us to the Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: I understand that all of the Orders of the Day are being carried over.

So, Mr. Premier.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn until Friday, May 17th.

The Speaker: Are there any objections? Would anyone like to speak to that?

I recognise the Honourable Minister . . . Member Weeks. You have the floor.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am Honourable former Minister Weeks.

The Speaker: Yes.

BERMUDA’S HOMELESS

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Mr. Speaker, on a serious note, I rise to my feet this afternoon feeling compelled to address an issue that is deeply concerning to most of us.

Before the House rose in March, Mr. Speaker, a homeless man had passed away who, from what I was made to understand, suffered from pneumonia and was found collapsed in town. This homeless man, Mr. Speaker, had a name. As you know, he was a classmate of yours, he was Mr. Keith Peniston. Some knew him only from being around town. Others knew him from a time past, Mr. Speaker, as a Berkeleyite, one of those guys from down Loyal Hill, a pretty boy.

I knew him as all of those things, Mr. Speaker. But also because he was a cousin of my wife and the Clerk, and he was just somebody we knew in a different time. But, regrettably, I was off Island when he was eulogised, so I was unable to pay my respects.

Mr. Speaker, also a few months ago, another homeless man died. Most of us knew him from around town as “Sonny.” Others knew him better as Mr. Reginald “Sonny” Furbert. I did not have the pleasure of knowing him, other than what I saw on the street. But I remember seeing Sonny walking around town with items in his hand, sitting in a vacant location, trying to find shelter from the elements.

But, as I am told about Sonny, in a time past, Mr. Speaker, he went abroad to school and was an accomplished tennis player. This would indicate to me, Mr. Speaker, and to us . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: He was an accomplished tennis player—

The Speaker: Tennis player.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: —and polo, Mr. Speaker.

But I say that to say, because like the rest of us, Mr. Furbert also had his dreams and goals and aspirations in this life.

Mr. Speaker, in the daily recently someone did a story of a homeless man by the name of Mr. Patrick Henderson. Mr. Henderson and I are the same age. Mr. Henderson can often be seen trying to avoid the elements in the abandoned building outside of the abandoned building across from Victoria Park up there on the hill. The title of the story that was done by the *Gazette* really, really made me stop, Mr. Speaker. The title of the story was *A worse life than a stray dog*. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Henderson could not even remember how long he has been homeless. He estimated that he was homeless for about 15 years.

But I came to know Mr. Henderson many years ago, Mr. Speaker. We called him Patrick or Pat. When he was a medic with the mighty Dandytown Hornets way back 20 or 20-plus years ago, he was a very kind, helpful and hard-working man, who took his job as a medic for our team very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

Then, there is the story of a young man, Mr. Speaker, who not many days ago was discovered living down among the brush in St. George's where the new hotel is being built. Excavators cutting down trees in the area stumbled upon his well-put-together outdoor space built in the brush. This space had rooms that he had created out of materials he found. He had bedrooms all crafted up in the brush for himself and his children. He had a bathroom. He had a window cut into the brush where he caught fresh rainwater. And I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. This man, who was truly an architect in his own right, had been living in the brush unbeknownst to most of us. But his home now has been displaced.

These stories, Mr. Speaker, could be repeated 100 times over, as there are just that many persons who find themselves in Bermuda homeless, or just a pay cheque away from being homeless, Mr. Speaker.

Having worked at the Salvation Army for the better part of these last two years, Mr. Speaker, I got to see and hear first-hand about the struggles of a growing segment of our society. Financial Assistance is doing a commendable job, I have to say, Mr. Speaker, with the task of helping or assisting the unemployed, the underemployed, the physically challenged, our seniors and so forth.

But our challenge, Mr. Speaker, is to address the growing population of the homeless. We have heard of the poor state of our current homeless shelter presently being run by the Salvation Army. I have been there, Mr. Speaker, not just as a visitor being guided around, but as an employee having to do occasional business at the shelter. This shelter, Mr. Speaker, is long past its expiration date. There is currently work being done to remedy some of the issues of an ageing facility, and for that I commend the Minis-

ter of Public Works and our Government for trying their best to keep this facility going.

But it is time for us as a country, Mr. Speaker, to invest in a multipurpose facility that will address the changing needs of our homeless. And I say "our," Mr. Speaker, because these homeless that we speak of are ours—our family, our friends, those that we came up with—so it is not "us" and "them." We have to address what is happening to our community.

Some of those, Mr. Speaker, just need a bed. Others need much more than that. But we desperately need a multipurpose facility, Mr. Speaker, where the homeless can receive counselling, functional skills training, health care and education, for example.

But let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, that they also need somewhere for respite, a place to go during the day, because a lot of our homeless people have nowhere at all to go during the day, especially those who are homeless in and around our city.

Some of the homeless that I mentioned earlier have succumbed to the elements. And before anyone can chant or rant, this is not finger-pointing at our government, but a clarion call to both sides of this aisle in this Honourable House and our whole community at large to assist, Mr. Speaker, in addressing this issue of homelessness once and for all.

This is a bipartisan issue, Mr. Speaker. Homelessness is not a political issue, so let us not politicise it. We cannot continue to beat our collective chests talking about our standard of living in Bermuda when we have our people—largely black men—living on the streets, in doorways, in parks, in the bushes around Bermuda, Mr. Speaker. For whatever reason, they are homeless.

If we do not take care of the least among us, Mr. Speaker, then we need to hang our collective heads in shame.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to take more than us just talking about the issue or speaking to the past lives of our homeless brothers, sisters, classmates, and friends. With as much passion as I can muster I implore us all here today to come together with a spirit of true humanity and an unwavering resolve to put the plight of our homeless at the top of any agenda. We cannot put a price tag on this most critical of issues.

As was stated in the ³*Royal Gazette* by a contributor to the story about Mr. Henderson (and I quote), "For such an affluent society, we shouldn't have anybody laying out in the cold streets." And I say that is so true, Mr. Speaker.

Homelessness should keep us up at night. The plight of our brothers and sisters who are homeless should bring tears to our eyes, Mr. Speaker. The loss of their dignity and self-respect because of their homeless situation should cause us to act.

As one who has sat and talked with many a homeless man and woman, Mr. Speaker, as one

³ [*Royal Gazette* 1 May 2019](#)

whose family does not eat a meal at Christmas until we help to feed the homeless, I firmly believe, Mr. Speaker, that we will not be judged by how many degrees we have earned (although that would be admirable), we will not be judged by how much money we do or do not have in the bank (although that is nice), nor will we be judged by whether our house has a pool, Mr. Speaker, or a view, or both. I do not believe we will even be judged by how many times we come to this House, Mr. Speaker, and pontificate, elaborate, or relegate, or, at times, obfuscate. But I do believe that each of us, Mr. Speaker, will be judged by how many persons we have reached, by how many of those we have reached down and tried to bring up, even just a little bit higher.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Homelessness must be eradicated in this country, Mr. Speaker. Let us do this and address this here once and for all.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member . . . we recognise the Honourable Member Dunkley.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am sure all Members of this Honourable House listened intently and support the Honourable Member who just took his seat. And certainly it is a challenge that seems to have grown in recent years, and it is something that we need to do a great deal about.

The Honourable Member, in fact, when he was a Minister for a short period of time, delivered a statement to this Honourable House and gave timelines for this Government to move forward. And the Opposition, I am sure, would support us moving forward to deal with this challenge which is rising and look for some funds to be found in the budget to make things happen this coming year which . . . and I do not think any funding was put into the budget.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on two subjects tonight. And the first subject . . . while the Honourable Member talked about people who face significant challenges in our community, I would like to also talk about individuals who face significant challenges in our community.

WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I thank the Honourable Minister of National Security for the Statement he delivered this morning in regard to Corrections. But Mr.

Speaker, [what concerns me] is not what was in the Statement and was written in the Statement and what the Minister spoke when he read the Statement, but it is what is not in it and the questions that were answered. The questions raised certainly highlighted many more concerns about the situation, and I think to some extent show why we are in such a precarious, delicate situation.

And first, like the Minister, I want to start out by thanking the officers and the leadership of Corrections for continuing to stay to the wicket in doing everything they can to fulfil their responsibilities to those who have been incarcerated, and they have a responsibility to [accept] underneath the Prison Act.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is very concerning, upon questioning by myself and honourable colleagues, are some of the answers that we got. And I think they illustrate very clearly why we are in this significant challenge that we face at the current time. And I will highlight just a number of areas, because I would like to speak to something else in the motion to adjourn.

The first, the Honourable Minister when questioned about the Commissioner of Corrections who has been seconded to another area (and that was done some months ago under the PLP when they became the Government) [as to] whether he would be coming back, the Honourable Minister said that, *No, he would not*. Therein lies one of the small parts of the challenges that we face. When you remove the top person, the main leadership person, you leave some sort of vacuum. And this is not critical in any way of the management team there and the Acting Commissioner, but an Acting Commissioner does just that—they “act.” They fulfil it with all the responsibility that they can, but you are taking a very senior person out of the position and they have not been replaced.

So while the Acting Commissioner, as far as I know, has done a good job with what she has in her hands to deal with, you have taken the most senior person out of that position and you have not replaced him. That is a significant challenge.

And that is why we asked, Mr. Speaker, what is the budget allocation going forward, not only for replacing the Commissioner, but for dealing with many of these issues that are up there, and dealing with the negotiations that are taking place, trying to go to arbitration to deal with the conditions of services—mainly pay and the health insurance thing. And if Government has not set aside a budget for that, we are going to be operating from a very difficult position, and the Minister of Finance is not going to meet the budget surplus that he said that he would meet last year.

So it is amazing. Until these questions were asked, we did not know that the most senior person was not coming back. Did Corrections know? Did the Prison Officers Association know? Is there, or was there, a plan in place to deal with this?

Going on, Mr. Speaker, on page 2 of the Statement by the Honourable Minister it says very clearly in there that the “facility had limited hot water supply.” And when I questioned that, I was informed by the Honourable Minister that they were without hot water for nine months. Now, Mr. Speaker, in talking to the Honourable Minister when we passed out in the confines of the House of Assembly the Honourable Minister did explain that it was not for the whole nine months, that it was for periods within the nine months.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you are without hot water in any facility or any operation for more than a very short period of time—and a short period of time, to me, is a day or a couple of days—that facility would be closed.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And I hear Members on that side say no. But Mr. Speaker, if you are without hot water for days and weeks at a time, how do you ensure that the kitchen runs effectively and hygienically? How do you ensure that the laundry is done effectively? How do you ensure that the inmates . . . how do you—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —and I hear Members say *you can boil water*. Yes, we can boil water. But an operation as big as that . . . it takes a lot of pots and a lot of boiling of water, and [it is] ineffective.

How do the inmates have the hygiene that they need in that facility? Yes, they are incarcerated and you could say *a cold shower will do you good*, Mr. Speaker. But under proper conditions of incarceration they are entitled to certain things, and hot water is one of them.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: So in this period of time the inmates—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Members, Members.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —the laundry and the kitchen—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Members.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —and you know I hear Honourable Members say . . . you know, they are cat-calling. That is because—

[Gavel]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —the button is red and the red button is being pushed and we are hitting points.

It is unacceptable that hot water has been a challenge for those periods of time. And, Mr. Speaker, I know it is an old facility. I know that there are challenges within that, within maintenance, but hot water is an issue that after a couple of days it has got to be fixed . . . it has got to be fixed. And it was only upon questioning that we found that the “limited” access to hot water meant there was “no” hot water. There is a difference in wording in “limited” and “no.”

Now I go on, Mr. Speaker. On page 6 it says that there are restricted, there are restricted . . . and I will get to it, Mr. Speaker . . . there are restricted programmes and classes, and visits are restricted. The last that I checked, Mr. Speaker, the dictionary says *restricted is limited in extent, limited in number, limited in scope*. Or, it can mean *restricted in space, limited space, limited . . . confined quarters*.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand, and [when questioned] I think the Minister confirmed that no classes are taking place. That is not “limited,” Mr. Speaker, that means that nothing is happening up there. And as we work through this “work to rule” and as it goes to arbitration, if we continue to be in this position where no classes are taking place, where there are no programmes taking place, we are doing a disservice to the charges that we have under our remit. They sit in a cell. How can they be rehabilitated? How can they be helped to be reformed? How does that do anything for them when they become closer and closer to the day that they get released? But the statement says “limited” and I understand that there are no classes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to get to another point that I want to speak about. But this issue of Corrections is one of many which show that this Government is slowly, but surely, being disconnected from the people that they serve. And their logo, their mantra is *Putting Bermudians First*. Well, how can you put Bermudians first when Corrections is to a point where they are under work to rule, with no end in sight as to when that will finish, because we do not know when the arbitration is going to take place, Mr. Speaker? We do not know how long that arbitration is going to last. So the officers are being subjected to that, the inmates are being subjected to that. At the very least we know that the hot water is going to be fixed sometime in July, but do we really know that this is going to be the case, Mr. Speaker?

An Hon. Member: Yes, of course.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: So I ask the Honourable Minister, with all of his good intent to get these things done, now we need to have some good solutions as we move forward because any other facility—*any other facility*—would have been closed under that. If the Department of Health had have gone to another place [and found] they did not have hot water in the kitchen, they would have closed it down. They would have given them a couple of days to do something or they would close it down. But here we only learn when the Minister brings a Statement to the House and is questioned by the Opposition doing their job.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: We only [just] learned about it, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will have an opportunity to speak when I am finished.

ARBITRADE—RED FLAGS

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The second subject that I would like to talk about in the 10 minutes that I have left is the ongoing embarrassment of many situations this Government has put us in.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Members, Members.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —the ongoing saga, the red flags that are still raised in regard to Arbitrade.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Arbitrade became public with many unanswered questions . . . I think it was about a year ago. And those questions have continued to mount. And I have followed this matter intently from the beginning, and I have asked questions. It was a year ago—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —it was a year ago—

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I am hitting that nerve again, that hot button is on.

The Speaker: Members, Members.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: It was about a year ago when the Honourable Premier—yes, the Honourable Premier—tweeted about a meeting with Arbitrade. Shortly after that, I think it was in July, Arbitrade held a press conference in which they threw out commitments—or you could say allegations—of title, to \$10 billion in gold. That number, I think, has risen to about \$15 billion now. They threw out a commitment, or an allegation, that they would donate a million dollars to the Government, a commitment of 200 jobs to Bermuda—many unsubstantiated donations that have never taken place to this time.

Mr. Speaker, a short time later, during the Premier's Question [Time] in July, I put questions to the Honourable Premier and many of those questions remain outstanding . . . simple questions like, who did you meet with? Who are the local principals of the company? And in spite of a commitment to reply, the Honourable Premier has not.

Next, as we go on, Mr. Speaker, the Premier, as the Minister of Finance, after what he called “due diligence,” signed off on a licence for a non-Bermudian company to purchase land and buildings owned by Bermudians.

And let me be very clear, Mr. Speaker, I think all Members of Parliament are [aware] that the law allows, I think under section 4AA of the Companies Act [1981] . . . so my concern at the time was not that the licence was signed off (because it could be done under the Act), but it was twofold. I asked the Honourable Premier what due diligence was done on what I said at the time appeared to be a ghost company. And why did I say “ghost company”? Because it was all board and no employees and nothing has materialised to date.

The Honourable Premier gave some understanding of what due diligence was done, but had to come back during the Budget Debate on a Monday to give a personal explanation.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I did call it a “ghost company” (to the Honourable Member), and I can go to the—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —I can go to when I spoke on the motion to adjourn.

The Speaker: Members, Members, one conversation, and it flows this way.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, the second concern, and what is very interesting and I view as somewhat concerning, is that this company has been granted a licence to own Bermudian land, and at this point has no licence. As per recent announcements by

Government, no licence has been granted for the company to do any business in Bermuda. So we have an empty building sitting a couple of blocks from here owned by a non-Bermudian company that cannot open the doors to do any business.

So, Mr. Speaker, what happens to the land? What happens to the building, if the company is not in fact granted a licence to do business in Bermuda? Did the cart not get put in the wrong place—in front of horse when the horse should be in front of the cart?

Now, Mr. Speaker, this saga continues with embarrassment to Bermuda. This week a PATI request by a media in Bermuda highlighted a number of things. A trader, an investor in Arbitrade, [was] reaching out to the Premier with concerns. I think the public wants to know some answers. What did the Premier ask? What did the Premier reply to this trader about his concerns that this company was trading on Bermuda's reputation? Those were the concerns, Mr. Speaker.

No company should trade on our reputation until they are licensed to trade in Bermuda, until they are regulated by Bermuda and governed by our laws. They have no right, and they should not be trading on our reputation at this point in time because they do not have a footprint, other than a building that is growing weeds, Mr. Speaker.

Another story was of the lack of knowledge to KYC [Know Your Customer] and compliance that the oversight people looking at the licence had placed on them. And perhaps the most concerning thing about this (because it shows a number of different challenges, Mr. Speaker), was the PATI request which showed that the Government tried to obtain a million dollars that this company promised. A million dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, anybody with a whiff of common sense listening to the press conference last July would know that if somebody promised you a million dollars without any fundamental strength around it, you are either grasping at straws, you are gullible, or you are not fit to be put in those positions of responsibility. This company promised a million dollars without any footprint in Bermuda, without any understanding or knowledge that they could actually donate that type of money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it perhaps goes against the grain of the anti-corruption and bribery legislation that we have, so the company might be put in a difficult position here. But it gets even more concerning and alarming when a civil servant *probably* (and I am pretty sure) under the direction of a Government Minister was informed that he needs to go chase that company for the money.

Mr. Speaker, we see a blank cheque in the [newspaper] . . . that is Mickey Mouse.

An Hon. Member: You don't know that.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I think my daughters probably could have done that when they were in their graphic and arts classes in high school years ago, Mr. Speaker.

But we have a civil servant put in the difficult position of calling the company, writing the company, meeting with the company and saying, *Where's our million dollars?*

Mr. Speaker, this is wrong. This is not the way Bermuda does business. We are a sophisticated, well-regulated, and well-respected jurisdiction. We cannot have Mickey Mouse running around asking for million-dollar cheques, Mr. Speaker. And I hope the Premier or the Minister now responsible for the Cabinet Office has got to the bottom of this, because just like the fiasco with the credit cards, Mr. Speaker, the public deserves answers because Bermuda is a laughing stock. It is a laughing stock when somebody writes and says, *Please send me the million-dollar cheque.*

Those people probably laughed on the other end of the email, laughed at how gullible we are as people in Bermuda, who are going to say, *Where's my million-dollar cheque?* This is concerning, Mr. Speaker. It is very concerning. It is simply not acceptable.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier comes out and the first thing he does is criticise the Opposition Leader when he speaks (quite rightly) this week about this subject. And he says, *But you know the Opposition Leader (my words) forgets about the 80 FinTech companies that have been formed.* Well, you know what, Mr. Premier? [Claps hands in applause] Awesome! Eighty FinTech companies . . . the number has risen—40, 45, 50 . . . 80.

But Mr. Speaker, I will come back to that in a minute, the first responsibility of the Premier is to come out and get to the bottom of this nonsense and stand up for the Bermudians who elected them to serve, not to try to defend a cheque we are trying to chase, not to try to criticise the Opposition Leader. He needs to have a responsibility to the people of Bermuda who are starting to say, *Arbitrade, this is a scam.* This is not suitable for the time of Cabinet which has got a lot of promises to face. But no, he attacks the Opposition Leader rather than protect the people of Bermuda and the good reputation we worked so hard for for many years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me get back to those 80 FinTech companies in the 15 minutes that I have left. Just paying attention, I know . . . I have been around long enough to know that I have got 20 minutes next week.

Mr. Speaker, the 80 FinTech companies is positive news—very positive news. But you know what? Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Premier today should come back in his motion to adjourn and say, *You know what I also want to tell you with those 80 companies? Here is the work, here are the office buildings that are being rented, and here are how many Bermudians have obtained jobs in those indus-*

tries. That is what the people of Bermuda want to hear. That is the economic substance of what we are looking for, not that 80 companies are formed.

We know that companies are formed all over the world and they have to configure to our regulations. But what we really need is economic substance. We need to have buildings—not bought, really but buildings rented—and Bermudians hired in those industries. And I respect the training, the training helps. But I have heard about 80 companies and I am not seeing Bermudians hired. I am sure there are many work permits that have been given out, perhaps, rightly so. That is what we want to know—the economic substance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, while the Government are not keen on our oversight as the Opposition, we will never back down from standing up to these difficult subjects and holding them accountable. Arbitrade has failed to date to meet any of the promises that they have given. The Government has courted them and Bermuda is embarrassed, and it must stop.

We live in difficult times, as the Honourable Member Weeks pointed out. We have many difficult challenges to defeat. It is a difficult environment. Business and consumer confidence are at low levels. Bermuda cannot afford, under any circumstance, that our good reputation built over the years is blotted by a company and a Government which acts in haste and fails to see red flags.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Minister of National Security. Minister, you have the floor.

PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING SEMINAR

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I had the occasion last week to attend the Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar that was put on by the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association].

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne Caines: I had the opportunity to still have parliamentary responsibilities, professional responsibilities, family responsibilities, civic responsibilities, but I made it a priority to be there.

During that seminar we learned how to interact with each other, how to deal with each other appropriately. I was absolutely personally surprised at the personal and professional growth that I achieved from that seminar. I could not help but notice that one of the key themes of the seminar was how we interact with each other to get the salient points out of our arguments. But, more importantly, the ultimate aim was to keep in mind that we work for the people of Bermuda and for the betterment of the people of Bermuda.

I do know that many of us in this room had reasons and specific commitments, but certain key Members were not there.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The key [points] that we have all personally and professionally decided [to follow], as a result of those meetings, is to make sure that we have the correct interaction, to make sure that we stay professional, to make sure that we use social media and that we use the media for the betterment of the people of Bermuda.

Those specific people that were absent, who could have benefitted . . . if you look at the people that were absent, it is noteworthy, every one [that] was absent had one specific thing in common, and I will leave that with you, Mr. Speaker, from the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

WESTGATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY WORK TO RULE UPDATE

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the Department of Corrections, everything that we as a parliamentary group have to do is not to inflame a situation that has the potential to affect the lives of incarcerated men. I believe that the Department of Corrections, the Corrections Officers, have raised legitimate concerns. I support the leadership of the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Speaker, we took a painstaking effort to outline the things that were done and that have been ongoing with the Strategic Plan of the Bermuda Prisons. It is almost mischievous, if not criminal, for anyone to leave this room, to take everything positive that we said around security, around mould remediation plans, around training and development, and to leave this room and to leave the people of Bermuda with the misguided notion that our country's prison system is in trouble.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Wayne Caines: I would say, like every other relationship, there are problems and there are challenges. The problems and challenges have been highlighted. Both sides said that they want to work to fix those problems.

They sat around the table and they said, *You have said that you want to do things with security. We want to put a list of priorities in place, and we want to make sure that we agree with that list of priorities. We accept that you have done things with the CCTV, we accept that you have done things with the fencing, we accept that you have done things with the PIN telephone system. We accept that those changes have been made. We know that we cannot discuss the*

GEHI. We know that we cannot discuss the salary increase. Let's get back to the table around this. Let's agree to these terms.

And everyone has said that we realise this is critical. The prison is not in a state of anarchy. It has never been in a state of crisis. There are specific concerns that are critical around the mould in the prison and that is now a priority. We go to the water situation at the prison. It is almost incredulous that the [Member] who was the Minister at the time that was tasked with fixing these problems a year ago did not fix it and now stands up in this House—

Some Hon. Members: Yes, yes!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Yes, yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The Honourable Member is totally misleading the House.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I am not misleading this House!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I was not the Minister—

Hon. Wayne Caines: Retract it! Retract it!

[Gavel]

Hon. Wayne Caines: I am not misleading this House!

The Speaker: Minister, Minister, Minister, Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Take it back!

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The Minister said “a year ago.” I would ask him to calm down and get his facts correct. I was not the Minister one year ago, two years ago or three years ago.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Minister, I relinquished the ministerial responsibilities to Senator Baron at the time. And so if the Minister wants to criticise the OBA, that is fine; but get your timeline straight.

It is a crisis now because it is on lockdown.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Wayne Caines: First of all . . . first of all, there is not a lockdown. Second of all, even if he was not the Minister, he was the Premier of this country, and he had dominion over every aspect of the running of this country.

Some Hon. Members: That is right!

Hon. Wayne Caines: Has he forgotten his responsibility? The absolute gall!

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Talk to me, just talk to me.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Talk to me.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, under—

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

[Gavel]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Members!

Hon. Wayne Caines: —under the OBA Government it was highlighted—

The Speaker: Calm down.

Hon. Wayne Caines: —that there was a problem with the boiler. They purchased an electric boiler when they were given instruction not to purchase an electric boiler, under the leadership of Michael Dunkley.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is once again misleading the House.

Those instructions, if they are in fact correct, were between the civil servants and the people who do procurement—

Some Hon. Members: Ooh! Ooh!

[General uproar]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Oh, now . . . now we see that—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker—

[General uproar]

The Speaker: You made your point. You made your point.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Now we see that—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: You made your point.—

Hon. Wayne Caines: Now we see that—

[General uproar]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, no, I am not—

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Members, Members!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, Mr. Speaker—

[General uproar]

The Speaker: Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah! Stay in your seat! Stay in your seat.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, Mr. Speaker, because this—

An Hon. Member: Don't blame the civil servants!

[Gavel]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, Mr. Speaker, this highlights a concern. No Government Minister is allowed to go in—

Hon. Wayne Caines: Who approves the funding, Mr. Speaker? Who approves the funding, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, no Government goes in—

[Gavel]

The Speaker: I did not take a lunch because I thought we would be able to go through—

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I thought we would be able to go through without the need for a lunch.

But, Members, it is looking like your stomachs are getting a little rowdy, but you are not going to exercise it in here. If you cannot sit in here and [act] as you should, the door is right there. That goes for everyone, no matter which side you are on.

We come in here to discuss the people's business. There are going to be differences. We are going to get through those differences in an orderly manner. What we are displaying right now will not be tolerated.

You have got . . . start to wrap up your comment—

Ah, ah, ah, I am still on my feet.

Wrap up your comment and then we are going back to the Minister.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the point of order and clarification is that Ministers, while the budget is approved, every purchase does not come to their desk to be signed off on. If it does, that is micromanagement and it is wrong.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, this is the double-speak and hypocrisy that plagues that particular Member of this House. This was a major purchase of *over* the amount that must go to Cabinet and must be discussed, and that Member knows that.

Mr. Speaker, the problem with the boiler commenced under the OBA Government, under his leadership as Premier of his Government.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Labour Party Government knew that there was a problem with the boiler and at the first opportunity, going through the procurement process, has made it a priority to get a gigantic boiler on the Island. Again, it is a false narrative that will stir up strife in a very delicate matter to insinuate to the people of Bermuda that this Government does not care about its prison officers and does not care about the incarcerated men of this country, Mr. Speaker. And it is the *modus operandi* of that Member, and I say that respectfully, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we looked this year at the programmes in this prison, and we know that we have to get these programmes up and running. There were 12 inmates over the last year . . . Mr. Speaker, let me rewind real quick. There are over 50 men that are incarcerated in Bermuda for convictions of murder or serious crime of gun- and gang-related violence. The Government has put in a plan called the Violence Reduction Programme. That is a programme that . . . for a period of six months, prison inmates that are convicted of serious—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Talk to the Chair.

Hon. Wayne Caines: [Inmates] that have been convicted of significant criminal offences go through that programme. They are given tutoring, they are given mental health treatment, they are given BARC [Bermuda Assessment and Referral Centre] assessment, they work hand-in-hand with the Corrections staff. Over the last two years we have seen 12 men go through this particular training.

At the end of it we invited the press and we sent a press release, we articulated the concerns, the significant strides that they were making. The press did not publish that. The press did not publish . . . it was not put in the *Royal Gazette* this particular . . . and we sent it back again to be published because that will not sell papers—the fact that this Government ensured and made sure that these men got the necessary training that they had, made sure that they got the necessary mental health training. There are programmes that have been put in place in the prison.

We believe there is a challenge with mould in the prison. There will be a specific emphasis on making sure that prison officers have the right elements to deal with that problem.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about the HM Prison Inspectorate. That is a body that will come to Bermuda from the United Kingdom, they will look at the inners and the outers of the prison and they will give clear indications of what will take place. That was not mentioned in the rebuttal minutes ago.

We highlighted the specific plans around each and every element. The Strategic Plan for the Bermuda Corrections Service, Mr. Speaker, was written in September 2017—September 2017. This was led by the Acting Commissioner. She and her team put together key elements that will be worked on. Members of the POA were present. They are not marching and going together without a plan going forward. This is a systematic plan to get the prison staff, to get the prison officers, to get the department and keep them on track. It includes a security plan. It includes a physical plant plan. It includes a personnel plan.

The Prison Officers Association is highlighting their concerns. Their concerns will be put into a specific order. The two entities remain around the table. I do not want to leave this country, this Honourable House, feeling that the prison is on its way to collapse. The Prison system, the Department of Corrections, is not. There is impasse. The issues have been articulated, the key components are at the table, and those components are being dealt with. Do we have a timeline? We do not. But we believe that everyone at the table has the impetus.

The former Member spoke that the prison service is at work to rule and so things must be upside down. Has he forgotten the legacy he left this country in—debates at the House, protestations outside of this House, the country almost brought to its proverbial knees—as a result of his leadership?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: And he has the audacity now to challenge a Government that . . . every move [this Government is] making is to balance this country, to bring it back on track, after a hundred million dollars was spent lavishly on a boat race! When all of the money that we are now trying to redirect, after it was

misdirected under his leadership, we are now trying to fix and bring into touch, deal with the salaries, deal with the hirings . . . he now is challenging the very same people who are trying to create . . . to fix the mess that his leadership created.

An Hon. Member: But we are a bunch of Mickey Mouse, that is what he said.

The Speaker: Members, Members.

Hon. Wayne Caines: He goes back—

An Hon. Member: Mickey Mouse.

The Speaker: Member!

Hon. Wayne Caines: He goes back . . . he goes back . . . the Honourable Member retreats to his very comfortable position of knocking FinTech. It is a clear case of an ideology that, number one, he does not understand technology . . . does not understand technology.

Mr. Speaker, I would put pension on it, that he has absolutely no idea what block technology does or what it is or what it would take to set up a company of that nature in Bermuda.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Blockchain, not block. Blocks are for building a house. Blockchain.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Blockchain.

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair.

Hon. Wayne Caines: And what distributed ledger technology is.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yeah, right.

Hon. Wayne Caines: He has no idea of what it means.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken an industry that was nascent, that was in its genesis. The building blocks are in place. I, as the Minister, have seen the companies setting up in Bermuda. There are key people that are moving to Bermuda that are seeking to buy . . . to rent houses.

And now, of course, he is right. Excuse me, the Member of Parliament is right, that we now need to start highlighting these things and the Ministry is now working to collate and to highlight the jobs that are being created, the impact—the social impact—that it will have with them coming to Bermuda and working tourism, setting up businesses in Bermuda and hiring Bermudians and training and development. Of course, those are things that should come in the right order to quantify the advances that are being made in FinTech.

We can tell you that we are going in the right direction. Naysayers and purveyors of doom will not take us off our plan and our trajectory. He speaks of Arbitrade, the very—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Members.

Hon. Wayne Caines: —the very reality is that he speaks as if it is the Government that is responsible for regulating companies that come into Bermuda.

An Hon. Member: You are bragging about them.

Hon. Wayne Caines: That is the responsibility of the Bermuda Monetary Authority. So if the Bermuda Monetary Authority says that a company is not in the right order, they have not filled out the proper paperwork, and it should not come to Bermuda, have they not done their job?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Speak to me, speak to me.

Hon. Wayne Caines: We have had the opportunity to create a fund that upon the successful licensing the companies would put the money into a fund that was set aside. Could we see how long the process would take? The money has been . . . by their teams, been set aside, and when the process is completed, the money will be put into the fund. Has the process been completed? Of course the process has not been completed. So what? Should they put the money in the fund before the process is completed? You cannot have your cake and eat it too.

You are saying . . . the country has said that we want a robust vetting process. The process of being vetted is being robust. And now that the process is being robust and that every stone is being overturned, we now downcry the very same process that we are doing? We have to make up our minds. The country understands that we are seeing contractions in certain parts of the economy. Look at where we are going and understand how we are trying to push tourism, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the next few months we will see a review document that has come through by one of our leading accounting agencies that highlights some of the strides that we are making in tourism, highlights some of the opportunities that are presented in tourism.

If we continue to rise to our feet and decry the Government, decry every move that is being made, why would people want to come to a country where at

every chance you get every element is being decried, made corruptible?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Not every element, come on, man! Give me a break.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members, Members. Speak this way.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member is, once again, about the third time, misleading the House.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mister . . . Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Now, now, now, wait, wait, wait—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, I have—

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait.

Both of you sit down, okay? Both of you sit down. Everybody sit down.

Wait for me to acknowledge you first when you come up, all right? If you want to make a point of order, I am going to accept your point of order. That means the speaker needs to take his seat. Take your seat, give me your point of order.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker, I respect every decision you have ever made from that seat. He . . . that Honourable Member to rise to his feet and say *for the third time this Member is misleading this House* is improper and it is inflammatory, and I will not accept it, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Have a seat, let me . . .

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, this is at least the third time I have risen.

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: But on that specific point, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister says that “every time” we criticise the Government’s actions. We do not criticise every time. We criticise when it is appropriate with the facts.

The Speaker: Okay.

Now, I am asking you both to tone it down a bit so it does not get out of hand . . . do not get out of hand.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Simons, you can repeat that. You can repeat it.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: If not go home.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I started off on the line of the Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar. I believe that we have a responsibility to paint an accurate picture of what is going on in Bermuda with FinTech and with reference to, in these sets of circumstances, the Bermuda Department of Corrections.

It is a false narrative to tell Members of our public that the prison department is on its way to implode. It is not correct. There is a security plan in place, there is a plan of leadership in place and there is a plan for the physical plant. There are areas of concern that have been raised. There is a plan to deal with them. We believe in all of our corrections officers. We believe in their health and safety. We also have . . . I have the full confidence in the leadership of the prison. I believe we have come to a difficult period and I believe that with the proper support we can work through those issues.

We should not leave this building, go into the public media, and do things that are normally done by specific Members of Parliament to inflame and polarise this community for political gain.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.
No other Honourable Member?

The Honourable Opposition Leader, you have the floor.

PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING SEMINAR

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

I want to thank you for the seminar . . . and your team. I appreciated the fact that . . . and I have been talking in this House for some time now about the temperament in the House, and I have spoken to you personally about some of the issues that I felt that we needed to address. And so I just wanted to get that out of the way and say thank you for that opportunity. Mrs. Wolfe here, as well, and a lot of the work that you did to organise this two-day seminar that I found to be rather helpful in clarifying a lot of issues that we have had as we have moved along in this House and especially—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Sorry?

The Speaker: Let the Member talk, the Member is on his feet . . . the Member is on his feet.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: There we go.

The Speaker: The Member is on his feet.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And that just goes completely into the issue that we are having in this House. I was there the second day. I know that his car was there, but I certainly did not see him in the morning on that second day. I was there.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, what he would need to do—the Honourable Member—is worry about himself rather than everybody else before he opens up his mouth, because there is certainly enough stuff to throw around in this House. And I try to prevent from going that route, but invariably there are Members within this House who just cannot get out of their own way. They cannot get out of their own way, Mr. Speaker.

And so I recognise that, oh yes, I recognise that certainly the Honourable Member always has a lot to say. We just want to make sure that the Honourable Member gets the right bus schedule in place—

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —so that we can ensure that our people can catch the bus, Mr. Speaker.

So if he can just concentrate on that part. It has been 17 years trying to get to a schedule, Mr. Speaker, and we finally got there. We had a whole lot of fanfare around the fact that we have a schedule, we go and put a schedule in place and then we ask questions about it and we have to revert back to the—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —we have to revert back to the old schedule.

The Speaker: All right, Members, Members.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So the Honourable Member, again, needs to stick to the issue of the Ministry that he is in and fix it. That is all we want because Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda who are catching the bus were very much concerned. In fact, we had videos going around [with] people screaming—literally screaming—at the bus drivers, which was unfair to them. They did not put the schedule in place. And to have a schedule that was put in place that had to subject them to other Bermudians—Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda—screaming and

shouting at them, quite frankly, is concerning and was concerning to all of us.

And I know it was concerning to the Minister as well, which is why we reverted back to the schedule that was in place before. And hopefully we will see, as we go forward, some positive changes. But the chirping does not help the matter. He can say all he wants in this House and go back and forth it is not helping the schedule.

Which brings me to a story line. The other day I was riding down on South Shore, Mr. Speaker, on a bike, and there was a van in front of me. And as we were going by the Botanical Gardens there he put on his indicator to the right and the next few minutes later to the left, but kept going, to the left again and to the right, and I was like, *What in the world is going on with this guy? I can't understand what's happening here.* You know, and at first I was like, *Well, maybe he is lost.* And then I realised as we got down towards going past Collectors Hill towards the traffic lights he certainly was not lost because the lights just kept going on left and right. It was not until we got to the traffic light, Mr. Speaker, where I had the opportunity to slow down and to essentially stop . . . basically stop. We stopped.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We stopped. They understand what I am saying. We stopped.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yep, you continue, you continue, more coming for you.

I stopped at the traffic light and realised that I was behind the van, and it was not until I had that still moment while sitting on the bike that I realised that my indicator was on. And what the van in front of me was attempting to do was send a message to me, *Listen, you might cause an accident because your indicator light is on.*

An Hon. Member: It happens all the time.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It happens all the time. And so in this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to have that session, but yet here we are. Honourable Members cannot even slow down to listen. Slow down to even maybe just think for a moment so they can have clarity. But yet the chirping has got to go back and forth. We are not going to get anywhere. We are not going to get anywhere.

And I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that we will be the rest of the year trying to figure out how to figure out what to do with the bus schedule, what we to do about lowering the cost of living for Bermudians, what to do about the economy that is faltering in Bermuda. And no matter how much spin we put to all

of these issues, when we look at the figures, beating a dead horse, this economy is tanking.

JOB CREATION AND THE ECONOMY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And when you read in the newspaper the articles by professional services who have come and said [that] since 2008 we have lost 7,000 jobs in this country, that we need to get more people back into this Island because every work permit that is issued out, every person that comes back into the Island, whether it is a Bermudian or a work permit holder, it means a job for a Bermudian. So everyone that comes back, whether it is Bermudian, work permit or the likes, there is a job created for a Bermudian.

And so my concern—

Mr. Scott Simmons: That is not a correct statement.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is a correct statement. It is a statistic that has been in place for years.

[Gavel]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So what you need to do is go check your statistics.

[Gavel]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Speak—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: You have no reference for it at all.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Member, just direct your conversation this way. Do not turn and talk to anybody else, just speak to me, okay?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, it has no reference at all.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, the Honourable Member is misleading the House, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to help him out—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Sure, help me out.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —because he just made a statement that said for every non-Bermudian job it creates a Bermudian job. And the Honourable Member Scott Simmons told him he was wrong and that is where he went off on a little tirade.

The Honourable Member, if he is going to get up and talk statistics, should get it right. And let me help you out.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Sure, help me out.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The actual number is, for every non-Bermudian job it creates 2.1 Bermudian jobs, not 1 to 1. So if you are going to quote, let us get it right.

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

Let me just clarify what I was saying. We have had that statistic all along. I was reading a statistic that was done by John White, as he was the President, or whatever the title is that he had—

An Hon. Member: Chamber of Commerce.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —Chamber of Commerce. And he put the statistics into the paper based on the information that he had been given. And I will read it to you, Mr. Speaker.

It says, “⁴Statistically, every work permit holder—or wealthy non-Bermudian resident—creates at least one job for a Bermudian.” And that was the statistic that I was referring to.

So I understand and I appreciate the Honourable Member wanting to clarify, but it goes back to the importance of this economy and what it is that is needed in order to get us where we need to be, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to hear about the idea and the—

Mr. Scott Simmons: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, point of order, point of order.

The Speaker: Your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Scott Simmons: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Opposition Leader is misleading the House.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to his point on whether or not every single foreigner . . . every single work permit holder, irrespective of what he read just now, it is quite obvious to us all that unless there are certain segments in this community—business community—where an IB job will create, or a foreigner’s job will create a job for Bermudians, we should not leave this Honourable House with the . . . presenting

the perception that every single foreigner who comes here, every single permit holder, creates a job for a Bermudian. It is incorrect, it is not right, and that is not how it goes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will let everyone sift through exactly . . . slow down and think about what he just said and sift through that.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Just talk to me and you will be safe. Direct your comments here.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: This is wherein lies the challenge with getting the economy where it needs to be. Because we have some who have thoughts and ideas about where they think it should be, some who have thoughts and ideas about statistics and the likes. We know—as we just heard from the Honourable Minister—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Deputy?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with what Scott Simmons said, because if you bring in a dishwasher, tell me how many jobs—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Well, well, let him make his point of order.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: How can he do a point of order on what he is saying? I have not even said anything yet.

The Speaker: No, no, he was making a point of order on the comment of work permits providing jobs.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, no, he just referred to the Honourable Member and what *he* said, not what I said.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And the perception. The Honourable Member said “perception.” It is a perception.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker—

⁴ [Royal Gazette](#), 12 October 2018

The Speaker: Okay, hold on, hold on.

Your comment has to be directed at the speaker.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Right.

The Speaker: Your comment is in regard to *his* comments on work permits. You have to aim your comment there.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: That is an erroneous statement because not every work permit holder creates “X” amount of jobs for Bermudians. A dishwasher does not create any jobs for Bermuda. Now, if you are talking about somebody in a higher income bracket, that may be true, but not . . . so we cannot say that.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will probably get point of order right on through the total amount of our time, but it is incredible that I would hear from two Honourable Members that do not understand that even if it were a dishwasher who was washing dishes, he spends money in the economy! And that money . . . and the statistics have been there from the beginning of time—

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Unbelievable!

The Speaker: Members, Members!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: If you would let me finish what I have got to say, then you will hear it.

The Speaker: Members! Members, we can let the Member finish his statement and then you can make your own statement, you know.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Exactly!

The Speaker: Make your comment real brief.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that Best-in-Class research in the case suggests migration at the higher levels—professional and otherwise—can bring demonstrable benefit to a country. But they are perfectly right. At the lower occupational levels, if I can use that term, low-skilled foreign labour harms your labour market with respect to non-college educated persons in your own economy.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: That is research, global research.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Member, continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, therein lies the challenge and therein lies why the economy is tanking. Therein lies why we have gone almost a full year of retail sales declining, confidence declining, and we are continuing to struggle—

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member just said this is why the PLP Government’s economy is tanking and we just released GDP increases—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order. I did not say “PLP.”

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: You said “their” economy is tanking, which would be a reference to the PLP Government’s administration.

The Speaker: Okay. Your point is made.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The point is we just released GDP growth numbers, which means that the economy is actually growing, not tanking.

The Speaker: Continue on.

An Hon. Member: Your speech is tanking.

[Laughter]

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

We certainly agree with the Honourable Member, if we listen to the rhetoric that is going on, that this speech is tanking. I cannot even get two sentences out because, obviously, they have not been reading the numbers. You can say your GDP has increased, but I have been looking at the retail sales figures. And if we look at those figures, they continue to decline for Bermudians in jobs every single day.

There probably is not one of these Members in this House who is not bombarded with the fact that somebody is looking for a job, that somebody is looking for some way to lower their costs, and the only way that we have seen thus far for the lowering of the cost in Bermuda for our members is that we get a poster that says, well, we are lowering the cost of living for residents of Bermuda by taking diet soda from 35 per cent down to 15 per cent and tout and boast

that this is the way that the Government is lowering the cost of living. I thought the whole purpose of the soda was to get people from drinking soda in the first place! A health message! But yet we get bombarded with—

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, yes, I want to hear from you.

The Speaker: Point of order. We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you. This Honourable Member is misleading the House. And I will give him the benefit of the doubt and perhaps it is inadvertently.

The Government did raise the sugar tax, as you will know. We reduced it several months ago with respect to diet sodas, primarily as a result of a call from those persons in the industry that sold diet soda.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really—

The Speaker: Continue, Member.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I appreciate that. And that is why they took it down from their post, because I do not think the perception by the public was because of that. Can you find that poster now? They took it down. And they took it down for a reason, because it did not make any kind of sense.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No sense at all.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: None whatsoever.

The Speaker: Members, Members.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And the Honourable Member who . . . the Honourable Member gets up in this House talking about a sugar tax . . . had they listened to the people, they did not want this sugar tax of 75 per cent.

Some Hon. Members: Amen!

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Who are “they”?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Seventy-five per cent. Yes, and let us talk about who “they” are.

Mr. Speaker, they have the honour of having 25 seats in this House where the people of Bermuda voted unanimously in favour of them. But yet to this date—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, against the OBA. And to this date we have not lowered the cost for business, we have not lowered the cost for the people of Bermuda—Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda—and now, as the Honourable Member said to me earlier talking about perception, the perception is out there, *What is going on? What is happening?*

The only thing that we are hearing about is FinTech. And then when we hear from the Premier, and we hear from other Members, *We are sticking to our guns, it is the FinTech area, we are going to go ahead with this here.* Well, what about the economy?

And now you see playing outright in the newspapers where businesses are now complaining, coming right out and saying, *Listen, by doing this here they are inadvertently . . .* we are affecting other things, not understanding how everything is connected. And so the Premier gets up and he talks about, *We measure several times and then we cut once.* Well, all you have got to do is look at what we have been doing in this House. That is not the case at all! And we have to come back and then the people of Bermuda are coming back and complaining, and we have to revisit and look at things, and yet this Opposition has not said, *Listen, we’ve got one day just to do this Bill.*

Okay, in the [interest] of wanting to make sure that things get done we cooperate, we cooperate, we cooperate, and allow Bills to go through in short periods of time. And then what? We have to retract or have to go back over and listen to things.

And so the perception out there—not amongst . . . you know, they can say all they want about OBA supporters. But the perception amongst those 25 seats and the constituents in those 25 seats, because if this Government believes that we are not out there listening [and that] there are some of our members who are not connected to ground, then they are being fooled by themselves.

We are hearing that people are out there who are complaining today about the conditions and where Bermuda is today. One of the issues that Bermuda has is this: unless we start getting some things going here, which is not happening . . . it is not happening. Now we are starting to see where the tourism figures are starting to falter after almost two years of this Government. I am not blaming them, but it is starting to falter. And what that means is if that starts to falter, then jobs start to falter, just like what we see with what is going on with the locals who are in this community

who have businesses who are trying to survive out there, who are trying to get something going, who are trying to keep Bermudians employed . . . it is faltering.

And now on top of that we have international businesses who are going forward with—

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member is talking about it is the PLP Government's fault for the tourism numbers, but the tourism numbers are going down because airline fares are going up because there are taxes that have been increased on the per person ticket because of the airport deal and the way it was structured. So that is actually the OBA that is causing the tourism numbers to go down.

[Desk thumping]

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: All right. Thank you.
Continue on.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: You know what? I am so glad that the OBA exists, because every time something goes wrong, or on every issue that this Government has to deal with . . . every single issue that they have to deal with, when it comes up and they are questioned on it, the answer always is, *Oh, well, it was because of the OBA.*

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me remind them of something. We had 14 years of a PLP Government that put a whole lot in train. And they wanted four and half years for our OBA Government to fix it. They go on and on about the mould issues and all of these things, but the mould existed back then. The mould might have been grey then, but it is now black, just like we got blacklisted because of errors . . . because of errors, Mr. Speaker. And you know what?

An Hon. Member: You didn't fix it.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, we did not fix it, but you did not fix it. You did not address it in the first place. So, tit [for] tat, go back and forth. You are Government now, you have the answers to the issues that are there, and if you get on going with the business that is at hand then we would not have to be going back and forth.

They complain about the America's Cup—\$300 million dollars put into the economy. A panel comes forward and does a whole report . . . a mix of PLP supporters, OBA supporters, and no supporters at all, puts out a fair report to say that this was a good deal. But yet we still continue to cast it in a shadow of darkness. *Oh, well, it didn't do anything.* Well, I can tell you the people that I am hearing on the streets

where I come from, Pookie down in St. David's is still looking for a job and said, *You know what? During the America's Cup I got something.* And what we read in the paper today, we see the Endeavour Programme and the likes . . . we are not . . . I am not talking about white members, I am talking about black members who benefited.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Black members who benefited from the America's Cup, okay? But yet we had all kinds of music fests and all kinds of things back in the day and it did not amount to anything.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. It is all over.

So you fix the economy. Get jobs on the table because the only jobs that were created and are being created, quite frankly, are from the legacy of four and half years of the OBA where we saw positive numbers.

An Hon. Member: Amen!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What jobs have you created? And every time we ask the Premier . . . *Please, listen bye, tell us what is going on. The 80 companies, you must be able to tell us a little something about those numbers.* We get nothing back. How many work permits have been produced? Tell us something. Give Bermuda the opportunity to say something, Mr. Speaker.

And so we have . . . this is incredible—

[Timer beeps]

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Thank God.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank God.
You guys are killing this economy.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: If you don't do something, it is going to crash on your head.

The Speaker: We recognise the Minister for Transport.

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

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members, Members! Members!

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Thank you. Thank you.

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Quiet down.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Member, Member, do you want to cool down a little bit? You can take a walk. You can take a walk and cool down.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh! He is letting you know.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Just cool down. You have had your part. Let somebody else—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Do not send him home, Mr. Speaker, please do not send him home.

The Speaker: Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah! I do not need any help!

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Take your seat. No, no, no. Look, I am on my feet . . . I am on my feet. That means, if I get up again, we are going to be going home early. I have been up twice this time; I do not intend to get up a third time. If I get up a third time—*gavel sound*—that is going to happen and we are going out that door. Do you understand me?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Got it.

The Speaker: Everybody understand?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Okay. Do not let me rise a third time.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I better talk real quick.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting because the Opposition Leader started off his speech talking about the sessions we went to last week and look at the way he carried on in the end. He absolutely lost his cool, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Just, just speak to the Chair.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair. That is all, just speak to the Chair.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member cannot speak about that, I did not lose my . . .
Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay. Ah, ah!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is still standing, Mr. Speaker, he did not go to the session.

The Speaker: Take your seat.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I did not hear him acknowledge your point of order.

The Speaker: Ah, ah, ah, ah!

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I certainly did not lose my cool . . . I got a little—

The Speaker: Oh, okay. You made your point. You made your point.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I certainly got excited. If I lose my cool, believe me, they will know.

The Speaker: You made your point.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: They will know.

The Speaker: Minister, continue.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know what? I will let everybody draw their own conclusions about who was out of control and who was not. But that is that Honourable Member's Jekyll and Hyde personality—

The Speaker: Well, well, well, Minister. Minister, let us not . . . let us not go that level.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay.

The Speaker: Let us not go that level. Let us keep it on the facts.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay. All right. Here we go, Mr. Speaker, here we go.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Take your time.

JOB CREATION AND THE ECONOMY

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, the Honourable Opposition Leader, Mr. Speaker, I thought the comments he made were very, very, very rich. We have been in government now for almost two years and he had the audacity . . . the audacity to ask what jobs we have created. The same person, before he resigned, told the people of this country that he was going to create 2,000 jobs and he went on to lose 2,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So in four years he did not create 2,000. They lost 2,000. And therefore the PLP Government in 2017 had 4,000 jobs to fill.

Some Hon. Members: Yes!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And [he] has the audacity to say, *What jobs have you created?*

And then they want to knock us when we have 80 companies—over 80 companies—that have registered since we have been in Government.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

The Speaker: Take your seat. I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER *[Misleading]*

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We did not knock the 80 companies that have registered here. We were encouraged by that. What we said was, we wanted to know, how many jobs have they have created? That is not knocking. How many jobs have they created? That is a fair question.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, before the Honourable Member takes my valuable time, can you ask him to please listen? I did not . . . I did not—

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair, speak to the Chair.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I did not say anything about them “knocking.” I said we have had 80 companies . . . 80 companies. Now, when they said “don’t knock” I heard them just now—

POINT OF ORDER *[Misleading]*

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member exactly said that we were “knocking the 80 jobs”—exact words. We were “knocking the 80 companies.”

The Speaker: Minister, I am sure you can straighten that out a little. Just get your points across.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, I tell you what, Mr. Speaker, let us back up a little bit.

We heard several Members, led by the Honourable Member Dunkley, we have heard the Opposition Leader in the newspaper this week talk about some of the companies that have come to Bermuda. We have heard them cry “Wolf!” over and over and over again about FinTech companies, blockchain companies, and the rest, every time. We have heard Members on this side say over and over and over again that this is what the Bermuda Monetary Authority does. They are not going to let companies come in and register in Bermuda without doing the correct due diligence.

So why do they continue to get up and slam Members on this side of the House that have responsibility for encouraging companies, in particular, FinTech companies to Bermuda?

I did not hear any point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is—

The Speaker: You could not resist it, could you? Go ahead.

POINT OF ORDER *[Misleading]*

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The point that was being made was how does this Government allow a company which is not licensed to register to do business buy a company *[sic]* before they even get that licence?

An Hon. Member: A building.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: A building, sorry. That is not due diligence.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, before they do these things, that is what the Bermuda Monetary Authority does. They talk to these people, they vet them, they go through their process.

But Mr. Speaker, let me get on to something more important, because the Honourable Member that just took his seat (the Opposition Leader) talked about black people benefitting from the America's Cup. And he seemed to be very proud of that. But what he does not tell you is where the majority of the money went. Some of our black people benefited, yes. Some of those who might work for Burland, Conyers and Mariree, who made millions and millions of dollars. And I can assure you that the millions and millions of dollars of profit that was made, Mr. Speaker, was not by any black person. I can assure you of that.

And Mr. Speaker, while we are on that, let us not forget, when was the last time in Bermuda's history that somebody got an OBE [Order of the British Empire award] for doing a contract for government? And whilst we are at it, an untendered contract for government.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: An untendered contract for government, Mr. Speaker.

And the Honourable Member has the audacity to say, *Well, black people benefited from the America's Cup*. I would challenge that Honourable Member to bring back some information to the House where that money went and who it went to and what they—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —look like.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member, again, is misleading the House. All he has to do is read the newspaper to see what black families did benefit from that, the Endeavour Programme and the like, all the companies that were hired up there. In fact, the Honourable Minister of Public Works can go up to WEDCO and get a listing of all of the companies that were black up there that were working who gained from the America's Cup.

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, I will just repeat what I said. Let us see what the colour make-up was, the amount of money that was spent, and the colour of the people that made the most money. That is what I will say to them, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing the Honourable Member said was . . . he talked about our 14 years and his four and half years. But what he will not tell you is this. And since he wants to bring up a little history, let us not forget one very important fact. In 14 years the PLP Government amassed a debt of \$1.2 billion—in 14 years. In four and half years they doubled that. The OBA Government doubled that debt! Doubled it! Doubled it, Mr. Speaker. And you will remember . . . you will remember a former OBA Finance Minister who stood up in this House—their very first budget—and said he was going to borrow \$800 million to last three years because *I am a smart business government* (the OBA).

Well, you will remember, Mr. Speaker, that within a year they came back. It was gone, and they had to borrow another \$160 [million]. Okay?

And Mr. Speaker . . . but I will tell you what, in light of all of that, they still found money for the America's Cup.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And where did they get that money from? How were they able to find that money, Mr. Speaker?

You heard the Honourable Opposition Leader talk about buses and concentrating on the bus schedule. Well, let us talk about the bus schedule for a moment.

An Hon. Member: Oh, we want to hear about that. Show the videos.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Why, why, Mr. Speaker, why are we struggling with the buses and the bus schedule in the country? For four and half years what did they do? They found a \$100 million for a boat race but they could not find \$20 million for new buses.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And let us think about who participated in the boat race and who uses the bus system in the country.

Who do they care about? Maybe that is why we have the majority that we do today, because the people of this country saw where they put a \$100 million for a billionaires' party instead of putting it into the people of the country that needed it most.

[Inaudible interjections]

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

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They do not like to hear that, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I love to hear that.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They do not like to hear that because you know why? It is the facts. And that is why they are over there and we are over here in historic numbers. And the people of this country, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, made a decision based on their total mismanagement—gross mismanagement—of the funds of this country.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, that is not true.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It is not true?

The Honourable Member says it is not true. That is why we are here, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. Do you know why? Because they found money for their friends, but they could not find any money for the people of this country.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They could not do it, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, they found that . . . they took \$165 million of the taxpayers' money to guarantee Morgan's Point. And guess what? It was never announced in this House, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, never! We forced it out of them one day; it just slipped out . . . it slipped out. [They] never told the people of this country that they put us on the hook for \$165 million.

And guess what else they did? They conveniently forgot . . . conveniently forgot that it was in default in January [20]17 and they forgot to tell the people of the country.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So, first of all you put the taxpayers on the hook for \$165 million and do not tell them, then it goes into default and you do not tell them—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Hang on, hang on. I have not recognised you. What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This Honourable Member has said several times over and over and over that he would guarantee to the hilt all of these programmes just to get them done as a Government. He said it in his own words.

The Deputy Speaker: That is, that is . . . take your seat, take your seat.

Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Honourable Member went to that session last week and something happened with the water he was drinking.

But look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me tell you something else, all right? It is amazing, it is amazing how . . . and that is one thing I have got to give the Deputy Opposition Leader of the OBA. If she makes a statement and makes a mistake she will say, *Look, I made a mistake*, as most of us do. But I will tell you what, with the buses . . . now buses come under her remit. And you noticed that the conversations between her and myself have been fairly, fairly quiet really. Do you know why? Because we communicate.

Now what I do not understand is how the Leader of the party does not understand. He does not get it. And Mr. Deputy Speaker—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is saying how I do not get it. Can you explain why I do not get it? Explain that.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. That is not a point . . .

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, if the Honourable Member would just keep his seat for a bit he might get the answer, okay? And it is obvious he does not get it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is obvious, because he says, *Look, you need to concentrate on the bus schedule, it's been 17 years, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah*. What did they do for four and half years? Did they try anything, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I do not recall . . . I do not recall them trying to do anything. Did they buy any new buses, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: How many buses did they buy, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

I will take a point of order if they want to clarify how many buses they bought.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We bought new buses.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did they hire mechanics that were needed? You had the funded posts—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: There were.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —you had funded posts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why were they not filled? Why were the buses that we had not maintained correctly?

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is because the OBA did not feel that the people of this country were important enough. It was more important to have a boat race.

An Hon. Member: Correct!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It was more important to have a boat race.

And you know what? The Honourable Member, the Opposition Leader, Mr. Cannonier, said about four times in his little speech *this economy is tanking*. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see the same thing starting again. I am just waiting for the word “corruption” to come up, because that has not come up yet. I guess they will save that for about a year . . . a year away from the election. But they did it over and over and over when they were in Opposition in 2011, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They talked about how this economy is crashing, *it is crashing, it is crashing*. In 2008, we had a worldwide crash and it was the PLP’s fault. It was the PLP’s fault that Portugal was bankrupt, Greece was bankrupt, Dublin was bankrupt, Ireland was bankrupt . . . it is the PLP’s fault.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Why is it tanking?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You had the worst worldwide economic crash that we have ever seen or witnessed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it was the PLP’s fault. And when we had 6,000 or 7,000 people leave Bermuda, it was the PLP’s fault.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Who said that?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And then you had employment drop all around the world and countries going bankrupt, it was the PLP’s fault.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Who said that? Who said that?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You see, that is what they would have you believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And now to hear the Honourable Member . . . I mean, he is saying that the Bermuda economy is crashing, but yet Stephen Catlin opened up a \$1.8 billion company last week. The confidence that he has in this country . . . the confidence that Stephen Catlin has in this country to open up a new company . . . \$1.8 billion. But the Opposition Leader is saying the economy is crashing.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, nothing to do with it all, [he has] no confidence in Bermuda, does he? No.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It was the market, the world market.

The Deputy Speaker: Hey, hey, now, now, now, we are not going to have this here, you know. We are not going to have this here. Now, if you want to go home early you can. Thank you.

Continue, Minister.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know it is funny because their former Finance Minister, Mr. Bob Richards, always used to say *looking under the hood*—how much time have I got left, Mr. Deputy Speaker, any idea?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Four minutes.

He used to talk about looking under the hood. Well, we managed to look under the hood, too. You know, when you get things like the OBA Government, again, doing things under the cloak of darkness . . . and I will tell you something else we found. They struck a deal with a certain cruise line—\$16 million—to do some work in the Island so that they could get in a bigger boat—interest rate double what the current interest rate is. Guess what? Along with that deal, while this loan is outstanding, there will be no increases in taxes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course, all that was done so it would not hit the books. Got it. Got that. So guess what we did? Guess what we did? No, you could not . . . no increase in taxes while the loan is outstanding. If one dollar was outstanding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you could not increase the taxes. So, you know what this Government did, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We paid off that loan, saved a couple of dollars on the interest rate, and guess what else we were able to do? We were able to take up the taxes. Okay, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

We are doing some things in our ministries that are going to make a hell of a lot of difference in terms of the bottom line, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All that is going to come out soon. We are working . . . we are working . . . and guess what? Another big thing that they could not fix was education. Diallo Rabain is going to fix that. He has got a really good team, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Any by the way, when we talk about what we are doing for our people, you will remember how we gave \$300,000 to assist folks, young people, to go up to Bermuda College. We have, I think, 126 people going to graduate next week. And out of that 126, guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? About 30 per cent of those students are the ones that took advantage of the \$300,000 uplift that the PLP Government gave them!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thirty per cent of those students that are graduating received assistance from this Government.

And that is only the start, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We will get there. We will get there. It is just like the buses, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will get there, trust me! If Lord spares life, I will fix that bus schedule, I will guarantee you that. And you can put a mark under that because I know a little bit about fleet maintenance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know a little bit about fleet maintenance, okay? All right?

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to talk about the sugar tax for one moment because the Opposition Leader talked about the sugar tax and what we are doing, okay? And I think he complained about the [reduction] in the duty on diet Coke. I am a diet Coke man because I found out years ago that sugar is not good for you.

Now I will say this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now you have heard me say on the floor of this House before. To me, we should not stop that sugar tax. And everybody knows, I spoke about it that day. I think sugar tax should be taken up to like 2,000 per cent. So if somebody wants to go get a Snickers bar and that Snickers bar is \$50 they are going to say, *I ain't getting no Snickers bar*. Because you know what we do not realise, or what the Opposition Leader does not realise? Is that, guess what, he said we should have left the sugar tax alone. Go find out how many people are down at the hospital getting their legs cut off.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, point of order.

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order, Honourable Member?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never said such a thing . . . to do away with the sugar tax at all or did not ever reference to the fact that sugar is a problem for diabetes. Not just sugar, though.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue, Minister, you have 13 seconds.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thirteen. I will leave it at that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

All I am going to say . . . let me finish on this note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all right? The sugar tax should be made to go through the roof so that it discourages everybody from eating sugar and you can add chicken to that too, fried chicken too.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Chair recognises the Honourable Salvan *[sic]* Richards.

Mr. Richards, you have the floor.

BISHOP SPENCER FACILITY

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I like the way you said my name—*Salvan Richards*—that is real Bermudian.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to take a long time because we are all hungry up in this place . . . we are all hungry up in this place, and I missed my lunch. But I felt that I needed to get to my feet to lend my support to the comments that were made earlier today by the Member from constituency 16, MP Michael Weeks.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he made some very salient points in his comments that a culture is only judged by how it treats and takes care of the least of us. And we have a problem in this country, obviously, with homelessness. When I walk through the city and I see primarily black men sleeping on benches on Front Street, sleeping in bushes in our public parks . . . I saw a gentleman . . . I was driving the other day, it was like one o'clock in the afternoon, he was fast asleep on a bench. And you could tell that he was someone who was challenged with having a place to live.

And, you know, we live in a fast-paced world. We are all living our lives and taking care of our families and having different challenges and whatever we are dealing with on a day-to-day basis. And it is easy to become immune and almost blinded to the plight of our homeless people.

So when MP Weeks got to his feet earlier today, you know, he touched me with his comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I can also relate to his comments because I, too, sat in the seat where I was

meeting with the then Major of the Salvation Army about the challenges with the current homeless shelter down there on Parsons Road in North Hamilton. And we were working, when I was Minister along with my PS at the time, to come up with a solution. And this is something that predated our time when we were in Government and it continues even now.

So the question I have today is: What is being done with the Bishop Spencer building that was donated to the Salvation Army to redevelop it into a multipurpose facility for the homeless? And there have been Ministerial Statements brought to this place over the last couple of years about the development of the Bishop Spencer facility. It was not only to house people who are challenged with having a place to stay, but also it was going to have a kitchen there. I believe, there was going to be a barbershop and facilities there to aid with drug rehabilitation and teaching life skills and various other things that would help people to get back on their feet and function in society as best as they can. Mental health treatment facilities and all that was supposed to be under one roof.

Now that has gone quiet. So I would like to hear from the Government, whichever Minister would speak to this, about what is going on up there with the Bishop Spencer facility, because I do know that there were negotiations going on. And some of the negotiations were that Government would donate the building—the Bishop Spencer Building—and the Salvation Army would actually renovate the building. They were going to go on a fund-raising effort to raise monies to renovate that building.

And then Government had pledged funds for the annual operation of the facility. And, like I said, there has been radio silence on that in recent months.

So I just wanted to back up what the Honourable Member Weeks said. And, you know, he speaks from a position, as he stated. He knows social work, he knows the challenges of dealing with the homeless, and he worked at the shelter and whatnot. So I just want to lend my support that this should be a bipartisan effort. This is something that we all agree on and we are put here in this place for a reason, and taking care of our homeless is a noble one.

So I would encourage the Government, the Premier, the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of Health—let's give this, finally, the attention that it deserves and let the Bermudian people know what the plans are in this regard.

Thank you, sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Mr. Christopher Famous.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG BLACK MEN

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good afternoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Good afternoon colleagues and good afternoon Bermuda.

I am going to carry on in the vein slightly from MP Weeks and MP—not Salvan, but Sylvan—Richards. I am not going to talk about homelessness. I am going to talk about young black men who need opportunities because if they do not get the opportunities these are the same ones that become not-so-young black men who are homeless.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last time we were in the House and I got a chance to speak I spoke about a young man in my constituency who came to visit me, while we were in Parliament, looking for employment. It pained me that as his MP I could not give him a job.

So a few weeks later I was given the opportunity to introduce this young man to the Premier. I did not speak, I just said, *This is the Premier; this is Mr. So-and-So*. The young man articulated that he had several skill sets, including welding. He spoke three different languages—English, Flemish, French and Dutch. Well, Flemish and Dutch are similar, for those who do not know, so four languages. And I left. I just introduced them and I just said, *Okay, you two talk*.

An hour later the young man came out and says the Premier has set up an appointment [for] me [with] the Department of Workforce Development for next week. So said; so done. We kept in contact. He comes over and helps me out to do stuff around the community.

A week later he said to me he had an interview with Mr. Talbot, from Club Road, Harrington's Bay. Not Greg but Jibreel. Perfect Pass Welding. He also had an appointment at Workforce Development. So, again, kept following up, following up.

Last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that young man was offered a full-time apprenticeship, partially sponsored by the government. This is a young man who is 19 years old, never been in trouble, most likely will never be in trouble. He is very humble.

Yesterday I drove through Devil's Hole, Harrington Bay and I said to myself let me stop. And I saw the young man, I saw a guest worker, and I saw Mr. Greg Talbot. So I went to Mr. Talbot and I said, *Mr. Talbot, I want to thank you for giving this young man a chance*.

Do you know what he said to me? He said to me, *Famous, no, thank you guys—the Government—for making sure young men are learning a trade*. Because in his 50 years of doing that he has seen the number of young black men getting into trades go down.

Now we could talk about the Tech, why it was closed; we could talk about Robert Crawford, why it

was closed; we could talk about that forever. But we have got to stop talking and start doing.

So I challenge the Premier and all of us in this room that if we know young black men, young black women who have skills, or even if they do not have the skills, have the attitude to want to get ahead, you take some time, you take them yourself and go to Workforce Development. Do not just say, *Go see this person at Workforce Development*. They might be intimidated. You, as their MP, or whether you are their MP or not, take 5, 10, 15, 20 [minutes], an hour out of your time, and you make the appointment and you take that person there. You follow up. If they get a job, go there and make sure they are making their time. Because at the end of the day we have companies in this country which hire a Bermudian—a black Bermudian—six months later, *Oh, they did not quite work out*. That was just a ploy to say, *We gave them a chance*.

I have running battles with some of my colleagues about this issue—lack of skills meeting lack of opportunities. This Government, no matter what the Opposition says, we feel it. Do you know why? Every price that goes up in this country . . . we are not immune from those price raises. Every time somebody black loses their job, that is most likely going to affect someone in our family. We feel it. So I do not want to hear from the Opposition or some Members of the Opposition (let me be clear) about this Government is not doing enough, this Government is tanking the economy.

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

Mr. Christopher Famous: Let me go on, Mr. Speaker. Again, I want to thank you, Premier, and I want to thank, not just the Minister of Workforce Development, but the Minister of Education who put things in train. Most importantly, I want to thank the people at Workforce Development for putting this in train.

But let me move on, Mr. Speaker, because sometimes I feel like we are up here in a Game of Thrones or something . . . sometimes.

Mr. Speaker, just this morning I got a WhatsApp—

[Inaudible interjection]

JOB CREATION AND THE ECONOMY

Mr. Christopher Famous: I'm late but I am going to start.

Mr. Speaker, just this morning I got a WhatsApp from a gentleman who said, *Brother, I'm considering leaving the Island*.

So I said, *Why?*

[He said,] *I can't make it here with continuing expenses. Every time I look, the expenses are going up, every time.*

Again, let me repeat for the people of Bermuda, not one MP, not one Minister, is immune from the rising costs. It is not like we go into MarketPlace and they say, *Oh, Scott, you get 10 per cent off because you are an MP*. No, we get affected by it. Our families get affected by it. My daddy religiously goes to MarketPlace, Lindo's, and Arnold's every Wednesday. And every Wednesday he comes in shaking his head, *I don't what you byes are doing, Chris, because the prices keep going up*. He could tell me if a price had gone up \$0.10, and every week something has gone up.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? Let us go on to reducing taxes. This Government has reduced duty on staple items—vegetables, some sodas and other items. Yet, when we go in MarketPlace those prices have gone up. But do we hear anything from certain people in the OBA? No.

Mr. Speaker, last week I wrote a piece about the price of mobile data. Everybody in here uses cell phones, half the Island—more than half—uses cell phones. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that Bermuda is the third most expensive place to have data? We spend almost four times what the lowest price is in the Caribbean. Why are our data prices higher? Yet when we put things in place to lower these, we hear chirps—*Oh, the Government's not doing anything*.

I understand why people are frustrated because prices are going up. But every time we try to do something to lower prices, what happens? The greedy—I am going to repeat that, the greedy—merchants and service providers in this country just continue to raise their prices. Mortgage rates are going up. So what happens? Our landlord has got to raise the rent. And then what is going to happen? People are going to say, *Oh, my rent's going up. I've got to move to a smaller place*. Somehow it becomes the Government's fault.

Mr. Speaker, let me touch on something. We are undergoing things called health care reform. A couple of months ago a certain company declared \$20 million profit—net profit. What did we see a couple of weeks later? Oh, premiums are going up—

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Not just a little 5 per cent, not a little 10 per cent, exponentially [*sic*] . . . that is not the right word, but it is going up.

An Hon. Member: Exponentially.

Mr. Christopher Famous: And, again, what do they do? They send out a letter and say it is the Government's fault. But we hear nothing from certain people in the OBA.

Now, I understand there are some of those who care about Bermudians, but why aren't the same

[complaints] about Arbitrade put on what BF&M is doing?

Some Hon. Members: Ah!

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Why are they not raising their voice about that?

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Well, well!
Not a word about that!

Mr. Christopher Famous: Now, I am going to say this: There is a certain Member here who has declared that they have interest in insurance companies. I ain't calling no names.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: Protect the guilty.

Mr. Christopher Famous: My point, Mr. Speaker, if you care about Bermudians, if you are a shareholder, speak up! Do not make it look like it is just the PLP fighting against Bermudians. You are sitting there being silent, collectively, while we are here fighting to lower things for Bermudians.

An Hon. Member: They won't do that!

Another Hon. Member: Keep those dividends coming!

Some Hon. Members: Yes, yes!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, my point is this . . . anybody want to point of order me so I can sit down?

Mr. Speaker, may I continue?

Here is the thing, Mr. Speaker, every day . . . last week I spoke about social media. Social media is a gauge of how the people are feeling. The people are vexed right now—rightfully! This price has gone up, that price has gone up. But what is the quick thing they want to say? *Oh, it's the Government. Oh, it's tax!* Who is taxing the banks for them to raise their mortgage rates? I am going to suffer as a landlord because I am not going to raise my rent on my tenants. But my mortgage rate is going up—not because of Government. I am going to suffer because I am going to subsidise somebody's health insurance.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I am going to revert back to this young man. Like you, Mr. Speaker, I like to go out in my constituency and my people talk to

me, sometimes harshly. But the point I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is as a Government we were elected 17 months ago because we were to put Bermudians first. And in that effort to put Bermudians first, at times, the message gets lost when people see rising prices and they think, *Well, maybe they ain't putting us first.* We have to do a better job at communicating how we are doing this.

I am going to take personal responsibility. I am part of that, to help communicate that, but each one in the House has to do it as well. There is no Minister in here that can get all the message out by themselves. Whether you are Opposition or not, if you know it is a good policy [that] we are doing, speak to it.

Mr. Speaker, let me finish up here. On Game of Thrones they have a saying, *Winter's coming. Winter's coming.*

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: No, but it is relevant at the moment.

In Bermuda the saying is, *Price increases are coming, Price increases are coming.* So I am saying this to every Minister in here: Continue to educate the people about what we are trying to do to lower the prices for Bermudians. Do not get sidetracked by some people, because they are not the ones speaking up about these price increases, for some reason.

So Mr. Speaker, I say this to the people of Bermuda: Continue to hold our feet to the fire, continue to demand that prices go down. But the reality is, as long as greedy merchants continue unabated, prices are going to go up. I am going to repeat it: As long as greed is considered good in this country prices—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: It is not capitalism; it is something else. I do not want to say what the word is, it is greed—unadulterated greed. When you can tell me that on an island like St. Kitts, I could spend \$4 for a gigabyte, and here in Bermuda I have got to spend about \$12 for that same gigabyte, what is it? They are not paying import duty on data. It is not there anymore.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude here. In 2012, we had 35,443 people employed in jobs. In 2017, we had 33,653. Again, do the numbers. The same people that complained about us lost jobs. But the people do not want to hear that, Mr. Speaker. They do not. So I implore all of us not to bicker about this and that and the other, let us continue to educate the people about what is really happening in this country, because the war is not political. We will win the next election, I can guarantee that. But we will lose if the unadulterated greed in this country is allowed to continue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member Commissioning.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

SIR JOHN SWAN'S REACTIONARY RACIST COMMENTS

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, earlier we had the Leader of the Opposition come out with the old canard from the 1980s or 1990s, the comments or analysis from John White about the fact that all things with respect to immigration into Bermuda, migration into Bermuda of foreign workers, is good. We had a number of persons on this side, including the Member from constituency 5 and the Member from constituency 32, including myself, who disputed that.

Mr. Speaker, during the time when we were preparing the final report of the Joint Select Committee, in one of the earlier versions of that report I had included this bit of research here from the UK Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration, and with your indulgence I would like to convey this to the Members and the listening public.

That analysis found that empirical evidence would suggest that if immigrant workers, with respect to the native ways' distribution, are competing with low-skilled local workers, the effects can be negative when it comes to wage compression in particular. Although they found that the effects are more positive overall the further up the so-called distribution one looks as it relates to median to higher skilled workers.

Translation: Inundating a country with low-skilled, low-paid workers does not help your economy. They are directly competing against your own mostly non-college educated, low-skilled workers, who are having to endure, what I call, the race to the bottom on wages. And after 25 years since the great doubling that occurred with the globalisation, which led to a doubling of the world's workforce, Bermuda has not been immune to these effects. That is why you are hearing calls for higher wages in the US, UK, Bermuda—statutory wages, living wages—in an attempt to combat this trend.

So let's not have a one-size-fits-all on the issue of immigration. We have some more nuanced discussion that is required here.

Mr. Speaker, Harvard's Richard Freeman, for example, a professor there, wrote a book called *The Great Doubling: [The Challenge of the New Global Labor Market]*, and he focused on this. He specialises in looking at the global economy and migration trends and the like. And he said that during that time of the 1980s and 1990s, the global workforce doubled from 1.46 [billion] to 2.93 billion, coupled with the whole ethos around globalisation, the lowering of borders

and barriers (including migration and immigration), you see the result today—especially from places like Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and the like. Those who have been most impacted by that are, again, low-skilled non-college educated in these respective countries.

Mr. Speaker, I am just going to segue here to what is going to be the basis of my conversation, my discussion, today (and actually around the same topic of immigration to some degree). During Black History Month there was an infamous interview that occurred on ZBM News with Tari Trott being the host. Mr. Trott had his guests, the interviewees, Dame Jennifer Smith and Sir John Swan. The topic was Black History Month. Sir John Swan, when asked about Black History Month, basically opined that white Bermudians were not like the whites in the southern part of the US, after all. He went on to say that they did not lynch black Bermudians, for example. He said that on ZBM News during Black History Month. And if you are talking about an insult to black Bermudians, but particularly the black Bermudians of his generation, I do not think you could do much worse than that.

Sir John Swan grew up in that same neighbourhood with my family, my mother, the Talbots, that Government Gate, St. Monica's Mission, Marsh Folly neighbourhood. Even today my mother is hard core PLP, as you know. But you mention his name and a little twinkle comes to her eye because they were all little kids at 4, 5 and 6 years old running around that neighbourhood. But let us be under no illusion here on who Sir John Swan is. And he keeps reminding us, even at this late age with his tap-dancing for those who form the most reactionary and racist elements in Bermudian society.

In 1954, for example, only three years before I was born, Sir John Swan would have already been in his late teens or early 20s. Mr. Hill (I forget his name, there was an article in the paper, he was a shipwright) builds miniature ships. And it was a great article there. And you know he was tied into that whole Bailey's Bay/Eastern Counties matrix of families down there. He related that what drove him initially to wanting to become a lawyer was an event that took place, I guess, around 1954, only three years before I was born. Down in the square in St. George's a neighbour of his, a relatively young man, teenager, had stolen a bike. Do you know the authorities took him down to the square in St. George's, tied him to a stake and whipped him publicly?

I did not say 1924, Mr. Speaker, I did not say 1890—1954. That was the world where Sir John Swan grew up, a world that saw blacks probably earning \$1 for every \$4 that a similarly qualified white person would have made in this country; a world that saw a House of Assembly that may have had, at that time, no more than 7, 8 or 9 MPs even though blacks even at that period were the majority in the country.

But they didn't lynch us.

[Laughter]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: But it does not end there. Let us fast forward now to a few weeks ago. Sir John Swan, again, their go-to person, was on . . . was it ZBM News again? This time being interviewed by Toni Waterman (and I have been on her show actually) in the presence of two white *foreign* journalists—this is important—on the issue of immigration.

Now, I am going to say this, we can all have a difference here on immigration. Our Minister, Minister Caines, is grappling with that issue now, coming with a set of recommendations. And it is going to lead to a robust debate. That should be. Some will have a more liberal view on immigration, some perhaps a more conservative view of how far the country should go. That is all fair. That is what we should have in a democracy as we have.

But Sir John Swan, who clearly wants to see a more liberal immigration regime did not stop there. He then looked over and glared at Toni Waterman . . . and said, *No, we need to open up immigration* (I am paraphrasing here), *and I mean rich white people*. And the veins almost came out of his neck when he said it. I mean, he is 83 years old, but he is still doing the tap dance for the most reactionary, racist elements in Bermuda society. And I started thinking, hey, it has worked for him for 50 or 60 years. Ah! Translate that into the ability to tap into sources of patronage and capital throughout his career, by saying what racists in Bermuda wanted to hear.

Left a legacy where black Bermudians are still a minority presence both in ownership and in terms of high-level jobs within Bermuda's private sector. That is Sir John Swan's legacy, not the legacy of people like Lloyd James and people we talk about. That is who Sir John Swan is. You want to know why there is only one Patrick Tannock? Look no further than John Swan. Do you want to know why there is only one Sir John Swan? Look no further than . . .

Mr. Speaker, our Premier, thank God (I was away) heard about it, got up and told them, *Listen, we will take investment from wherever it comes*. As long as they can pass the Bermuda standard, I might add—Indian, Chinese, African. Come on, guys, Bermuda is open for business. But Sir John Swan still tap dances as if it is 1967.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a positive here and let me tell you what it is. ZBM following that . . . I mean the story had legs, right? Let us be honest about it. ZBM went and did a men-and-women-in-the-street interview. They interviewed about seven or eight or nine people—a little lengthier than usual—and at least about half of those people were white. I assume most were white residents and/or Bermudians. To their credit . . . to their credit, each one of them repudiated what Sir John Swan said—every white person they interviewed. *No, I don't think that should be a litmus test*. In other words, like our Premier said,

we should welcome investment from wherever. They repudiated Sir John Swan, and kudos to them! It may show us that there is a growing number of white Bermudians who are starting to get it and are rejecting this whole white identity politics, which has been such a feature of Bermuda in the modern era.

And also does Sir John Swan not hear the words of people like Jonathan Reiss and others within Bermuda's international business sector over the last year and a half, two years, who have said, *We need more racial inclusion?* Jonathan Reiss, to his credit, I called him and praised him behind the scenes. He and I are having an ongoing conversation around these issues. I know his sister; I know the family going back years. But I am saying Jonathan Reiss said that white supremacy is a problem. And conscious and unconscious bias is a problem. And you know who enables that problem? John Swan is not the cause of it, do not get me wrong; but he has been a powerful enabler of that status quo throughout Bermuda.

But those are the positives. And if we can keep seeing what I call these racial justice warriors in Bermuda's community come out and be prepared to speak publicly and say, *No, we are not going to affirm that type of thinking*—whether it is coming from a front man like Sir John Swan or from those who he is trying to impress—Bermuda is going to continue to be better off and we can put this issue behind us, which is what they claim they want to do. But this is how you do it.

So let us today, in this House, unequivocally, unreservedly, reject what Sir John Swan says, condemn what Sir John Swan says, and let us make that a bipartisan effort on our part.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Mr. Premier, I recognise you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be too long this afternoon—

The Speaker: Thank you very much.

BIASED MEDIA

Hon. E. David Burt: —as I think that a few of us are hungry. I know that you are, and you had a snickers bar Sylvan and that has been talked about?

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Diet soda.

Hon. E. David Burt: The diet soda? That is what you need? I had a diet Coke, so I am all right.

And Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of sound and fury today. A lot of sound and fury coming from Members who have no solutions, who have noth-

ing left but to try to attack and to try to tear down. And despite the fact that there is progress on so many fronts inside this country, they will constantly find a way and a need, aided and abetted by their friends in the media. And it is particularly interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition Leader himself who, I will say, has a history of making statements which are not necessarily aligned with fact—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, the Honourable Member, the Premier, is misleading the House. He started off by essentially saying that I was misleading the House, [but] I have not said anything today other than facts that I have in front of me.

The Speaker: Let us try and keep all comments factual.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Premier, if you got something you want to be factual about, be factual about it, but support it with the facts.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am absolutely happy to keep things factual, Mr. Speaker.

And here is what I will say, Mr. Speaker, because when I say . . . when I say . . . when I say “friends in the media,” Mr. Speaker, I am not making it up. I am not making it up at all, because today the *Royal Gazette* has given us the example of the home field advantage that they give to the One Bermuda Alliance.

And let me just make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, because on numerous occasions the Honourable Opposition Leader, who has a habit of making statements which may not exactly be in line with the facts, decided to do the same thing again today. Printed inside the *Royal Gazette* in an opinion piece called “What’s good for the goose . . .”—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: —and he went on with his opinion piece about what is good for the goose and spoke about the fact of payroll tax charges and credit cards . . . and then, of course, ended the statement with something which has already been disproven by the budget numbers, but somehow just must sound good inside of the polling which they do in their focus groups.

It says (and I quote): “One would [also] think that with an extra \$2.5 million having been allocated for its communication efforts, the Government would be able to implement a fail-safe process to approve a press release.”

Now we know, Mr. Speaker, that there is not \$2.5 million extra in communications. But that will not stop the Opposition Leader or his friends over there from saying it.

But here is where the story turns, Mr. Speaker (and Chris please bring up the website and screenshot it before they put it back, right quick—please, please, please). This is important, Mr. Speaker, when the Opposition Leader gets called out by someone who will never be called a friend of the Progressive Labour Party, Mr. Bryant Trew . . . I am going to read to exactly what Bryant Trew wrote in response to the Opposition Leader.

And the reason why I can read it for you, Mr. Speaker, is because you will not find it on the *Royal Gazette* website right now because they took it down. But I was lucky enough to still have the page on my phone to screenshot it so I can read, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what it says.

It says, from Bryant Trew: “[This opinion piece](#) is trying to mislead voters by taking the Minister of Finance’s statement out of context. It is extremely disappointing to see the OBA resort to the same disinformation attacks the PLP used on them. If you are going to resort to the same dishonest tactics, you will not gain any support from independent thinkers/voters. From the budget statement: ‘Tax Collection and Accounts Receivable’” and it goes on, Mr. Speaker, to basically say exactly what was in the Budget Statement.

But guess what? It is no longer on the website, Mr. Speaker. It has now been replaced with a comment attacking the PLP. So when I say “their friends in the media,” there it is for you in black and white . . . plain and simple, Mr. Speaker.

So, now I am going to go back to my comments because when we speak about bias from the daily newspaper, everyone who is listening now sees the bias from the daily newspaper, when someone who is no fan of the Government has the temerity to attack them, the comment gets deleted. And now there are comments attacking the Government. Shock and surprise—not for me, Mr. Speaker.

Because here we go again, and the one thing that I want to say, Mr. Speaker, as I have said on numerous occasions, is what we have here is the past versus the future. And it is important to recognise the difference between the past versus the future because people who speak about the past are stuck in the past. And not only are they stuck in the past, but they have old ideas. The old ideas, Mr. Speaker, play themselves out when we have individuals who will sit here and defend the status quo at all cost.

Now here is the thing, Mr. Speaker, I do not blame them! Because if I was defending my pockets, I would defend it too. If I was a shareholder of an insurance company that is pocketing money off of Government, I would defend it too. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? I am not. So I am standing up for the people of this country.

Now when we talk about the past versus . . . I hear the noise now, Mr. Speaker, because they are getting nervous. They are getting nervous, because when we talk about the future, Mr. Speaker, it is very, very, very important—very important—to put in context what is going on in the world. The world is changing. And this year I was fortunate enough to be invited to attend the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, something which was an invitation which I certainly [accepted], and something without question that was beneficial.

But Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me, I want to read from the World Economic Forum's manifesto this year. And it says that governments have three basic options when confronted with the challenges of the world faced by the fourth industrial revolution—three options.

The first option which they have is to protect those who have been left behind from the transformative changes brought by the fourth industrial revolution [41R], thereby gaining short-term political advantage, but ultimately setting the stage for erosion of competitiveness.

Item number two, which I am going to call the One Bermuda Alliance approach, follow a *laissez-faire* policy which requires the business community to be ready and able to serve as a strong catalyst and mover. Mr. Speaker, the business community in this country will protect *their* interests, not the peoples' interests.

The third is mobilise all forces to fully embrace the fourth industrial revolution and achieve a leadership position, recognising that the principle of the future global economy will no longer reflect Adam Smith's division of comparative advantages, but rather a world characterised by a complex interplay between platforms and systems that cross national boundaries.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a mouthful. But let me make clear what it says, Mr. Speaker. The world is changing. Boundaries are falling. We have to think differently. This Government will make absolutely no apologies for measuring, for understanding, but acting with deliberate intention to change the status and structure of this economy.

When we talk about health care, Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognise that from the Government Health Insurance Programme (which is the administered standard hospital benefit) and the money which is going to insurance companies over the last five years, Mr. Speaker, \$80 million of that benefit has gone to administration, bonuses and profits and not

towards health care. Let me say that number again—\$80 million.

An Hon. Member: Wow!

Hon. E. David Burt: Eight-zero. I want to make sure you got that.

So Mr. Speaker, when we talk about making health insurance more fair, what do we get from the Opposition? Opposition—simple.

They talk about costs of living inside of the country. That is what they speak about, Mr. Speaker. They will not tell anyone that they raised energy taxes to the highest level ever, but yet they will then talk about it. They will not say anything when the Government proposes to put in place programmes that will cut peoples' mortgage rates. What do they do? What do we get from the Opposition? Opposition.

The question is, Mr. Speaker, who are they protecting? They, Mr. Speaker, are protecting the status quo. It is what they do. It is their *modus operandi* and, as everyone can see, they are easily aided and abetted by the media. And I have now today proven the fact that they are aided and abetted by the media.

So now, Mr. Speaker—

An Hon. Member: What is number four?

Hon. E. David Burt: Now, Mr. Speaker—

An Hon. Member: You said four.

Hon. E. David Burt: Three options, but thank you.

But here is the thing, Mr. Speaker, and this is what is important, because when we talk about transformational change, making sure that systems are fair, making sure that money is going to be put to work, I want to put the people of this country on notice, Mr. Speaker, that despite the sound and fury from the Opposition, we will not be deterred. The people of this country voted for a fairer and better Bermuda and this is going to require deliberate action on behalf of them tackling the status quo.

Understand, Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Member from constituency 11 said, it is our responsibility to tell the people of the country the destination and it is our responsibility to tell the people of this country that this change will not be easy. When you are going after peoples' vested interests which they believe is their divine right to have, they will fight to the death to protect it.

But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, this Progressive Labour Party Government will not bow, we will not cower, and we will press on. Because there is something that I say in every single Cabinet meeting and every single caucus meeting, Mr. Speaker, and it is very simple—if we say we cannot change it, then there is no reason for us to be here. We have the power to make the fundamental changes. So when we

begin to take on the banks and when we begin to take on the insurers and when we begin to take on the grocers—the forces which are making prices high in this country, forcing persons to struggle—we are going to be on the side of the people, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. E. David Burt: There is potential inside of the community here and in the next few months—starting now with health insurance—moving on to banking and then touching other matters, Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide economic opportunity by doing what? And I am not going to say it in a fashion that might upset persons, I am going to say it right here. Inside of this country, Mr. Speaker, every single person, just like every single person who is working is forced to pay health insurance, which goes to health insurers, and they are able to take \$80 million over the next five years, every single person in this country is also forced to pay for other things and they are called pensions. And guess where all that pension money sits, Mr. Speaker, Colonial, BF&M, Argus, [and] other places. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? When we said the Bermuda Fund we are going to create a fund in this country that is going to provide access to capital for people who did not have it.

And let me say this, Mr. Speaker, these are the types of things that will happen. And so I serve it as an advance notice that just like how we are hearing the squealing on insurance, we will hear the squealing on insurance then. Our job is not to have money that is forced to pad peoples' profits. Our job is to make sure that money is set to transform this economy, Mr. Speaker. We will make things more efficient, we will get rid of old rules, and we will continue to make things better. This is just the start.

And the final thing which I will say, Mr. Speaker, is that I encourage every single person in this country to continue to speak up. Continue to express your thoughts; continue to express your opinions. Take the opportunity to engage with myself when I have my monthly Lunch and Learn. Take the opportunity to meet with us on the doorstep and express your opinion. And we will go ahead and share the message as well, because there is one thing for sure, Mr. Speaker, if you are relying on the *Royal Gazette* to get the truth . . . just like today, they will cover up anything that gets in the way of their preferred Government being in a good light.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Members.

We stand and we will return next week Friday, the 17th of May at 10:00 am.

Have yourselves a good week. Remember some of the topics of how we should conduct our-

elves and I look forward to seeing that exercised here in these Chambers.

Have a good weekend, Members.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: One thing for all our female Members, I should be wishing you a Happy Mother's Day on behalf of the House. Happy Mother's Day! Enjoy your Mother's Day.

[At 3:19 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 17 May 2019.]

[This page intentionally left blank.]

BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****17 MAY 2019****10:04 AM***Sitting Number 20 of the 2018/19 Session**[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Mrs. Shernette Wolffe, Clerk]***The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.*[Gavel]***CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES***[Minutes of 10 May 2019]***The Speaker:** Members, the Minutes of May 10th have been circulated. Are there any omissions, adjustments or corrections?

There are none. The Minutes are confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 10 May 2019 confirmed]***MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR****The Speaker:** There are none.**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING****APOLOGIES****The Speaker:** Yes, the announcement this morning is that there are two Members who have indicated that they will be absent today. The first is the Minister of Education, Minister Rabain; and the Deputy Opposition Leader, MP Leah Scott.**MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE****The Speaker:** There are none.**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE****The Speaker:** There are five papers or communications on the Order Paper this morning. The first is in the name of the Premier.

[Mr. Premier], would you like to present your paper?

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you.**The Speaker:** Good morning.**GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGIC PLAN****Hon. E. David Burt:** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the [Government Reform Strategic Plan](#).**The Speaker:** Thank you.

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

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.**The Speaker:** Good morning.**TAXES MANAGEMENT (LARGE SHIP
INFRASTRUCTURE TAX PRESCRIBED FORMS)
REGULATIONS 2019****BERMUDA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION
2017 ANNUAL REPORT****BERMUDA PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD
2018 ANNUAL REPORT****Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson:** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the following:

- [Taxes Management \(Large Ship Infrastructure Tax Prescribed Forms\) Regulations 2019](#);
- [Bermuda Deposit Insurance Corporation 2017 Annual Report](#); and
- [Bermuda Public Accountability Board 2018 Annual Report](#).

The Speaker: Yes. Thank you.

The next paper is in the name of the Minister of Transport. Minister De Silva.

2019 TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER REPORT**Hon. Zane. J. S. De Silva:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the [2019 Transport Green Paper](#) report.

The Speaker: Thank you.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND JUNIOR MINISTERS

The Speaker: On the Order Paper this morning, Members, there are seven Statements by Ministers and Junior Ministers. But I am going to seek your indulgence that there are eight. One will come after the seventh, and it is in reference to the blacklisting. And I think it will be news that is worthy to put on at the last minute. So, we will have that at the end.

The first Statement this morning is that in the name of the Premier.

Premier.

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

Copies are being distributed now.

CABINET COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, Bermuda's Cabinet-style government allows for the establishment of Cabinet committees. A Cabinet committee is designed to provide a greater focus on specific issues separate and apart from the more general agenda of the full Cabinet. Successive governments have established committees to deal with issues of economic development, cybersecurity, hotel development and, more recently, matters surrounding anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise this Honourable House and the public that this Government has formed a [Cabinet Committee on Social Development](#).

Mr. Speaker, in our 2017 General Election Platform, the Progressive Labour Party set out an agenda that, at its core, promised to provide leadership on the social issues that demand attention in Bermuda. We promised (i) to introduce equality impact assessments as a component of [the] legislative and policy development process to ensure that current and future laws or policies do not expand or encourage discrimination. (ii) We promised to reduce the need for long-term social assistance by focusing on prevention, and empower people by investing resources as early as possible at critical stages of individuals' lives. (iii) We promised to implement perfor-

mance benchmarks and accountability measures to ensure that the Government's programmes and policies are responsive to the needs of our community and evaluate the effectiveness of social investment strategies using performance data. And (iv) we promised to evaluate approaches to best support family-first policies for families with children in lower-income households to break the cycle of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, by any measurement, that is an ambitious agenda which will take time to accomplish. However, I am pleased to advise this Honourable House and the public that the work has long started and is ongoing. The lens through which we view all of our policy and legislative implementation is one that magnifies the social impact as a priority.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee's first meeting was in February, and an equally ambitious set of issues was tackled. In keeping with our Throne Speech promises, the Committee addressed matters around the living wage, the extension of paid maternity leave, revisions to the mandatory retirement age, the adoption of the charter of rights and responsibilities for seniors and the unified family court and mediation centre.

Mr. Speaker, from that list of items, Honourable Members will note the progress made. (i) Public meetings on the living wage have now been completed, and legislation will soon follow. (ii) The Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports, is addressing the extension of paid maternity leave in a consultative process. And the Seniors' Charter is being modified for Bermuda and will shortly be provided for this Honourable House to take note. (iii) The revisions to the mandatory retirement age are now on the Order Paper for debate in this House. And (iv) the unified family court and mediation centre will be further updated in the coming months, with current efforts focused on structuring the mediation framework.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to highlight one issue that was addressed by the Committee in that first meeting. Honourable Members will be aware of the reputational damage that can be done to young people whose youthful indiscretions land them before the courts and, therefore, in the media. The Committee considered the case of a young man, aged 17, whose involvement in a drug offence saw his name reported in print, and who, like so many young men over the years, faces the prospect of limited employment opportunities and restrictions on his travel, all for something that he has done before even reaching the age of majority.

Mr. Speaker, to ensure that young men in particular are not so damaged before their lives have even started, I can advise this Honourable House that the Ministry of Legal Affairs is working on a policy that will prevent the publication of the names of minors in the media when they appear in the criminal courts, certainly before sentence, and in only limited circumstances after sentencing. Mr. Speaker, our young

people cannot be condemned so early in life; we must give them every chance to succeed and move beyond the early mistakes they make.

Mr. Speaker, since that initial meeting, the Committee has twice met and convened and devoted one meeting to determining strategies around providing services required to assist those students in our education system who are not well-suited to the classroom setting and whose behaviour prevents teaching and learning for them and their fellow students. Mr. Speaker, we have identified the resource needs and the requirement for better information-sharing between those departments that touch the affected children, and the Cabinet will shortly consider a paper to address this critical area that impacts the safety and educational well-being of staff and students.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee most recently met last month and addressed the issue of affordable housing. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Public Works identified early the need for more accurate data around housing issues. The recently completed housing survey which ended in April will provide a clearer picture of housing issues and better inform how we tackle this problem on behalf of the people of Bermuda. The Minister has informed me that almost 1,000 responses have been received.

Mr. Speaker, more than affordability in housing the Minister of Public Works is encouraging us to think in terms of adequacy of housing. This focus is important because some of the social issues that we encounter are caused or exacerbated by inadequate housing, which in some cases forces on families living arrangements that are not suitable and become conducive to anti-social behaviour or even criminal conduct.

With this in mind, Mr. Speaker, affordable and adequate housing is a priority of this Government. And after a period of 10 years in which there has been no construction of units for addition to the Bermuda Housing Corporation stock, we will roll out projects that meet the demand identified by the community and informed by the housing survey to which I referred earlier.

Mr. Speaker, no discussion on housing can be complete without some reference to homelessness. Honourable Members will have heard the comments from the Honourable Member for constituency 16 last week in this House, which shone a light on the issue of homelessness. Mr. Speaker, as Honourable Members will know, there are various permutations to the issue of homelessness, and the condition of being on the streets is more often a symptom of wider issues that need to be addressed. It is important to note that the Bermuda Housing Corporation does not have a centrally located rooming house, and discussions are underway to determine if the Bishop Spencer site lends itself to this purpose.

The aim, Mr. Speaker, will be to provide more than just housing, but to also provide for functional

skills training and work opportunities that will assist in returning our fellow citizens to the dignity of work and quality of life. Concurrently, Mr. Speaker, I have asked the technical officers of the Cabinet Committee to separately identify a means to address the lack of aftercare provided to young people who “age out” of the system of care. I have received heartfelt pleas from family members who simply cannot, in spite of their best efforts, provide the care needed for these mostly young men. The result is that their conduct can land them on the streets and eventually in the courts, often leading to incarceration.

Mr. Speaker, we must interrupt a system that criminalises the mentally challenged or those simply in need of alternative assistance in living.

Mr. Speaker, this overview represents just the highlights of the work of the Committee and the Government as [a] whole in addressing head-on the social challenges in this community. Mr. Speaker, as we stated in 2018’s Throne Speech, while we grow and diversify this economy, we must devote equal attention to lifting people up; strengthening our communities and tackling the social issues that can prevent Bermudians from benefitting from the economic success we are determined to achieve.

Mr. Speaker, this Government will use the considerable mandate received from the people of Bermuda to promote a system of greater fairness and equity, where the potential of Bermudians is limited only by their individual determination to succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

The second Statement this morning is from

...

[Pause]

Hon. E. David Burt: Should I just go ahead, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Oh—yes, yes, yes, yes!

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: Sorry.

The Speaker: I was just going to announce it. But go ahead unless you want to do something different.

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

The Speaker: Continue, Premier.

CONSULTANTS AND ADVISORS—A REVISED CONSTRUCT

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my second Statement is on

[Amendments to the Premier and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act.](#)

Mr. Speaker, in a Statement to this Honourable House on the 11th of March 2019, I advised Honourable Members of this Government's intention to advance amendments to the Premier and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 1983 to start the process of building capacity within ministries by developing a private office function. Honourable Members will recall my reference to the recommendations of the SAGE Commission and the 2011 Civil Service Review, which recommended the creation of a ministerial private office to "relieve Permanent Secretaries of the day-to-day tasks associated with Ministers' needs."

Mr. Speaker, I am therefore pleased to advise this Honourable House and the public that I will today introduce the promised amendments to the Act, and reflecting the change we have made, the Act will now be known as the Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019.

Mr. Speaker, in an era when phrases like "openness and transparency" are used more as weapons than a genuine encouragement of best practice, this Government has determined to demystify the appointments and terms of service of those men and women who bring to bear their talent and expertise in support of Ministers and their policy objectives. The Act will see an end to the *gotcha* nature of ministerial appointments by requiring the annual publication of all such appointments, with details of remuneration to be tabled in this Honourable House. By codifying these appointments in terms that mirror the Ministerial Code of Conduct, this Government is providing the initiative required to move our political discourse beyond the small politics that so often distract us from the very important issues of true significance to the people of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda is a complex society with a delicate economy, and is facing equally complex issues around economic diversification, social change and building a fairer society. We must ensure that Ministers of this and future governments can call upon the expertise and support required to properly discharge their responsibilities as demanded by the modern era of public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Would you like to do your third Statement, Mr. Premier?

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

The Speaker: Well, stay on your feet. Do not sit down.

[Laughter]

TABLING OF GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGIC PLAN

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will now move on to my final Statement this morning, which is entitled the Tabling of the [Government Reform Strategic Plan](#).

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to remind this Honourable House that a plan for government reform has been finalised and implementation has commenced. Mr. Speaker, on March 1st I informed Honourable Members in this Honourable Chamber that the Government Reform Plan had been completed. On that day, I committed to table the plan following the next phase of consultation with our union partners. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to table for the consideration of this Honourable House a document that sets out this Government's strategic intent for government reform.

Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet Office has developed a strategic planning framework that will be used to move the initiative forward. This planning framework serves as the starting point towards the building of a comprehensive roadmap to realise government reform. The plan highlights the current state and anticipates a future state towards a vision of "a future-forward Government for the people of Bermuda" with the purpose of "enhancing the lives of the people of Bermuda."

Mr. Speaker, given the complexity of this initiative and all of its moving parts, it is imperative that the implementation is well-structured and well-planned. Thus, a programme management approach is being utilised to execute the multi-year implementation to move government from the current state towards the desired future state. What this means is that the Government will ensure coordinated management of all of the individual projects and the related change management activities to achieve beneficial change within the public service.

Mr. Speaker, five project management teams, comprising several technical officers, have been determined, and the Management Consulting Services [MCS] section will function as the Programme Management Office [PMO], as well as project managers on each project team. Union partners have also been invited to assist with various initiatives. Project teams will be supported by technical officers from all levels within the service. These officers will complete the various tasks associated with delivery of each of the projects. Some of the officers will be experts in the specific areas, and others will be provided training and growth opportunities or simply have an interest in participating in the change initiative. The opportunities to participate on the various teams are many, and we look forward to more public officers getting involved as the projects are rolled out.

Mr. Speaker, a comprehensive communications plan is being developed to ensure that all stake-

holders are aware of and understand the implementation plans, and regular updates will be issued. Some of the project teams have already commenced work on a number of initiatives in accordance with the identified priorities.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that all of the work is important, our priorities are the information and technology components, as well as the people components, of the plan. To be clear, the people component of the plan is all about continuing to support the growth and development of talented public officers, empowering these officers through effective talent management, training and implementation of accountability processes and systems.

Mr. Speaker, the plan incorporates and seeks to build on some of the work that was already in progress that is consistent with our vision and purpose for the public service. For instance, in our election manifesto, this Government committed to review the SAGE recommendations as a part of its efforts to reform the public service. Recommendations contained in the first section of the report entitled Performance: The Critical Paradigm Shift, which seeks to strengthen leadership and address performance gaps, are of particular importance to this Government. I am therefore pleased to report that at least 75 per cent or more of these recommendations have either already been implemented or are a work in progress.

Mr. Speaker, specifically, under this administration, the hierarchy of the civil service has been restructured in accordance with the recommendations, and as a consequence, some of the recommendations peculiar to the functioning of the civil service executive have been implemented; the recommendations regarding government employees' capacity for implementing change have been implemented, including the monitoring and accountability for MCS recommendations at the Ministerial and PS level and an accountability structure for monitoring and implementation of internal audit recommendations; also, amongst others, work is in progress to implement the recommendations specific to succession planning and talent management, as well as those recommendations specific to performance management and accountability.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has assessed employee readiness for change and identified obstacles, such as being an overly bureaucratic environment with a weak execution model, and deliberately put in place the building blocks to enable the service to move towards a shared vision and purpose.

Mr. Speaker, steps to ensure the integration of the vision into the public administration workstream will commence with a planned workshop for civil service executives and heads of department, scheduled for June 20th. During this workshop, all senior officers will be engaged in a process to align each Ministry and department mission with the vision. A subsequent series of workshops will address the establishment of

key performance indicators and/or performance measures. The output from these workshops will coincide with the preparation of budgets and will be incorporated into the budget output for the next budget cycle.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has embarked upon an ambitious workplan towards Government Reform. Innovation and technology will underpin change as the Government works to achieve 100 per cent paperless processing by 2023. Ultimately, the public service will be the employer of choice, where talented individuals are rewarded fairly and valued over the long term for their contributions to enhance the lives of the people of Bermuda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

The next Statement this morning is in the name of the Minister of National Security.

Minister, would you like to put your Statement?

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

GANG PREVENTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, this morning I would like to highlight and acknowledge the important work of the National Security Ministry's Gang Violence Reduction Team's primary prevention initiative, called the Elliot Kings Group. Mr. Speaker, the Gang Violence Reduction Team has been working hard in our public schools since September 2018. The team has strategically partnered with the Ministry of Education, the Bermuda Police Service, the Department of Child and Family Services, Court Services, various school administrators, student services and community organisations to provide various support services for at-risk students and deliver prevention programs targeted to specific-year groups.

Mr. Speaker, the Elliot Kings Group is a targeted primary prevention initiative delivered by the Gang Violence Reduction Team in conjunction with the Elliot Primary School administration and the Living Legends Community Organisation. The initiative's specialised curriculum includes 14 experiential based sessions, which are delivered to targeted students in Primary 5 and 6. Sessions focus on self-esteem, positive relationship-building skills, teamwork and building resilience. The initiative was designed to reduce risk factors, enhance protective factors, increase academic motivation and increase developmental factors in the young people participating.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the opportunity to watch the 14 young men at their completion ceremony. The young men gave testimonials on how the group impacted them and why it was important for them to participate. I learned that, for the majority of

the young people participating, this group has been a safe place where they can speak freely about their challenges, fears and their triumphs. It is also a space where they can be themselves, ask questions. They can be pushed to try new things and step outside of their comfort zones.

Mr. Speaker, the Elliot Primary Principal, Kimberly Creighton, spoke yesterday about the changes the school had seen in the young men participating in the programme. She reported that the young men were fully engaged and looked forward to each session. Principal Creighton reflected positively on the changes the classroom teachers and counsellors had seen within the young men. The principal said that she was proud to announce that there was a major decrease in discipline referrals and an increase in participation for the young men involved in the programme.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all 14 of these courageous young men for their hard work, dedication and commitment to this programme: Master Daezi Harvey, Master Zion Smith-Codrington, Master Kyrah Richardson, Master Josiah Smith, Master Danari York, Master Gregory Talbot, Master Mason Whitehead, Master Jyaire Swan, Master River Curtis, Master Zaidon Smith-Codrington, Master J’Kiah Minors, Master Yacol Simons, Master Qash Lambert, and Master Zianni Trimm. I would also like to highlight the special award winners: Mr. Jyaire Swan and Mr. River Curtis, the recipients of the Most Improved Award; Mr. Gregory Talbot, the recipient of the Alchemy Fitness Comfort Zone Award; and Mr. Kyah Richardson, the recipient of the Overall Leadership Award. Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally thank the Elliot Primary Principal, Kimberly Creighton, and the teaching staff for their support of the students throughout the initiative.

I would like to thank Mr. Darren Woods, Youth Outreach and Prevention Manger of the Gang Violence Reduction Programme; Mr. Ian Coke, Founder of the Living Legends Community Organisation; and Mr. Don Vickers, Behavioural Therapist at Elliot Primary School, for designing, coordinating and delivering this amazing initiative. Their involvement and leadership are inspiring, and the impact will be seen for years to come on the students, as it is immeasurable.

Mr. Speaker, the [Primary School Prevention Initiative](#) is one of the programmes that the National Security Ministry’s Gang Violence Reduction Team has within its arsenal. This programme will be delivered in two additional targeted primary schools next year. I am looking forward to seeing equally uplifting results in the young men selected for next year’s initiative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I believe there is a second Statement on the Order Paper in your name.

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

IMMIGRATION REFORM UPDATE

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update the Honourable House with an update of the proposed changes to the [work permit policies](#), which begins with assessing jobs currently listed in the closed, restricted, special and open job categories. This Government recognises the importance of including every member of our community in the decision-making process. To that end, we have been asking the members of our community for their feedback on the proposed changes.

In the Government’s Speech from the Throne, we pledged to make immigration laws better reflect our mandate of putting Bermudians first. This includes ensuring that Bermudians can secure employment in their own country. To achieve this objective, Mr. Speaker, I tasked the Department of Immigration with making improvements to our work permit policies to strike the right balance between the legitimate expectations of Bermudians and the legitimate labour needs of businesses.

With that in mind, the positions currently found in the closed category, for which work permit applications are not permitted, Mr. Speaker, are airline ground agent, retail floor supervisor, general labourer, office receptionist, painter, salesperson, tourist retail salesperson, taxi driver, wallpaper technician, grocery packer, cashier and courier. Tennis professionals and golf professionals, along with pot washers and . . .

Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct that. Tennis professionals are not on the list; neither are golf professionals. Those, at this time, need to be taken off, Mr. Speaker. I stand corrected.

An Hon. Member: They should be. I declare my interest.

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, in the restricted category, work permit applications for these jobs will be carefully considered and may not result in approval for work permits. In addition, jobs in the category must be referred to the Department of Workforce Development so that suitable qualified Bermudians who are registered can be referred to employers. It is expected that any referrals to employers will be seriously considered for employment for the relevant job. The positions currently found in the restricted category are bank teller, general customer-facing bartender, carpet installer, commercial cleaner, entertainer/musician,

fisherman, photographer, technical salesperson, travel agent/consultant, general carpenter, administrative assistant, room attendant, kitchen porter, dish/pot washer/kitchen assistants (or roles similar thereto), landscape gardener (entry level) and general mason.

Mr. Speaker, in contrast to the closed and restricted categories, work permit applications in the special category are positions which may include child caregiver, beauty salon or spa and hairdressing staff, family support, fine artist, graduate trainees, hospital nurse and physician, hospitality—seasonal work permit holders, interns, live-in domestic employees [private home], locum pharmacist and shared pharmacists, occasional work permit—model and casual or part-time employment, musician or entertainer, music school teacher, photographer, restaurant staff, self-employed persons and part owners of a Bermuda business, or categories of jobs identified by the Minister where there are large numbers of work permits.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, positions not listed in the closed, restricted or special categories are considered open category jobs and work permit applications may be applied for. It is hoped that changes made will assist with skills enhancement, employment, and training and development opportunities for Bermudians who may be unemployed or underemployed, or who are looking to make a career change.

Before proceeding with any proposed changes, the Government would like to have the Bermuda public's feedback. The public has been invited to send written concerns or comments regarding jobs which should or should not be included on the closed, restricted, special and open categories, and they should include reasons why or why not, by visiting the Citizens Forum on www.forum.gov.bm. Mr. Speaker, that deadline has been extended to May 24, 2019. Any decision made will affect all of us, and so it is of the utmost importance that every Bermudian, every person be given the opportunity to follow through with voicing their opinion, concerns or feedback on this most important issue.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to addressing the work permit policies, the Department of Immigration is working on many other initiatives that will address long-standing and/or sensitive immigration issues such as mixed-status families, children born overseas to Bermudian parents, the Department of Immigration processes and procedures, public service orders, PRC holders, the border management system for the new airport, policy and legislative development in support [of] or changes to mixed status families, and other immigration-related matters.

Mr. Speaker, the Government will continue to keep the public updated on developments and involved in the process by periodically requesting feedback via the Citizens Forum. Again, the website address for this is www.forum.gov.bm. Mr. Speaker, the public can also keep abreast of information and the announcements by downloading government's new

Tree Frog app, available for free from the Apple and the Google Play Store.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Minister on the Order Paper this morning is the Minister of Works.

Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, good morning.

The Speaker: Good morning.

KINGS WHARF REHABILITATION

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, last November I reported extensively on the plan for the complete [refurbishment of King's Wharf](#) at the Royal Naval Dockyard—one of two deep-water cruise berths built in 1987/88. The main structure comprised a structural steel frame encased in reinforced concrete, with reinforced concrete slabs, constructed at a cost of \$9 million. Following a comprehensive inspection in 2014 by the UK engineering firm Mott MacDonald, deck problems were clearly identified and the report at that time estimated a replacement cost of the deck and terminal building at more than \$20 million.

Mr. Speaker, in 2017 it was clear that the deck had deteriorated further and needed to be rebuilt during the 2018 off season, from November 15, 2018, to April 9, 2019. Planning began immediately to explore options and new methods to meet that limited timeline. So, with that background, the Ministry initiated an accelerated replacement programme in order to meet the critical deadline of April 10, 2019, the arrival of the first cruise ship of the season. The consequences of missing that deadline would have incurred a US\$500,000 penalty for every visit that a ship could not dock.

Mr. Speaker, no one on the team could countenance such a circumstance. So, in order to complete the project and to avoid potential delays due to the current high demand for concrete on Island, a method of precast concrete slabs and beams was devised for the works. Using precast concrete would also increase the lifespan of the pier, as low reactivity aggregates such as fly ash (commonly used in Europe and North America, but not Bermuda) could be added to the mix to minimise corrosion of the reinforcing steel.

Precast Systems, Inc., of New Jersey who had previously supplied 25 concrete slabs to create a temporary pedestrian walkway atop the compromised deck at King's Wharf earlier last year, were selected. An agreement was reached with Bermuda International Shipping to transport a third of the dock on their weekly vessel, and the remaining two-thirds of the shipment, which included the slabs, would be trans-

ported to Bermuda on a cargo ship chartered specifically for this purpose and unloaded in the Royal Naval Dockyard and stored on Cross Island. This proposed approach would meet the demands of the construction schedule and essentially produce a savings of approximately \$400,000.

Mr. Speaker, the lowest bidder, at \$2.97 million, Crisson Construction, was awarded the contract to demolish the existing building and concrete deck, and construct the new pier. A number of other factors were implemented to enhance the construction and expand the life expectancy of the wharf. Usually, for long-term corrosion protection, one of the following elements would be included in the design: fly ash, cathodic protection, corrosion inhibitor or low reactivity aggregates. In this case, they were *all* used. Strict quality control was employed onsite and offsite by an independent lab. Top-of-the-line 6,000 psi concrete was used. Corrosion inhibitor was added to the concrete to make sure it was the most durable concrete for our harsh environment. Cathodic protection was added to ensure a lifespan of at least 75 years for this new infrastructure. The new wharf was built with increased loading to accommodate the next generation of cruise ships.

Mr. Speaker, under this plan, the replacement terminal could not be completed by the start of the 2019 cruise ship season. So, a temporary structure is in place while construction continues apace, with an anticipated July completion date. As I stated earlier, the 2014 estimate for these works was \$20 million. But, with savings from the reuse of some of the piles and the use of precast slabs, the revised budget was set at \$15 million, including contingencies.

Mr. Speaker, the best news of this whole exercise is that the project manager was Bermudian civil engineer, Ms. Carmen Trott, a trainee in the Ministry a decade ago, and since January 2018, she has been on secondment to the Ministry from the private sector. She, along with key participants in the project, namely, Permanent Secretary, Mr. Randy Rochester; Chief Engineer, Mr. Yves (Bob) Lortie; WEDCO General Manager, Mr. Andrew Dias; structural engineer, Mr. Austin Kenny; bursary student, Ms. Tabia Butterfield; and contractor, Mr. Charles Crisson, all join us in the Gallery today to witness this historic milestone.

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, with the exception of the chief engineer, who everyone knows is my favourite foreigner, they are all Bermudian.

Some significant highlights of this project are worth noting. It is the first time that we have used precast for maritime work in Bermuda, and it was done to the highest professional standards. No major injury occurred onsite for the entire construction period. All work was completed with the highest quality control standard at all levels. The expected life of the new

deck is 75 years. Work was completed on time. Work was completed within budget. Construction of the new terminal building is well underway. Precast was made in New Jersey, but all the rest of the wharf was assembled and constructed locally.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Charles Crisson is a smart businessman with a lot of experience, and he is a very good contractor. He and his workers were simply amazing on this project—welders, crane operators, labourers—all working six to seven days a week since December. Precast System from New Jersey; Ramboll, UK; the main designer, Brunel, a local engineering company hired by Crisson to support the construction on site; Onsite Engineering, another local engineering company, were in charge for all quality control onsite. Overnight Construction, who are building the new building, are in charge of the finishing work on the slabs. All of these craftsmen and craftswomen were proactive and dedicated, took ownership of this project and worked very hard to meet the deadline, and are to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, outstanding cooperation was received from WEDCO. Everything that was asked of them, the reply was simply, *Yes, we will make it work*. The GM [general manager] and his team were totally dedicated and committed to this project. And, of course, Mr. Speaker, I could not be more impressed with Carmen and the Ministry team of Austin [Kenny] and Tabia [Butterfield], based at Dockyard for the past five months. Their professionalism, teamwork, camaraderie and commitment shone through in every aspect of this project.

We received daily reports of progress (or not, as the case may be), as the weather on occasion wreaked havoc with progress. Even when we were three weeks behind, there was no panic whatsoever, at least none I saw. They simply put their heads together to agree a plan to address the challenge of the day. I cannot commend them highly enough, so I will let the Chief Engineer say it. He wrote, “During my 30 years of experience as an engineer, I was privileged to work in different countries like Chile, Canada, France, Algeria, Morocco, Angola, Saudi Arabia, Dubai [United Arab Emirates] and Bermuda. I have been around and I worked with many project managers. After all these years, if anybody in the future asks me who is the best project manager that you worked with in the last 30 years? I will have one answer, just one name—Carmen Trott.”

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, we are all so proud of them, and it really is an honour for me to work with such professionals in the truest sense of the word.

I must emphasise, Mr. Speaker, that this aspect of the rebuild is Phase 1. The next phase, the costing of which has not been finalised, is to provide

for the extension of the dock by 100 feet on either side of the terminal building to accommodate the larger ships with four gangways and provide a better service area for grey water, sewage and garbage disposal. Mr. Speaker, as you will appreciate, not only does an exercise of this magnitude require a host of participants, but it is critical for success that they all work together for the common goal. I can say that this was the case here.

To say this was a phenomenal accomplishment is an understatement. The entire team, led by Carmen, did an outstanding job and have been designated as the new gold standard for the Ministry of Public Works in meeting deadlines on time and on budget. They had several backup plans in order to accomplish this, including a “nuclear option,” if all else failed. They are in this House today, so colleagues may join me in publicly thanking them, on behalf of the people of Bermuda, for setting a standard of excellence that others will follow for years to come.

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I am tabling for the information of the House several photographs that catalogue this incredible, almost five-month, journey.

Mr. Speaker, on the morning of April 10th, it was an immensely proud moment for both Permanent Secretary Rochester and me, while standing next to this Bermudian team on the newly built dock, to witness the *Carnival Pride* breaking through the sunrise and safely coming alongside. We were even prouder when the captain gave the thumbs-up for his passengers to disembark.

At the end of day, the work needs to be done by real people. These real people sitting in our Gallery today not only did the work, but they did it with professionalism, integrity, tenacity and flair, and they were simply awesome!

Thank you to them, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Now, normally, we would not allow that in the Gallery. But on this occasion, we will allow you to acknowledge the good work of the officers that have been mentioned by the Minister.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Hear, hear, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: It is well deserved, so we will allow that clapping that took place that time.

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

As he rises to his feet, let me acknowledge that there was a technicality that did not get picked up until well after the Order Paper had been printed for the day. But there should be a motion that should

have been down that is going to accompany the Statement that he is giving this morning. And that will be done at the appropriate time. But there was a technicality, and that is why it was left off of the paper. Minister.

2019 TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER

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

Mr. Speaker, in the 2017 Speech from the Throne, the Government undertook to conduct a thorough review of transportation and to produce a Green Paper on the future of transport that will provide various options for modernisation, which also takes into account the needs of the differently abled. Government recognises that technology is modernising transportation globally and that Bermuda must examine those trends when taking into account the future of public and private transportation.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Tourism and Transport is very pleased to lay the [2019 Transport Green Paper](#) before this Honourable House today, and we are ready for a debate in early June on the priorities that emerged from the consultation period.

Mr. Speaker, the Transport Green Paper consultation process was designed to stimulate debate on a range of options for strengthening the transportation sector to better plan for the future. The public was invited to comment and engage in discussion, between November 2017 and December 2018, to identify and modernise transportation efficiencies and policies that are realistic and fiscally prudent, and that enhance transportation safety and experiences for all.

Three overarching themes emerged when we assessed the issues, comments and thoughts of respondents during the extensive consultation period. These themes centred on reliability, safety and the desire for frictionless transport experiences. Specifically, there is a high demand for more reliable public bus transportation; reliable taxi service; sidewalks; traffic enforcement to deter bad driving behaviours; enforcement of heavy trucks on the roads; safe spaces to walk and cycle; motorised wheelchair transport options; smooth road surfaces; regulations to establish, for example, training standards for public service vehicle drivers and higher road traffic fines, et cetera; and funds to modernise transportation infrastructure and services in an energy-efficient and intelligent way.

Mr. Speaker, the Transport Green Paper has caused us in the Ministry of Tourism and Transport to re-evaluate our short- and long-term goals over the next five, ten and twenty years and to focus on the future by making the necessary changes required to modernise our transportation infrastructure. We will be setting new goals and priorities.

Mr. Speaker, we will start by implementing many of the hundreds of recommendations offered by our stakeholders, who included residents, students,

managers within public authorities, business groups and visitors, regarding, for example, the following:

- supporting taxi and minibus solutions relating to rates, central despatching and credit card acceptance;
- issuing 20 new special taxis permits (of the 88 special permits allowed by legislation) for five years to see if this will help alleviate some of the demand problems experienced at peak times and late in the evenings;
- delivering on safety programmes for safer drivers, walkers and pedal cyclists;
- implementing speed camera and spotlight initiatives;
- approving more wheelchair-accessible taxis and minibuses with lifts;
- incentivising community service vehicle transport options for our differently abled residents;
- procuring new energy-efficient public buses and a bow-loading ferry fleet, with digital fare media and GPS tracking applications, for better customer experiences;
- increasing road traffic violation fines to \$300 across the board (except driving without due care and attention, and driving while under the influence, which may incur heavier fines);
- focusing on training and standards programmes for public service vehicle operators;
- monitoring and increasing the number of rental livery minicars to 500;
- revamping and modernising the Project Ride training programme; and
- setting a goal date for Bermuda to go green by eliminating the importation of fossil fuel-reliant vehicles (cars, bikes and trucks), recognising the Government ought to lead by example with respect to its own fleet of vehicles.

There are many more suggestions that will be taken into consideration as we move public policy forward.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, technology is changing very quickly, and we must be able to adjust accordingly and prepare for a future where perhaps Bermuda embraces autonomous vehicles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Now I will call on the Minister of Finance to present his Statement.

EUROPEAN UNION TAX DELISTING

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

Mr. Speaker, I addressed this Honourable House at its sitting last week to provide additional background information regarding the actions which Bermuda had taken to address issues related to the

EU's "blacklist." This included the political-level engagement in Europe, undertaken by the Premier and me, toward being removed from the list, as adopted by the EU Finance Ministers (ECOFIN) at their March 12th meeting.

Mr. Speaker, I am now pleased to report to the Members of this Honourable House and the people of Bermuda that, following its meeting in Brussels today, the ECOFIN made a public statement announcing that it has removed Bermuda from the Annex 1 list of non-cooperative jurisdictions in relation to tax matters.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, on March 28th, Premier David Burt and I, along with senior Bermudian officials, met with Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, responsible for economic and financial affairs, as well as taxation and customs. Thereafter, on April 1, I, as well as members of the Bermuda team, met with Mrs. Lyudmila Petkova, Chair of the Code of Conduct Group on Business Taxation. These meetings, together with visits to the German and French Ministries of Finance, were open, constructive and cooperative, and we believe that they played an important role in achieving today's positive outcome.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier and I, on behalf of the people of Bermuda, wish to thank the members of ECOFIN, as well as the EU officials whom we met during those critical late March and early April meetings, for their work in progressing Bermuda's removal from the list at the earliest opportunity. We would further note that we certainly intend to continue our engagement with these and other key persons in the EU to address a wide range of relevant matters that are important to Bermuda's national interest.

Mr. Speaker, consistent with my remarks to the Honourable Members and the people of Bermuda last week, Bermuda has now been placed on the "greylist," meaning being placed in Annex II of the EU list. This reflects the need to further expand our legislative framework in the area, to include the EU's economic substance requirements for collective investment vehicles (CIVs).

Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda Monetary Authority CIVs experts are already engaged in several discussions with the EU Commission on these matters. They will continue to cooperate with the EU with respect to the adoption, by the end of this year, of an economic substance framework for CIVs that is acceptable to the EU.

Mr. Speaker, I must reiterate how extremely pleased and thankful I am that Bermuda has been removed from [the EU's list of non-cooperative tax jurisdictions](#). Mr. Speaker, the support from the people of Bermuda and other stakeholders has been a positive force during this difficult period. I would note that teams within the Ministry of Finance, the Bermuda

Monetary Authority, as well as private sector partners, have worked extremely hard on an ongoing basis to address the various issues related to all of these economic substance requirements. Today's announcement from Brussels is a tribute to the dedication that those men and women have brought to this initiative. We must also recognise the advice and support from the UK government during this extended period. I therefore wish to express my sincere thanks to all persons involved in this work, to other stakeholders who provided assistance, and to the people of Bermuda for their support in these matters.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda has done considerable work to become a well-regarded and respected jurisdiction. Our reputation and commitment in that regard kept our industry partners and other influential persons in our corner through this challenging process. We were heartened by the recent S&P ratings affirming the sound economic direction of the country. I would also note that in the last several weeks, including at the April RIMS [The Risk Management Society] conference, business confidence has remained high and there have been public demonstrations of that confidence with significant new entrants to the marketplace.

I would further highlight that, earlier this week, I attended the latest Consensus Conference in New York and witnessed continued interest and support for doing business in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would note that I recognise that the positive decision by the EU today is by no means the end of the work required to continue addressing and strengthening the framework in this area. We will build on our experiences to date and appropriately take the required steps to ensure that Bermuda remains a jurisdiction of choice for quality and compliant business that positively contributes to the economic and social development of Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: The Question Period begins. It is 11:01, so we have an hour for this.

The first are the two questions for [written answers](#) that were submitted, one from the MP Dunkley to the Deputy Premier.

And I believe you have the answers, because they were requested just for written answers.

QUESTIONS: PLANNING APPLICATIONS APPEALS AND ENFORCEMENT

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: *Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House what is the mean time taken for the resolution of planning appeals for each year from January 1st 2014 to December 31st 2018?*

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: *Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many planning applications per month have been handled for each planning Officer in the Department of Planning from January 1st 2014 to March 31st 2019?*

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: *Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many enforcement actions have been taken by the Department of Planning on a monthly basis from January 1st 2014 to March 31st 2019?*

The Speaker: And the second was also to the Deputy Premier from MP Richards.

And you likewise have your [written answers](#). Okay, good.

QUESTIONS: PLANNING BOARD APPLICATION APPROVAL TIME

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: *Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many planning applications have been approved on a monthly basis from January 1st 2014 to March 31st 2019?*

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: *Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many building permits have been approved on a monthly basis from January 1st 2014 to March 31st 2019?*

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: *Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House what is the mean time taken for issuance of planning permission from the initial application to Planning Board approval in each year (by quarter) from January 1st 2014 to March 31st 2019?*

The Speaker: Then [we will] move on to questions from this morning's Statements. And there are some questions this morning.

I am going to start with whom I see from my seat at the moment. And we are going to go to the Minister of National Security.

Minister of National Security, we have a question for you from MP Richards in reference to your Statement on immigration.

QUESTION 1: IMMIGRATION REFORM UPDATE

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister, the Honourable Minister, stated previously that legislation addressing the status of mixed-status families would be brought to this Honourable House in this parliamentary session.

My question is, Is this still the target?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary? Okay.

Minister Caines, while we are attending to you, you also have a question for your Statement on gang prevention from the MP for constituency 28.

MP Lister, would you like to put your question?

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

QUESTION 1: GANG PREVENTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes. My question is to the Minister of National Security, and it is regarding his Statement on the gang initiative.

My question is, Will this be rolled out in all of the schools, this initiative?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, we believe that this is a most powerful initiative.

Yesterday, as the Statement read, Mr. Speaker, we saw 14 young men who some would have deemed to be at-risk. We simply saw it as an opportunity for us to get in at an early stage and give guidance. We believe that yesterday, at the programme, we had the Commissioner for Education, some of the deputy commissioners of education.

And we believe that now, with the school administrators, we can indeed look at having this programme in other of our primary schools, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a supplementary.

The Speaker: Ask your supplementary.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Okay. Supplementary: Is there any way of tracking the progress of the young men as they move through the school system?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, go ahead.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, there is a significant opportunity for programmes like this to be done in the middle schools and at the high schools. This programme is not being done in isolation, Mr. Speaker. As we have highlighted in previous Ministerial Statements, these programmes are being . . . a similar programme is being rolled out in the middle school, and there is a similar programme being rolled out at the CedarBridge. But we believe that this is an opportunity to create a continuum of care for our young students, highlighting the needs and putting together opportunities for them to be guided directly through their matriculation in the public school system, Mr. Speaker.

This is an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, that when we looked yesterday, there were 14 young men who were in the programme. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, they spoke about some of the challenges that they were having, articulating themselves. They spoke about programmes—challenges that they had with being able to work with others, with listening to authority, having problems controlling their tempers. We had 14 weeks and 14 different modules working with these young men on occasion after occasion, behaviour modification, very subtly, allowing them to understand the roles and their responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I actually led a class on trust and discipline and had the opportunity to go down to the school for a day and to work with these young men and to spend time with them. We believe that this is not something that people will get up and they will scream about in the House, as they so often do when they are asking about salaries and when they are asking about what we are doing. But this is a legitimate roll-up-your-sleeves get-to-the-heart-of-the-challenge work that we are doing. We are seeing the green shoots. Fourteen young men successfully completed the pilot programme at the Elliot Primary School for helping them to deal with certain challenges in their lives, Mr. Speaker.

And to the heart of the question, we believe that this is something that could be rolled out in our schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The Speaker: Any supplementary? No further questions? Okay.

We now move on.

Mr. Premier, [there are] some questions for you in reference to your first Statement on the Cabinet Committee on social issues; the Opposition Whip would like to put a question to you.

QUESTION 1: CABINET COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you, and good morning, Mr. Speaker. Just a quick question.

I am just reading on page 2 that the Ministry of Health is addressing the extension of paid maternity leave in a consultative process. And I am just wondering what is the status of that?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: The status of that is that the consultative process was undertaken by the Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports. It is something that touches two ministries.

The fact is that it was a part, as you will know . . . (Sorry.) Maternity leave is inside of the Employment Act, and the Government's intention is to bring amendments to the Employment Act in this sitting prior to Cup Match.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary? No.

Mr. Premier, the next questions for you are from the Opposition Leader in reference to your third Statement, the tabling of the government reform.

Opposition Leader.

QUESTION 1: TABLING OF GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGIC PLAN

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On the last page, page 4—I might add that I was glad to hear this Statement being made—the Premier makes reference to performance appraisals, reviews. And in the second-to-last sentence there [it says], “A subsequent series of workshops will address the establishment of key performance indicators and/or performance measures.”

I am aware that there are certain departments within government [in which] appraisals, reviews are not required. Is it the intent of this Government, at some point in time, through negotiations with the unions, to establish something like that, which will go a long way in ensuring that we have accountability within many of the departments?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Opposition Leader for his question. I do not know specifically if I am able to answer it right now. What I can say is that I would share his view and vision that, in order to have an effective public service, there should be appraisals at all levels for all public officers.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, supplementary.

The Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Can I ask the Premier to take it upon himself to find out what those departments are that do not require this procedure with the unionised agreement? And take it upon himself to have discussions to effectively bring that about?

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to give that undertaking to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. As I said in my previous answer, I support the general premise that all public officers should be subject to appraisal because that is the best way to make sure that you manage and improve performance.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Any further supplementaries? No further questions.

Premier, on the same Statement, you have [a question from the] MP from constituency 19. MP Atherden would like to put a question to you.

QUESTION 1: TABLING OF GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGIC PLAN

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Premier, on the same page, page 4, there is a statement that indicates that this Government has assessed employee readiness for change and identified obstacles such as being an overly bureaucratic environment with a weak execution model, and deliberately put in place the building blocks to enable the service to move towards a shared vision and purpose.

Is it possible that you might, for this House and also for the people in Bermuda, perhaps expand on some of the building blocks that you have put in

place? I did try and look at your February 2019 Government Reform Report, but it is not posted.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to share on that.

One of the things of which we found, and it was probably a bit of sobering reflection, is that there is a survey done of public officers. And one of the things that had come back in comparison—of the Government of Bermuda in comparison to other governments, both local and national, globally, is that we were judged to be underperforming in just about every particular area. And the thing that was said was that there was an overly bureaucratic environment, difficulty in advancing decision-making effectively, that things have to go all the way up the chain before they can come back down the chain.

And so, what it was looking at is making the civil service nimbler and more flexible, possibly flattening the decision-making process, in order to make sure that things could happen more quickly.

So, when we are talking about delivery and putting in place building blocks to enable us to move toward a shared vision and purpose, that is what this process is about. But I think also, what we are talking about ultimately are some of the work streams—which will see in the document, which are tabled—we are talking about how do we flatten the decision-making process inside of various departments and give line managers the ability to better make decisions as opposed to those things having to go all the way up the chain and back down.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: As part of the Statement that I read, and thank you for expanding on the building blocks in terms of execution, in terms of overly bureaucratic, the other side of it was a weak execution model. So, I wondered whether you might want to expand on that? And as I said before, the report is not on www.parliament.bm yet.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Just so I can help the Honourable Member, the weak execution model and what I just stated about the bureaucratic thing are one and

the same. This prevents the ability to execute quickly because of the fact of the challenges with being able to make decisions, and also to make changes when things are not necessarily working.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: New question, although related.

The Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION 2: TABLING OF GOVERNMENT REFORM STRATEGIC PLAN

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: On page 2, it talks about project teams. And part of the way down, it talks about, “The officers will complete the various tasks associated with delivery of each project.” I guess my question is, too often, we see reference to tasks rather than goals that we hope to achieve. And I wondered whether there is going to be any sort of change in emphasis so that instead of telling everybody about all of the tasks that are going to be done by the project teams, there is some identification of what will be deemed a success? And I just wondered whether we are going to get towards success rather than just work?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what was meant in my Statement when we speak about the “current state” and the desired “future state.” That is where the ultimate goal and the vision are. And the tasks are built upon getting to that particular future state that has been defined.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: And on that same Statement, it is talking about the comprehensive communication plans as being developed to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of and understand the implementation plans, and regular updates will be issued. I just wondered whether, as a Government, there might be sort of some deliberate plan that says, *Periodic updates will be quarterly, monthly, or something, be-*

cause we always hear about updates. But unless you ask a question, you are really reliant on the individual, the person who is responsible for the project or the plan, the Minister, to decide when it is time to come forward.

But if you had something regularly, then the public, as well as the House, will be anticipating. It will be on a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, and will even prod people to get it on time.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Mr. Premier.

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

At this point in time, I do not want to commit to a specific timeline for the release of updates to this project. What I can tell you is that the work has already started. It was my specific recommendation that there be some form of dedicated team. We do not want this to fall by the ways of previous items of public service reform where persons have shared resources and are not dedicated to this particular matter on a full-time or a close to full-time basis. That is the way we are doing it. The information is being communicated to stakeholders, whether those are our union partners, whether those are the employees, but also to the general public. And when the communications plan is finalised, which was laid out here, I will make sure to . . . I am sure that the public officer is listening, but I will be sure to try to make sure that it includes a schedule for the updates so that people can have that expectation of how often updates will be issued.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.
Any further questions?
No further questions. That brings us to a close of Question Period for this morning.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: Does any Member wish to speak?
I recognise the . . . Premier, are you on your feet?

Hon. E. David Burt: I am.

The Speaker: Okay. Premier, you are going first. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good morning again. I thank my Honourable Minister today for yielding.

I want to, of course, start off, and I will associate the entire House, because I am sure that everyone wants to extend congratulations to the graduating class of 2019 of the Bermuda College. I know that there were a number of us who were in attendance

yesterday. And it was moving to see so many students not only graduating, but graduating with merit and distinction. And for some, they were the first in their families to attend college. And for others, and I think [we are] particularly proud for this Government, is that for 32 of those students, a Bermuda College education was made possible due to financial support that was offered by this Government, Mr. Speaker.

One of the first things that we did when we came into office was to make sure that we increased money, financial assistance, to people attending the Bermuda College. And we said that your bank account should not determine your access to higher education. There were many students on dual enrolment, which is a PLP creation, as well as, I would say, mature students who are now going back and taking heed to upgrade their skills. I even found out that a number of persons are current government employees who are also taking the opportunity to make sure that they can upgrade their skills and get certifications behind them.

What I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that I want to express my well wishes and pride for 18-year-old national football player, Kane Crichlow, for signing a two-year contract with premiere team Watford FC. We have seen Kane develop to the ranks of Bermuda's national team, as he is captain at both the Under-17 and Under-15 levels, and he is an inspiration for our younger athletes, and to many of us adults, as well, as to what hard work, determination and persistence look like. I want to say congratulations to Kane, his family, his coaches for their role in getting him this far. And we wish him all the best in his future football career.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I wish to extend well wishes, again, to Lornell Taylor, this year's Inspiring Woman in ICT [Information and Communications Technology]. This is an award that is given out every year, and she is leading the way for Bermuda's young girls in technology. And I want to extend congratulations to all of the participants in this year's Girls in ICT competition. Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that over the next 10 years, there will be two million jobs globally that will not be able to be filled due to a lack of resources in IT.

In Bermuda, we see that there are many persons who are coming into the country on work permits due to the lack of talent that we have in ICT. And what we are committed to do is to make sure that we not only promote this as a viable industry for men, who have traditionally been in it, but also young women, as well.

So, I am proud to see so many of our young people interested in careers in IT, and this Government will continue to ensure that these young people have every opportunity to fill the IT jobs on the Island. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

I recognise the Minister of Health.
Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that this House join with me in sending condolences to the family of Frances H. Eve Lister. I would also like to send condolences to both yourself, as well as the Honourable Member from constituency 28, who obviously share the same name and relationship.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Ms. Frances Lister, who was the wife of Allan Lister, who predeceased her, who was actually a Chief Inspector of the Police, and actually served as a Black Rod here, for some of the Members who perhaps may have been here at that time, was a long-standing member of Allen Temple AME Church. We referred to her as *Mother Lister*, actually, because of her eloquence, as well as the stature which she commanded at the church.

In addition to that, Ms. Lister was a long-term employee of the Bermuda Post Office here in Hamilton, working within the administration office. She leaves to mourn, Mr. Speaker, her children, Karen, who predeceased her, as well as Allison and Conrad; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. And of course, one of the notable grandchildren of hers is Mr. Roy-Allan Burch. I would ask that we send condolences. Our thoughts and our prayers are with the Lister family, as well as yourself, Mr. Speaker, at this time. And I would like to associate my honourable colleague . . . the whole House, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

I recognise the Whip—beat you up there, Minister. He got on his feet before you.

Whip, you have the floor.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise on my feet on a joyous note, because I think that if it is not a world record, I think it is at least a Bermuda record for the PHC Zebras, who won the Premier League for the 12th time, Mr. Speaker, which is more than any other Premier League team here on Island. And this was the second time in a row that we have won it. But we did not just win the Premier League, we won the Friendship and the Charity Cup, Mr. Speaker. So, I think that this is almost . . . well, I think it is a precursor of what is going to happen with Cup Match, where Somerset is going to win once again.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: So, you know, I go to church. They say, *Speak things into existence*.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: So, Somerset will take the Cup this year. But once again, it was a hard-fought year. It was a hard-fought championship that we did. And we cannot and will never forget Muzzy. We did it for Muzzy. And once again, I would like to associate the whole House with that, for the 12th time. MP Weeks says he does not want to be associated, but that is okay.

[Laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: That is okay. I understand. But the thing is that they have done well. They worked hard. They deserve it. And I will be at the games once again in the season to come.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I now recognise the Member from constituency 19.

Member, you have the floor.

But the Minister has got a bad leg, so he is moving a little slowly. I will make sure that I watch him closely the next time.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will start off with what I call the congrats. I would like to have congratulations sent to the Kardias Club, who on the weekend had their “Tea with a Twist,” which is a fundraiser, a fashion show. It was well-received by all of the guests. It is one of those [events] where you have lots of hats and finery. But also, the nice part about it is that the beneficiary this year was the Family Centre. And they are one of the organisations that I have a special feeling for. And I want to say congrats to them.

On the sad side, I would like to have condolences sent to the family and friends of the late Philomel Ahern, “Phyllis,” as we all knew her. I got to know her when I was Director of Finance at the hospital. She was one of the supervisors. She was one of those individuals who performed well, and then when she left the hospital, she started to do private work in the community. But she was best known, from my perspective, as being a golfer, a very proficient golfer, and one of those individuals who would always lend assistance to new golfers to try and get them involved. So, she will be sadly missed. But at least she was 89. And I think that, you know, is pretty good. And if condolences could be sent to her family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Minister. Everybody else decided it is your turn. How is that? No one else jumped to compete with you that time. Go ahead.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to be associated with the congratulations, in the wider context, to those graduates at the Bermuda College yesterday. I particularly, though, want to take note of the nine members of the Ministry who graduated, two of whom I will name, Dean Smith and Danny Paynter, who graduated with distinction, and four others with merit. They were supported in that effort by the Ministry. And so, I am not sure whether those figures were included in the numbers that the Premier mentioned. But the Ministry did support them, and we congratulate them.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to just record for the record that, I guess, one of the most pleasant tasks of being a Minister is actually going to retirement parties for people who have served not only in government service, but the people of Bermuda. And so, this week, I had the occasion to attend a retirement celebration for Mr. Brexton Outerbridge, who served in the Ministry of Public Works for 40 years. And in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, thinking about this, I asked how many of those people currently at work were born in 1979 when he started? And about half of them put up their hands. So, I encouraged them, if they could serve for half of his time, because we struggle to get people to serve for four years, let alone forty, in this day and age, that they would be able to, you know, have that sort of celebration as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the comments that folk made was that, whilst he was short in stature, he was tall in integrity, and he stood up for his rights as a worker at Public Works. And so, it was quite encouraging and pleasant to see that a lot of the young folks who work at the Marsh Folly Depot with him were not afraid to stand up and say that he had helped them in their journey and employment at Public Works, and not only by his example, but by his willingness to give them advice and to encourage them. So, I extend congratulations to him and wish him a happy retirement for his 40 years of service to the government and people of Bermuda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 28.

Honourable Member Lister, you have the floor.

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

I would like to sadly start off by sending condolences to some of the families of a few of my constituents. Mrs. Marjorie Kathleen Mathews, of 8 Spice Hill Road; Mrs. [Loretta Dennison Viola] Morton, of Stacey Estate Road in Warwick; and Mrs. Smith of Sun Valley in Warwick. I would like to send condolences to their families. Also, condolences to a friend of mine who—unfortunately, I have not been in the House since he passed, young Antoine Seaman, a

teammate of mine of the Somerset Trojans who died recently in a bike accident.

And also, to associate with the comments by Minister Wilson, for my great-aunt, Frances Lister, who passed away last week. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to see her just before. But I will always remember, growing up, living next door to her. I remember the good times that we had growing up, swimming in her pool. As she mentioned, Roy-Allan Burch who swam and represented Bermuda in the Olympics, we learned to swim together in that pool. I beat him a few times, but he would never admit to that.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: But, yes, I would like to send condolences to the family.

And on a lighter note, congratulations to (as it has already been mentioned by the Premier) the graduating class of Bermuda College, the Class of 2019. I wish them many successes in their endeavours. Also, to the young Kane Crichlow for signing for Watford in the Premier League. Hopefully, he can go on to have a successful career and represent Bermuda. And also, to the Last Call singing group, Tricray and Adrian. They have, over the past few weeks and months, been the number-one top song on the Billboard 100 gospel list. So, they have represented Bermuda very well in the music industry.

And lastly, next week, Sunday, a constituent of mine, Ms. Maude Gwendolyn Bassett, will be celebrating 100 years. So, I would like to send her birthday congratulations for May 26 when it comes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 10.

Honourable Member Dunkley, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues and the listening audience.

I would like to start out by offering sincere condolences, as my honourable colleague from constituency 19 did, to the family of Phyllis Ahern on her recent passing. I first knew Ms. Ahern when she was actually, I think, the head nurse at the hospital. And then, as I learned golf when I was younger, she was very active, as MP Atherden said, in the golfing circles in the community. So, she will be not only a real loss to family and friends, but to [the] greater good she served. She probably touched as many people in the community as anyone we know through her work at the hospital and golf. So, may she rest in peace.

I would like to ask that this House send condolences to the family of Donald Frederick Stailey, or “Freddy” Stailey, as people called him. I think the Honourable Minister from constituency 6, where Mr. Stailey lived, would like to be associated with this. I have known Freddy for many, many years. Many people probably know that he was one of the truck drivers for the Supermart on Front Street for perhaps 40 years. But [he was] very involved in the farming and animal community in Bermuda. He got involved in a piece of property down there just close to Shelly Bay. And his house was really—I think the tribute given by Thad Hollis said that he had more animals than the ark ever had, down at his property. And that was true. Freddy was always around animals.

What a wonderful human being, a person who could talk to anybody. He was a pleasure to be around because he was always very interesting to talk to. And it was a very heartfelt eulogy [given] by his good friend, Terry Lamb, who was also suffering with a disease in stage 4 brain cancer.

The Speaker: Wow.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: To see those two come together and care for each other was a touching tribute to the Stailey family. Condolences on the passing of a good man.

I would like to be associated with the congratulations to all of the students at Bermuda College. And certainly, I think it is appropriate that the House congratulate all of the schools and their passing-out graduation parades this year. It is a tremendous achievement, not only to win awards, but to be able to graduate qualified in your certain area of study. So, congratulations to the young men and women who have done that.

And as colleagues have said, to Kane Crichlow for being signed on at Watford. Many young men and women dream of getting in their passion, and football is one that many young men have in Bermuda. But to see another young Bermudian have a contract with a top-flight team over in the UK is positive, and also to be a role model for young Bermudians who believe that they can get there. And I think that we should send congratulations to all of those individuals who helped Mr. Crichlow and other young people along the way, because it takes a lot to get there. His skills and his stick-to-it-ness have helped, but [also] all those individuals [who helped] along the way.

And, Mr. Speaker, lastly, I would like to send congratulations to the Bermuda Motor Sports Hall of Fame, which launched its hall of fame over this past weekend. I am sure that all Members of the Honourable House would like to be associated with this. I am well aware of the work that they do, but now they recognise each other.

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

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

The Speaker: I now recognise the Honourable Member Weeks.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you, and good morning to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off my remarks by wanting to be associated with the remarks by the Honourable Premier for the recent graduates up at the Bermuda College. Mr. Speaker, in particular, I want to congratulate Ms. Sharmila Harris, one of my constituents. Her family, historically, Mr. Speaker, has really been very much in support of me in my 10 years in this Honourable House. And I have seen Sharmila study, and work and study and go through the hard times. But for her to get her four-year degree yesterday up at the college, I want to congratulate her. And I take my hat off to her, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to be associated with the remarks from the Honourable Whip. I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I did not rise to my feet asking to be associated. (Especially after his remarks, I would not want to be associated.) But the mighty PHC deserve all of the accolades and congrats regardless of the teams that we others support and represent.

Mr. Speaker, also, before I take my seat, I want to be associated with the remarks for young Kane Crichlow and his signing of a new football contract over in England. That accomplishment goes a long way, Mr. Speaker, in encouraging our other youngsters that dreams, with hard work, can come true. So, I wish him well. And I hope that he can encourage, through his actions, other youngsters who aspire to the same thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member Simons, from constituency 8.

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

I rise this morning to send congratulatory remarks to Christian Dunleavy. He recently was appointed CEO of Aspen Bermuda. I would like to associate my colleagues, Ms. Pat Gordon-Pamplin, and Jeanne Atherden. This is a young Bermudian, a very young Bermudian, who started off in reinsurance, very unassuming, did what he had to do. And he is bearing results. And so, I would like to commend him on behalf of the House for his achievements in this field.

I would like to also associate myself with the comments made in regard to Ms. Lister. The last time I had a good conversation with her was at my father-

in-law's viewing. And we chatted and chatted. And then she says, *You know, I am from Devil's Hole. And I knew your mother and your aunts really, really well. We are Devil's Hole girls.*

And even though she lived in Somerset, she believed in her roots. So, it was a very interesting conversation.

The Speaker: She is going to be buried back their too.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I would like to also associate myself with the comments in regard to Freddy Stailey. As you know, I am an equestrian. And his fields were just across the street from where my horse is kept. And many a morning, I would go out, and he would say, *Mr. Simons, you're late today! You're late! Your horse has been waiting for you.* And so, he was really keen on the sport and animals. And the funny thing is that I have been told that when he knew that he could [no longer] take care of his animals he did the humane thing and put them down so that they would not be a burden to anyone and so that he could assure himself that they were taken care of at a standard that he could take care of them.

I would also like to associate myself with the comments made in regard to the graduates of Bermuda College, and I would also say the Mount St. Vincent programme. I think Bermudians should remember that they are able to get a full degree here in Bermuda through the relationship with the Mount St. Vincent programme. So, again, congratulations to the students and also congratulations to the faculty and staff members.

We also should acknowledge the dual enrolment students, because you had students graduating from college before they graduated from high school!

The Speaker: Yes. Yes.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: So, again, this is a wonderful achievement. And it speaks well for what is going on in education here in Bermuda.

And then, I would just also like to acknowledge the seniors. There were a number of seniors who graduated yesterday, and they were so proud. They [made] career changes. And I remember one lady who was in the culinary arts. She was so enthused by her success, and she is about to start a new catering business. She was featured a few weeks ago in the newspaper, and that is why I remember her. But she was so thrilled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 26. Honourable Member Tyrrell, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to be associated with the congratulations to Kane Crichlow, specifically, because his family have their homestead in my neighbourhood. But the reason why I certainly want to give congratulations is because I know the efforts that his parents put in and the sacrifice that they made to get him to the place he is now. I certainly do wish him well. But I certainly think his parents should take a lot of those congratulations, as well.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to attend the sports day at Lorraine Rest Home. It is about the 10th year in a row that they have had it. It started out with just the Lorraine Rest home.

The Speaker: You were a participant? Did you participate?

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Not this time. I think they have got me down for about another five years, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay. Just clarifying that.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Just making sure. And I will be joined by probably a lot of my colleagues here, as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me say that it is a well-run event because what they do is they invite all of the other rest homes of the Island. And the competition here is very stiff. So, I am not looking forward to actually going there myself.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: "Hope" is the operative word.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: The operative word. But I would also like congratulations to go the MC for the day, Ms. Linda Mienzer, who keeps it very lively and keeps things on track, as well.

Mr. Speaker, on a sad note, I will ask that condolences be sent to the family of one of my former constituents, Mr. Raymond Lauder. I also know him as "Jack." He is from Kings Land in South Shore. Mr. Lauder was very prominent, and I will associate the Honourable Member Scott, his neighbour, as well. Mr. Lauder was very popular because every time I would go out canvassing in the area, I would always get a two-for-one, because he would always be at one of the neighbour's houses where I was at.

So, I was able to canvass him and the neighbour at the same time. And I think he will be sorely missed by his family and friends.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Opposition Whip. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to rise and send out some congratulatory notes. Last week, Saturday evening, Summerhaven celebrated a casino night at the Bermuda Aquarium. They were generously gifted the location, and they were able to bring together a very healthy and happy group of people, who certainly got a warm-up with Crown and Anchor, so warming up for Cup Match. And it was very well supported. I would like to send congratulations to the Summerhaven team. They did an amazing job with the catering and all of the entertainment. The music was great. And I certainly look forward to future fundraising events that are hosted by Summerhaven.

In addition, I would like to send out congratulatory remarks to a constituent, who is an entrepreneur. His name is Alex Jones, and he began iRepair, which is a store that works with and fixes electronic devices. And he started on Court Street, and he has since moved to the Washington Lane. He employs about 10 young staff. And just recently, he has now expanded to partner with CPR, which is Cell Phone Repair, and they have stores and support throughout the Caribbean. So, just to see a young entrepreneur growing and expanding in Bermuda is just a positive note. And I wish all the best to him and to his team.

Finally, I would like to be associated with the Bermuda College graduation. I had the privilege of sitting on the Bermuda College Board for a little bit. And I certainly appreciate the work that [is done by] the staff and the faculty and the administration who support these young people as they begin and continue on their journey of higher education. I wish all the best to the Bermuda College. I look forward to a full enrolment in the fall, and I support all the students whether they are here in Bermuda, traveling overseas or entering into or continuing at the Bermuda College in the fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Now I recognise Minister Caines. Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I would like to send congratulations to the following people: As you know, His Excellency held the Honours and Awards Ceremony at Government House on Wednesday night past. The Queen's Certificates and Badges of Honour were given to Ms. Meredith Ebbin for her literary work in journalism; and Mr. Janeiro Tucker, Somerset's great batsman.

The Speaker: Mr. Cricket!

Hon. Wayne Caines: Also known as Mr. Cup Match.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: And Mr. Sean Tucker, for his service in radio journalism, as the Voice of Summer, Mr. Speaker.

The Bermuda Police Service Long Service Award recipient of 30 years, Detective Constable Lennox Ince; 25 years of service, incoming Deputy Commissioner Darrin Simons; also for 25 years, Constable Courville Hilton; and Constable Richard Merritt. The award for 15 years of service in the Bermuda Reserve Constabulary was Section Officer, Mr. Karim Huey; 18 years of service to the Bermuda Department of Corrections, 18 years Principal Officer Attiba Tucker; Divisional Officer Luce Tride-Sterling Martinez; Officer Carmel Amory; Officer Rajay Bean; Officer Royden Grant; Officer Gladstone Headlund.

The Royal Bermuda Regiment Longstanding Award recipients, first class of the efficiency medal, Colour Sergeant Shantay Arnold and Sergeant Kenneth Byron. The Commissioner's first class in efficiency medal also went to Captain Alvin Harvey.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The Member from constituency 2. I believe you have the floor to yourself.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the condolences that were offered on the passing of Ms. Phyllis Ahern, whom I had known for nearly 50 years through golf. As was mentioned, she was very proficient and loved golf. She hailed from Ireland. And if there was ever a person who came to Bermuda who was an example of how persons should interact and integrate and contribute to better racial relations in Bermuda, I think Ms. Ahern would be right up there amongst them. And I just want to say how much I benefited from knowing her, how positive she was in my development, with encouragement. And I know many of her friends are also my friends who would attest to what I just shared about this very fine lady.

Mr. Speaker, I would like in the celebration of this graduating season to associate myself with all of the congratulations being offered to the graduates of the Bermuda College. But add young Canaan Ming, who was out there in Nebraska, from St. George's, who went to school with my daughter way back when in primary school. And also, Honourable Member, MP Ming, I am sure would want to be associated with this, as her son was part of that group, and his parents Johnny and Carol Ming are very proud, as we are, of their son.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognise all of those Belizeans out there, of whom my wife is one, around the world and in Belize, whose government successfully put forward a referendum for a long out-

standing issue that dates back to the 1850s. But there is 90-plus per cent agreement that a long-standing land dispute between two neighbouring countries should be settled by referenda, of which Britain was very much a part. It was finally taken with agreement that it would be taken to an international court. So, congratulations to the people of Belize and the Belize Government for handling this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Minister. Minister Foggo, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in the chorus regarding the congratulatory remarks for all Bermuda College graduates. And I can say that this Government is showing how much progress we are making in terms of meeting the people's needs. When, one, we look at the dual enrolment programme and we look at many of the seniors, senior persons or senior students in terms of their age in comparison to young people who are taking part of—taking a part in retooling, re-educating themselves. And so, it is important to point that out, Mr. Speaker. And again, this Government put up \$300,000-plus to ensure that we would assist people with their tuition. And so, it is panning out in a positive way.

Mr. Speaker, on a sad note, I would like condolences to go to the Pitcher family with the passing of Mr. Glenn Pitcher. I would like to associate MP Kim Swan, MP Renee Ming and Minister De Silva with these remarks, Mr. Speaker. Glenn was, I guess, very well known when it comes to operating major big vehicles in construction. And I think perhaps he even worked under, or with, Minister De Silva. But in terms of the work that he did throughout this Island, he will always be remembered. And definitely, when it comes to the St. David's community, he will be missed, including the St. George's community, Mr. Speaker, because he is known very dearly to all of us. And I see my colleague coming back. I am sure he is going to add more to what I have had to say.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On that note, I will take my seat.

The Speaker: Yes. Thank you, Minister.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from St. George's, MP Ming. MP Ming, you have the floor.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Good morning, Mr. Speaker and listening audience.

The Speaker: Good morning.

Mrs. Renee Ming: I would just like to also be associated with the comments for the graduates of Bermuda College. I think it was phenomenal what we saw this

year with regard to the graduates. And I just want to highlight three who are well-known to me. And they are young women who are well-known to me. And I sort of look forward to whatever their progress is going to be. And that would be Ms. Alnike Looby; Ms. Tamiyah Durrant, who is actually going on to do a two-year internship at Marcus's because she is studying to be a chef; and Ms. Kadijah Burrows, whose mom is so proud of her.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the comments for Kane Crichlow. Suzette and Craig Crichlow were both in my year at Berkeley. And so, you can imagine, as ex-Berkeleyites and friends, we, the class of 1988, we are extremely proud of his progression in athletics. I would also like to associate Minister Foggo with that.

And although this has been said, Mr. Speaker, I am associating myself with the comment from last week, and that was for the retirement of Herbie Siggins from the Bermuda Aviation. He spent his last 13 years at JetBlue, but if you have a conversation with him, you will find that he mentored many of our young people who are involved in aviation today. So, we want to wish him well. I still speak to him, and I know that I am sure he has a huge honey-do list at this stage to which he said yes. And I would also like to associate Minister Foggo with those comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member, MP Famous. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

I am going to start off with condolences for the family of Ms. Mary Boorman. I know her son Paul.

I also want to give birthday greetings to Dr. Ewart Brown and the Mayor of Flatts, who just walked out of the Chamber, Uncle Joe Simons.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: The Opposition Leader. You can include him in it. There you go.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Oh, oh! And birthday wishes to the Honourable Member from Devonshire, [constituency] 12, Opposition Leader Craig Cannonier.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I want to congratulate Mr. Cal Blankendal for taking over the Bermuda Cricket Board. Okay, I associate the whole House.

Also, I want to congratulate the graduates. Forty of the graduates graduated from the Technical Division, which is very good to see. And I am going to call a few people by name: Ms. Chelsea Ray graduat-

ed from the Mount St. Vincent University programme. Cameron Holder, of Devonshire, graduated from the Culinary Arts. Shakur Looby, of Smith's, graduated from the carpentry programme. Ms. Karen Simmons graduated from the Mount St. Vincent programme. And Mrs. Shawnette Perot who graduated from the Mount St. Vincent programme, as well. And what is encouraging, Mr. Speaker, is to see persons my age or older going up there. And it shows that it is never too late to go back to Bermuda College to take advantage of the opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: That's old.

Mr. Christopher Famous: You will be there soon.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member?

We recognise the Honourable Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor, and happy birthday to you.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. I want to echo the sentiments to the Bermuda College. Every year, we have the opportunity to speak to the success of the college and the success of the leadership there, led by Dr. Greene. I took note of several things that stood out this particular graduation which took place yesterday. Number one was their attention to the environment.

Every year, quite frankly, I was a little disappointed, and I look forward to the fact that you see all of these balloons and horns and all kinds of things going on there. We certainly had horns this year, for sure. But quite festive, the graduation, when you see the extent to which they go with the balloons. However, the school has made a decision that it would not endanger the environment, by not having balloons. And so, I congratulate them on making that move, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that was very evident from the graduation was the fact that there was a lot of emphasis on the trades. And we have always talked about the fact that it is important that we continue to train our young people in the trades. And quite frankly, anyone, all of us who have had to hire a plumber for our homes, I am not sure why we are not encouraging our young people to get into some of these trades, because I know the money that I pay to a plumber. And I am like, *Well, whoa! There are some serious hourly charges there.*

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We all need to become plumbers, eh? Or electricians.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: But in particular, electricians and plumbers, I am always amazed that—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. I am always amazed at the living that can be made by such professions. So, it was good to see that young people were graduating in the trades at the college.

And then, I want to go on to congratulate Dimitri Packwood, who spoke on behalf of the graduation class of 2019. She probably has a career in also being a comedian. She started out by saying that her speech was going to cover the basics like a skirt, but be short enough to get your attention. And we all went into a pretty big uproar laughing at that.

The Speaker: Could everybody else check their microphones? Not yours.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mine is on, but the light is not on.

The Speaker: Yes.

[Crosstalk]

[Pause]

Hon. Zane. J. S. De Silva: The light just came on.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Okay. Thank you.

In addition, I also would like to congratulate and thank the Worshipful Juan Wolffe for his keynote speech that he gave. And he made some pretty profound short quotes. And one of those was, *Do you . . .* And I appreciated the fact that he was encouraging our young people to be themselves.

[Timer beeps]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That cannot be right.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Apologies, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Well, you will wrap it up now.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. I will wrap it up.

The Speaker: You wrap it up.

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

Again, going back to the college and the good work that it does, it is always amazing every year to see the number of Bermudians who are graduating from the college there, but also those from years ago who are senior members within the community, like the Worshipful Juan Wolffe, who had been through the Bermuda College. And so, congratulations again to Dr. Greene on her fine job this year.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Now I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36.

Honourable Member.

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

Mr. Speaker, I just wish to be associated, even though the House was associated by the Minister of Health, I wish to stand and be personally associated with the condolences to yourself and to the family of Mrs. Frances Lister.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: The Minister of Health commended, with great elegance, the bio and life and times of Mrs. Lister. And I wish to be thoroughly associated with Minister Wilson's remarks for this woman of stature in our community, who carried herself with stature. And I know that the community in Sandys, and certainly the family at Allen Temple, Pastor Howard Dill and Rev. Dr. Emily-Gail Dill and the whole family will wish to be associated with the loss and are mourning the loss of your family member.

And I heard Mr. Famous, the Honourable Member, wish happy birthday to Dr. Ewart Brown, and I wish to be associated with those offers of congratulations on his birthday. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Minister De Silva, would you like to add a few remarks this morning?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I would certainly like to join colleagues in wishing the best of birthday wishes to both the Honourable Dr. Ewart Brown and also the Opposition Leader, Mr. Craig Cannonier. Long may they both . . . may they see many more, and possibly together. I am not sure which one is older, though, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, whilst I am on my feet, you know, we always talk about when

someone passes, we celebrate their life. I would like to associate my condolences to the family of Glenn "Cleary" Pitcher, who used to work for Island Construction, Mr. Speaker. Cleary was one of the—and I say it without fear—I think one of the best bulldozer operators the Island has ever produced. There was not anything that he could not do with that machine, Mr. Speaker. And, of course, like many of my employees before I got into politics, I do not do it as much anymore. But we used to spend a lot of time together. And I could tell you many a story about myself and Cleary and some of the things that we did over the years, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But whilst I am on my . . .

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, he was. He was a great Liverpool fan, as am I, Mr. Speaker. And I think you know that.

But one of the things I would like to do whilst I am on my feet is to thank St. David's Cricket Club and all of the executives. Because what Minister Foggo and I were a part of about a year ago is that they decided that they were going to honour some of their former members whilst they were still living. And Cleary was honoured that night. And it was certainly something that will live with me, and I am sure Minister Foggo, forever.

And something that I think, if anyone else in the club life are listening, I think that this would certainly be something that they should all carry. Honour some of their long-standing members not only in the club, but in their communities, whilst they are still alive. So, I take my hat off to St. David's for that initiative, and I certainly encourage others to follow suit. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to make comments on the condolences or congratulations? None? 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

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Speaker: Deputy Premier, are you going to introduce the Bill for the Premier?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. You can do so now.

FIRST READING

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019

Hon. Walter H. Roban: On behalf of the Premier, 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: Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

NOTICE OF MOTION

MOTION TO ACCEPT RECOMMENDATIONS SET OUT IN GREEN PAPER ON TRANSPORT 2019

The Speaker: Minister De Silva.

Hon. Zane. J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I give notice that I propose to move the following Motion at the next day of meeting:

WHEREAS the Government undertook in the 2017 Speech from the Throne to conduct a thorough review of transportation and to produce a Green Paper on the future of transport in Bermuda that will provide various options for modernisation, which also takes into account the needs of the differently abled;

AND WHEREAS the Government recognises that technology is modernising transportation globally and that Bermuda must examine those trends when taking into account the future of public and private transportation;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House supports the recommendations and priorities set out in the Green Paper on Transport 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: Members, that now brings us down to the Orders of the Day. And Order No. 3 is the Order that is going to be taken up this morning. And it is the second reading of the Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 in the name of the Minister of Health.
Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with the Governor's recommendation, I now move that the Bill entitled the Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 be now read the second time.

The Speaker: Continue.

BILL

SECOND READING

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to streamline the way Bermuda funds its only hospital in order to control health costs and make the necessary amendments to effect this through updates to the Standard Premium Rate and the Mutual Re-insurance Fund. However, Mr. Speaker, before getting into the substance of the Bill, I would like to pause to invite this Honourable House and the public to reflect for a moment.

Mr. Speaker, some members of the public and the Opposition may be asking, *Is access to health care a privilege or a right?* Health care in many countries is considered a basic human right. Article 25, Mr. Speaker, of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care . . ." Mr. Speaker, the World Health Organization's Constitution preamble provides that "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health to be one of the fundamental rights of every human being."

Bermuda should join the rest of the developed world and take steps to deliver quality and affordable health care for all. We can no longer accept a system which distributes health care unevenly on factors other than necessity, a community that permits some persons to have greater access to care than others, creates inequality and a two-tier system. In such a system, we will inevitably see persons who fail to receive the care that they desperately need. If persons are unable to access care early, they could end up consuming a larger portion of our health care resources. So, I submit, Mr. Speaker, that health care is

a human right to which all members of our society are entitled to.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some members of the public and the Opposition may be asking, *Why now?* For years, Mr. Speaker, we have had conversations about health care and health costs around dinner tables, at sports clubs and under the tents at Cup Match. We have talked about which family member or which friend had what experience with what doctor or what nurse or what physiotherapist. We have talked about the amounts of the bills and the increases in premiums, the receipts and the co-pays, the stories and the subtleties, the comparisons and the controversies. We have talked about the emergencies and the not-so-emergencies, the urgent care and the nurse whose name we could not remember, but whose kindness we could never forget. We have had this conversation before in this Honourable House, the Senate, in our caucuses and with our Opposition.

And it has all brought us to this moment, Mr. Speaker. Our discussion about health care here in Bermuda, as we have been recently engaged, is not just a conversation about corporate profits and hospital funds. It is, however, about coming to look in the mirror as a country, about who we are. It is coming to grips about where we have fallen short and what we can highlight that we really do well. The truth is that we do a lot in health care extremely well, and we have qualified professionals who are highly skilled and who are passionate about their current patients and those who may one day be. It is in this reflection that I come to address this very important issue, Mr. Speaker.

So, where are we? Our current spending on health care is over \$720 million, but we are not living as long as we should. We are knee-deep in chronic illness and waist-high in health risk. We are eating more than we should and exercising less than we can. We are treating more and not preventing enough. We are spending almost \$2 million per day on trying to keep healthy people in healthy communities. Some of that money is being spent wisely, and some of it could be spent a whole lot better. It is for the latter that we are building our work around health financing reform. *Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are reforming our health system.*

We are changing the way in which those dollars come—from your pay cheques and taxi fares, and construction salaries and corporate offices and hotel rooms—and how they end up being spent on your health in order to make your ability to contribute to Bermuda stronger. We are taking what we have been talking about for decades and putting those energies into real action. We are, in real and significant ways, changing how we do business here in Bermuda, for health.

So, why now, Mr. Speaker? I can go on and list the reasons why a stronger Bermuda in the face of a rapidly changing and technology-driven world, where blockchain and global economies, genetic

breakthroughs and transportation strategies for our international tourism need a much healthier population to drive business. I can talk about how we need to reduce our cost of doing business by lowering the cost of health insurance to attract more international companies to the Island. I can even talk about how we can compete better in sports and education if we do better in health. And while those things are all true, maybe this conversation is more straightforward than that. Maybe the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that this is our moment as a country to seize an opportunity to do something better, not for business reasons, but for people reasons. This is an opportunity to really put Bermuda and its people first.

Mr. Speaker, let me lay out what is happening and what this initiative of reform is all about. We are putting in health care and financing reforms to improve our health system for the sake of our economy and each of our families. We are starting with the way that we pay for the hospital. We are giving our hospital a fair budget so that they can deliver the care they need to the public. As a return for that budget, we are also holding our hospital more accountable for how much care they need to deliver and the quality and patient care they provide.

As a return for that budget, we are asking for better reporting and better negotiation of better costs, better reviews of utilisation and better partnerships with our community doctors and nurses. As a return, Mr. Speaker, we are looking for better efficiencies and better health outcomes. We are demanding the best from our hospital, and they are taking the progressive and responsible steps to achieve under those demands.

The budget is being paid for through a fund that all able-bodied residents already contribute to. Whether you use the health system or not, we are asking for a base level of social responsibility from *all of us* to make sure that our communities, from our seniors to our children, get the basic care that they need at a cost that is affordable. Mr. Speaker, this is our social contract. This type of social contract is exactly the type of deal that describes us as a society, that helps to strengthen our culture, helps to define who we are as persons, public and parties.

This is our time and our way of allowing every member of our society to have the right to health care. This is our opportunity to take leaps towards that universal health coverage goal, towards health for all.

Not every person has the ability to contribute to that goal equally. Some within our midst must bear the cost more than others. Some in their 30s and 40s will have to pay for someone in their 80s and 90s. Some workers will have to help in support of those seeking employment. Some costs will have to shift, and some caps will have to be put in place to control those costs. Some smaller businesses may need more support. Some families will have to sacrifice additional funds to assist those who are in more chal-

lenging circumstances. We will have to share responsibility now so that the future costs of future responsibilities can be less. We will have to share the costs of investing more in prevention now so that we can reduce the shared costs of emergency and acute care in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the conversations we have been having with our Island's health insurers are just about how we make this social contract of shared responsibility a fair proposition. How providers, payers, politicians, regulators, researchers and religious bodies can use their unique skill areas to put forth and implement timely solutions in a proactive and non-reactory way.

As the carefully considered and evidence-based changes are being made, we are at the same time asking our health insurance companies to conduct business differently. We are looking for each of those companies to use more of the money that you are paying into health insurance premiums to pay for your health. At the same time, we are looking for our health professionals to look for cost savings within their businesses and between colleagues so that we can move forward with fairer pricing.

Mr. Speaker, this is a change in how things have always been. This is a change in the status quo, and we understand that these conversations have not always been easy to be involved in. Yes, we are demanding to put the health of people as a higher priority to the health of profits. But this is not the opening and closing of the conversation. Our teams are working on a number of other initiatives in collaboration with the different members in health care. We are working on making the Standard Health Benefits a better set of services for you, we are working on ways to better measure quality in services, and we are working on updating our strategies and innovating our care. We are working on prescription drugs, mental health and maternity care. We are working on educating our youth and putting them in health careers to fill the gaps. And we are working on bringing more care home to Bermuda while preserving smart choice.

Mr. Speaker, we are working on communicating with the public on all the steps we are taking to create a better system for you, their parents and our children. So, again, Mr. Speaker, the question is asked, *Why now?* The answer? This is the moment that we should, and this is the moment when we can. We can rise to the occasion to put partisan arguments to the side and find common understanding of what we need. We can listen to our seniors and give them more financial relief. We can start to stop the abuse within our system. We can buy better, smarter and at lower health prices. We can set an example to the next generation of how better health is a tool for better living. We can empower our communities and ourselves to eat better and laugh harder. We can embrace our challenges of mental health and give those affected their needed treatment.

We can manage diabetes, cancer and heart disease, and find ways to stop the devastating effects of stroke. We can reduce our road traffic accidents, broken bones and traumatic brain injuries. We can make health care more affordable for all and make sure that health is available for all.

As Bermudians, we have always sought to be the best, and we should always want to change and adjust for the better. We can change now, Mr. Speaker. We can, and we will because if not now, Mr. Speaker, then when?

Mr. Speaker, it is in this context that I would like for us to consider the Bill and its aims. The purpose of this Bill is to streamline the way Bermuda funds its only hospital in order to control health costs, and make the necessary amendments to effect this through updates to the Standard Premium Rate and the Mutual Re-insurance Fund. Mr. Speaker, the Standard Premium Rate (or SPR) is the premium for Bermuda's basic, mandated package of insurance, the Standard Health Benefit (or SHB). The premium, Mr. Speaker, is set annually following actuarial reviews facilitated via the Bermuda Health Council.

Mr. Speaker, as this Honourable House is aware, the Standard Health Benefit is the basic insurance package that all employers must provide to their employees and employees' non-employed spouses, and they pay 50 per cent of its premium. By law, Mr. Speaker, all health insurers must include this package in any insurance policy. The package is regulated, as are its fees and the premium. In addition, government subsidises the cost towards the SHB coverage for children, indigent persons and seniors. The premium for this mandated package, Mr. Speaker, is called the Standard Premium Rate (SPR). It comprised of the Standard Health Benefit component and the Mutual Re-insurance Fund (or the MRF) component.

Mr. Speaker, the Standard Health Benefit covers most local hospital-based care (both inpatient and outpatient services), select diagnostic imaging in and out of the hospital (for example, mammograms) and select medical home care benefits (such as IV infusions). The MRF is a pooled fund into which all insurers currently pay a prescribed premium to cover all insured persons' kidney transplants and dialysis, and to provide transfers to specific health programmes.

Mr. Speaker, following actuarial consideration of the volume of services used in the past year, and historically, as well as projections for future use of SHB and MRF benefits, my Ministry learned that an \$84 standard premium increase would be needed to sustain the current level of coverage. This was due to utilisation increases, fee levels and unequal risk pooling. This would have resulted in the standard premium increasing by 23.6 per cent, from \$355.31 a month to \$439.32. Such a change would have been untenable for the public and for the employers, so it was obviously unacceptable to the Government.

Mr. Speaker, everyone paying for health care knows all too well that year-on-year increases cause hardship on individuals, families, businesses and the community. The Government could not sit by and allow this to happen. Actions commensurate to the problem had to be taken, and this Government has acted. It is well known that the primary step taken to prevent the premium increases was to streamline the way we fund BHB [Bermuda Hospitals Board]. While this has not been universally popular, I know it was the only way that the premium escalation could have been averted.

Mr. Speaker, BHB represents over 95 per cent of claims against the standard premium across the system. If we retained the status quo, the claims would have exceeded the premium significantly. So, our choices were to increase the premium, reduce BHB's fees dramatically, or change the way that BHB is funded. And, Mr. Speaker, we chose the latter. The option to reduce BHB's fees was considered seriously. But it is not a viable solution, as it would not solve the larger, systemic problem that fee-for-service makes cost containment impossible. Further, such a change could not be implemented fast enough for the SPR to suffice. Rather, the Government took the decision that to get a different result we have to do things differently, and accepted that a fundamental change to the overall funding of the hospital was necessary and timely.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pause here to remind this Honourable House that this is not the first step in streamlining the hospital's funding with a fixed-budget model. In 2017, when the then-Government decided to reduce the hospital's subsidy budget by \$25 million, it amended the legislation to change subsidy from a fee-for-service model to a block grant. Now, while the \$25 million grant was a one-time reduction and the subsidy budget was restored to \$108 million in 2018, the elimination of fee-for-service created significant efficiencies for both BHB and the Health Insurance Department without hampering utilisation monitoring and collaboration.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to stress that funding the hospital in more efficient ways is not new and has been used successfully in recent history. We expect a similar outcome from the change proposed now. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, what we all want is for the hospital to be properly resourced and funded to deliver the quality care that we all want and deserve. And of that I can give complete assurance, Mr. Speaker.

The \$330 million revenue target was derived on the basis of extensive discussions with BHB and a review of their financial needs and position. And the figure was concluded on the basis that it is a realistic funding level that will enable the hospital to operate and deliver quality care.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have to remind us all that the very origin and spirit of the Health Insurance Act 1970, which established the structure of our

health financing, is that the standard health premium is community rated. This seems to have been forgotten by some. However, anyone who has sat in the seat of the Minister of Health previously is all too aware of this fact and its fundamental rationale: The point is to distribute risk evenly throughout the community. The change we are making ensures that this happens as was intended.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill brings amendments to effect this important, necessary and beneficial change. In particular, Mr. Speaker, the Bill:

- requires a licensed insurer, or employer who operates an approved scheme, to pay the MRF premium into the MRF within 30 days of the start of the month or week (as the case may be) covered by the payment;
- provides that a prescribed transfer from the MRF to the Bermuda Hospitals Board is to be used to fund all standard health benefit received by insured persons where it is provided by the BHB;
- provides for an insurer, or employer who operates an approved scheme to not be liable to pay SHB claims from BHB if they have paid the MRF premium for an insured person;
- provides for an insurer, or employer who operates an approved scheme, that has not paid the MRF premium for an insured person to be liable for the SHB claims from BHB in respect of the insured person;
- makes all dialysis claims payable by the MRF;
- provides for the hospital to bill for all non-SHB services;
- increases the proportion of the standard premium rate that is ceded as the MRF premium from \$101.97 to \$331.97 and adjusts relevant transfers, including increasing the existing MRF transfer to BHB from \$13.16 to \$231.33 in order to fund hospital care of insured persons;
- updates the definition of "the general hospital" to provide clarification that this means only a hospital facility operated by the Bermuda Hospitals Board; and
- clarifies the definition of inpatient and outpatient hospital services for the purposes of SHB coverage.

Mr. Speaker, to effect these changes, the Bill amends the following: the Health Insurance Act 1970, the Bermuda Hospitals Board Act 1970, the Bermuda Hospitals Board (Hospital Fees) Regulations 2018, the Health Insurance (Standard Health Benefit) Regulations 1971, the Health Insurance (Mutual Re-insurance Fund) (Prescribed Sum) Order 2014, the Health Insurance (Maternity Benefits) Regulations 1971, and the Health Insurance (Mental Illness, Alcohol and Drug Abuse) Regulations 1973.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now recognise the Opposition spokesman for Health, the Honourable Gordon-Pamplin.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, given the time, I would be wondering whether the Minister would be willing to start lunch now.

The Speaker: I was going to make that suggestion, if you like.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: As opposed to starting my presentation.

The Speaker: Now, it would be the Speaker's call rather than the Minister's call. So, on that note, I will ask that we now rise and have lunch and come back at two o'clock, with the Opposition Member leading us off.

Is that acceptable for all Members?

Yes. We will rise and have lunch.

[Gavel]

Proceedings suspended at 12:25 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:03 pm

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

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members. I trust everyone had a good lunch.

[Gavel]

BILL

SECOND READING

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

[Debate thereon continuing]

The Speaker: We are resuming the debate on the Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 and the Opposition spokesman for Health, the Honourable Gordon-Pamplin has the floor.

Honourable Member.

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

Mr. Speaker, first let me apologise to my colleagues for the weakness of my voice. I have just recently had throat surgery and, unfortunately, I am not as strong as I might otherwise be. However, I will give this presentation my very best because it is our re-

sponsibility, Mr. Speaker, when legislation comes to this Honourable House, we have an obligation to ensure that we give it a good critical analysis and that we have the opportunity to discuss with significant stakeholders the terms and conditions that are likely to be implemented by the legislation that are going to impact the community at large.

Mr. Speaker, to say that this particular legislation, notwithstanding that the Minister has given me a copy of her brief and she has called in that brief for bipartisan cooperation for the betterment of health care in Bermuda, I would be remiss if I did not point out that this legislation was tabled last week, Friday. Prior to that, about a week before that, the Minister asked that we have a consultation so that we—so that I as the Shadow spokesperson—would have the opportunity to discuss the legislation and its intent. As I met with the Minister on Friday—the 2nd or 3rd of May—the Bill was not ready. So I was sitting, listening to a conceptual presentation by the Minister, which had no detail of what it was that we were likely to be discussing.

This is legislation that, to all intents and purposes, Mr. Speaker, will turn the health care system on its head as we know it. And I believe that it deserves more than the short shrift that the Government has afforded it in trying to railroad this legislation through within one week. However, within this past week, after the legislation was tabled last Friday, we, as an Opposition, have done our very best. I did not have the opportunity until Monday (having returned home only on Sunday) to start the consultative process so that we could, at least, get a feel for the significant layers in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not make mention of the conference that was held just prior to this legislation being tabled in which we spoke of strengthening parliamentary oversight.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the very first opportunity that we have to strengthen parliamentary oversight and to allow the Executive to be held to account for their actions, we have failed. We have failed because we have legislation—significant—that has been forced on us within one week with virtually little ability to continue—

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —the consultative process.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Honourable Member is misleading the House saying that she . . . that we have failed. We are following Standing Orders. Standing Order 29(1) says that a Bill can be read for its second time within seven days. We have followed

that. So we are following Standing Orders. There is no railroading . . . and everything is being done according to policy.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Member?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Mr. Speaker, I take the point that the Honourable Whip has made. It does not alter the fact that this is being pushed through in very short shrift, irrespective of “seven days.” Very little legislation that we discuss in this Honourable House has the significance of impact of *this* legislation. And a result of that, it deserves more, Mr. Speaker, than for us to have less than five days to have the necessary consultations.

However, with that said, we start with the major players, Mr. Speaker. It is important to us to ensure that we have the opportunity to discuss with the insurers, the insureds, and corporations—the significant people who are going to be impacted by the implementation of this new legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I started with the insureds with whom I was able to get the necessary meetings and the common refrain was that the consultation process implemented by the Government has been woefully inadequate. They were . . . I was told that initially, mid-February, there was a meeting of the insurers who were then told that this new legislation . . . the Government wanted to implement it with effect from April 1. Seemingly, that was far too short a period of time for the insurance companies to even come to grips with the questions that they had and, therefore, one particular company, having made representation, asked for more time and, therefore, it was pushed back, instead of April 1, to June 1.

But what does that do, Mr. Speaker? When there are questions that the insurers have and they do not have satisfaction in terms of how it is likely to be implemented—this new policy—they do not have the answers and we do not have the answers. I cannot tell them because the Government has not told us.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister did a press conference in which, based on the information that insurers had, some of them had gone to their policyholders and effectively said that there were going to be changes, there were likely to be increases in premiums that would be charged to policyholders as a result of the changes that were being made. The Minister, by way of press conference, made mention in a public . . . in a press conference, said that it was unconscionable for insurance companies to dare to raise rates to policyholders, given the fact that there would be no increase in the standard insurance premium (the SPR, the Standard Premium Rate) and there was no increase in the cost of the Standard Health Benefits.

Standard Health Benefits, as the Minister indicated in her presentation this morning, is the basic

level of services that must be offered in every insurance package that is offered by an insurance company—Standard Health Benefits. And those Standard Health Benefits, Mr. Speaker, comprise standard benefits that are available at the hospital and standard benefits that are available outside of the hospital, but they are prescribed and we know what they are.

The Minister said it was “unconscionable” that an insurance company, given that this aspect of the premium and claims were not going to change and benefits were not going to change, that it was unconscionable for there to be a premium increase.

Mr. Speaker, what was missing in that evaluation and interpretation and what caused—not just anxiety in terms of the industry itself, but certainly for people at large—what caused anxiety, Mr. Speaker, was the failure to acknowledge that there has been an increase—even if it were only the . . . sort of the normal inflationary increase—in the health care costs that, of necessity, is going to require or could require that premiums are increased. If there is a basic failure to understand that the Standard Premium is not the only thing that generates health insurance premiums on an overall risk-rated basis, then I think that we have got a fundamental misunderstanding of the insurance system. And I believe that the Government must have better knowledge than that for the Minister to make that kind of statement.

But I have to say that the Minister did [conduct] a town hall meeting last night and I was quite pleased to hear that the insurance companies were not vilified in that meeting that was held last night. Because I think it is important to point out, Mr. Speaker, I do not hold a brief for the insurance companies, but I have . . . and I will declare an interest. My background has been in insurance for a significant number of years. And while health insurance has not been my focal point (my focal point has been property and casualty insurance), certainly the regulatory structure that is required in order to ensure solvency of our insurance companies is a critical and integral part of the stability of our insurance industry.

So when we get an attitude that says that premiums are being put up so that to all intents and purposes those vile and evil and greedy shareholders want to get some profits, when they are required by law and regulation and statutory methodologies, Mr. Speaker, to provide significant capital in order to confirm their solvency . . . so if that money is not there, then a company fails. If a company fails, Mr. Speaker, they are not there to pay the claims that the policyholder is paying for. You are paying a premium to be able to get a claim out the back end.

So while it may be overly simplistic for the Minister to say that the Standard Premium has not changed—the Standard Benefits have not changed—therefore, the premium ought not to change, it just shows a fundamental lack of understanding of how insurance works and the necessity, Mr. Speaker, for

there to be a solvency margin that insurance companies must hold on a regulatory and legislative basis. So that is my presentation in that regard.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we understand what this Insurance amendment is trying to do. And technically what happens at the moment is that there is \$355.31 which is an amount of Standard Premium that is paid by every insured person. That Standard Premium, Mr. Speaker, at the moment, is comprised of an amount of \$101. . . and I can give you the exact change, but just for the purposes of this argument it is \$101.97 that is transferred from that Standard Premium that goes into a Mutual Re-insurance Fund. Historically, the Mutual Re-insurance Fund has been used to fund catastrophic illnesses in respect of dialysis and things that are outside the norm when one would plot on an actuarial basis what the claims experience would be because these are expensive “outside the norm” things, so they were covered by the MRF.

So what the Government has decided to do is instead of having the MRF continue to just deal with that one little portion, the MRF is now going to comprise a larger portion out of the Standard Premium and that money—that larger amount—the premium is \$355, and as I said the Minister has indicated that this is not going to change, that premium amount—that larger amount of \$330 or thereabouts—will now go into the Mutual Re-insurance Fund and that money will go to the hospital as a block grant so that the hospital will have a block grant funding of \$330 million with which to cover the expenses of running the hospital.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that \$330 million . . . what has not been made clear, and the Minister I have no doubt will explain to us when she takes to her feet, is what happens with the existing subsidies that are now offered to the hospital, but out of the Consolidated Fund—not out of the SPR, but out of the Consolidated Fund—for the youth subsidy, the aged subsidy and the indigent subsidy. Is that money in addition to the money that is coming out of the Standard Premium that is going into Mutual Re-insurance [Fund] that is going up to the hospital?

What is also very clear, Mr. Speaker, is that the premium that is going up to the hospital is going to be used to pay . . . sorry, the Mutual Re-insurance Fund, the block grant that is going up to the hospital, is going to be used to pay for services provided by the hospital *in* the hospital—standard benefits.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that there are standard benefits . . . there are items included in the standard benefit requirement that are provided outside of the hospital. So of the \$355 of Standard Premium, \$25 (for rounding numbers) is going to be retained for the insurers to pay the claims that relate to all of these other things that are outside of the hospital.

Now, we did not get from the Minister an aggregate. How much did we spend last year in outside the hospital standard benefit payments that would

give us the satisfaction of knowing that the \$25 figure that has been allowed to be set aside is effectively sufficient to cover the claims that are likely to come from the community-offered services? The way the premium was done before, it was certain standard benefits that were provided in the hospital and then there were other benefits that were provided that were hospital and community. But we have not seen the split between what of the hospital and community was hospital and what was community so that we . . . I do not know that this \$25 that is being left over—that little tiny sliver—is sufficient, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the question begs, what exactly are we trying to achieve? The Minister in her presentation said that she wanted to ensure that there was equity in the insurance industry in terms of affordability and costs and that we would have, as a result of whatever we are putting into our health system and the reform of our health system, that we want to make sure that we have more efficiencies and better health outcomes.

So if we are talking about efficiencies, if there are significant services that are offered in the hospital (for which the hospital now is getting all this grant from the Mutual Re-insurance Fund of \$330-odd, leaving the \$25 for the community), why does the hospital not say . . . or why does the Government not say for services that are offered in the hospital that are provided outside of the hospital, let those outside providers send that bill up to the hospital? The hospital has the money. They get the \$330 million from the block grant of the Mutual Re-insurance Fund.

So since they have got the money, why would they not take . . . for the services that are available . . . I want to be clear, not all services, not all ancillary services, but the services that are provided in the community that are available *in the hospital*. Let the community send that bill up to the hospital. That is efficiency. So that those external providers . . . you have compiled in one place the claims experience relating to specific areas.

So, in other words, if the hospital offers an MRI, if the hospital offers an x-ray, if the hospital offers something that is a standard benefit and I go to TB, Cancer & Health to get that service done, let them send the bill . . . so that the bill is all incorporated in one community-rated billing so that we do not have to slice and dice \$0.30 or \$0.50 out of the \$25.00 that is left to go and satisfy that claim. Because notwithstanding the system provides that there is no claims adjudication and with the failure for having claims adjudication we will not know, in the absence of controls . . . and that is just the environment and the space in which I work from an accounting perspective, internal controls and external controls and every other kind of control. But in the absence of controls, Mr. Speaker, you will not know whether you are being billed for an amputation or an aspirin and, presumably, the differential would be significant.

So in the absence of that oversight that we are losing, I think that we need to ensure that, if we are looking for efficiencies, let us be really efficient and do something that is meaningful and put all the similar claims in one bucket, in one place, and then the Government knows exactly what it is that we are dealing with.

The other thing is how do we guarantee better health outcomes with what we have seen today? I do not see that by taking money and sending it up to the hospital . . . says that there is going to be any better outcome. That is what we want. We do not want to say that the hospital has got \$300 million, \$400 million, whatever the millions are, in money, and that you have got a pile of people going down to the hospital who may or may not come out with a better health outcome. So something that we are . . . must be ensured to not miss in the process and in the equation, Mr. Speaker, are the educational aspects that come, at the moment, as part of the service that is provided by some of the insurance companies, in terms of education, telling people how to live, the things to do, getting benefits for . . . discounts if your claims experience is better than it might otherwise have been. How do we get a better outcome?

How do we know, if we are talking about the cost to the health care system, Mr. Speaker, how do we know that in the absence of controlling provider costs that there is going to be any more efficiency, that there are going to be any better outcomes, and that there are going to be any savings? [By] what we are doing today I do not see that there is one dime of savings. The Minister indicated that people who are paying premium . . . you know, you are going to have to pay some more.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that through the course of the past two months, subsequent to the Budget Debate, we have heard nothing but, *This price has gone up. The Sugar Tax has caused this to go up. The Land Tax has gone up here, something else has gone up over here.* So every time a consumer looks at his wallet this Government, who promised to reduce the cost of living, has somehow found a way to further exacerbate how the expenditure quotient has deteriorated on behalf of the taxpayers of this country.

Mr. Speaker, when you read that some in their 30s and 40s will have to pay for someone in their 80s and 90s, you know, that is the way it works and we are fine if we transport ourselves to Havana or Moscow, but we do not live in Havana and we do not live in Moscow. We do not have that type of national system or a tax support base to bolster it if anything goes wrong, Mr. Speaker.

So my question to the Minister is this: What happens when the \$330 million runs out? Because it will. And I know, actuarially, it is stated that the \$330 million is adequate, it will be sufficient, that the Minister and the Health Council are satisfied that the actuarial extrapolations are appropriately applied, but Mr.

Speaker, when you look at the Standard Premium which the Minister said in her presentation this morning, that the recommendation was that this premium could have been as much as \$84 different than the \$355 but for the fact that the population would not stand for it—you put a hold on that—that is like putting a lid on a pressure cooker. At some point in time it is going to blow, Mr. Speaker. You can only hold down costs to the extent that you put in other things that help to support efficiencies and savings. And one of the first things that we have to do is to start to look at the extent to which we are able to control what costs are going into the system.

Now the Minister mentioned in the opening part of her presentation this morning that we all have stories about comparisons and controversies, the bills and the increases and the negative outcomes and all those kinds of things that happen. And it is fine to say *let the hospital survive* because the hospital, notwithstanding the money that it requires to run its day-to-day operations, it also is required to pay their \$25 million per year on that 30-year loan that they have to Paget Health Group, which, part of that was a \$2.5 million per month, that is \$25 million per year . . . I am sorry, \$30 million per year—\$30 million per year—\$2.5 million per month, which is \$30 million per year for 30 years. That is the \$900 million that had to be repaid. But that gives . . . that is \$30 million just for the amortisation of that principal amount that has to be paid out by the Hospitals Board. So that is part of the \$330 million, so \$30 [million] is off the table because they have got to pay that, we know that, which effectively says that \$300 million has got to be left.

The question also begs: Is the Government required, through its GEHI contributions . . . are all of the Government plans, FutureCare, HIP, as well as GEHI . . . are those contributions going to be made to the Mutual Re-insurance Fund as well in the same amount that we are expecting from the private sector members or anybody else in the same amount of the \$330 going into the Mutual Re-insurance Fund?

Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand why. The Minister did mention in her presentation that the questions are being asked: Why is this being done and why now? And it would seem to me that we are almost getting the cart before the horse. The hospital has to survive. And what happens when the \$330 million runs out? Clearly, the Government will have to be the backstop.

The Government cannot allow the hospital to fail. When the \$330 [million] runs out, that money is going to have to come out of the Consolidated Fund. And so it is important that the public is put on guard and on notice to understand that this money will come from them—out of their pockets, again—somewhere down the road. You will not see it this year and you may not see it next [year], but you will see it the following year. And, of course, we have got to have a

year to make the determination as to how adequate \$330 million is as a number.

But the one thing that we do not have control over, Mr. Speaker, is the utilisation, even at the hospital, because the hospital can say that we have the capacity to do things, but they cannot say that they are going to provide the services because the services are predicated on peoples' necessity to use those services. So, even though the hospital can say they have got 100 beds, Mr. Speaker, 100 beds can only be occupied if 100 people show up. But if only 80 people show up, there are 20 beds that are there that are not generating revenue for the hospital.

By the same token, if 150 people show up, you then end up with lines at the hospital where then people will decide, *As opposed to utilising what I am paying for already as a Standard Health Benefit, I will go outside*, and then that starts to put pressure on the outside agencies to provide and pick up the slack to the extent that the hospital may not be able to cope.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we are not holding the costs down, if we are not centralising similar claims experiences and similar claims categories and having those as being one part of the insurance equation, how are we effecting any kind of efficiencies or savings in the health system?

Mr. Speaker, the hospital at the moment is using a fee-for-service [system]. And that fee-for-service concept will go away. But when that fee-for-service concept goes away, Mr. Speaker, how will the statistical development be communicated to the insurers who still have to rate their premiums for their clients? In addition to standard benefits they have to figure out what the claims experiences are and what premium is an adequate amount of premium.

So these are things that have to be considered [about], Mr. Speaker, that we do not have the answers for.

Now, if the Minister . . .

[Pause]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am giving it my best, Mr. Speaker.

Okay, so, what we have noticed, Mr. Speaker, is that with this new block grant going into effect on June 1—which is what the Government wants to do—the people who have been wait-listed for various services at the hospital, who have not been able to be fitted in . . . now, for whatever reason, the hospital is a beehive of activity so that people can get these services done. The hospital can . . . not so much to get the services done, but be able for the hospital to get the services provided so that they can get the revenue while they can still bill for it on a fee-for-service basis. Is that the intent? Or is that an unintended consequence?

Will we see in the month of May a significant spike in utilisation and costs that have been utilised by

the hospital in order to ensure that . . . by the hospital to make sure that they . . . in the \$300 million that they will be getting as a block grant . . . as I said, the number was \$330 [million], but \$30 million has already gone out the door to pay for the amortisation of their mortgage, but . . . Actuarial statistics are done effectively on the smoothing curves and based on an extrapolation of experiences. And when you get spikes and peaks, then you just have to make significant adjustments and amendments for them. So, it is important to know the impact that will happen with the revenue drivers from now until the end . . . in the next two weeks. It will be interesting to see the significance of the additional charges that have come through the Hospitals Board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am curious to know who is being left out as we speak. When I say “who is being left out” in terms of the provision of services that we cannot put into place the checks and balances and the procedures that ensure that there is some kind of cost control in the provider sector. So who will be left out if we did not do this tomorrow? Because we are basically talking about . . . not tomorrow, but two weeks' time. So who will get left out? You will get people who are uninsured who will not be able to buy an insurance premium, an insurance policy. But those people are covered by the indigent subsidy that presently exists. The aged are covered by the aged subsidy and the youth are covered by the youth subsidy.

So, if we took the time to make sure that this works, that we put the checks and balances in place where the checks and balances are needed, so that we are not driving up the cost of health care without any sort of . . . like a runaway train, Mr. Speaker. If we take the time to do that and to do it properly and effectively, who will lose out? I would submit that nobody will, because, at the moment, over the course of the next month or two months or whatever time it might take . . . let us say we bring this new system into effect on September 1, which gives everybody the opportunity to understand how it is going to work.

I have been made to understand very recently that implementation, which is scheduled to be June 1, [and this] short time that we have had to be able to go and look at this Bill, Mr. Speaker, has not given me the opportunity to consult as I would like with the hospital who is an integral player in this. But as readiness is scheduled for June 1 . . . as recently as 10 days ago I did not have the opportunity, but one of my colleagues had the opportunity to speak with the hospital. [They] were not even aware that as of June 1 they were not going to be submitting any bills to the insurance company for payment of claims. They did not realise it. So there is something missing in the information flow, where the integral and key people do not know what they are doing, do not know what to expect, and do not know how the new policy and plan is likely to impact them. Is that what we want, Mr. Speaker?

When we know that your standard premium rate should have gone up, but for the fact . . . and let me just say, I have been in the seat of the Minister. I had situations in which we had a Morneau Shepell report which made recommendations as to what the premium should be, and made the recommendation to choose a point that made sense in terms of what the economy could sustain. But when you have a differential from \$355 to \$433, Mr. Speaker, that is [more of] a difference than saying, *We're not going to go up an extra \$10 here.* We are talking about \$84. And if we cannot acknowledge and accept the fact that \$84 on standard premium is a significant impact that has been actuarially calculated because the statistics that have gone into the equation have dictated that this is the output . . . so, Mr. Speaker, if that is the output and we know that we are already deficient by at least \$84, but for the fact that the economy cannot sustain it, that is the only reason we cannot implement it at that stage.

We need to know that if we are making such significant changes, maybe it is time to bite the bullet; maybe it is time to be realistic about what the costs are. Maybe it is not the time to vilify the providers of services. Maybe it is not the time to turn the system on its head. Maybe it is not the time to stand and hope that what we are putting into place is going to be adequate. Maybe we need to pause, Mr. Speaker.

I am not suggesting for a second that we do not want to see equity when it comes to insurance claims, but there are always going to be those, Mr. Speaker, who are going to be able to afford to pay whatever their premiums are and they will get whatever standard of treatment they choose to get and they will hop on a plane and they will go to wherever they choose to go. And, Mr. Speaker, what will happen is that those others who are not in that happy position will end up having to settle for what it is that they get. Nothing from what we have seen here has said to me, Mr. Speaker, that there is something that is going to impact the adequacy of the outcome of what it is that they are trying to achieve—nothing.

People are going to pay more because health insurance . . . sorry, health costs have gone up. Health inflation is real, and you cannot make it . . . you cannot wish it away by failing to acknowledge that there are extenuating circumstances that would exacerbate what premium rates are being charged for standard premium, for standard benefits.

Let us start with putting in place . . . Now, I think part of the presentation last night indicated that because 47 per cent of the health spend goes into the hospital, then, therefore, that is the big ticket item and we, therefore, want to attack that first. And I understand, perhaps, in a way, that level of thinking. But that level of thinking can only work effectively when there is an active intent to look at the contributing factors. And I believe, in this instance, the contributing

factors are the ones that are causing the problems that we have.

So until we start looking at putting controls on the contributing factors, you know, we are talking about pharmaceuticals, we are talking about things like we heard last night in the town hall meeting, self-referrals; we are talking about overutilisation; we are talking about inappropriate procedures, or procedures that might otherwise . . . when there are options. You know, I do not question a doctor for making the determination as to what treatment is good for his patient. However, when it comes to overutilisation, the trends are there. It is very obvious. And there are times that we, even as consumers, Mr. Speaker, decide that we want to go and look for a second opinion or a third opinion or a fourth opinion until we hear what we want to hear. And every one of those costs helps to generate additional costs to the system.

We do not have an electronic medical records system. That is what we should be looking at. How can we ensure that an electronic medical records system will stop me from going to my doctor here, my going to my doctor there, and going to my doctor there and getting different treatments for a similar complaint because I am not satisfied with the prognosis that came out from doctor number one? And these are things that happen. How can we put those checks and balances in place?

And I would submit that this is part and parcel of the entire system, Mr. Speaker, in order to make the system work. We have to utilise those checks and balances first and then start to look at where we are in terms of overall funding. Because you can be assured, Mr. Speaker, I will bet you dollars to donuts, that \$330 million that goes up to the hospital is not going to come down when the other checks and balances go into place. That money is not going to . . . the standard premium, the cost of the standard benefits is not going to decrease. Once it is up there, it is going to be up there.

So there is nothing to say that there are going to be any efficiencies that will be gained if we do not start looking at the little things. It is the little things that make the big things, and right now we are overlooking the little things, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want anybody's mom or grandmother to have to do without health care. But we take care of that. If they have to go to the hospital, we take care of that, in respect of their subsidies.

Where people are concerned, Mr. Speaker, is that they go to a dental office or a medical office or whatever and their co-pay has reached the stage now where they cannot afford to go to the doctor. So what happens is that people then become chronically ill and wait until they cannot . . . because they do not have the co-pay money.

So you present at KEMH because you need the medical care, but you do not have the money to pay the doctor. That is where we need to be looking,

Mr. Speaker. And that is what is impacting our population every day in their pockets, Mr. Speaker. Whether the hospital gets \$330 million, \$350 million, ten-hundred million [dollars], it does not matter. That is of no consequence to the man on the street who has to stand on the street corner, or to the lady on the street, who has to stand on the street corner and decide, *Can I go into Dr. Joe's office because I don't feel well? Or will I stay here until I drop on my feet and then present at KEMH because I don't have a co-pay?*

That is where we need to be looking. And we need to be looking at it urgently, Mr. Speaker, not as an afterthought, not decide how much money the hospital should or should not have. The hospital is not going away. The hospital is not going to fail. The hospital is going to survive. The hospital has sufficient . . . in terms of its revenues, in terms of how they now bill on a fee-for-service. It is not the most efficient way of billing, [with] that I agree.

However, Mr. Speaker, that is not where the issue is. The average man on the street does not know what we are doing here today, and whether what we are doing here today is going to impact whether the hospital doors . . . the hospital doors are going to be open. The Government cannot let the hospital fail. And if it means somewhere down the road that there is going to be some injection of additional cash, it is what it is.

But where the average person in the street is concerned with, Mr. Speaker, is what has to come out of his pocket today. And what the Minister has presented in front of us here, Mr. Speaker, does not make any impact on how the person in the street is going to feel about what it is that is happening today.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, having socialised medicine, which is obviously the path down which we are going . . . that is what it looks like to me. As I said, it is fine if we lived in Moscow or Havana; but we do not. So we have the wherewithal, we have an insurance centre second to none with insurance minds—both in terms of the private industry, in terms of what we have at the Health Council, and what we have in the Ministry—and I refuse to believe, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot put our heads together and find the solutions that are necessary.

Now I do know that based on . . . and this is not something that is just new. But perennial challenges in which there are under- or uninsured people in our community . . . and I think, Mr. Speaker, that we have three major insurance companies. And those three major insurance companies, between them, should be able to come up with a methodology by which they are required—through Government, through legislation—to absorb those under-insured or uninsured people in their book and make that determination, Mr. Speaker.

If we really, honestly, want to look at how we can resolve the challenges that we have with our health care system, let us look at all of the component

parts, let us look at not leaving somebody behind, not because the hospital has money, has more money with which to operate, but because the people who now feel as though they cannot go and get these extra services are being covered by an insurance system that requires—that forces—them to absorb those people who do not otherwise have those privileges.

And so it would make sure that nobody . . . nobody is actually turned away when it comes to the hospital, Mr. Speaker. We know that if you are sick, you go to the hospital. It is what it is. And I did hear some people challenge and question what happens, because I did ask the Minister the question, as to, with this new system, how will somebody who presents at the hospital now be billed? You know, if you show up . . . how? You know, if there is no claims adjudication, no nothing and you show up at the hospital, what says that you will not go and ask for services if you have not paid your premium? Well, the legislation is clear that this is not . . . this will not happen. So if you present at the hospital and your premium is not paid, you will be billed. However, Mr. Speaker, it does not answer the question: To whom will the bill go?

Now I know that in certain instances if you go to the hospital and if you have, let's say a visitor who shows up with a cycle accident, they have to show proof of [insurance] and have to leave their credit card to say *here's the payment for my treatment*. But if it is Mr. Smith from down the street who does not have insurance coverage who goes to the hospital, who does not have an insurance premium that backs him up for his service, to whom is the bill going to go? And how is it going to be settled?

How is the billing system going to work if it is no longer a fee-for-service? How will we know what will whittle away at the \$330 million in the aggregate for our claims? How will we know when that \$330 [million] runs out? How will we know, Mr. Speaker, that we are serving our people?

And what we are seeing today [is] nothing more than simply make sure that the hospital has money to run. The hospital is always going to have money to run. The Hospitals Board had . . . we heard last night that there was \$65 million extra—I would not say “extra,” but there were \$65 million in kind of reserves in the hospital's books in case there was any drain on the \$330 million, that this \$65 million will help to kick in. Short of a pandemic or something in which all hell breaks loose in terms of demand and raid on the hospital's services, then very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that demand on the hospital's services will have to be supplemented and backstopped by the Government, which is understood.

But we do not . . . it is not reasonable to assume pandemic circumstances. When the hospital stresses its capital, when the hospital stresses its ability to remain a viable concern, they have to put in ridiculous stresses . . . what happens if a plane crashes at the same time as there is a mumps outbreak at the

same time that a ship goes down and all these kinds of things? These are the kinds of scenarios that go into stress testing for capital to ensure that an organisation is still solvent. The stress tests that are required, that are prescribed by the regulators, will never, hopefully, ever come to fruition at the same time.

So we can rest almost assured that as we look at the system we are not forced . . . we are not a house on fire where we have to grab the buckets or grab our robes and run out the door. We are not at that degree of critical that we have to do whatever they are trying to do immediately without making sure that Mr. Smith and Mrs. Smith can go up to their doctor on the corner and make sure that they have the money for the co-pay, or that the co-pay goes away, because through the Health Council and the Ministry they have looked at bringing checks and balances on the service providers so that those service providers are kept honest.

Mr. Speaker, as we go through the actual Bill itself there are, obviously, some concerns that will come up. And I think I have asked the major questions. But when the Minister mentioned in her brief this morning that we want to make sure that people get the basic care that they need at a cost that is affordable, the one thing she did not say is that it should be in and out of the hospital. It is not just the hospital. What we are doing now is singularly focused on the hospital, its solvency, its ability to cope, its ability to be funded effectively.

But even with what we are trying to do with giving them a block grant and taking away the necessity for them to generate all these bills and send them up to the insurance company and get paid for it and whatever, Mr. Speaker, it still does not account for the fact that in all this equation as well there is also a human factor. There is a human factor of staffing. And we cannot say, Mr. Speaker, albeit the Standard Health Benefit, the Standard Health claims are mechanised, they all are computerised, they may go from point A to point B, there still has to be somebody who is going to look at the level of accountability to make sure that the charges are appropriate. As I said, we do not want to be paying for an amputation when we should be paying for an aspirin.

Mr. Speaker, the only thing that I can say is that when we present ourselves as legislators to the electorate, to the public, it is important that they know that we have their best concerns at the heart of our intentions. And in so doing, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda are treated and considered first and not as the afterthought, not as . . . we are going to make sure the hospital is fine this year, and next year maybe we will look at pharmaceuticals, and maybe the year after that we will look at provision of services and maybe after that we will do something else.

We also have to look at how it is that we cannot consider the fact that somebody may be employed

today who, through this system, ends up losing their job, because we do not have a whole lot of jobs that have been going . . . now we did hear a focus on ICT this morning in a Ministerial Statement. But what I can say is that to the extent that those jobs are not yet on the table, we do not have that flexibility to say to somebody who is now working in an IT department at the hospital, at an insurance company, wherever, to say, *Oh, well, not much I can do about it; it's just the nature of the business.* And it is okay to stand on the outside and to say to private enterprise, *You need to keep these people on staff. It's not fair for you to let them go; you have to keep them employed.* You can say to the hospital, *You have to keep people employed,* but if their services are no longer required for the jobs that they need to do, where are the efficiencies, Mr. Speaker?

I do not want to see anybody losing their job. But we want to make sure that the people who are employed are employed in a circumstance in which they are effectively being used and that their jobs are critical to what they are providing.

Mr. Speaker, we heard from the Minister this morning that the revenue target of \$330 million for the hospital was derived on the basis of extensive discussions with BHB, and based on their financial needs and positions. I understand that. I understand that fully as an accountant. I believe that anybody who operates in my space would get an understanding of that. But that is not my concern for today. My concern for today is Mr. and Mrs. Smith who may or may not have the co-pay.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a thought process that the only people who can be concerned about Mr. and Mrs. Public reside on the other side of the aisle. I say, not so. I say *not so.* So notwithstanding what protestations we might have coming from across the aisle in that respect, Mr. Speaker, we—every single one of us, all of us—in this House have an obligation to look out for the man and the woman in the street.

The one thing I learned, as I said, I thought that perhaps in retrospect, given the pressures of this legislation and in such a short period of time with such significance was probably a slap in the face to the conference that was held. But the one thing we learned, if we learned nothing else, from that conference, Mr. Speaker, is that there must be a distinct difference between being a politician and being a parliamentarian. I say today, Mr. Speaker, our responsibility in this place, to this Bill, to those people in our community, is for us to be parliamentarians. Let us look as to how we can effectively make changes to our system that work for everybody in a parliamentary and respectful and bipartisan way so that we know how we can act . . . how we can go forward with the best interests of the community at heart.

As it stands there are going to be challenges. If we do not have any changes to what we are seeing, we will challenge it, because that is our responsibility.

But, Mr. Speaker, none of us has any more concern than the others of us that what is required in our community for good and effective health care is not going to be achieved by what we are seeing here today. We are seeing, or we will see, that there will be more expense in terms of premiums outside of the Standard Health Benefit, there will be no guarantees of efficiencies and there will be no guarantees of positive health outcomes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 6.

Honourable Member Furbert, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, we have been listening to the Honourable Member for the last hour (or 58 minutes probably), and I have not really heard—

The Speaker: Everyone else has half an hour from here on in.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, yes, I respect that.

I have not heard any strong arguments about why the Government should not move ahead with this legislation today. To me, the arguments coming from the Opposition were weak and fighting on behalf of organisations that have been making millions over the years.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member speaks about social medicine, or social insurance, or whatever you want to call it—social medicine, in particular—and Moscow, and she referred to Moscow and Cuba. She left out countries like—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

Minister . . . Minister.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I believe the Honourable Member is, unfortunately, misleading the House. Thus far, our [Member] has not mentioned that she was against this Bill in any kind of way at all, but was simply seeking clarification.

And the way that he stated it was as if we were not in favour of the direction that they were looking to go.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member would at least give me back my 30 minutes, I never said the Honourable Member did not support this Bill. But the way she spoke, if anyone was listening, it gave the impression that she did not support the Bill.

And what I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, is that they never gave any strong arguments on why we should even delay debating this Bill today. That is what you are saying. There is no real reason.

The Honourable Member spoke about, as I said, Cuba. But she left out countries such as Canada and Switzerland and other countries that do have—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, the Honourable Member must take account of the fact that places like Canada and Switzerland have a significant tax base that we do not have.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I made mention of that in my presentation. There is a taxation system—

[Gavel]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —which helps to support—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, that is not a point of order.

The Speaker: Ah, ah, ah, ah—I am taking it.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —the cost that goes into their health care and, therefore, is able to ameliorate the cost of their health experiences.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Minister, continue on.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member said that there are certain things the Government should have done first. And it is not like we just woke up. They were five years in Government and the changes that they should have made, they did not make. The cost of—

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mathematically, Mr. Speaker—I am an accountant, as is the Member—but 14 years trumps 5 years any day, any time.

The Speaker: All right, that is—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I do not know what the Honourable Member is . . . I do not know what the Honourable Member—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members, let us just try and stick to the matter that is before us, please.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker, she spoke about being parliamentarians; she definitely is not right now talking about parliamentarians.

Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Stay with . . . stay, stay, stay on the matter before us, please.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, I am going to stay right on line, Mr. Speaker.

But the Honourable Member herself was a former Minister of Health. And if you can think of any substantial legislation the Honourable Member brought to this House to reduce health care costs . . . I cannot recall.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, we did.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: And if she could stand up and tell me which major . . . that reduced costs, because the costs still went up. And there are two Members on that side, as a matter of fact Ministers of Health, that were changing the Bill, like, left, right, and centre. If Honourable Members can tell us what they did, I would be glad to listen.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are at a point in time . . . and sometimes you have to do something out of the extraordinary. What do I mean by that, Mr. Speaker? When we look at the statistics in Bermuda and see the increase—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Out of the extraordinary?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —out of the ordinary, out of the ordinary—

[Gavel]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: But, Mr. Speaker, when we look at what we have, the increase in costs of health care in Bermuda, we all know it. There is one thing that we all [agree on]—health care costs in Bermuda have become extremely high.

Mr. Speaker, I remember being on the Hospitals Board, at 23 years [of age]. As a matter of fact, I was Chairman of the Finance Committee for 12 years. And at that time the Government was giving a . . . there was not a fee-for-service. As a matter of fact, the Honourable Member, Jeanne Atherden, was the Controller at the time. So, we go back there. But there was no fee-for-service at the time. The Government just gave a fixed amount. As a matter of fact, I remember David Saul coming to us after the Hospitals Board was making some good money in those days. We were—

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Board still had to submit claims to the Government and that is not a block [grant]; that is a fee.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am talking about . . . the hospital never charged for an aspirin or charged for a room. We know that. So if the Honourable Member . . . all three of us are accountants, so we understand that. So we are referring to the charge for certain services. The Government used to give an amount, whether they put claims out or not, there was an amount. And we had to get an amount because the Government had to budget for that amount for the year.

And in 2000 . . . 19 . . . I cannot remember the exact time. As a matter of fact, by that time the Honourable Member had left the board. But David Saul found out the way we were calculating our total . . . the amount the hospital should collect . . . and he . . . if you go back, you will find that there was a time when the hospital was in a deficit because the Honourable Member David Saul cut the budget significantly for the hospital.

But going back to [my] point, Mr. Speaker, the cost for hospital, the cost for everything, has just skyrocketed. This Government made a commitment to the people of Bermuda that we would bring down health care costs. We made a commitment. Now, is this the final stage? No. It is part of the beginning of

where we are headed. And so we have to move in a direction that people understand.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we look at the . . . first of all, let me make it very clear. It was the actuaries that told us that costs . . . or the premiums should not go up, based on the model that the Government was moving into. That is the first premise I am trying to get to yourselves—it was them. And so if you look at the Standard Health Benefit, and we look at it as a circle, one big circle, take the diameter being 100 and go around, in there was the MRF. What the Government has just done is increase the MRF. The circle has not changed. So I am totally amazed at how, at the end of the day, certain premiums will go up unless, Mr. Speaker, unless the insurance company does not want to lose their \$100 million a year in profit. That is the only reason why, because the total picture, Mr. Speaker, has not changed by the Government's calculation on that circle. Or, if you look at the Bermuda Health Council's website, which is very explanatory, there is a house and at the bottom there is this rectangle. And the rectangle size did not change, it shifted from MRF to the Standard Health Benefit, but the whole thing did not change, the top part did not change.

So what we are paying for, the Government said, based on this, we are going to allow the Standard Health Benefit . . . let me just get the picture out here for you. The Mutual Re-insurance Fund was paying for kidney treatment, hospital care, chronic disease, and so on and so on. What they have done is just increase that piece of the pie. But the whole circle did not change. The supplementary premiums that were paid in addition . . . the bigger circle . . . and the reason why [is] because they . . . if you look at the Standard Health Benefit Regulations in 1971, it said that these Standard Health Benefits should go towards certain things. And these things were accommodation and meals at the standard or public ward; full nursing services; use of radiotherapy; treatment for alcoholism; the use of bone . . . et cetera. I do not see in there, Mr. Speaker, where it said that that money should go towards profit and dividends.

We have had it wrong all this time. Never at the time when these Regulations were put in place . . . it talked about hearing screenings for newborns. And I am looking in the Act, Mr. Speaker, and I do not see where it says that "X" amount of dollars should go towards shareholders.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I do not see it. We should go back and get that money from 1971, actually backdate it and give it back to the people of this country. And accountants understand that. And we as parliamentarians understand the laws that we passed in this country where money should be allocated. We passed the law where that Standard Health Benefit should go to-

wards. But they have been taking some of the money and paying out to their shareholders.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, they have. The supplemental was supposed to be on top of that for whatever was additional. They could have done that.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: As I said, I do not hold a brief for the insurance company, but I cannot stand and allow misinformation. From the information and the consultations that I have had, there is no standard premium that has been utilised to generate a profit margin. There has been an administration fee, but not a profit margin for any of the insurers with whom I have spoken.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Minister?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I know the Honourable Member stepped out of the room for a while, so maybe she did not understand, or did not hear, but if the loss ratio is 80 per cent, where do you think the 20 per cent went?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: They are accountants. Where do you think the 20 per cent went, Mr. Speaker? I am not asking you, Mr. Speaker, but the Honourable Member should tell this House where she thinks the 20 per cent went.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Other programmes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, our challenge is great. We know that this party had set some goals as far as bringing down health care costs, food costs, and a whole bunch of things. And the beginning . . . this is our second year, we are ending our second year.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member said, *It hasn't been working*. For five years, I did not see anything working, that is why they are not on this side again.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Premier and the Members of the Progressive Labour Party have made a commitment to bring down the cost. You will judge us in another five years whether we have brought down those costs—two years, three years—you will judge us then. As long as the Honourable Member keeps on increasing [the price for] his eggs, I will be all right. No, I am just joking. I am not talking about him in particular.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you consider where we fit in the whole structure of where other countries stand as far as health care, we are . . . I know we like to be in first place. But, man [as a percentage of] GDP, health care costs consumed 11.5 per cent. And the only two countries [which are close to that]—based on this diagram—are Switzerland and the United States. Indonesia is 2.8 [per cent], Turkey is 4.3 [per cent], India . . . why can we not get our costs down? And so the things that the Honourable Member mentioned, as far as what the Government should be doing, the Honourable Minister will be doing those things. The Honourable Minister will be doing those things!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Do it now.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member said, *Do it now*. If the graph . . . and the Honourable Member was there last night at the forum, she saw that particular graph where . . . as far as the hospital . . . the hospital was out of control. I wish I could show those on . . . through the [microphone], Mr. Speaker. But if you see the graph of the Bermuda Hospitals Board, look where it has gone. So that is why 43 per cent—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: [It's] 46 per cent. That is why the Minister dealt with that first. Because who held some control over that but the Minister? So those things are what the Minister felt . . . Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member keeps on saying that the Minister . . . they should have done something themselves, but they did not.

The Speaker: Just talk about what you are going to do and you will be all right.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Talk about what you are going to do.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: They should have done something themselves, but they did not. This Gov-

ernment under the Minister of Health, Kim Wilson, is making a big effort. Now there is never any [gain without any pain] also, I must say that.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Take your seat, Minister.
Yes, Member?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, the Honourable Member indicated that we should have done something. What we did in trying to bring down the cost of health care, Mr. Speaker, the premiums, we looked at the reimbursement of diagnostic imaging. The minute these guys got into power they put it back up and they donated an extra couple million dollars to the hospital and to another private entity in terms of equalising diagnostic imaging. We tried to do things to help decrease the cost of health care.

The Speaker: Thank you. Thank you.
Minister, continue.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, they went after one person; that is all they went after.

The Speaker: Continue, Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Their focus was on an individual. We are focused on the whole, which are some of their friends, who they do not want us to touch.

The Speaker: Now, just, just—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is the difference.

The Speaker: —just, just, just, just stay on your line and length. Do not get distracted.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Their focus was on one person, Mr. Speaker, and the country knows that.

The Speaker: Do not get distracted.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: We know what they were going after.

The Speaker: Do not get distracted.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: But when some of their other friends speak, they do not want us to touch them.

So it is not fair, Mr. Speaker, attacking one individual. What if you attack one of your children and not the rest of them? And said, *I am going to make some cuts on* . . . you have got five people in your family and you are only going to cut one child. What

[about] the other four? No, it is supposed to be comprehensive amongst the whole family. This is a unified approach on how we approach health care costs.

And so the Honourable Member says that as far as our seniors . . . our seniors, because they are getting old, they should pay . . . I was not sure what the Honourable Member was saying. I will be honest with you. But what she implied was that because you are older you should pay more, and if you are younger you should pay less. I could be wrong.

An Hon. Member: You are wrong.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I will just say he is wrong, Mr. Speaker, he probably just needs to check that, it is all right.

The Speaker: That is all right.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I do not want to take his time, but he is wrong.

The Speaker: Let him just follow his point.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: So what is wrong with putting everyone in the same pool and finding a balance between some that are sick and some who are not? And we . . . and the whole view of those who . . . as a matter of fact, the Bible says that we could bear the infirmities of the weak.

Some Hon. Members: Whoa!

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: So when you bear the infirmities of those who are weak you have got to take care of those who are weak.

So you put the weak on the side and take the strong and put them on the other side—that is not balanced, Mr. Speaker. Pooling us all together so we could get our health care costs down overall could be the answer. And so the Minister is working towards a resolution, something that this country can be proud of. And there is nothing wrong in having social benefits and medicine and any other things we do. What is wrong [with that]?

The Congress in the United States is debating on, or they were (as much of the debate as I heard on the radio and television this afternoon), about prescription drugs, bringing down the cost of prescription drugs. There is nothing wrong with that, Mr. Speaker, and there is nothing wrong with people making money either. There is nothing wrong with that. But we have got to find a balance for those who cannot afford it. There are people out there who cannot afford it and you talk about co-pay. Yes, we can deal with that too. We can deal with those things. But this is the first step . . . two years . . . June, July 17th . . . it was a bad day. I am sure you do not remember that date.

But, Mr. Speaker, this Government will stay the course and we have got some more time to put more legislation in place to bring down what we promised this country. We promised that we would bring down the cost of health care, and that is the direction this Government is heading [in].

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak? No other Honourable Member?

Okay, Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: The Throne Speech of 2018 addressed the cost of the health care in Bermuda, and it is the objective of this Government to make it more affordable, make health care more affordable, by expanding access to coverage at better rates.

Mr. Speaker, we spend over \$11,000 a year in health care costs for each person. This we cannot continue in that fashion. This Government is addressing it, maybe not to the satisfaction of some, and we understand that. But change can be hard and painful sometimes. But after you go through that pain it is almost like you are training for a marathon. If you have never run before and you run outside of your lane, you will get tired, sometimes you may even faint. But as you get stronger, you can last longer, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Oh yes, you can, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you know, in the 1970s, the early 1970s, when health care insurance was put in place, it was enacted in this Parliament. And I think the Minister at the time was Quinton Edness. He was the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, legislation was put in place that employer and employee [each] paid 50 per cent for health care.

Mr. Speaker, I will venture to say for the next 10 years after that was enacted, insurance companies made millions of dollars in profits. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because blacks and poor whites did not go to the doctor every year for annual check-ups, things that were covered under the insurance plan. It took many years for that to get into our DNA, or into our culture, like we do today. We go to the doctor every year for a physical. We go to the dental hygienist twice a year. All those things we did not take advantage of regularly, because we were not used to it. We suffered through our pain. We just worked . . . we went to work in pain. And a lot of older folks today, they still do that, they do not run to the doctor.

But things have changed and, unfortunately, insurance companies are there to make a profit. And each year they want to increase that profit. And really it does not matter who pays, as long as they make the profit. And two of the most expensive places in the world for insurance coverage are the United States and little Bermuda. Even though both [countries] spend the most in health care costs, we do not live as long as those that spend much less than us. We live less. We do not live as long as they live, Mr. Speaker. So really, spending a whole lot of money on health care costs does not necessarily mean that you are going to live longer.

This Government is trying to educate our people to get some good habits because, Mr. Speaker, we spend over 10 per cent of our health care cost on diabetes and kidney disease—two diseases that we can, if we ate and changed our way of living, change our way of how we consume our food, we can—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: —we can save a substantial—

The Speaker: I am sitting up here in all this—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: —amount in dollars if we were able to change our lifestyle in terms of our diet.

Mr. Speaker, it was Dr. Brown who said in this Parliament, *If we cut all health care costs by 10 per cent today, we will save over \$70 million a year.*

Mr. Speaker, we have not asked the doctors to cut their rates, even though the workers of this country are working at the 2013 rate of pay. Because, remember, wages were frozen. They had a furlough day. And when they did get an increase under our Government it was only for two years. So they are still working about five, six years behind that rate. But health care costs continued to increase. In fact, under the previous Government, health care costs increased by at least 38 per cent. That is a substantial amount.

Mr. Speaker, in 1974, under the household expenditure, when you compared it to gross wages, we paid (in 1974) \$12.92 for health insurance. And in 2013, that is up \$197.87. Mr. Speaker, today in 2019, I am sure it is much more. We all know that it is because the costs have increased substantially.

Mr. Speaker, we got an actuarial report. And if we continue, as the report says (in my words), if we continue on the path where we are going, we would have to increase the insurance payments by \$84. And this Government said we are not going to do that. We have got to change the way that we pay for health care. And by doing what the Minister and her staff have come up with, we do not have . . . we are not going to take that up to that rate.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, right now up until when this Bill will be passed tonight, right now the . . . when

we . . . it is \$355.31 (the Standard Health premiums) Two hundred and two dollars and sixty seven cents goes to the hospital and others; \$50.67 goes to administration and profit; and \$101.97 goes to the MRF.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing . . . out of that \$355.31, \$331.97 is going to the Mutual Re-insurance Fund. No dollars are going to administration and profit. In fact, out of the \$331.00, \$1.51 goes to administration and oversight, and \$23.34 is going to the SHB health care, Mr. Speaker.

So Mr. Speaker, there are other things that, as a group, we should be attacking, because when we look at drugs . . . generic drugs are put there to help decrease the cost of health care. But I do not know if you all saw *60 Minutes* on television Sunday night. There is a case before the Supreme Court of the United States because these generic drug companies are making a mint. In fact, one of the leading lawyers that is leading this case, was paying \$20 for a drug because of a skin condition. That drug went up to \$1,800—over 8,000 per cent! Then there is another drug for asthma treatment, very common to some of our people in Bermuda. It went from \$11 a bottle to \$434. And these are generic drugs! And then one for cholesterol went from \$27 to \$196 per bottle.

Mr. Speaker, the report says that in the United States, 90 per cent of all prescription drugs are filled with generic drugs. This is supposedly making health care cheaper. We do not produce any drugs in Bermuda and so we have got to bring in these generic drugs. Nobody is attacking that. They are saying the Governments are responsible. You think the PLP Government is responsible for things for which we have no control over. That is what we are facing. And I just hope that this case in the United States is very successful because that certainly would affect us. And maybe we have to look at different places to bring in drugs from, provided that they conform to the standards that are set out by the World Health Organization, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, I . . . you know, I have said to my colleagues that maybe we should be looking at other places to get health care when we have to go overseas. I know most people who require treatment go to the United States. But I would think . . . now I have not done the research, but I would think Canada is much more reasonable, and certainly the UK is much more reasonable. And I think we have to start sending people to the UK because, for example, if someone has a conviction for a *seed* from 30 years ago, and they need to go overseas for treatment, they have to get a waiver. And the way things are in another country, it is not so easy.

So when people call me I say, *Well, you need to tell your doctor to refer you to the UK, because you can go home and get treatment*—we are British, whether we like it or not. So they cannot . . . they do not stop you from going home. So we need to look at, particularly for that particular purpose, because the

UK has got some fine health institutions in existence and we should use them, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I certainly support the Minister, my Government, for taking a stance and, certainly the staff of the Health Ministry, for trying to find ways to decrease the cost of health care in this country. Yes, it is going to be painful. But insurance companies, as you can see, Mr. Speaker . . . I have heard from some people that have gotten notices from insurance companies where the insurance has gone up over 20 per cent.

And people—some people—are blaming the Government because they do not know better, instead of trying to find the facts. We are trying to contain the costs. And why would the insurance companies increase their rates? For more profit. You see, I think I heard it on TV the other night. Some companies have become too big to care. And so, really, they really do not care about . . . they will probably write in the paper the way they love to write me up. And I will get a rebuttal that, *Yes, we care*. Care about what? Profits! Yes.

They have got to stop thinking that every year they have got to make a bigger profit on health care. Health care is a human right, something we should have, and it should not be made for profit. Our people deserve that health care. It is not a privilege; it is a right we should have—all. And you should get that health care service, and that is our objective, regardless of your financial position. Our folks should have treatment afforded to them whether they are rich, whether they are middle class, or whether they are poor or homeless.

And that is the objective of this Government, to make sure that people are serviced, whether they have got insurance or not. We cannot have our people going to the hospital and because they are not insured they are not going to get service. That is not the case. And we do not want to make that the case because some people are homeless because of the circumstance of this country, some people are poor because of the circumstance of this country, and we cannot let them suffer because of some of the circumstances [are the result] of some of the history in this country.

Mr. Speaker, health care to working men is young in Bermuda—when I say “young” [I mean] enacted in the 1970s. A lot of other folks had that before we even got that, like pensions. And it has gotten out of hand because, just like in the United States, when the private sector is involved your health insurance will be as expensive as it is.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member . . . we recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 10. Honourable Member Dunkley, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, I start out by asking the question, How does this Bill decrease the cost of health care? Because that is where the Honourable Member from constituency 6 started. And he went on in his presentation with some emotion and he talked about this Government’s commitment to bringing the cost of health care down. And so far in this debate, which started about twelve o’clock, I have not heard any fundamental understanding of this Bill on how it will bring the cost of health care down.

I have heard a lot of conversation so far (and I am sure this debate is going to go on for some time). I have heard a lot of conversation up to this point in time about many different things that are not included in this Bill, but I have heard nothing, if very little, to show me how this Bill is going to bring the cost of health care down. And that is the underlying problem that my colleagues and I have with this Bill. And it is the reason why there is a lack of support for this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable colleague who speaks for Health made a very commendable presentation this afternoon, just coming back from a procedure herself. I know how she is committed to it. I know she is committed to this House and the people she serves. And she came back and did a wonderful presentation after listening to people, consulting with people, and bringing information to this House.

And I am going to start where my honourable colleague started out because, Mr. Speaker, there has been a lack of consultation; there has been a lack of input. People involved in the industry have just been advised of what Government is going to do. And this Government hangs their hat on consultation, listening to people, moving forward together. But we have seen the track record over the almost two years, Mr. Speaker. The track record has been veiled in consultation, but it is, *We are going to tell you what to do and we will move forward from there*.

This important Bill, as my honourable colleague said—and it bears repeating over and over again, Mr. Speaker—this important Bill has been rushed to the floor of Parliament because time is not on the Government’s side. They gave a commitment to June 1st and they have to make that commitment to June 1st. Hence, here we are today with the Rules of the House being pushed to a seldom-used Rule to allow it to be debated without the two required sittings here. And perhaps some of that, Mr. Speaker, is because it is 25/11. That is not good for democracy in any way because this, Mr. Speaker, is a significant piece of legislation.

The Speaker: Speak to the Bill, speak to the Bill.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Everyone in Bermuda is concerned about their health. Everyone in Bermuda is concerned about their cost of health care. But what is happening today is not informing, it is not listening, it is telling, just telling people, Mr. Speaker. And what I find most amazing about it is . . . because I would say a couple of weeks ago this started to really ferment behind the scenes and then bubble out into the public and information has slowly come out.

First, the Minister made some comments. Then some of the insurers made some comments. Then the Minister went back and then we get into, what I would call the straw man about who is guilty about this—the insurance companies making too much money. We go back and forth. And all through this, up until today bits and pieces of information have leaked out. And I was quite surprised, Mr. Speaker, to see and to hear last night in the public meeting we learned about a \$65 million, what I would call slush reserve that is there just in case.

So, through this period information has just trickled out. And I say that because this is a significant change, and I do not think that the people of Bermuda really understand what is going to take place—and I will come to that in a minute.

The PLP needs to own this change. They own it today because it seems that their benches in unison support the change. But they need to own the change; they need to manage the change, Mr. Speaker. And this is very key because this is a fundamental change to the way that health care has been managed. And I have not heard yet, Mr. Speaker (and I will get to that more) how this change will be managed effectively.

The PLP also as the Government need to understand what the impact of the change is going to be. And I have not heard that up until this point in the debate as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me address for just a few minutes the cost of health care. And I will admit that generally our health care in Bermuda is quite good. We know we have one of the highest costs of health care in the world, but generally the care we get is good. We have got some excellent professionals at the hospital and out in the community taking care of Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda who we all care so much about.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting things—and it causes me to just smile quietly for a moment about these types of debates—is how everyone says what the other guys have not done and what they have done and vice versa. Well, Mr. Speaker, when you point a finger at someone else, four fingers always point back. But here is what I can say; health care costs in Bermuda are expensive. That is a fact. We all agree on that.

Health insurance premiums in Bermuda . . . and the Honourable Member from constituency 5 who just sat down talked about health insurance premiums back in the 1970s and how much they have changed.

Mr. Speaker, I just look back over the past 10 or 20 years. Health insurance premiums have doubled in the last 10 years—10 years. Now reflect on that impact. And we will say it off the cuff in the debate but, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we reflect on that impact, reflect on the impact to the people we serve, those people paying those insurance premiums. There is no way that their cost-of-living increases or the increases they would get because a business is doing well or they have done well or they have been promoted . . . there is no way that those cost-of-living increases, or whatever raise they earn, will keep up with the increasing cost of health care.

Mr. Speaker, in my company . . . and I have no interest in health care, so I speak without any conflict in any way about that. In my company, Mr. Speaker, I have watched the rise in what we pay for health care by law. And we have always paid a slight bit more than the 50 per cent that we have to pay—that is something that my grandfather started back in the 1970s. And, of course, when you give people something which they deserve, you do not roll it back. But, Mr. Speaker, in the company that I have worked in for 40 years now, we pay \$1 million a year for health care—a million dollars!

When I started out in 1980, I could never imagine I would be standing here in the House of Assembly in 2019 stating that figure, Mr. Speaker. It is unsustainable. And so we support every initiative to bring down the cost of health care. But, unfortunately, myself and many Members of this House—probably on both sides—will question the success of the direction we [are going] because we have not seen it yet. But we point fingers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the worker cannot afford it. The employer cannot afford it. I have already heard over the past couple of weeks and months as these changes have been muted coming out in the community, how some employers are looking at ways to stay in business because of the rising cost of taxation (which they have to pay) and they are reducing benefits to their employees. Clearly, that is not what we want. Clearly, that is not acceptable.

And you know what is amazing about it is that over the last couple of days I have talked to people in the street. I have talked to people that I work with at Dunkley's about health care. And very few of them know how much they have actually paid. Very few of them have calculated the changes over time, Mr. Speaker. And I do not care if you can afford to pay it or if you cannot afford to pay it, it is shocking and eventually it knocks on your door where enough is enough. It is unsustainable for Bermudians, Mr. Speaker. It is unsustainable for the man in the street who is struggling to get ahead. This is sugar tax number two.

And why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Because sugar tax number one was well-intended. Sugar tax number one was done without adequate consulta-

tion—no listening, just advising. This is sugar tax number two. It is unsustainable for a successful Bermuda going forward because of the pillar of our community which brings in the revenue, which props up our GDP, which really is a miracle GDP, but some people would classify it as a false GDP, Mr. Speaker—international business. If we did not have international business here, Bermuda would just be paradise. It would not be a successful paradise; it would be paradise struggling to get ahead.

So, Mr. Speaker, health insurance costs with international business—who can move anywhere they want in this world, who do not have to be anywhere to do business . . . they need certain things, yes. They need quick access to the markets, quick access to get regulation, they need a lack of bureaucracy going forward, they need to be able to have good service—Internet and things like that. They need to be able to travel and stuff like that. But the cost of health care to an industry that is a pillar of Bermuda not only impacts the people of Bermuda, it has international business questioning, *Well, wait a second, is this the right way?*

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Honourable Minister and the civil servants who work so hard. And we do not always agree with the policy. I would like answers. How do the ABICs and the ABIRs feel about this policy? What has been the communication with them? How does the hospital feel about the implementation of this policy? What has been the pushback from within the various sectors of the community?

Let us face it, Mr. Speaker, if we could get something for nothing, we are all going to want that nothing from us to get that something. But, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day somebody has got to pay. And what we are doing here is . . . I see Government rushing into something without any measure of success being able to be seen by us on the Opposition benches, and they are just fighting to say that, *We're going to move forward. We're going to reduce the cost of health care.* And I am concerned, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned because I do not see how this is going to be successful.

Now, look, the cost of health care, general health care inflation . . . from my research it shows that it is 6.5 per cent this year. So, if the Government believes that the cost of health care should not go up, what do we do about that 6.5 per cent increase generally in health care inflation? And if the Minister can correct those numbers or prove that number correct when the time comes, I would like to hear it. But if it is 6.5 per cent, who is paying for that 6.5 per cent? Is the hospital paying for it? Are we going to pay for it down the road somewhere else? Is it coming from that slush reserve that I referred to, Mr. Speaker?

Last year we know the Government took a lot of stick for increasing the Standard Premium Rate by 6.4 per cent—6.4 per cent. They took a lot of flak about that. So when the actuarial came back this year

and said that we would need to increase the rate by \$84—\$84—I am not surprised that the Government balked and said, *That is not the way that we are going to go.* And that is acceptable. But when you are listening to the rationale for going in the direction we are going, it does not make any sense to me.

So they devised this block funding. And I have sat here since twelve o'clock (with the lunch break) and I am still looking to see how this is going to work, and I am still waiting. The Minister's brief did not include it.

So I want to know, Mr. Speaker, \$330 million is given to the hospital—a significant amount of money. What is in place to make sure that it works effectively? Mr. Speaker, what is in place to make sure that it is efficiently used? What changes are put in place to make sure that this money is spent in the appropriate way, that there is no waste, there is no overutilisation, and there is control over it? I am still waiting.

But what do I hear, Mr. Speaker, on the eve of this important debate? I hear there is a slush reserve. Now, Mr. Speaker, \$65 million . . . that is a lot of money. Even when you talk about Government budgets and all, \$65 million—a slush reserve, we heard last night—is not mentioned in the brief. *The slush reserve, we hope we do not have to use it, but it is there if we need it.* That is more than \$1,000 that every Bermudian has put aside to pay for something if it does not work. Can you imagine those Bermudians in need, what they could do with that money? How they—the man in the street that we all love and we talk about—could reduce the cost of their groceries if that money was actually put aside for healthy living? Not in some slush reserve where we just heard about it, but now it is available and now, if we have to use it, we will use it.

Mr. Speaker, when I heard that [last night] all the support that I thought about giving to the Bill went out the window in that nice heavenly breeze we had last night. It was gone, and it is not coming back. It is not coming back, Mr. Speaker. One thousand dollars—more than \$1,000—per person is put aside.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we hear Honourable Members on the Government benches talk about how they want to reduce the cost of health care. But when [the OBA] Government came forward with real change to help by capping costs for services given out there, as soon as the PLP became the Government they were pushed into a corner and they paid out millions of dollars to people who threatened them.

Mr. Speaker, they were threatened, they blinked, and they paid. No, no, Mr. Speaker, let me correct that—

The Speaker: Well, well, let us not—

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Ah, ah, ah, ah, I got it.

Let us not make accusations that you cannot support. So, if you cannot support that there was a threat, do not put it out there. You were on a good line and length until then. You were on a good line and length. So stay on the line and length that you were on.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will support that there was a legal suit, so Government paid out to settle the suit. That is what I was referring to, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay. Move on.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, I will move on, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, to change the direction of trying to deal with one of the challenges . . . and Members on both sides of the House have talked about utilisation of services. The Honourable Member who spoke just before me talked about utilisation of services. But what happened? So what did we see at the Bermuda Health Council? The CEO is removed so they can go in another direction, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is the start of a change to a single payer system.

POINT OF ORDER

[Imputing improper motives]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Mr. Dunkley must stop imputing improper motives gamely and continuously, please.

The Speaker: Ah—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, if what I said was incorrect, the Honourable Member can correct me. But I don't think that was the case.

The Speaker: Well, well, wait, wait, everybody take your seat.

So far this day has been on track. Do not get yourselves sidetracked on something that you should not be walking on. Stay on point where you are. And I do not think it is clear yet why certain individuals may or may not be where they were beforehand. It is not for us to sit in this room and make that judgment. So until it is made open and clear, I would ask us to stay away from that.

You have the floor.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to comment on that matter because it is for the courts.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I made the single comment about that to talk about the direction that we are taking.

And so here we are, Mr. Speaker. Today it is a start of a single-payer system. Money that is going directly to Government we will send to the hospital.

An Hon. Member: Amen.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, Mr. Speaker, I hear the Honourable Member say on that side, *Amen*. And while I have confidence in the Government to provide many services, one area of confidence that is lacking is to provide the oversight of a block grant going to the hospital without any background shown today of how it is going to be managed, controlled, and where the efficiencies are going to come from.

Mr. Speaker, we would have to be foolish to stand here today and voice support for this Bill without fundamental questions being answered. We cannot just blindly follow behind a 25/11 Government and expect, *Okay, \$330 [million] goes to the hospital and they will manage it in the most appropriate way*. What systems have changed down there? Who is responsible for that management? How is it going to be controlled?

You know, one of the things that I have not heard discussed in this debate as of yet, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that we have seen over recent years the use of the hospital increase drastically. And I think everyone [can state] their view of why that has happened, but one of the reasons why I have seen it happen, Mr. Speaker, certainly in my company, is the fact that doctors charge a co-pay for a doctor's visit. So a lot of people say, *Well, you know what? I am not worried about going to my doctor. I need to get an appointment. I have got to wait in the doctor's room, and then I have got to pay money out of my pocket, and it changes for every doctor. I am just going to go to the hospital*. So we have seen services at the hospital be called on with more and more demand.

And now, with this change to a single-payer system where a block grant is going to go to the hospital with its already increased usage, how is it going to be managed? That is a real concern.

So in doing this, Mr. Speaker, the Government, in my belief, is quietly and conveniently putting an increased burden on the private sector. Government is taking the burden that they should [accept]—[this is] why people pay taxes for the indigent, for those who need help, for young people, for older people. They are shifting [this burden] onto the private sector and they are saying it is okay to do because the insurance companies are making too much profit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the insurance companies were making too much profit, where are the discussions that they have had with the insurance companies to discuss this? I have not heard about it. The Minister was very strong, very strong, in her com-

ments about the insurance companies. But at the same time, if you are going to be very strong in those comments, I want to know what discussions you had with them to show your discontent and to show how they would work together. I have not heard it, Mr. Speaker. That is a straw man in my view.

This Bill does nothing to address the fundamental costs of health care in Bermuda. We have not seen it yet. In fact, and I am going on record today, because Hansard is a beautiful thing, Mr. Speaker. It is a beautiful thing. I will go on record today that this will be a backward step and it will lead to more increases in health care.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, further enables health care providers to overutilise with little oversight—few checks and balances. If we want to deal with the challenges facing health care today, we should start with overutilisation. We have great discussions about health care in this Honourable Chamber and in our caucuses, and I am sure you do in the PLP as well. The factors that contribute to the cost of health care . . . overutilisation is one of them. Medical technology and innovation is expensive, and we are paying for it; spending on drugs (the Honourable Member from constituency 5 talked about spending on drugs). But you know what? There are many generic drugs that, if Government mandated the use of those, we could save money.

Another reason why we see a real increase in health care is that there is very intensive diagnostic testing that is done. And quite often, Mr. Speaker, in my view it gets a bit defensive, because it is done over and over and over again trying to look for a reason behind it, but that is unsustainable.

Of course, we know our demographics are impacting us in a real way. Now we have the baby boomers starting to age a bit. Our senior population is growing, and their health care costs are quite a bit more, much more, than the younger people. And the younger people are the group that is going to pay more disproportionately for this than older people. And younger people do not use health care as much as older people because they do not need to. Plus, when you are younger you feel that you are invincible—*I have a little ache and a pain, I'm not going anywhere.*

Mr. Speaker, we also know that our lifestyles and other high-risk behaviours are a drastic drag on the cost of health care, whether it is obesity, our physical inactivity, whether it is our diet, and then there is the general inflation that I referred to.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we had a Bill that came today which addressed those fundamentals—even if it was just two, three or four of them—rather than a block grant to a hospital like, *We'll give the money to them, they are the experts, they'll deal with it, and we feel comfortable*, I think you would see more support, Mr. Speaker.

Now Mr. Speaker, during their election campaign the Government was very vocal in talking about

Two Bermudas. Well, Mr. Speaker, I believe this will help create more of Two Bermudas in our community. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because you are shifting the cost to the working class to make them pay the bill. Included in the Government taxes that continue to go up there is a lack of check and balance and, at the end of the day, the working-class people are going to pay the bill with no guarantee that they are even getting value for money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is time that we stopped the talk of the straw man and blaming somebody else. We have to have real talk, because in a year's time we will be back here again. A budget will be passed, health care will be a hot topic again, and we will know what has happened in the months to come with that \$330 million block grant. And I would love to see my suspicion and my research proven wrong, Mr. Speaker. I would love to see that it is successful. But I just cannot see it, Mr. Speaker. I see a hospital that is going to be overwhelmed by people going down there. I see hospital staff that are going to be overwhelmed by what they have to do. I see a lack of control for money that needs to be put in certain areas. And I see Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, who we all care so much about, paying for something that we cannot afford anymore, Mr. Speaker.

This is a step in the wrong direction, and we need to think more clearly about it. And before the Government even asks us to support this Bill, they need to explain how this is going to be productive and get some buy-in—not only from us, but from the people they serve who are really starting to raise questions. Because they are tired . . . people are tired of being taken for granted, Mr. Speaker. They know the health premium is going to go up again. And we can blame the insurance companies when 15 per cent is passed on, or 20 per cent is passed on, Mr. Speaker. But that does not change the fact that more money is coming out of Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda's pay cheque. They are not going to get a raise to cover that in most cases, Mr. Speaker, and ends are going to get tougher to meet.

More people will leave the country. When the PLP was in the Opposition, they talked about people leaving the Island and going to the UK wherever they can go. People will be leaving the country. And we have a responsibility not just to pass something that sounds good, but to show how it is going to work well.

And I will take my seat now and wait for that rationale, for that reason, for that understanding to come. And if it is not heard, Mr. Speaker, this Bill cannot be supported.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does another Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 4. Honourable Member Furbert, you have the floor.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Members.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wore my green master jacket today, [for] anybody who understands golf, "Tiger" is very strategic—

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: —and logical in his approach. This Bill also makes logical and strategic sense, Mr. Speaker in its changes.

While it may not be favourable for the insurance industry, it does, however, Mr. Speaker, make sense. And I do not envy the Minister of Health for the decisions she has had to make. But I do know that we have a very excellent actuarial team. And the Opposition should know that as well, because I am sure they have worked very closely with them as well. And so they would have studied this and made decisions in regard to how this would impact our health care system.

Our current health care system, Mr. Speaker, is unsustainable. With 75 per cent of our people being overweight and obese, and a 35 per cent rate of chronic disease, Mr. Speaker, it is costing us way too much.

I did attend the town hall meeting last evening as well, Mr. Speaker, and many of the questions that were raised today were actually answered in the town hall meeting last evening. Last evening the presentation was very detailed and many people were there and they had the opportunity to ask questions. I think they did a phenomenal job in their presentation because we thought that the questions would be at a much higher volume. We know that all insurers, Mr. Speaker, have to pay into the MRF [Mutual Reinsurance Fund], and that includes [GEHI], that includes Argus, BF&M, Colonial—all of them. They will have to pay into the MRF.

Mr. Speaker, we currently have a "sick care" system, and not a health care system. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I work in the health care field and I am run off my feet every day having to deal with health issues. We talk about "utilisation." Mr. Speaker, we all have a responsibility in utilisation. I have an uncle who is homeless. Prior, he was living in a home and the home burnt down. He had to get help because he had nowhere to stay, and he did not really take advantage of the health care system because he had no insurance.

Once he was able to get help through FA [Financial Assistance], and he got insurance, he then had the opportunity to be part of our health care system. And he had not been in our health care system since he was a child.

When he was young he had an injury which impacted his vision, his eye, and so now that he had insurance he was able to get follow-up treatments and follow up in regard to his vision. He was stabilised, you know, he had cataract surgery, he was stabilised, and he is doing well. However, I noticed that they kept making appointments for him every two to three months and his vision was stabilised. And I said, *Why do you have to keep going to this doctor every two to three months when your vision is stabilised? You tell me that you are seeing better than you ever saw before.*

He said, *Because they kept telling me to come back. They kept making appointments for me.*

So I called and asked, *Why are we making appointments for him? He does not need to come.*

And so, you know, in all of this we all have responsibility for utilisation. If that means advocating on behalf of other people, advocating for ourselves, we must do that. We cannot continue to do things the same way, or just continue to kick the can down the road. We cannot continue to fund an open cheque. We have to be more efficient in hopes of making health care more affordable for Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda.

Care will still be available outside of the hospital. There is a misconception that care is not going to be available outside of the hospital with this change that we are going to make. Care will still be available. Currently, Bermuda's funding mechanism for health care is extremely complicated. We saw this chart last night. It is extremely complicated and it is . . . we understand why . . . how things could go missing and things [could be] misunderstood.

For a country of our size, this could be much more simplified, and this is what we have attempted to do, Mr. Speaker. So taking a block payment of \$330 million is making the process simplified. It does not mean claims are not going to happen! Claims are still going to happen.

If this system was easy, it would have been fixed by now, Mr. Speaker. Would we rather have an \$84 increase in our premium? Because that is what actuaries were proposing to maintain a status quo. Honourable Dunkley's insurance . . . he would have had to pay more, it would have gone up. But we as a Government are keeping our commitment of what we can control to keep health care costs down for our people by maintaining the current extended premium rates. The money that we are spending for the people of Bermuda is going toward your health care. No where else! Our health care system has to start cooperating to make health care more affordable. The insurance companies should be a part of this cooperation.

The change of a block payment will hopefully encourage the hospital to put in place controls and to also make our system a little bit more efficient. And because we have control of this, we know that the

majority of our health care costs, 46 per cent, goes toward the hospital care. So we are going to use this as an opportunity, and also an incentive, to keep people in Bermuda healthy.

The hospital has all sorts of expertise. They sat around the table, I am sure, and the insurance [people] have sat around the table, I am sure, looking at how we could make our health care system more affordable. They continue to do this, I am sure, within the health care reform meetings.

Insurance companies will now have to get a little bit more creative, and they cannot expect to do the same things the same way and get a different outcome. So why address the hospital? I am quite sure, actually, like I explained before, that we have more controls over the hospital, Mr. Speaker, and if we can work with the hospital so that they can create programmes within the hospital to try to get health care costs down . . . we actually have a very effective programme right now, which is the Enhanced Pilot Care Programme, and I am hoping that the hospital with all their expertise will come up with some more programmes to also help to actually deal with health a little bit better and to make people more healthy rather than us becoming more sick.

So we are trying to address this issue. We want to be able to preserve health care for the future. There are two questions. Should Government be in the business of subsidising administration costs and profit? How are we going to change the behaviours of our people and of our system, [which is] causing their health care costs to be so high? How are we going to do this? We have allowed health care to become a business of profit. And if you follow health care all over the world, particularly in the United States, health care is a big profit business. And so we have to try and figure out how we are going to pull in the reins now. If we don't, we are going to be in big trouble, Bermuda.

To the people of Bermuda [I say], shop around. Shop around for your health care needs. You know, a lot of times we get on social media and we will complain about things but we do not really go to the source to try to get health care costs down. Okay? And even if we shopped around, we might even find that some of the cost savings are not a big, significant difference, but that should still not stop us from shopping around.

It is not an option to do nothing, Mr. Speaker. It is not an option. We have to continue to protect the citizens of our country. We have to continue to make our citizens responsible. And practicing healthy behaviours we should be incentivising. We will stay the course because our ultimate goal is to provide national health care. As you will see in this Bill, there are many other changes as well which—I mean, actually, great changes.

So we have to continue to run the course and believe that we are making the right decisions. You

know, sometimes we will speak as though not much time, not much effort, not much thought has gone into a particular Bill, but it has, Mr. Speaker. It has. And we will see, just like how the Progressive Labour Party, so many years ago, enacted pensions for our people, we will see in the years to come, how this will be helpful to us as a country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak? We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 19. Honourable Atherden, you have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think I am glad I am starting where the Member left off, because I think this whole question of the Bill and where we are going, to me, gets right down to what is the intent. And when I look at the information that was put out by the Minister, it seems to me that it is all centring on universal health care for all. And when you look at it and look at the information that has been put out in her brief, et cetera, it is the social contract, et cetera, and I just think that the people of Bermuda need to understand what this means, because I have always maintained that everybody in Bermuda should have access to health care.

And I have always maintained that we should be looking at ways in which we make sure they have access. And I know that when I used to be the Minister, we used to talk about the potential 6,000 individuals who were out there who were uninsured or underinsured, and I used to say to myself, *Okay, we have indigent subsidy. We have age subsidy. We have youth subsidy. There has got to be a way that we can turn around and deal with these 6,000 people.*

And I always used to say, *If we could somehow give an insurance card to these 6,000 people to say, 'Here you are. This is your card. When you are ill, go to your doctor and have whatever illness taken care of. Do not go to the hospital where you are going end up being charged \$2,000 for a doctor's visit that you could pay \$200 for. And I thought, Why can't we do that? When I heard that this current Government was working on something that we had hoped to work on, which was the unique patient identifier, I thought, Great! That might be the beginning of trying to figure out how to have universal health for everyone.*

But, now that I see what is being introduced, my concern is, I believe that we are putting the cart before the horse. I believe that we are coming up with something that says that you are going to have universal health [coverage], but I still cannot see with all the stuff that is in here, how it is going to get down for the people who we need to get to. I cannot see how the person who is underinsured, or the person who does not have insurance because he is not working, I can't see how he is going to be better served.

So, for me, I am saying, *Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, look carefully at what is going to happen because there are some unintended consequences.* And when I get to talk about some of the other things that are happening, they will see. On the one hand, there has always been two issues that we have had to wrestle with. I acknowledge, we all acknowledge, \$770 million (or whatever, those huge numbers), we do not want to be at that level because I know this is the type of thing—you do not mind having your . . . the cost of . . . the amount of money that [Bermudians earn] high because then you can say you have got the richest people in the world. But you do not want your health insurance to be high because then you are saying, *Hey, we are too expensive.*

But what we have to look at, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that if we are going to bend this curve, you have to bend the curve one of two ways. You have to bend the curve in utilisation, or you have to bend the curve in terms of the cost that you charge for that. So when I look at the things that are here, I am really concerned, because I see lots of things that talk about putting money in this pocket and putting it there and whatever else, and I do not see anything that talks about bringing the cost of health care down, so I am going to go through, Mr. Speaker, and I am going to pick out a number of things in here that I believe Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda need to understand and what this says.

I have no problem with saying health care in many countries is considered to be a basic human right. Understood. I do believe that in Bermuda we should try and make sure that everybody has access to health care. And that is why I am reminded, and I had forgotten all about this, when you used to have . . . down at the hospital, you used to have a clinic that people who did not have insurance could go to, they could go down there and they could be seen by staff that cared about them and whatever, and all of a sudden someone made it like a dirty word as if to say, *You can't go down there.* And so I am saying, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that when we do things we do not have unintended consequences that were unforeseen. Or, if someone had a plan, then you need to understand what their unintended consequences were and make sure that you are not hoodwinked.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there was an indication that we do not want to have persons who fail to receive the care that they desperately need. That is what I said. That, to me, was why you had the subsidies. You had age subsidies [and] indigent subsidies, and that is why I always felt that they were put together to try and make sure that these people were covered. But maybe they were not achieving as much as we wanted. So, when you start talking about current health care spending, over \$720 million—which it is rather unfortunate, but [that is what] it is—and when you have it being stated that how we reduce the cost

of doing business is by lowering the cost of health insurance, I totally agree with that. But I do not believe that you are going to say that this is going to attract more international business to Bermuda. What it is going to do is make sure that everybody that is on the Island can then pay for their health insurance and make sure that, generally, Bermuda becomes less expensive.

And I totally agree with the Minister indicating that it is time for us to do this because we want to make health financing reform to improve our health system for the sake of our economy and for our families. I buy into that. I think all of my party buys into that. We are aligned as it relates to that. But where we get into this issue is how do we make sure that the cost of health care is improved.

I have a real concern when I see it stated that holding our hospital more accountable for how much care they need to deliver, and the quality of health care they provide . . . I support that. I think we all support that. But I think we are also forgetting part of this. The hospital is a provider and, in some respects, the hospital is subject to the demands that other people put on them. A doctor has to send you down to go to the hospital, to say that you are ill, and to ask you to be admitted. When the hospital does lab tests, any of the lab tests that are done for the hospital inpatient, are not charged outside. The only services that are charged are the ones that outside physicians order.

So, in some respects, we have to understand that they are not like some providers where they can generate, by and large, their revenues, where they have control of their revenues. And so, to suggest they are responsible for how much care they need to deliver, I think sometimes it is not having us look very clearly at the way they operate.

From the perspective of better reporting and better negotiation of cost, I think we all buy into that. I think we all agree. And I just cannot see how changing this money from one pocket to the other is going to prevent the Government from saying that right from the get-go. Because I remember when we were the Government, we had discussions with the hospital about doing that. They had a study done, I think it was by KPMG, where they went through, they looked at all the costs, they brought down a number of their fees, they looked at ways to better utilise the service, so this is not something that does not happen. And for this current Government to do that, I glory in that, because the better that they can be in what they do, the better we can make sure that the costs that we have to pay for these services [can be reduced]. So, better utilisation and better partnerships, I think we are all into that.

But, as I say, the hospital did that before. But what I am concerned about is the suggestion that looking for the hospital to be better, and then to turn around and not talk about the other providers, that worries me. Because if you turn around and you look

at the amount of money that is being spent, if there is \$700 million that is being spent outside, in total, and if we are saying that the hospital is \$330 million, then there is still money which is almost more than that money which is being spent. And I know some of this is being spent overseas, and we cannot always control what is happening overseas. So when you start to look at the suggestion of doing these changes, getting the basic care at a cost that is affordable, I do not think that anybody on this side of the House disputes that. But you have to start looking at what is affordable.

And when I look at what the Minister said, I looked at three things. She said that we are asking for a base level of social responsibility for all. And I do not know whether the definition of “social responsibility” has ever been put out there so that all of Bermuda understands. When you say “social responsibility,” I believe that this Government needs to come and make clear what they mean by social responsibility for all.

And when you start to talk about the basic care, it is important for us to have clarity on how is basic care defined because depending on what you put in there determines how much you have to spend and also how much is going to be available. And then we are talking about the cost that is affordable. When we started to try and look at the cost that some services should be, we changed it. Then all of a sudden, the next thing happened. The current Government came in and increased it. So I am saying to myself, *If we brought it down to something that is affordable, what was the basis on which it went up?* And if your premise is to make it affordable, and you come up with something that made it affordable, then why would you backtrack?

But, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Minister indicating that . . . in terms of it is the time to allow every member of society to have the right for health care, I do not think that anybody disagrees. Where we get into this disagreement is the way it is being done. Because if you are not clear on why you are taking all this money from the standard premium . . . the Standard Health Benefit [SHB], and moving it over, and saying only \$25.00 of the amount is going to be transferred over the hospital, it leads one to require some clarity on, How was this identified? I have not heard anyone indicate the basis on which this amount was created.

I have looked and I know that I have seen the BHB [Bermuda Hospitals Board] accounts which indicate that even . . . and I mean, the last lot of accounts of 2014 that indicate for the whole BHB that it was \$305 million. And I am saying that the Minister is saying that it is going to be capped at \$330 million, and I still cannot figure out how you get from \$305 [million] to \$330 [million]. But then actually when I go and I have the actuarial report, the actuarial report shows that when you are looking at BHB it is sort of like \$163

million, and I presume that is without looking at things like for the renal dialysis. But I think it is important for the Minister to clarify the basis on which this amount of money was moved out.

The reason I say that is because if you do that, if you make it clear how the \$330 [million] was allocated, then I think you can get into a better understanding of how much was put for the hospital-based expenditures, and how much was left for the rest. Because nobody has made it clear to Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda that all those other things that are not at the hospital, they are still going to use those services. They are still going to have to pay for those things, or have those things paid for out of their insurance. And if the insurance does not have the money there, the insurance companies are then going to turn around and say, *Hey, we have to decide to charge you more.*

And we need to make sure that there are some actuarial basis for splitting \$330 [million] and taking \$25[.00] and all the rest going out. And I have not heard anybody . . . and I hope the Minister will explain that because without that, you have what I feel like is a money grab. A money grab that says, *We can take all this money and we can put it over there and we have it available to do things—*

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: —*and we have it available there to do other things.*

And the reason I have this concern is because everybody forgets that the Government is also one of the payers. Okay? The Government is a payer because the Government pays for indigent, aged and youth [subsidies], which means that they are also persons who [get sick] and have claims that need to be paid. So let's not forget that. Okay? And that is why it is important to have some clarity on how this works because we will have a better understanding of the splitting of the money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the suggestions that the costs will have to shift, and some caps will have [to be] put in place to control costs, I buy that. But I do not see enough indication about how that is going to work, because that is where Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda is going to get the bang for their buck. They are going to get their bang for the buck by hearing how these costs are going to be controlled. They are going to be getting the bang for their bucks by hearing the caps that have been put in place because we know . . . and I can say that because I actually read the last actuarial report, if you can allow me for one second, Mr. Speaker.

The last actuarial report indicated that there was this utilisation and they said, “The utilization represents the overall expected change” and “It may arise due to numerous factors such as ageing of the population, the introduction of new medical technolo-

gies, a shifting in the case mix” and the “increase in the disease burden.”

So if we are not addressing the issue of utilisation, then this cost, which we are trying to control, is never going to change. All we are doing is just changing the pocket in which the funds are going to be paid out of.

And I worry that the Bill, per se . . . I do not believe that it actually goes anywhere in terms of saying, increase the costs. And I know that the Government had always had its strategy in terms of the National Health Plan, and it always had a strategy of Universal Health Coverage. And I see that as something that is being put through. But I do not see enough in this plan to indicate how you are going to make sure that Mr. and Mrs. Uninsured/Underinsured Bermuda are going to get the benefit of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just have a concern that there is not enough and maybe when we start to get into the debate itself I will raise some more questions because I think the people of Bermuda need to know what is the social contract [and] they need to know what their Government is trying to do with respect to creating fairer pricing. The Minister said that she wanted to move forward with fairer pricing. As I say, we reduced the cost of MRIs and they went back up.

So in terms of the change of the status quo, [this is] very important. But if you are going to put the health of people as a higher priority than profits—I just found that this was rather interesting because, I mean, if I read that statement again, “we are demanding to put the health of people as a higher priority to the health of profits.” And I think of the MRIs, the increases that we went down, and I just think, *Okay, how does this, if you will, . . . how does this tie into the actual reality?*

I think the current Government did not support our efforts to get fairer pricing, so now it is going to be important for them to demonstrate to the people of Bermuda that they are behind this and everybody is going to be looking to see what they are going to do. They have to walk the walk and not talk the talk. So, Mr. Speaker, I will just say that I look forward to some more discussion when we have the individual . . .

An Hon. Member: Committee?

The Speaker: Committee? In Committee?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Committee. I look forward to when we have the Committee, but I just think that there is a real concern because the Minister talked about providing a prescribed transfer from the MRF to the Hospitals Board, and then about an employer who operates an improved scheme, not be liable to pay [SHB] claims, that seems to imply that claims will still have to be moved from BHB to the insurer. And yet somewhere else there was an indication that was not going to occur. So there are some specific things in

there that I think need to be flushed out because sometimes when you get out and ask questions, afterwards what you say in one place doesn't tie in to the other.

And then this whole thing about dialysis claims being payable under the MRF, the devil is in the details, Mr. Speaker. And I just have a worry that other than moving toward the concept of universal health for all, I do not think that there is sufficient to make Mr. and Mrs. Underinsured Bermuda feel that it is going to happen. But I do think the other people who are insured need to worry, because what is going to end up happening is that with the amount of money that is going out for BHB, the insurers are going to have some real challenges as to how much money is going to be left over.

And I carry no brief for any insurance company. But I do think that until the people see what is going to be covered, they are not going to have any clarity on why that split took place and whether it was a reasonable split. And I have not seen anywhere, anything that said from the MRF or from the actuaries, et cetera, how it was going to happen.

And I do not want to get into this whole thing about profit because there are still going to be claims, there are still going to be reconciliations, there are still going to be issues that take place. And we know . . . and I know before, because I have to acknowledge that the former Government . . . we were going to put all the money into a pot to be used for everybody. So that is not unheard of. But this is different. This is putting all the money into the pot and now starting to say that you are going to make the decision on how the pot is being used. And I am just . . . I find it . . . I find it strange. And I am waiting to see, because, as I say, it really worries me that you end up having what I call a cash grab.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think I . . . how much time do I have left?

The Speaker: You have got a few minutes left.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Okay, well, then if I have a few minutes, let me finish off.

If you start to look. . . and I hope the Minister will explain how we came up with \$330 million, especially because after that there was an indication that you might have \$65 million also there, just in case. Because if the hospital itself . . . and as I say, I know these accounts are old. But if the hospital itself was not operating at that level, then I will be curious as to where it is coming from. But I also will be curious as to how it works, because I happen to have the report of the Auditor General which was talking about concerns about reconciliation of accounts of knowing claims and how things were actually paid for. And if now you are going to have all of this money going over there, you are going to have even more responsibility to make sure that the funds are properly accounted for.

And if we are going to bend this curve, you have to know what people are having the services for. And the previous speaker talked about the Enhanced Care Pilot down at the hospital. Well, that reminds me of the programme that we instituted in terms of the Mutual Re-insurance Fund, which I have not heard anybody talk about recently. If we do not institute some of these programmes and tell us how we are doing, then there is nothing that you could do, if all the money gets there, but you do not look at the results that are being created.

Mr. Speaker, more importantly I feel that the Minister, the Ministry, and the Government have to look really closely at value for money, look really closely at overutilisation, and look really closely at things like interest—conflicts of interest. Because whether we like it or not, it has been well established that if you have the ability to be able to generate the utilisation of your service, many times (and I am saying in the health industry) it results in overutilisation. And it already has been established. It has been established [by] the auditors. It has been established about overutilisation. So I just think that we have to be aware. And all of our colleagues have to ask the question, we have to make sure: Is this the right thing?

I know we cannot change it because they have the numbers, but that does not stop Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda from making sure that the right amount of money gets left with their private insurers. Government has a plan, private insurers were there, we need to make sure that the right amount of money gets left—

An Hon. Member: You said that already.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: —because it is very important that there is a rationale for this.

Mr. Speaker, I will look forward to hearing the Minister at some point in time tell us more about how the uninsured and underinsured people will get to have universal access. I will be really pleased to hear the Minister tell us about how she is going to make sure that the cost of health goes down, and make sure that the professional that she has mentioned in this report starts to make their contribution to reducing the cost of health. And I would like to think that we will be able to get some of the other questions answered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Government Whip, the Honourable Member Scott, from constituency 24.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that we have had Members on the other side stand up, give speeches, say that the Minister did not give them an-

swers, and that they were hoping that somebody else on this side would help provide them with those answers. But then they get up and leave the Chamber. So how genuine are they about really wanting answers, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Well, Member, you know people do not sit in that chair the whole time. They can get listen . . . you know people can listen outside of this Chamber.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Well, I am just . . . it is a question. I am asking a question. How genuine?

The Speaker: They do not have to sit in their seat to hear it.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Okay, Mr. Speaker, the thing is, one thing we know about . . . and I want to put this in ways . . . because the Minister has actually answered all the questions that the Opposition asked. But it must seem as though they must not be able to understand what the Minister is saying. So let me try to put this in a way, shape, form that they can actually understand it, and makes it a little bit easier to understand.

So instead of talking about it from the technical point, . . . few things are more important to our personal health than our heart health, our cardiovascular system. And this is why you will have public service announcements saying, *Always get your blood pressure checked. Get your heart checked*, because your blood pressure allows physicians, health care professionals to get a snapshot of what is going on with you. Right? If something is out of balance, or if it is not.

So, the thing is that your blood pressure is made up of two numbers: systolic pressure and diastolic pressure. All right? This is 120/70. Now, the systolic pressure, Mr. Speaker, is when the heart contracts and pushes blood throughout your arteries, the pressure that is created from that action, that is your systolic pressure. That is that 120. And then the diastolic is when the heart relaxes, or the cardiovascular muscle. Mr. Speaker, I need to put a disclaimer that I did do St. Johns for a few years and I am now dating a nurse, so I do know what I am talking about.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Come on, man.

The Speaker: Stick to the point. Stick to the point.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. I will get back—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: So, Mr. Speaker, but when the heart muscle relaxes and fills with blood, that is where the diastolic pressure comes from. And together you get that 120/70. All right?

So, now, Mr. Speaker, let's just say . . . and I will put some things in perspective. Right? [At] 120/70, or 120 and below, is your normal blood pressure. Anything around 130 to 139, that is your Stage 1 high blood pressure; 140 or more is Stage 2, hypertension; and 180 would be basically hypertensive crises. So now, with that, let's just say that the health care industry in Bermuda was a person. And this person has now gone to get their blood pressure taken. If the blood pressure of this person (of the health care industry) was taken right now, it would be 140/80. So now, as I said before, that would be Stage 2 hypertension.

Now, let me break down that 140/80 for you. All right? That 140 means that for every dollar, for every premium that is paid, the Government has to pay \$1.40 for health care costs. Now, on the other end, for every dollar, for every premium that is paid, the private sector has to pay \$0.80. So now what we are seeing is that the private sector somehow is generating \$0.20 worth of profit for every dollar that they get, and the Government has to spend \$0.40 on top of every dollar that they get.

So now, what does this look like, Mr. Speaker? This looks like the private insurers are now generating somewhere in the area of around \$80 million per year in revenue. And if we were to take those numbers, if all things remain equal, that would mean that the Government is spending \$160 million on health care costs.

Now, how does this happen, Mr. Speaker? How does this happen? Because nobody on the other side seemingly understands this point that I am making, because the thing is that private insurers can pick, choose, and refuse who they want to provide health care to. So all the healthy, young individuals, or all the healthy individuals in society, in the community, all the people who play football for PHC, all those members who do martial arts with the Harto School on Cobbs Hill, those members will probably get health insurance in the private sector, no problem. But once members in society start getting to a point where they start to infringe on that 20 per cent profit, when they start costing more than \$0.80 on every dollar, whether it is because of existing conditions, whether they get into an accident or they get too sick, or because they fall on hard times, what ends up happening, Mr. Speaker, is . . . if the private insurance companies cannot increase your premium to cover that, to keep that 20 per cent profit, they drop you.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I believe he is misleading the House, because I am certain that that was one of the things that was mandated. That if you were there and you had insurance, and [they] were not able to just turn people out just because [they] got ill.

The Speaker: Okay. Take note of that, Member.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: I will take note of that but—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: —I will keep going, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Take note.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: But that does not mean that the private insurers do not have the better pick of the members of society, Mr. Speaker. That . . . so . . . all right.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: The Member is misleading the House. These are businesses. They have ranges of people who are a part of the business. Nobody goes there and says, *Okay, I am going to only have those six people. And you are covering the others.* They are businesses! And what you see is what you get.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Member, be mindful. Be mindful of those points.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: I am being mindful, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am going to keep going on the track. Right? So, what ends up happening, Mr. Speaker, is that you then end up having premiums raised. Regardless of what the Honourable Member said, those premiums continue to rise.

Now, the thing is that there are members in society who can afford to pay these increases in premiums. And if they can't afford the increases in premiums, they have one of two choices. They can either go without health insurance, or they can look to more affordable health insurance, which is your public health insurance product. All right? Because, remem-

ber, the members who are part of the government health insurance, sometimes, more times than not, are unable to pay for or afford the increasing premiums.

So now what ends up happening, Mr. Speaker, and this is where we come over to the government, because most persons on government insurance are 65 and older. All right? So that means that they would most likely be on a fixed income and so on and so forth. But now, what I am trying to do is this, Mr. Speaker. And this is where I am going to get to where this \$330 million comes in. [The] \$330 million is to help stabilise that “blood pressure.” Meaning, we are putting something in place which should stop the increase in premiums. Now, once you have stopped the increase in premiums, and it stabilises, then after it is stabilised we can go to the next steps to try to help reduce those premiums. All right?

Now, I understand that the Opposition is finding it hard to follow what I am saying because they were in Government and they did nothing about it. All right? They were in Government and they targeted individuals. They were in Government and all they wanted to do was talk about, *Oh, it was the PLP’s fault. It was the PLP’s fault.* Mr. Speaker, one thing this administration can do right now is just deal with the situation. This administration is saying that we can no longer sit by and do nothing. We must do something. We have sat there and we are going to put in place transformative policies, transformative legislation, that makes sure that we have members of this society that have a better quality of life, all right? That we have a better quality of life.

And so what happens is this, Mr. Speaker. Now that we are putting this policy in place, we are going to pass this Bill, put it through. The role of this is to stop the increase of premiums. Now, there have been insurers that have done the supplemental premium increases, but your primary premiums, this is what should happen, and it is my understanding that this will put a cap or moratorium on the premiums. But now, there are supplemental policies that can be increased, and that is what is going on. That is what insurance companies are going through and where members are getting letters saying that, *Oh, a 20 per cent increase in this, and a 20 per cent increase in that.* That is my understanding.

So, Mr. Speaker, the one thing . . . and the thing is this. And this is what I find very interesting. We have all agreed . . . and I am repeating this to prove a point. We have all agreed in this House that health care costs are too high. And now that the Government is doing something to address that situation—

Some Hon. Members: But they are not.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: —to do something to address that situation. All right?

An Hon. Member: But they are not addressing it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: There are Members on the other side who are unhappy.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: There are Members on the other side who would like to see us allow insurance companies to continue to make \$80 million a year.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: It is not their money.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: And, Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in the Honourable Member that just took her seat, trying to [impute] improper motives and saying something about a “cash grab.” And I am hoping that it is because of a misunderstanding, or not fully understanding the concept in what we are doing here today, the concept in capping the premiums, the standard premiums. And then what I found disheartening is that the Opposition is now talking about the hospital is unable to manage funds. So now, all of a sudden, they now have no trust—

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: That is what you said.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I did not say that the hospital could not manage funds. I quoted a report from the Auditor which talked about reconciliations, et cetera, of funds. And I quoted from the Auditor. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

She cited her source.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: No problem. Well, I will put [it that] Members on the other side have implied that there is a lack of trust in the management of funds, if and when they go to the hospital. All right?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: That was the Auditor. That was not the Member on that side, that was the Auditor’s comment that she put.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Point of order.

The Speaker: So it was Auditor’s perspective.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Point of clarification.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. Michael J. Scott: I took an express note of the Honourable former Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Dunkley, make that very point. It made me make a note: What is the reason for this lack of confidence, suddenly, by the usual supporters of the hospital, having no confidence in their management style? It was Mr. Dunkley.

The Speaker: He clarified the last one. Go ahead.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Thank you.

But, Mr. Speaker, the other thing that leaves pause is that, very much like the insurance companies here in the Island, which contradict each other over this situation, Members on the other side have contradicted themselves.

An Hon. Member: Yes, they have.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: You had the Leader get up and say that he supports this.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Then there have been the other Members who say they do not support it. Other Members who say, *I sorta, kinda, might want to support it*. So, Mr. Speaker, the one thing I do agree with that the other side said is that we have a united front on this side as the Government.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: This Government is firing on all cylinders, Mr. Speaker. This Government is focused on improving the quality of life for individuals in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have a majority—25 seats—here. Not because we provide lip service, but because we listen, we understand, and we act. While there is a lot of noise coming from the other side, while there is a lot of you should've, could've, would've, we are actually doing, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I commend the Minister for bringing this, for taking this bold step, for taking this necessary step, and it is a first step to reducing the cost of health care in this country. This is not something that can be done overnight. This is not something that can be done with one Bill. It is going to take multiple steps. It is going to go through multiple phases, Mr. Speaker. This is not like the airport where they can sole-source it, Mr. Speaker, without any real research.

Some Hon. Members: Ooh!

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Right? And I wish an Opposition Member would challenge me on the airport.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: The airport is not up for debate in this Bill. Let's stick to what is up for debate.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: I understand that, Mr. Speaker. I understood.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: That is the motion to adjourn. That is the motion to adjourn.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: So, Mr. Speaker, one thing is for certain. There are Members who talk about Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, and then there are Members who are in this Chamber who are actually doing things for Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda. There are Members who like to talk about that the sky is falling, and then there are Members who are showing them that it is just smoke and mirrors on that side. Talk is cheap, Mr. Speaker, and we are actually doing things. And, Mr. Speaker, one thing I know about—

The Speaker: Stay on point. Stay on point.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: One thing I know about Bermudians is that we do not necessarily like change. But we always want things *to* change. So, Mr. Speaker, this might not be . . . and change is difficult for many people. Change is not the easy decision to make, Mr. Speaker. The easy decision is to continue to go with the status quo and just complain in our living rooms.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The easy way to go is to just allow the oligarchs to continue to make the money that they have always made and then make excuses why others cannot have, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: You sound like daddy.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: One of the more esteemed Members in this Chamber has said that I sound like my father.

And one thing that my father has said, Mr. Speaker, time and time again, and it has been quoted by the Members in the Opposition, is that with this PLP Government one thing I want to make abundantly

clear, is that the haves can continue to have, but the have-nots need to have more.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: And that is why we are starting with health care.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

No other Member?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 9, Honourable Member Moniz.

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

Perhaps something upon which we all agree is that the health system is a complicated beast. We see an attempt today, and I am not quite sure what it is, one of the things I am trying to find out is whether the Minister has tabled the most recent report from the actuaries, Morneau Shepell.

Can she answer that?

Has the Minister tabled that most recent support? Is that publicly available? Mr. Speaker?

She is not answering, so I assume the answer is no. Perhaps I will answer for her. I see there is a report from last July, but not any recent support. So, of course, on this side we like to look at the analysis of policy changes, particularly strategic health policy changes to see why you are doing this.

Now, we see, you know, some sort of warm and fuzzy stuff in the Minister's brief where she talks about social contracts and everybody would like to have better health care, everybody would like to have better access. And we all agree on that. I do not think there is anyone who would not agree on that. But of course, the question is: What are you going to do to get that? I think one of the things that we agree on is that we need some serious health reform. And the Minister in her brief said that we were going to have some proposals coming forward for actual health reform.

But what we on this side see today, I think, (and maybe I will just speak for myself) . . . we see it as a bit of a shell game. We are moving things from one pot to another pot, and somehow the Government is trying to present this as solving a problem. We do not, on this side, see that the problem is being solved. Somehow, we feel that it is going to be the average working person who is going to pay a higher tax for their health. Their health premiums are going to go up.

Now, on the other side, they are saying *No, no, no. That is not going to happen. The health insurance companies will pay all of this.* And somehow when they look at it, on the Government's side, when they look at the health system, they see the hospital and they see the insurance companies. They do not

see any other providers. They seem to be totally blind to the people who are providing the services.

And one of the things that concerns me . . . you will remember under the previous administration of the PLP we had a new hospital built, and then [with] a cost, ultimately, of upwards of three quarters of a billion dollars. And now we know that that hospital was too small. So parts of the old hospital that we were going to get rid of, we now keep. And there are still logistical problems at the hospital. We constantly see complaints, letters to the editor, and complaints that people are in beds in the hallways and they are having to wait for long periods of time before they can be put in a room because all the rooms are single rooms so they can accommodate much fewer people than the old hospital could.

So these are some of the challenges that we face. And the Government just does not have a good track record. We know that the Government made a payment to the hospital and they made a payment to Doctor Ewart Brown's company. I think Dr. Brown was getting \$1.2 million. And, Mr. Speaker, we were told that that payment was made. It was in the public domain from the Minister, I believe, that it was paid because he sent a letter before action. That was what the Minister, I believe, said, the Government said. It was in the paper. He sent a letter before action, so we agreed to pay him off and they hoped he would keep his clinic open and he then said, *No, I am not going to keep it open. I am going to close it.* It may not have made economic sense to have that clinic open in any case, but I cannot speak for him.

But you can understand if we on this side, and the public in Bermuda, do not have a great deal of confidence in how the Government operates. We have heard recent reports that the Premier himself was intervening on behalf of Dr. Brown. The Premier has—

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Well, ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down, sit down!

Member, I have been careful to make sure people stick to what is factual and not bring stuff in this debate that are innuendos or hearsay. I am going to remind you to do the same. Because everybody has been pretty good on staying on point to this debate, and this debate has the potential of going off course. And I am not going to let it go off course.

The Speaker: And I am not going to let it go off course.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: So, stay on track, please.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: And the Premier will have his chance to say his piece on it. Thank you. I will not take that any further.

But we have a lot of difficulties here. We have no idea what analysis was put into this. What we have been told, essentially, is that the Government were told in a Morneau Shepell report that the SPR, the standard premium rate, was going to have to go up by a substantial sum of money. And it already went up by a substantial sum last year. And Government were not willing to do that. So, they are saying, *Well, how can we get out of making this increase that Morneau Shepell tell us that we are going to have to make?*

And so, they came up with this, in their view, clever gimmick of moving money from one pot to the other and presenting it as a health reform. We on this side do not see it as a health reform; we see it as something that is going to cause more problems than it solves. It is being presented as a package. And, as I said, the Minister said in her brief, in very vague and warm and fuzzy terms, that all of these wonderful reforms are going to follow.

We on this side have not seen any sense of that. The only thing that the Government had was a health report from 2012. The 2012 report was very similar, in my view (and this is my opinion), to the Minister's brief today. It had a number of statistics in there and numbers comparing, trying to compare the expenditure that we in Bermuda have to other countries, and again saying there should be universal health care, which is an extraordinarily expensive thing. As we all know, particularly when we are living out here in the ocean, there are a lot of treatments that you can only get overseas, whether it be open-heart surgery, whether it is dealing with premature babies. There are certain treatments that you just cannot get here and we have to get them abroad, you know. So, there are certain costs that we face that they may not face in other onshore centres, particularly ones the size of Bermuda.

We on this side just do not see [it]. Now, they come along and they say, *All right. We are going to give a block grant to the hospital*, as if somehow that is a health reform, as if somehow that is going to produce an efficiency from the SAGE Commission or something like that. You know, some sort of efficiency is going to come out of it. And we do not understand how it is going to produce any efficiency. All you are doing is saying instead of you billing and us having oversight of those bills through the Health Insurance Commission or the Health Insurance Board, now we are just going to give you a block grant.

It looks like there is going to be, on the face of it, less oversight. That is not a question of trust. Everybody sits at home and checks their bills. I am sure that Member who accuses us of having a lack of trust checks his bills when he gets them at home and sees, *Well, is this the right amount that I am paying?* Everyone does that. So, it looks to us on this side like there

is going to tend to be less oversight of the amounts that are being charged.

Now, you know, I am sure the Government will say, *Well, there isn't. We're going to have this system. The Health Council is going to get more people.* We just do not know how it is going to happen. And I am afraid the Government have given no adequate explanation of any way in which this is going to improve the efficiency of the health system.

Now, we have had a number of people on the other side say a number of things, which are similar, but not quite the same. Particularly I get concerned when people who are not Cabinet Members purport to speak for the Government and say, *This is what we're doing.* And you would say, *Well, you know, I really look to the Minister to see what the Government is doing.* The Minister speaks for the Government on Health. And that is the person I want to answer on it. Because other people may say a similar thing; it may have a slightly different spin on it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: So, we really need to know where we are going on this. There needs to be a substantially better explanation of where we are going. There is not a good track record in this Government with managing the health care system. As you know, we were not happy with the sugar tax. And again, you know, a tax is going to be passed on. The taxes are passed on. The way I see this particular switch, it is a tax. Because what is happening now is that the average working person is paying a greater proportion of his income into the MRF. And I do not see how that can be anything other than, ultimately, a tax on that particular individual.

Now, at the same time, what I do not see in the Government, is it saying, well, how are you . . . If you make the system more efficient, Mr. Speaker, it just seems to make sense to me that you are going to want to make the whole system more efficient. The hospital represents less than 50 per cent of the health costs in Bermuda. And presumably, you would want to address the whole system. You would have to have some sort of agenda if you said, *Well, we're only going to look at part of the system. We're not going to look at the majority of it. We're just going to look at a minority.* That would not make any sense to me at all.

And, you know, they like to have these political targets, spin, *Oh, we're going after the insurance companies. We're going after the insurance companies' profits.* Well, I do not think that is what you are doing. I do not think that the man in the street or the woman in the street is going to be fooled [by] that. I think that they will see that you are not really addressing what is at issue here at all. And what we are seeing out there . . . and this is the interesting thing. Different Members have been saying, to me, what seem to be opposite things. You know, some people are

saying, *Oh, well, on this side we're trying to figure it out because the Minister clearly has not explained what the programme is, going forward, except in very broad-brush terms.* So, we have a hospital that is too small. We know that already. But on the other hand, we have people on the outside who are providing services, like diagnostic imaging services and now dialysis services, which we have being provided outside of the hospital.

So, the point here is, does Bermuda require more services than the hospital can provide in those areas? Is the hospital's CAT scan, the hospital's MRI not sufficient for Bermuda's population? Do we need more services than that? I suspect that the answer to those questions, from my short time as Minister of Health, is no. We do not require any more than that. But people see those as being an opportunity to make money. And those are people in the private sector. Those are doctors (in some cases, non-doctors) who are going to open their own, what they call, hospital. They are going to open their own hospital. They are going to have their own diagnostic imaging.

Why are they doing it? Well, they are entrepreneurs. They are doing it to make money, put money in their pocket. Whether it is Dr. Brown, whether it is Mr. Thomas, any of those people, they are all doing it because they see an entrepreneurial opportunity to make money.

Now, the problem is this. You have to size it right for the hospital. You have to have the hospital operating as near to full capacity as you can without it being over capacity. You have to have it at its optimum utility. You have two things that could happen that are bad things. You can have overutilisation of the hospital, where they have got people sitting in hallways and they cannot find rooms for them, and people in the Emergency [Department] there waiting hours to get any sort of service. You constantly hear these sorts of complaints.

On the other hand, you can have people going out to private services, going to Dr. Brown's MRI or CAT scans or Mr. Thomas's hospital or somebody else's scan. You can have them going out to these other people. And this is what was extremely confusing, because recently the Health Council said . . . all of a sudden, they said, *Well, we're putting a moratorium. We're not going to allow any more services.*

And it just came out of the blue, and everybody said, *What?*

And everybody said, *Well, for how long? How long is that going to be?*

And they said, *Well, until further notice.*

What? Until further notice when? When is that further notice going to come?

I mean, it is the most ridiculous thing I have ever seen, just announcing out of the blue . . . again, what tends to happen with this Government is that you get these sudden pronouncements that seem to come out of nowhere. It is the same as this Bill we are see-

ing today. We are constantly on the Opposition side getting complaints from the public, from insurance companies, et cetera, that there was not proper consultation. And we say, *Well, surely, Government did all sorts of analysis.* They have actuarial reports. They have got all sorts of analysis to show this is the way to go and to bring in the stakeholders, whether they be the public, the doctors, health care providers, whether they be the insurance companies. They have consultation. They have got reports to back up what they are doing.

But none of that looks to have happened! It looks like they are just panicking. And so, they are pulling some sort of sleight of hand.

It is very similar to the thing, in my view (and these are my thoughts), that we saw during the budget. You know, the Government did not know how to balance a budget, so they said, *Well, we're not going to pay any more money into the Sinking Fund.* Which may or may not make sense, but it looks like a knee-jerk reaction to cover up a situation you found yourself in. You are figuring, *Well, I don't know how to get out. Let's do a Hail Mary here.*

The Speaker: Now, stick back to this matter here. You had a little drift for a while. Now come back on point.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Well, that is what we see here. We do not see the underlying analysis of why it is done.

The Government is saying, *Oh, well, we're the good guys. You're the bad guys. We're doing this because we want to reform the system. We want universal health care. We hate the insurance companies, and we figure we'll get them this way.* But overall, it just does not seem to have been a decision that was arrived at in a rational fashion. And it looks like it is a lot of political spin, unfortunately, and could have negative results for the average person in the street in terms of their insurance premiums and the type of insurance available to them.

And the Government does not seem to be aware of that. Of course, if the Government has a problem going forward, they again are going to try and spin it, saying, *Oh, it's the terrible insurance companies causing the problem. It's that awful Opposition.* I mean, you do not accept sometimes you have managed something very poorly and you have done it in a knee-jerk fashion.

And we may all regret the hasty action of the Government in this regard, when we think that proper analysis and study has not been done. And the Minister certainly has not tabled in this House anything that would show that this course of action was recommended by the experts upon whom the Government should be relying. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 26. Honourable Member Tyrrell, you have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we seem to have reached that stage of the debate where, you know, we seem to be repeating ourselves.

The Speaker: Well, do not continue that. How is that?

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: No. I certainly do not want to go there.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: I certainly will not. In fact, I am going to be as brief as possible.

The Speaker: Whip, thanks for saving your Member that time.

[Laughter]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: But I certainly felt it necessary, Mr. Speaker, to get on my feet and support the Minister for bringing this Bill forward. It is well overdue. Let me say that health insurance is a right and not a privilege. So, it is something that this Government has taken on.

But, Mr. Speaker, before I probably go any further, let me make a sort of a declaration. And I am sure you have heard the statement, *Don't bite the hand that feeds you*. I am going to now say today, *Don't eat the hand that fed you*. I have for 16 years worked for a company that one line of their business was health insurance. So, I want to be very clear that I am not trying to bite the hand that fed me.

Mr. Speaker—

An Hon. Member: However.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: However, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member from constituency 23 in her earlier remarks made a statement that we did not appear to understand health insurance. I do not know why she would have said that because we are getting advice from the experts, really. So, we are just putting it into play. And I hope that is what she understood, as well.

I think it is a shared responsibility, health insurance. It is a shared responsibility. And we are looking for really fairer pricing, as well. So, I think it all goes hand in hand.

As I said, I am not the technical person on health insurance. But I did have to do some homework, obviously, to get on my feet and speak on this.

And one of the things that I came across in my research was another line of business that companies, [similar to] what we are talking about, are going to. And it is the motor insurance fund. Now, the reason . . . I am bringing it up for a reason. I am making a point on that, which is that sometime in the early 1990s the big four, as I call them—Colonial, Argus, BF&M, Freisenbruch-Meyer—obviously felt that they were losing money by having to make pay-outs to people who were uninsured in accidents. So, they came up with this fund, jointly. And sometime around 2007, I believe, they made a Memorandum of Understanding for the then-Government, which would have been led by a friend of ours, of course, whose name I will not call at this time.

But the amount of money that can be paid out started at about \$250,000 and went up to about \$750,000. So, you would ask, Well, why am I bringing up the motor insurance fund at this time? Well, what I am saying is that the “big four” were not even forced into doing that. They were not forced to do that. That is something that they came up with. Why have they not, at this point in time, thought about health insurance and doing something jointly to bring down the cost of health insurance?

Let me also say, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the health insurers did have an opportunity to come up with a plan that will cover everyone, regardless of the ability of that person to pay. One of the things that we know, and it was sort of disputed over on the other side, is that the health insurers can pick, choose and refuse. You can say what you like; they can, and we know it. We have heard of cases where people have not been able to get insurance because either they have had prior medical conditions that the insurers do not want to take on . . . so, let us not be blind to it and think that they do not have that opportunity to do that.

So, where do those people who do not have the proper insurance go? To Government. It is us. It is definitely going to fall on Government. So, we felt at this time that there needs to be some reform in health insurance. And this is a first step that the Minister is taking. It is not the be-all and end-all. It is, to me, I would use the term “work in progress.”

Let me really get to the end of where I want to go, Mr. Speaker, which is that I want to let Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda know, because I am sure they must be a little confused out there hearing some of the debate that has, you know, gone back and forth today, that they are entitled to health insurance. It is a right. And what I am afraid of is that the health insurers—I am not picking on them, they are profit-makers. They make profit. That is what they are in business to do. But at the same time (I hear some chattering over there)—

The Speaker: No. Speak to the Chair. You will be all right. Just speak to the Chair.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: At the same time, they have to be conscious, because it is something that, consciously, they should do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me go towards the end and just say that I believe that reform and streamlining of the Health Bill is necessary. The Minister is doing the right thing. And in the end, our families are definitely going to benefit. But I want to basically end by saying that I am confused by the message that is coming from the other side. At one time, I hear them saying that they have some support for the Bill. Then there are others who got up and said they cannot support it. So, obviously, they have a—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: No problem. No problem. Now I hear they have no issue.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me end with this. I thought the Minister succinctly spread out, laid out her cards early. And I want to speak to one paragraph that she had in her brief. If you will allow me to speak to it, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: A quote? Yes.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: It says, “the conversations we have been having with our Island’s health insurers are just about how we make this social contract of shared responsibility a fair proposition. How providers, payers, politicians, regulators, researchers and religious bodies can use their unique skill areas to put forth and implement timely solutions in a proactive and non-reactionary way.” Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency [8]. Honourable Member Simons.

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

The Speaker: You have the floor.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, this has been an interesting debate. Mr. Speaker, a lot of things that have been said and presented by the Minister of Health make sense. She spoke about equity. She spoke about efficiency. She spoke about streamlining the process. She spoke about universal health care for all. She spoke about lowering the costs. And she wants a better outcome. Mr. Speaker, who can argue with those principles? Not many people can argue with those principles.

Mr. Speaker, universal health insurance. As my colleague, the Shadow Minister of Health, said, who is not getting covered now? Who is not getting covered now? Because we have grants for the sen-

iors, the youth and the indigent. All others are covered through their health insurance. But, Mr. Speaker, as I said, in principle the issues that are being raised today are normal issues that impact the health industry.

When I was sitting here, I wrote down how many times Members have said, *This is the first step*. I heard the Minister Wayne Furbert say this is the first step. I heard the Whip say this is the first step. I heard the Minister herself say it is the first step. But my question, Mr. Speaker, is, The first step of what? Mr. Speaker, what is the vision? What is the vision? Mr. Speaker, what type of health care is this Government going to present?

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that in Canada they have Medicare, and their system is a government-funded system. And they have universal health care, and everybody knows that they can go to any hospital facility and get free health care because it is paid out of the Consolidated Fund. Mr. Speaker, in the UK, there is a two-tier system. There is National Health Service, and then, if you want, you can supplement that and go to the Harley Street doctors, the private sector. Again, everybody is clear on the type and model of health care that that country has. In the US, you have similar. You have private insurance and Medicaid, and again, everybody knows what they are up against.

But I would have liked to have heard the Minister and her communications team say, *Okay. We are doing a revamp of the health care system in Bermuda. And this revamp, in the end, will look like this. Bermuda’s health care system will be a two-tier system. Or, Bermuda’s health care will be a socialised health service system*. But I have not had that clarity.

And I invite the Minister to basically speak to that issue so that everybody would know what we are doing. I know that they are making changes to the legislation. We are talking about the premium. We are shifting the premium from the carriers to the hospital. That is fine. But what does that lead up to? What is the strategic plan for the delivery of the vision of health care in this country? What is the vision of health care in this country, going forward?

We have not heard it. And to me, we are just moving around in circles and circles and circles. Because there is confusion as to where we are going, what we are going to do, and what is the big picture that the country has bought into. So, I invite the Minister to, when she gives her response, to basically give us an overview of her vision and say whether we will have a two-tiered system whereby there will be public health care and private health care. Or we are going to have all socialised medicine. Or we just have what we have now. Or we are going to have all private medicine. Just give this community clarity as to what we will have, going forward, and the benchmarks and the timelines that will be in place so that we can deliver on the vision and the overall long-term objectives for the delivery of health care in this country that will

improve the health outcomes of those who use our health care system.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Are you trying to get rid of me, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I would like to speak to is the issue of . . . (Let's see here. I have her brief; sorry.) You know, I said everyone was to reduce the health care cost and the middleman. But the question becomes, when we move the servicing of the reinsurance fund to the hospital, I would like to have heard the Minister speak more to the adjudication process. Who is going to review the claims and services and service for value and ensure that the money is well spent and that quality service is provided and that there is no excess usage?

Mr. Speaker, the other issue is that come June 1 . . . June 1 is the date. And on the financing side, my question is, you know, there will be \$330 million allotted as a grant to the hospital for the standard health premium and the reinsurance premium. Well, what happens, Mr. Speaker, to the liability that the carriers have at June 1st? Does the hospital assume the liability, the outstanding liability for the standard health care policies that are out there at June 1st? Things have been quiet on that front, and just from an operational point of view, I would like to know how we will address the lost reserves that are outstanding at June 1st. And the same applies to the unearned premium for June 1st. Will they get additional money as of June 1st for the unearned premium that is in place that straddles the old system and the new system?

Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about profits and that the 20 per cent that has been allotted to the insurance carriers will be used to cover their profits. I did some research on this, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to share this with you. I got this from a reliable source. And they spoke about how each dollar is broken down in regard to premium dollars and costed health care. If you allow me?

The Speaker: Yes. Go ahead.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Eighty per cent of every dollar goes to claims cost. Claims costs include hospitals, inpatient care, surgery, anaesthetists, hospital outpatient, lab and diagnostics, doctors' visits, preventative care, prescriptions and others. That is 80 per cent of every premium dollar. Fifteen per cent of every premium dollar goes to administrative costs and reinsurance. This 15 per cent includes consumer service, marketing, compliance . . . Compliance, compliance, compliance.

An Hon. Member: Hmm. We know about that.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Oh, Lord, that is a world unto itself.

And claims processing and other administrative costs. So, that is 95 per cent to administration, compliance, marketing and claims costs. There is 5 per cent left, Mr. Speaker. And 5 per cent is attributed to risk charge and profit. So, what do I mean by "risk charge and profit"? There are risk-based capital needs that these insurance companies have to have for their solvency requirements and BMA requirements. They also need to support investment in their systems to get the work done. And then, they have to provide a reasonable return on the investors' investments in capital.

So, again, we talk about the 20 per cent as though the 20 per cent is going to the shareholders. But that is inaccurate. I think that we are just being mischievous, Mr. Speaker, or we do not know what we are talking about. I will let the public be the judge of that, Mr. Speaker.

So, I would keep away from saying that 20 per cent of every premium dollar goes to the profits of the insurance companies, because that is not true and it just shows our lack of knowledge, or the Government's lack of knowledge, of what is going on in the industry.

And, Mr. Speaker, I will make it clear. I am not working for an insurance company. I have no interest in insurance companies. But I have responsibility to make sure that the facts are presented to this House in a reasonable manner and to make sure that the community is educated as to what is going on in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I wanted to speak to is the comprehensive coverage. I want the community to know that some of these smaller businesses will now ask to have the standard health premium coverage only. And what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? That means some of the coverage that they are currently getting they will not get. And I am talking about after school coverage, dental coverage, and some overseas medical treatment and care because they are not in the hospital, Mr. Speaker.

And so, these Bermudians, these residents will have to dig in their pockets because of the limited coverages that they have from the smaller businesses, and the coverage being the standard health premium coverage, which will basically cause those who least can afford it to have more challenges from a financial point of view in securing health care in this country. Because there are a number of services that are excluded from the standard health benefits programme that people of this country need today.

The other issue that I would like to speak to is the issue of the doctors. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we have an army of doctors and specialists out in Bermuda who have private practices. Based on what I am learning here, the Government will be encouraging people to use the hospital facilities more because it

will be economically more efficient, because it gets rid of the middleman and because it will be cost-effective. For those who go to doctors, the question of co-pays, you have to pay a co-pay to go to a doctor. And then if you go to the hospital, there is no co-pay. And so, there will be an incentive for most people to go to the hospital.

But, as was said earlier, Mr. Speaker, the hospital is having problems keeping up with the demand in services now. Many people who go to the hospital have waited hours and hours and hours outside on a bed in emergency. Just last week Friday, a colleague of mine said, *Cole, you wouldn't guess what happened to me last night. My father-in-law fell down at four o'clock in the morning, and I think he broke his hip. So, my husband took him to the hospital. And at five o'clock that evening, I said, Hey, Ann, how is your father-in-law doing?* He said he was still in the hospital out in the waiting room in the emergency! They said, well, they cannot take him in because they cannot find a bed. That is over 13 hours out in the hallway.

So, with the additional demand for the hospital based on this model that the Minister has been proposing, I have grave concerns that the hospital does not have the infrastructure or the resources to service this increased demand. And the consequence at some point, we may have to depend on these private service providers if the hospital cannot get it done. You might have to give them a nod to say, *Listen. Things are dire down here. And we're going to need your services just to supplement.*

Mr. Speaker, in smaller jurisdictions like the Caymans or the Bahamas or Barbados, they have health centres around their islands. Cayman is the same size as us. They have health centres.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: That is fine.

They have health centres, five or six, around the country that can take some of the load of a hospital. But those health centres have to be sanctioned and supported by the government. And that way, we can relieve some of the demands and tensions that we currently see at the hospital. Because we have one major hospital. Even as we send more traffic down to St. George's . . . what is the name of St. George's facility?

An Hon. Member: Lamb Foggo.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Lamb Foggo Clinic. Again, that can be used to take some of the weight off of the demand of the hospital.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: So, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Government come up with a plan to

demonstrate to the people of this country how they are going to relieve some of the demands and the challenges that we face in servicing the numbers that currently exist in the hospital. I mean, currently, like I said, we are embarking upon a new plan that will place more demands on the hospital, and the hospital cannot service what they have on a timely basis. So again, I would like for the Minister to just tell us what plans they have in place to help the hospital manage the additional demand that will be placed upon them.

The other issue that I had, and it was touched upon earlier, is conflict of interest. Mr. Speaker, we have doctors out here who own labs and pharmacies, or, labs or pharmacies. I have a very good friend in South Africa. I was there in February. And she has a thriving practice. And so, I was telling her about that. She said, *Cole, that's unheard of! In South Africa, we would not be allowed to own a pharmacy or a lab if we had a licence.* Because that, in essence, encourages malfeasance, overutilisation.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: And there is a potential, as my colleague has said. And so, I think we might need to look at that because it causes . . . it is a fertile ground for overusage.

But the interesting thing about this is that somebody said to me, *But what's the doctors' position on this change? Because it impacts them most.* And, Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing about these doctors around this country is that they do not say a word about any of these issues. They make all this noise amongst themselves. But you never hear them come out and say, *This has [an] impact on private practice.* You never know. And so, it is amazing. It is amazing. Either they are too comfortable, or, *This does not apply to me.* And so, it is interesting. And everyone keeps [talking] about health care, and I can say without a doubt that no doctor has lobbied me or even my colleague, Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, about health care.

You get the insurance companies. You get the service providers. But the doctors continuously remain quiet, and you do not know where they are at. But you know they talk, because when you go to their office as a patient, they wring your ears off! But to come out publicly to say something . . . it is very interesting. It is very, very interesting, Mr. Speaker.

So, the conflict of interest with doctors owning labs and pharmacies, I think that is [an] issue that we need to look at.

The Minister indicated that basically she wants to get rid of the two-tiered system whereby the haves and the have-nots . . . I think right now, as I said earlier, we are just reinforcing the two-tiered system. Because the working class, the middle class and the elite, they have the resources to get supplemental coverage, comprehensive coverage. And they can afford to have the best health care with bells and

whistles, whereas, the small businesses cannot afford to provide their employees with comprehensive coverage. There are one or two shops, businesses, that will provide the standard health benefits, and there is limited coverage there. And so, you have a large section of the community that has limited coverage with the standard health benefit, and you have the working class and the middle class and the executive class having all the bells and whistles, and the blue collars, and blue civil service . . . civil . . .

An Hon. Member: Blue ribbon.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: *Blue ribbon* service (thank you) that they can have and enjoy. And what is the end product? The end product is a two-tiered system, just what we are trying to get away from. So, what is being proposed does not provide equity, as the Minister would like. And I would like to see equity. But it is just not happening under this structure. And so, this is why it is important for the Minister to come out and say, *This is the model that is best for Bermuda. It has been proven in other jurisdictions. We have taken the best from Canada, the best from Cayman.*

Cayman has an authority, a medical authority that manages the hospital and health care system. And they manage various clinics and centres around Cayman and the few hospitals. So, you are clear as to what model is used. But, in Bermuda, we still have yet to define that with clarity, the model that we are going to use.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to address the underlying causes of these health care challenges. And we have to manage the ageing population, because our seniors are getting older and older. The baby boomers are up there. And that is putting additional pressure on the health care system. You have the health care inflation, as was spoken about earlier. And then, you have the challenges with the infrastructure.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like for the Minister to pause. I am not saying stop completely. I am saying just pause, take more advice. Speak to the stakeholders. Examine other options. Come up with the model and vision that she can share with the community and [which] the community can buy into. Listen to the stakeholders. And before we roll out our plan, make sure that we have a plan in place to reinforce the infrastructure that will service the health care service in this country. And then, we have to also decide whether we are going to be a for-profit hospital or a community hospital or just a state-run hospital that will be breaking even and that is it.

Again, Mr. Speaker, those are my limited contributions. And I will take my seat at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36. Honourable Member Scott, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, of course, it is not always possible to respond to all of the Opposition OBA presentations in the House either by spin or, like the last speaker who just took his seat, who is inviting the Minister to pronounce a grand vision, state the underlying philosophy of health care in this country, whilst at the same time and in the same breath, he is asking her to pause and consult. So, the Minister of Health, the Honourable Kim Wilson, is many things. But she is just not an acrobat who can do all of these things.

[It is] better for us to pitch a policy that is addressing health care cost of living in our country. You know, the Minister of Health, we were very busy in the Progressive Labour Party last night. The Minister of Health last night, while she was in the East with her town hall on health, in the West there was a town hall going on on the liveable wage discussion. And beyond no doubt, the Premier announced even in his excellent Ministerial Statement this morning, we are about reform in this Island. And we are all concerned about the cost of living. Health care cost is one of the greatest offenders of cost in our country.

So, I do not wish to try and respond to all of the OBA spin that we have heard. But there are perhaps one or two spokespersons on the other side who deserve some attention. One of the Members of the Opposition, in their early speeches this afternoon, has laboured and been concerned about identifying where the cost savings will be made. And he indicated, that Honourable Member indicated that he did not see it in all of the speeches that he had heard up to the point that he took to his feet.

Can I suggest that the answer to finding and identifying where the cost savings will be made by this Bill is in the simple formula that 0.0 per cent of regulation, Mr. Speaker, 0.0 per cent of regulation of the health care funding in this country is better than . . . I beg your pardon—1.0 per cent regulation—of the health care funding package of money in this country is better than 0.0 per cent, which obtains now. Because the money is in the hands of the private sector insurance companies. And they do zero regulation. Rather, as was confessed to by the very Shadow Minister herself, when she expressed their concern that this initiative is going to deplete and rob the insurance companies of their capital reserve. I mean, it was a remarkable confession to make. And therefore, expose the insurance industry to risk. And by doing that, by that confession, she was actually confirming one of the core arguments of the Minister of Health, which is that heretofore, for the last many years, as the Minister for the Cabinet Office has pointed out, that has

been taking place since he was the chairman of one of the committees at the hospital's board many years ago.

So, private sectors have been benefiting from the use of taxpayer dollars. It is an old, old story of the UBP/OBA. We have seen it most recently with the America's Cup, the transfer of public funds into the private sector, wholesale, and used by them. And what this Bill seeks to do is to stop that, to put a stop to it. We are going to follow the money as the first step in this health care reform. Follow the money. It is the policy that will give the most anxiety to the private sector health care insurance sector. It will cause them to squeal with the greatest degree of squealing. But it is not just causing the funding of health insurance in this company. That is not the end of this picture, as the Health Minister has made very clear in her statement, and that we have been hearing repeated by other Members taking to their feet, that this is just a step. We begin with following the money and regulating it better.

And it will propagate, Mr. Speaker. I dare say it will propagate cost savings and efficiencies. It is bound to. It is bound to. So, to the Honourable former Leader of the OBA, that is where I invite you to look when you look for where there may be cost savings that you say that you have not heard in the debate to date.

On the page of the Minister's brief, it would be useful to turn directly to it, where she states—with your permission, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: This is the starting point. "We are starting with the way that we pay for the hospital. We are giving our hospital a fair budget so that they can deliver the care they need to the public. As a return for that budget," says the Minister, "we are also holding our hospital more accountable for how much care they need to deliver and the quality and patient care they provide.

"As a return for that budget, we are asking for better reporting . . ." That is one important outcome. Better reporting will lead to better data understanding. "[We will seek] better negotiation of better costs . . .," yet another opportunity to see an exchange for these millions that are going to be in the MRF to be managed. And for those who say that you fear that the management of all of these funds will be bleak or weak, I dare say that with these kinds of approaches, negotiating a better course, [with] "better reviews of utilisation" of these funds is a methodology. It is a best-practice methodology for good management. And it will throw up new models for identifying cost savings.

And again, this is just but the initial step. It is not the end of things; it is the beginning of things. It is not the end of things, I repeat, Mr. Speaker; it is the

beginning of things. And finally, in return for this budget being deployed, where it is to be deployed in the MRF, the Minister will expect, and this Government will expect "better partnerships with our community doctors and nurses," and may I add, without the permission of the Minister, better partnerships with the citizens of this country, the persons who most use the health care system. I know that this kind of approach is going to result in the propagation of new ideas for cost savings in the health care industry.

The Member who just took his seat was asking from us this rather grand vision and said that there is no equity here. But there is great equity in this approach, I would like to suggest to him. His trope is that this policy, this important policy is going to drive persons away, citizens away from the private sector and drive more into the arms of Point Finger Road. I think that is a scary and unrealistic calculation and bears no resemblance to the reality. We know that we will not be adopting policies that are designed or, by accident, to drive more business or more feet into the hospital doors. There is quite enough utilisation at the hospital right now.

And to the degree that the Government can ensure with its partnering initiatives that we scope out opportunities to achieve what we have been trying to achieve since 2009, with the Johns Hopkins Report, which is less utilisation of the hospital, not more, no one can accuse the Government, the PLP, of pursuing policies that are going to be driving more utilisation of the hospital. Just the reverse is required. This affords an opportunity for attempting to have less utilisation of the emergency room at the hospital. And these opportunities will come.

I am not quite sure what happened in the days when there was not fee-for-service. But something happened to ensure that there was this transfer of public taxpayer money into the private sector. Somebody worked it out. And it started happening.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: And when the Honourable former Leader of the OBA barracks us for not having made or identified how cost savings are going to take place and seeks in this House to punish this plan as being inadequate, how he can do that without examining the status quo that currently obtains and making an analysis of it and coming to the conclusion that surely the transfer of public taxpayer monies gamely into the private sector is a better model than clawing it back and deploying it with government regulation and control . . . it was the Honourable Member, Ms. Furbert, who began to advise this House with her speech that control is better. And I commend her for pointing out and helping me to support my statements here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, that this is the *raison d'être* for this Bill in its native and nascent stages of reform and regulation of health care—control. Be-

cause so far it is just a cowboy situation of no control. And we know that it is driving up health care costs.

I heard the Deputy Speaker speak to the generic cost issue, where Attorney General William Tong, in Connecticut, has identified this remarkable scam of price-fixing by health care providers—well, generic drug providers in the United States. I commend Attorney General Tong for taking this matter on.

But even as we examine this story in the health care platforms, insurance companies have a poor record and a role to play even in that kind of situation. I do not say that this is happening here. But when generic drugs are being moved from \$80 to \$1,000, then that makes insurance companies raise their premiums in the United States because they are having to meet these higher costs of persons visiting surgeries or visiting drugstores and collecting drugs, and paying for health care, at these increased costs. All it does is cause insurance companies to raise their premiums. So, they are willing participants and collaborators in these kinds of awful schemes in health care.

And this is a mark. It is laying down a marker that we have to be aware of and that we have to signal to insurance providers that they are being watched even on this front.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Absolutely.

So, reform is the new norm, Mr. Speaker, in case anyone is—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: In case anyone is wondering about the speech, in case anyone is wondering about the commitment of this Government as articulated in the Cabinet Committee Social Issues Ministerial Statement today. Just read it, and you will see that this is the commitment of this Government, to bring life in this country to more reasonable proportions—education, health care, energy and certainly in our crime and conflict, crime/gang conflict that is driven by these kinds of pressures on our society. These are where we intend to commit our resources, energy and time in the Government.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, Mr. Moniz, called for and sought to use the report that spoke to this \$84 as being necessary, based on actuarial analyses as resulting in, as the Minister of Health pointed out as unacceptable, a further \$84 being added on. Surely, Members of the Opposition have not been asking us to really seriously contemplate choosing that option. But that is what seems to have been the suggestion, that we are ignoring the pronouncements in that report. So, the Minister of Health, with her Cabinet colleagues, saw that result and has adjusted her tack, and certainly has rejected even con-

templating taking up the actuarial's recommendations. And I commend the Minister for it and the executive for doing this. It is a true expression of, we are in the game of fighting for the citizens of this country, particularly in the context of everything being so awfully expensive in this country so that people cannot really function.

It is the primary reason and basis for health depletion in our midst. The stressors of living in this country, at the cost of living, is driving us to emigrate to England. It is causing us to have hypertension issues, cancer, and strokes. Statistics in the country are some of the highest that we have ever seen in our history. And so, we cannot afford not to do what we are doing. We cannot afford not to respond to calls for or tropes being thrown out that, *Oh, this is going to result in loss of jobs in the insurance industry, or, This isn't well-thought-out.* And we have stood, as the Shadow spokesman for health said, *stood health care on its head. And I have not had enough time to examine this because it is a significant debate.*

Well, you are right. You are darned tooting it is a significant debate. It is an overdue debate, and it is important that we have it within the seven-day period after it was tabled in this House, particularly after we have foreshadowed, both in Budget Statements and in Throne Speech Statements and in the actual consultation of this Minister, going out to the world here in this country called Bermuda, and letting the people of this country know and the industry know that this is what is coming. It is more than enough time. Life does not rotate around the specialised requirements and needs of the Shadow spokesman for Health having just a little more time to work up arguments against reform. That is the new norm.

So, the Member, Mr. Moniz, has described this as being a case of, and tried to attack it as being a part of, the PLP's poor track record of not managing health care in our country. And that was just typical of Mr. Moniz. It has no bearing on really grappling with the issues of this policy as stated in this amendment Bill. He omitted to indicate that there was a reason for the steps that were taken in relation to the matter of where he accuses us of reversing legislation in this House.

Mr. Moniz is blind, and has been blind to the fact that the explanation to which I have referred you, Mr. Speaker, yourself and this House, that is contained in the brief of the Health Minister, that is where the explanation is for how cost savings will be effected in this matter, the starting point. And the demands that will be placed on the institution that is responsible for 45 per cent, as the Minister has advised me, of our health care costs, what is a better place to start?

That is a significant percentage metric of health care costs in this country which requires and demands that any good Minister, any reasonable Minister, begin to shine the spotlight on it. And the Honourable Minister has done well to start there and tell

the House and tell the people of this country that it will lead to other outcomes, based on better reporting and better negotiation of better costs and better reviews of utilisation and better partnerships with the community doctors, nurses and the people of this country.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I commend the Government for adding to the platform of reforms in this country's health care reform, this Bill. It will go a long way to meeting the *cri de cœur* that we hear from our citizens, and have been hearing from our citizens over the years that we are fighting for you. And I look forward to June 1st and beginning on an important initiative dealing with the reducing of the cost of living in this country. The Minister has begun a good thing and has shown that she and her colleagues within the executive are fighting for the citizens of this country.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 7. Honourable Member Richards, you have the floor.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just took his seat, who also happens to be my cousin . . . oftentimes we do not agree on things that we do up in this place. But I have to comment on his last statement, meaning that he is fighting for the people in this country. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that when I look at the track record of this current Government since they have been leading this country, we have gone backwards in terms of the cost of living, the expenses that Bermudians are paying to live on this Island. And they are fighting for the average Bermudian? Do not fight for me. Because when I walk the streets of this country, all I am hearing is people moaning and complaining about how the cost of everything has gone up. I am struggling to think of anything that has gone down since the PLP took over the Government of this country.

Sugar tax has done nothing but drive up the cost of food. I am hearing it, and I know they are hearing it. They walk the streets of this country. I know they are not hearing people saying, *Thanks for making my grocery bill more expensive!* Our land tax is getting ready to go up. Wait until the people of this country start getting those bills. Oh, your phones are going to be ringing off the hook.

Bermuda is the most expensive jurisdiction in the world, and once this Bill passes, and it will pass today, it is going to be even more expensive, more difficult for the average Bermudian to live in this country. Now, I have reviewed this Bill. I have listened to the Government Members vouch for this Bill and how it is going to be so awesome and so great, and how it is the first step in bringing down the cost of health care in this country. And I call things as I see them, Mr. Speaker. And I just do not see, no way, no how,

how shifting around the chairs on the deck of the *Titanic* is going to make things more affordable in terms of health care. I just do not see it.

And I will declare my interest. I am an insurance underwriter. It is what I do for a living. And I have looked at this thing every which way that I can.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: The Premier just asked, *Do I have an alternative?* If he would have asked before this, if he would have consulted with us before this, he may have gotten an alternative from us. That is what I am so frustrated about. There are alternatives to what we are trying to achieve. There are alternatives. But those alternatives are not being explored, because there is a rush to get this legislation passed in this place.

I thought it was kind of funny when the Member from constituency 26, MP Tyrrell, was on his feet. He said, *The actuaries are advising us. We are getting our advice from the actuaries.* Well, I will share a little secret with you, MP Tyrrell. When I am in my office underwriting an account and I see an actuary come through my door, I want to run the other way.

[Laughter]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I want to run in the other way! You know why? Because actuaries are very smart. Sometimes, they are too smart. Right? An actuary comes into my office and says, *Sylvan, the premium you are charging for this policy is too low. It should be at least three times loss payback,* and he is spouting off all this stuff. *Your premium is too low.*

And you know what I tell the actuary? *If I did what you said to do, I would have no clients. The company would have no business.*

You see, there is advice, and then there is operating in the real world. And I am going to tell you what is going to happen in the real world when this Bill is passed.

Everybody's insurance premium is going to go up. I want that in the Hansard. Insurance, health care insurance premiums, the Bermuda Health Council figures show that because of a shift in Bermuda's population demographics over the next seven years, there will be a dramatic impact on the cost of health care in Bermuda, which is already at 11.53 per cent of Bermuda's GDP. For example, health care costs are projected to grow to 20 per cent of GDP in the next 10 years. But those figures do not factor in what Government is proposing to do today. So, we can fully expect those percentages to go higher.

Now, we all know that here in Bermuda we have a problem with the overall health of our population. We rank number one on all of the charts that we should not be number one on. Seventy-five per cent of our people are overweight or obese. Physical inactivi-

ty is leading to chronic diseases, heart disease, hypertension, increasing rates of cancer. And then, on the flip side, you have improving medical technology, coupled with an increase in defensive medicine, which means that more and more people are living longer, which impacts health insurance costs.

So, there is a perfect storm going on in Bermuda with our health care crisis. You have got more unhealthy people living longer, putting a strain on health care.

So, I understand the Government's motivations to try and do something about it. But I have looked at this legislation. And the Government can say . . . the Minister has said, you know, *So many terms—and the standard premium rate is going to stay the same—and you cannot blame us if your insurance premiums are going to go up.* They know they are going to go up. They were going to go up before they did this, because insurance premiums do not go down. They go up. So, the only thing that I can see is that a bad situation has been made worse. A bad situation has been made worse.

So, we have had a very informative debate today. But when I get to my feet in this place, I am speaking to the people out there listening on the radio and to the people who tomorrow will go on *Bernews* and listen to the audiotapes of what we say up here. And I speak plainly. Because a lot of people do not understand this stuff. Insurance is an intangible. It can be complex. You are talking about ratios. It is not an easy thing to grasp.

But what I do know is that in the upcoming year, people are going to be crying about the cost of their health insurance. And the Government talks about Two Bermudas and the inequities and this, that and the other. This legislation is going to make it worse for people in this country who cannot afford health insurance.

So, I am just putting down the marker. And history . . . I hope I am wrong. I hope I am wrong. Everything that this Government has done, I am hoping that I am wrong, but I have not been proved wrong yet. I do not know what you are thinking of. But you are not helping the people of this country to survive in this country. It is getting more expensive and more difficult for too many people.

In my view, the Ministry of Health is expanding services while paying little attention to the economics of this change. I will repeat that. The Ministry of Health is expanding services while paying little attention to the economics of this change! Everything that we do in this place, the first thing in our mind should be, *Am I making it better or worse? Am I making it easier or harder for the average person to survive in this country?* It is my view that we are not making it easier for people to survive in Bermuda.

The end result of this change will be that health insurance premiums will continue to rise at a faster pace. Those customers who can afford the

health care increases will buy top-up insurance. Those who cannot afford to will not. And once again, this will widen a divide between those who can afford health care, health insurance, and those who cannot.

And then, there is the effect on the cost of doing business in Bermuda for employers. Now, some Members mentioned that they do not really give much thrift to the fact that next week there will be meetings held by the international business companies that are the main drivers of economic activity in this country. And they will tell their employees, *Your deductions are going to go up because health insurance costs and premiums are going up.* It is going to catch a lot of people by surprise, because a lot of people do not pay attention to what we do up in this place until it is too late.

Those seeking to look to Bermuda to set up operations here, this is not going to help them to make the decisions that we want them to make in terms of coming here. Because we are a very expensive jurisdiction, and we keep getting more expensive. We should be trying to find ways to lower the cost of doing business in Bermuda.

An Hon. Member: We are.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: You are not! You are in denial. And that is not a river in Egypt.

[Laughter]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: So, you do not listen to me, but that is okay. You do not have to listen to me. Because I am in the Opposition. And you have got the majority up here. You can do whatever you like. But when you walk the streets of this country, you will hear from the people of Bermuda. You are hearing from them now. If I am hearing from them, I *know* you are hearing from them.

So, I wish you well. But so far, your rhetoric, your words are not matching up with your actions. And the people will hold you accountable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 21.

Honourable Member Commissiong.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Mr. Speaker, thank you for affording me a few minutes to join what I think is a very important—

The Speaker: A few minutes? I like that. Just a few.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Thank you.

And consequential debate. I guess the heading thus far would be *The Tale of Two Leaders*.

[Laughter]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: We had the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Craig Cannonier, state that, I guess, the devil is in the details. But his party, the Opposition, is not opposed to the legislation.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: That is what we heard. And I took that as a very positive step.

There have been a number of major initiatives [on which] the Opposition, to their credit, has decided not to take an obstructionist stance, but, for the good of the country, has joined us in advancing these very important sets of agendas that are unavoidable. Because I think the realisation is happening there, along with many throughout the country, that the current status quo is no longer tenable.

However . . . however, only minutes later, we had the once and perhaps future leader, for the third time, perhaps, take a view that was contrary to the positive view that came from the Opposition Leader. And it was all doom and gloom, and the sky is going to fall. Mr. Speaker, I will say this here. I know this much: This Bill is just the opening phase of a multi-phased approach to substantively reducing the cost of health care in Bermuda. So, stay tuned! Because relief is on the way.

But, see, what the Opposition failed to do, because they are too beholden to the current status quo, is make the sort of transformative changes that were necessary, because those persons who have been drinking quite easily out of that trough are steadfastly opposed to making any changes that are going to leave them to get a little less water and to provide more for everybody else. But, you see, we are at a point now in Bermuda that you cannot have your cake and eat it, too. It just cannot be done anymore.

Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: We know that the insurers have had a fantastic ride. The Minister was not off base in pointing out that their motive for opposition was solely profit-driven. A large part of those extraordinary profits that we see them bragging and boasting about over the last few years can be directly traced to that model that was perhaps set up here maybe 50 years ago that essentially is a fee-for-service model, with insurers at the centre of that model.

The fee-for-service model or a variation of it is what has brought us to this juncture, as it has in the US. As you know, as the election is getting ready to wind up again in the US, health care is front and centre. Firstly, in the recent congressional elections, where the Democrats were able to take a significant number of seats, health care was the seminal issue.

And it will be so again in the presidential election. No less for us! I mean, look at those figures that everybody has been talking about. The amount of money that we spend on health care is extraordinary! Over \$700-odd million per year!

Mr. Speaker, we know that . . . and the reference, of course, the Minister, the Honourable Kim Wilson, looked at me and I looked at her. And we heard references where a Member there, one of the Shadow Ministers was evoking 1980's Russia. Now, she dropped Cuba in there. Everybody knows that Cuba's health system has been touted by everybody for generations as being very good in the delivery of services there. Top-notch. But the Russia reference was just extraordinary; it really was.

Of course, they conveniently forget that, throughout Western Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, France, they have very good health care systems that offer some variation of what we call a single-payer system. These are not socialist countries. These are not communist countries. They have certain features within their public policy that one could view as being socialistic, I guess you could say. But they have free market economies because they recognise that health care is not a privilege; it has to be a right in a modern society, especially one as wealthy as most Western countries are, and increasingly around the world who are also adopting some variation of single-payer systems. This is the way forward for us in Bermuda. It has to be.

Mr. Speaker, I went to my chiropractor just recently. As a matter of fact, it was just this week. And he had a document that, in support, I would like to add, of the sugar tax. He is a professional who is in support of it. And if I may, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: I am just going to . . . this just illustrates where we are at here. It is on the written page here. He says, "By any country's standards, they are shocking figures." He is referring to the amount of diabetes that Bermuda suffers from, the Bermudians, I should say. "More than a third of Bermuda's adults have diabetes, and around three-quarters of men and women are obese or overweight. As a result, the costs are extraordinary. Last year alone, spending on people with diabetes amounted to \$77.8 million, or 10 per cent of that \$700-odd million of Bermuda's total health spending."

Extraordinary. And it is only going to get worse.

Gentlemen, we can differ on some of the policy prescriptions. But we all have to come down and be realistic here that it is not going to get better in and of itself, that the status quo is not sustainable. We know [about] this ageing population. We are going to have to make hard choices here. This Government is determined to make those hard choices! We have to. I

think we are going to reach a milestone by 2020, which is going to see our aged population . . . if anybody here can give me the correct figures, I think we are going to be at 20 per cent by 2020 of our population being either 66 or 65 and above. And with the baby boomers, particularly my generation, hurtling towards, you know, their mid-60s and above, we are facing a tsunami, demographically.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: That has got to be part of the mix, too, raising the retirement age. And this Government is dealing with that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I applaud what the Government is doing. There is going to be some short-term dislocation. There is going to be some short-term pain for some. But I want people to understand that there is going to be long-term sustainable gain for Bermuda.

And you know, I have been involved in a few of the town halls that we had on the living wage. And I am not going into any specifics around that, Mr. Speaker. But I will say this here. As I mentioned earlier, Bermudians are understanding that the status quo is not working for us. And what is gratifying, Bermudians are also more open to dealing with the complexity around these issues. They know there are no easy fixes. Bermudians know that.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see what we have done with the hospital there is long overdue. The block grant for the hospital has to have occurred. It should have happened some years ago. But again, Bermuda, if you are listening out there, that is only phase one. And, believe me, you will get the contours of the phase two plan very soon. Because this part is just—this is just one aspect of it. We are going to move towards having a single-payer [system] or some variation thereof, maybe one, maybe two pools. When the Minister is ready, when we have all of the numbers together, when we have the whole framework established, that will be made public and there will be debates around that.

But that is the way we have to go. And by doing so, it will be no different than what many of our peers, in terms of countries large and small, have done. And you will also note that it is what they are increasingly looking to adopt in the US, as well. Because they know that they have reached a dead end with that system. And they know that it has not helped health outcomes. And we, tracking or actually adopting many of the American prescriptions for health care coming out of that World War II era, went the same direction. Look where it has got us.

The other thing is we went in the same direction in terms of adoption of what I call that Western, but particularly American, diet. Look where it has got us. So, it is not just a fix in terms of how we pay for health care. It is also about the whole wellness package and diet. It has got to be all a part of it. I remem-

ber my godmother, Hyacinth Jones, God bless her, from out in Spanish Point, the back of West Pembroke School out there. And I remember one of the last conversations I had over to the house we were visiting. And everybody started reminiscing about Bermudians and how Bermudians were such a handsome people. And they then talked about, *Why?* Because they were not eating a lot of processed food. You know, a higher percentage of fresh fish and vegetables. Everybody had a garden, you know. And some of the better-off families would have had maybe a goat tethered in the yard, right?

But they also walked and, in particular, rode what we used to call in the vernacular, *pushbikes*, back in the 1920s and 1930s and 1940s and 1950s. They were all slim and handsome people. That is the way Bermudians used to look. But you look now, and, ah, man, I tell you.

[Laughter]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: But anyway, I mean, let us create a better model that is going to serve Bermuda and its people, a healthier Bermuda. It can bring about such significant benefits, not only for the individual, but for our economy. Let us not lose sight of this. This also brings about economic benefits for our country by having a healthier population. By decreasing the debt load [we have] incurred by having a sort of fee-for-service winner-take-all, wild, wild West system around health care, which is going to lead us to bankruptcy. And I know we all want to avoid that.

And if it means that everyone has to sacrifice and that those who have been doing well with this current system have to sacrifice a little more than others, then so be it. But we are no longer going to put the burden for the downside of this system firmly on the backs of low income and the working poor in Bermuda. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The Chair recognises the Honourable Mr. Pearman. You have the floor, Mr. Pearman.

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

My interests are declared under the parliamentary website.

I believe in investing in Bermudian companies and Bermudians. And that includes investing in certain of the health insurance companies on this Island.

There is a quote often attributed to Winston Churchill, which is that “Democracy is the [single] worst form of government, except for all the others.” And that is an apt quote today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is an apt quote in the context of our health care conversation because Bermuda’s health care system is

the single worst health care system in the whole world, except for all the others.

Generally, our health care system works. It has significant problems, and they need to be fixed. But it works. It is costly. But it works. There is overutilisation, but it works. Our population is ageing and generally unhealthy. But the health care provision that they gain and that we gain on this Island works, generally. The provision of urgent and emergency care is there. If you are Bermudian and you need urgent emergency care you are going to get air-vac'd out of here to Lahey or wherever it is, this happens. This happens today. And it happens whether you have a job or you do not. It happens whether you are white or you are black, whether you are rich or you are poor. That is the health care system that we have today, and it is the health care system about which we Bermudians should be proud.

Is it perfect? No, it is not perfect. It is costly. There is overutilisation. And we as a people are generally unhealthy and getting older.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, moving to the legislation itself, I have attended numerous discussions with people in the health care industry about this Bill. I have read the Bill. I have discussed the Bill at length with my parliamentary colleagues. And we must say on this side of the aisle, despite our vigorous efforts, we are none the wiser. It is hard to see. It has been touted as a reform Bill. It is hard to see what it intends to reform. I mean, if these are the Commissioning reforms for our health care system, where are they taking us, and what do they mean? Because those questions need to be answered, and they have not been.

Now, we all know that this Bill will pass because the Government has the votes. But it is the Government that will be held accountable to explain to Bermudians what these changes mean. And I hope they can do so.

What I think they mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that money is being moved from one pocket to another, from the private sector insurance pocket, where we have health care claims that are managed to try to keep costs down, to a government pocket, where we *may* have managed claims to try to keep costs down or we may not. What has not happened is any identification of cost savings by borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. And, as we understand it, and no doubt we can be corrected with facts and figures, but at the moment, this first step in this journey does not show any cost savings at all.

And so, to link it to the Throne Speech promise by the current Government that they were here and elected to reduce the cost of living, it is a disconnect. This is not going to reduce the cost of living, and no one has said how it will reduce the cost of living. Indeed, I would suggest that it is far more likely that this change will increase the cost of living for Bermudians.

Now, why do I say that? If you obtain health care from a Bermudian health care provider, know this: Your premiums will go up. And I will repeat that. If you obtain your health insurance from a Bermudian health care provider—Colonial, BF&M, Argus—your health insurance premiums will go up as part of this journey. Maybe not with the first step, but as part of this journey, the cost of health care for the vast majority of Bermudians is going to get more expensive. So, we should at least be honest about that. Your premiums will go up.

Why? Why? The only answer at the moment is the desire expressed by the Premier in the motion to adjourn last week that his goal, which we take to be a collective PLP goal, is to dismantle the system, tear it down. Burn down the house. Because things need to be changed. The Commissioning reforms are needed. We need to have a new landscape.

The problem with burning the house down is that if you want to be a radical bomb-thrower and you want to light things on fire, be careful who gets burnt. Because the evil pantomime villains in this picture, the health insurance companies, the *bad guys*, they are Bermudian companies. They are owned by Bermudian shareholders. They are public companies. They have a diversity of Bermudian shareholders. Not every shareholder at BF&M and Argus looks like me.

And more importantly, what do they do? They employ Bermudians. They have some of the highest percentage employment rates on the Island compared to other sectors of Bermudians. These are Bermudians, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who will lose their jobs when this money is shifted away and into the government sector. There will be job losses. Premiums will go up, and there will be job losses.

So, if you are going to start a fire, take a moment to stop and think about who is going to get burnt.

But let us say this Government is successful in burning the building down. Well, what next? We still need the building. Someone is going to have to build it again. Who is that going to be? Well, we heard last week, *We need more competitors in this space*. Great! Where are they coming from? Overseas. So, we are going to get some foreigners to come in and build the buildings, the Bermudian buildings, that we just burned down with job losses. So, that is a solution.

And maybe that is not what will happen. Maybe we will not have foreigners come in and build new businesses to the loss of Bermudians and Bermudian employees. Maybe the Government will take over the whole system.

Now, I ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that a good idea? Look around at any country in the world and identify a circumstance where the government is better at running things than the private sector. They are pretty hard to find. This Government is not in the business of providing health insurance for all Bermudians, nor should it be, because it will not be very good at it. And the fact that it is not good at it is why

we are struggling currently to deal with the circa 6,000 high-risk Bermudians who do need better health insurance and provision of care. And the Government has not been very good at that thus far, and that is why we face some of the problems we are facing with escalating costs. That, and obviously, utilisation and an ageing environment and an unhealthy environment.

But we are told that this is just the starting point. *This Bill is just the first step on the journey*, was a quote from earlier. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, watch out, Bermuda, because this road is likely to lead to job losses.

Let us look beyond this Bill. Let us look at the next steps. Because we have been told that there are next steps, that this is the first step in a journey. Well, how is this all going to work? We know now that King Edward is going to get a lump-sum grant. Well, how are they going to manage this change? How are they going to cope when the lump sum grant runs short? We have heard, parenthetically, that dialysis treatment now is going to be capped. Okay. So, how does that work come July or August, where someone needs dialysis treatment? Money is not there. Today we heard that we had an emergency \$65 million medical fund. Okay. But still, maybe it is not July. Maybe it is September. Dialysis treatment is still needed, but the money is not there. How is it going to work?

You can look to other jurisdictions that have (quote/unquote) “socialised medicine.” And what you tend to see there are two things. One, you see delays in the provision of services. You see waiting lists. The words “waiting list” were on the front page of the UK papers any time they talked about hospitals, the delay in getting service. Something, I would point out, that under the current system is not a problem. If you are a very sick Bermudian, you see the doctor you want to see. You get the emergency treatment you need. You get good health care.

So, here we are, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is going to be a block grant. Maybe it is not July. Maybe it is September. So, what happens when the money runs out? Will there be a reduction in services? Will there be waiting lists? Will we go a step further? Will we go on to the next step, where Bermudians who want to be able to decide their own health care choices are told, *No. It's not your decision anymore. This is a government health care system. We're going to tell you which doctor you go to.* And that is how it works in the UK. You go to the doctor who is in your post code. You do not say, *Oh, I'd like to go see Dr. Jackson, because she's a great doctor and I'd like to go see her.* Oh, no, no, no, no. You will go see the one two streets away from you, because that is how it works. So, they start choosing your doctors for you.

And the second point, and it is a point that my honourable friend, Sylvan Richards, already raised—you will start to have a two-tiered system. There will be more of Two Bermudas in the health care system.

Because those who can will go off and buy private high-end premium health insurance to make sure that if things start to go badly at the hospital or wherever, they are still covered. So, that is the problem that will be faced.

And so, respectfully, if this is the start of a journey, we must be very careful about where this journey will take us. We do not want the clunking fist of the state telling people how they must manage their health care. This is a matter for personal choice for all Bermudians. And this is a first step down the treacherous path. And we will wait. We will see what happens. And the Bill will pass because the Government has the votes. But my prediction is that costs will not go down, and premiums will go up. And Bermudians will be less better served by their health care system in five years' time than they are today, notwithstanding the problems that exist in our system. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Jamahl Simmons. Mr. Simmons, you have the floor.

Hon. Jamahl S. Simmons: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, and good evening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I waited with bated breath for that Honourable Member who just took his seat to declare his interests.

An Hon. Member: Yes. Yes.

Hon. Jamahl S. Simmons: I waited for him to follow the traditions and the protocols of this House that, when you have an interest, you at least let people know from whence the knife is falling.

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

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Scott Pearman: I realise the speaker has only [just] wandered into the Chamber, but you were here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And right at the beginning I declared my interest.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Jamahl S. Simmons: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Chamber, we are all honourable men. I will take the Honourable Member at his word. The Hansard will speak for itself.

Mr. Scott Pearman: The Hansard will show.

The Deputy Speaker: I really did not hear it. But if you did—

Mr. Scott Pearman: You may not . . . I did, and the Hansard will show it. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Jamahl S. Simmons: But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the theme of the previous speaker's speech was that, if I cannot convince you, I will scare you. If I cannot sway you with facts, I will frighten you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will say this. And I will quote my colleague, my neighbour in Parliament, and my Sandys PLP representative neighbour, Mr. Michael Scott. *Greed, not government, will lead to an increase in health care if it comes. Greed, not government, will lead to an increase in health care costs, if it comes.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened to the One Bermuda Alliance defend the status quo. I have listened, with apologies to my good friend, the Honourable Member from constituency 21, the One Bermuda Alliance tap dance on behalf of seemingly certain interests. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that we recognise that, when it comes to the One Bermuda Alliance, the degrees and the education, the experience that we possess will never be enough. We recognise and understand that the degrees and expertise and experience and knowledge within the government and the civil service that helped to advise us to shape the policy we developed will never be good enough.

So, I am less concerned about their attempts to frighten rather than convince, but more concerned about the people whom they profess to care about. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will not hear me talk about Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, because I like to be specific. I talk about Bermudians, Bermudians. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when people talk about the cost of health care, when people *talk* about the cost of health care, I have lived it first-hand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from 2012 when I was made redundant to the day I was elected, I did not have health insurance. I did not have health insurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I could not afford it. I did not have health insurance to be put on my wife's insurance because it would have taken her take-home pay so low it would have made no sense for her to go to work. So, for two years, I hoped and prayed that nothing happened. All right? And there are many Bermudians in that position. There are many Bermudians in that position. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those who profess to care about Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda were among the people who mocked people like me when they did not have insurance, when they could not find work, when they took work that some viewed was beneath them.

So, one thing I can say about this Progressive Labour Party, and the Opposition may never accept this, our hearts are with the people who, at the end of

the month, their dollar does not go far enough. Our hearts are with the people who cannot afford health insurance or whose health insurance bills are wiping out their salaries every month. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the status quo will not do. We had a choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and when we came to the Cabinet table, I cannot disclose the Cabinet discussions. But we were told we are going to put a higher bill on our people, Bermudians. And as a collective and as a party, we said no. We must find another way.

So, we had a choice. Raise the costs on our people. Do not raise the cost and hope for the best and pray that it worked out. Or find a new path. And one thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can say about this party is the status quo will not do. We believe in blazing new trails. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I think about some of the remarks I have heard, and some of the remarks I have heard over the years, I am reminded (and with your indulgence, Mr. Deputy Speaker), I am reminded of a quote from a book, *Dante's Inferno [sic]*. Before Lucifer was thrown into the pit, he said to God, *Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.*

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the devil could not and no longer envisioned heaven, because heaven was denied him permanently. So, a devil will put an air-conditioner in, trying to make hell a little cooler. The devil will try and make a backyard barbecue a little bit more festive, because they are not getting to heaven. We have to envision not to make hell, which [is what it] has been for many of our people for the past several hundred years on this side of the world, better, slightly better, a little bit less painful. We must work step by step towards creating, as best we can, a more heavenly life for our people on this Island.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we stand up here and we bring things for that, we recognise that we speak not for corporate interests. We speak not from fear that our friends will make less money this year at the end of their bottom line. We speak for the people who wonder how they are going to pay their bills. Not Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, but Bermudians, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and unafraid to say it—unafraid to say it.

So, when I stand to my feet in this Chamber, I do not speak for any insurance company, although we must ensure that we have an environment that is prosperous for business. But I do not speak for them. I do not speak for them. They do not own me. I do not take a dollar from them. Lord knows they have taken enough dollars from me.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we, as we seek to go forward on the first step of this journey, I am excited because I was not put here to make the backyard barbecue more festive, nor hell a little bit cooler. I was put here to transform and tear down the status quo. And when I stand alongside of my colleagues, we know the status quo will not do. It will not do for our seniors. It will not do for our children. It will

not do for any generations. The clock has run out. The day is over. The time has come to move forward in a way that benefits all, not just the few.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I commend the Health Minister because she could have taken the tack and said, *You know what? Let's burn Bermudians one more time. You know? Let's listen to the bean counters and burn Bermudians one more time.* And we said no. We have to find a new path. And so, when you hear companies that declare millions and millions of dollars of profits, and then saying, *Guess what? We need more.* When you hear companies outside of that industry declare profits and say, *You know what? We need more.* And people are out on the street. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the Bermuda we are fighting for.

Our Bermuda is about making sure that that little guy, who works hard, works hard, has a few dollars to scratch together at the end of the month. That if he gets hurt, he does not have to worry about whether he is going to pay for medical bills. That is what we are here for, not tap-dancing for insurers and for shareholders. No, sir. No, sir.

So, while I appreciate the support that was given by the Leader of the Opposition, and I recognise the agenda of the man who would be king, the former Premier, but we have a job to do. We have a job to do. And it is no clearer the division between these two parties than on the issue of Bermudians and ensuring that we level the playing field. This is the first step on a journey. We have laid out our rationale and our reasons for taking the first step on this journey.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to the conclusion of this journey because we will once again prove that those who fight for the status quo, that not only is their day over, but they were wrong.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Susan Jackson. Ms. Jackson, you have the floor.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I have been listening to this debate. And for all of the speakers, I still have yet to hear exactly what this means for the person who is employed and insured. And I find that this legislation and the changes that are about to take place around the payment of the insurance premiums to be quite confusing. And we have gone through this process in a very short period of time. So, I would like to just take a few minutes and see whether I can understand this for the person who is actually the one who is employed and is going to be paying this premium.

So, if a person is working in the private sector and they are paying their premiums to date, the insurance company is paying a couple of hundred dollars out of your insurance payment to go to the Bermuda

Hospital for the Standard Hospital Benefits. And the insurance companies, because they are right now receiving, if you go to the hospital for services, they, the insurance company, will receive a bill from the hospital, and then the insurance company will pay the hospital. And the insurance company is keeping a record of all of this activity.

So, if you are healthy and you do not use the hospital facilities, then there is an opportunity for your premium to be reduced, because you are healthy and you are doing a good job, no claims. You are being rewarded.

In the new framework, more than \$300, a [full] \$335 is now going to go into a fund, which will pay for any hospital visits that you, the employee, the worker, are going to have, any services that you need at the hospital. So, it has gone from about \$100 that you used to put into this fund, now it is going to be about \$335 that you are going to pay into this fund for any hospital treatments that you may need.

And the insurance company is no longer going to know what services you may or may not have at the hospital. So, it is going to be virtually impossible for the insurance company now to reward the people who are healthy with a lower premium, because they have no record of the services that may or may not have been provided at the hospital. And so, they just do not know.

So, in summary, you (being the worker) are going to pay \$335 out of your insurance premium to the hospital, and it goes. Whether you use the hospital or not, it is gone; it is being spent there, and that is it.

The remainder of that standard health premium, or Standard Health Benefit premium that you pay toward the hospital, there is this little bit, there is about \$25 that is left over. And there are certain services that you can get that are not provided at the hospital. And that \$25 goes into a pot to help pay for those services that are not provided at the hospital.

And if you can imagine, let us say, I do not know, I just had a running accident. I needed some services that are covered by the Standard Health Benefit. And I am not sure that the \$25, the pot that I am putting that \$25 into, is actually going to be overall covering the costs of whatever services that I might need outside of that hospital \$335 that you have to put in whether you use the hospital or not. So, there is this risk that the insurance companies may say, *Well, you know what? That \$25 that you're contributing toward any of the services outside of the hospital that still fall within the Standard Health Benefit, which is basically services that are provided to insured people in Bermuda, [for] those services you may now have to pay a little bit more.* So, your premium may be adjusted upward in order to cover those costs.

Now, in addition to all of this money that you are paying toward the hospital and any of the other standard health benefits outside of the hospital, these things I do not have a list, but dieticians, it may in-

clude some physio, things like that, sort of these services that go, sort of complement things that you may need outside of the hospital. So, [these things are in] that pot.

Then, we pay a whole bunch of other money for major medical. So, if we work in the private sector at the banks, the insurance companies, we do get major medical. And that is when the doctor may say, *You know what? There is not any service at the hospital that can help you with this particular illness. We're going to have to fly you overseas.* Or maybe you go to your general practitioner, and he says, *Oh. This needs a specialist.* So, you are going to go and see a specialist. All of those extra special services are also a part of this premium that you pay. And that is what it is, and those premiums adjust according to how healthy we are or how sick we are.

So, all in all, I guess what I am saying is that if we are working in the private sector, yes, you will still get your coverage, be able to fly overseas, go and see a specialist, and the insurance company will pay for that. But I guess the most important part is that we are paying this large amount of money into a fund that is going to go to the hospital, and basically it is going to get paid whether we use the hospital or not.

Now, one might say, *Okay, well, that's wonderful because there are people who use the hospital in emergency circumstances, and, you know, as a responsible citizen, I make my contribution.* Well, those that are seniors, those that are indigent and do not have any money to pay for any hospital or medical care, and then children, they all receive medical care at the hospital free of charge anyway. So I am going to leave it to the listening audience to figure out where that extra money is going to be spent. I do not know whether it is going to be spent to care for people who are underinsured or whether it is going to pay to help with the services that are provided at the hospital, but that money will all go into a pot and it is going to the hospital, and no one is really going to know other than probably the Hospitals Board and the Bermuda Health Council where and how that money is going to be spent.

So, the other side of this coin is that if we were to decide as workers who are paying this large amount of money that, *All right, well, since I am paying all this money toward the hospital then maybe I am going to use the hospital services a little bit more.* So, *if I get hurt rather than waiting and having to go to my private doctor and he is going to charge a co-pay, I might as well just go to the hospital and get those services.* Well, the risk there is that the hospital, as we know, struggles with the amount of people that go into the hospital now and it is often overcrowded. And we have heard stories today of people having to wait in hallways in the emergency room or sit and wait for services for, you know, 20 hours before anyone can see them. So, there is this risk that if we were to say because we are spending all of this money and it is all

going toward the hospital, then we might as well go to the hospital.

And if that happens, then we are getting to this point where the hospital just does not have the capacity . . . they just do not have the space, they do not have the medical staff to care for all of us who are going there. So, it puts us as the workers who are paying these premiums and paying this lump sum into this fund that is going directly to the hospital in kind of an awkward situation, because it makes it very difficult for us to get value for money.

I am now going to sort of shift a little bit around that value for money. The insurance companies, when they had a little more oversight of the services that were provided at the hospital, and we were not paying as much money (we were paying about \$100 toward the hospital, whereas now we are paying over \$300 a month for the hospital), the insurance companies, if we were healthy or if our . . . if, you know, part of what that extra expense or the extra money that was left from the premiums that we all paid, the insurance companies, I believe, have done a very good job with education. So, they have introduced many different programmes around healthy eating, healthy lifestyles. There are some private companies that have very complex and sophisticated health monitoring, computerised programmes and websites where people can monitor and track their healthy lifestyles and be rewarded for that. So, whether it is an extra reward that you get in the form of gift cards, or whatever it is, oftentimes you will get a reduction in your premium when the annual calculations are made. It is going to be very difficult for the health insurance companies to really gauge and have the extra resources to provide that kind of service.

So, as difficult as this entire process and this change is to understand, the bottom line is that we as the workers who are paying the premiums into this Mutual Re-insurance Fund, the MRF, really are not going to necessarily know what benefits we are going to get from it or what the actual use of our funds is going to be going toward. And I do not know in the government system where you have GEHI, so if you are working as a civil servant, I am not sure whether GEHI is also contributing to this Mutual Re-insurance Fund or not. And that is a question that I would like answered by the Minister if that is possible tonight, because I guess that would put the civil service in a similar situation as the private sector, or maybe not. I am not sure. You may not have to pay as much money toward the Bermuda Hospitals Board as the private sector.

So, I guess one of my other concerns is that the insurance companies, not receiving any of the data, [will not] know who is having services down at the hospital, what services they are getting or how much those services are costing. It concerns me because I do not see that anyone is having any real oversight, or anyone is sort of policing the services that are going

to be provided out of the money that we are paying through our premiums. Now, I understand that the Bermuda Health Council will receive the data on the use and the services at the hospital, and I am not sure whether that data will be made available to the public or not so that we have some idea of whether the hospital is being overutilised or whether the hospital is finding cost savings and efficiencies. And, of course, if the data is not released at least to the insurance companies, then there is no one who can really calculate and see whether we are being healthy enough and whether it is possible for our premiums to be adjusted downward if we are in good health.

So, I do not know who is going to administer that and I do not even know what is going to happen to some of the staff who in the past have been the ones at the hospital who have been processing the services and sending the claims to the insurance companies for payment. So, it may be, not only the insurance side, but as well as the hospital, where staff could be impacted, because if there is not that exchange of, sort of, invoices and payments, then there may not be need for some of the staff that have been providing those services in the past.

I guess my only other issue or fear is that if we do find that there are a number of people who are deciding to go into the hospital and the hospital is being used at, you know, 100 per cent or more and full to capacity, whether ultimately the hospital is going to have to cut their services—whether they are going to have to look to see what [rationing] they can [institute] because they are unable to provide all of the services because maybe they do not have the staff or maybe there is just not enough equipment to serve everybody. And so that, from a country-wide perspective, could be a real miss.

And it is unfortunate because a lot of what I am saying is . . . you know, I am asking a lot of questions. I am feeling a little uncertain because no one has had that conversation in the public domain. Everybody has been so concerned about who is going to get the big pot of money, and no one is really telling the working population what exactly is going to happen and how their money is being used. So, I do not believe there has been much or any real conversation publicly amongst people who are insured about these changes. Some people . . . I do not . . . some people may even get offended by that, because if we are living healthy lifestyles, if we are certainly noticing our health premiums because they are the largest deduction from our salaries, if we are not feeling as though we are getting value for service all around, then there is going to be greater concern and, in particular, as [has] been mentioned by colleagues here in the Chamber this afternoon, international business whether they are here and existing now or whether they are thinking about coming to Bermuda, they are going to look at the costs of living here and if our insurance package does not look attractive, then many

potential and prospective companies that may want to come to Bermuda may start to look at other jurisdictions because it is not in their best interest to have unattractive and costly health payments for their staff, especially if they are trying very hard to keep a healthy and young population of employees who will feel as though there is a large amount of their pay that is going to go toward a service that they are not going to be using.

Finally, the small businesses, charities . . . I spend an awful amount of time looking at the expenses at Summerhaven. Clearly, our health insurance is the largest payment that we have. And I know that there are many small businesses out there who also struggle with health insurance for their staff members. I guess the fear is that the expense of it in general, because with this amount of money going into the hospital, eventually we are all going to have to pay a little bit more for those services outside the hospital. And that is going to make it more difficult to keep up with our health insurance premiums. And if we have not paid for our health insurance premiums, then we are not going to be able to use the hospital services either without a costly bill.

So, in that situation where it is a small business and the charities, I just . . . I just cannot imagine what the cost of that is going to be, and the impact on small businesses in Bermuda, the impact on charities and how that is going to be handled by the employer. It certainly is a stress now and I do not see it getting any better.

I am going to end by . . . and I have no need to defend an insurance company. I have no interest to declare. But it seems to me that an awful lot is being placed on, you know, sort of let us get this large pot of money away from the insurance companies and, you know, possibly we will be able to split this pie up and weaken the structure a little bit. But, I guess, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we do live in a capitalist environment, and everybody who has a business is doing their best to make a profit.

Insurance companies make their money in lots of different ways. And, you know, I happened to go on a random local insurance company site and they have every kind of insurance you can imagine. They have got travel insurance, home insurance, boat insurance, they have car insurance, they have pensions, they have all kinds of products that are out there, and the health products are toward the bottom of the pile. So, I am saying all of this to say that insurance companies are making their money in lots of different ways. And if we are doing this simply to break the back of an insurance company, or insurance companies in general, or to knock it down a size, I think we are really hard pressed and may be surprised that these are astute business people and they are going to continue to make money.

So, you know, I just would hate to see the Bermuda Government cut off its nose to spite its face

and we find ourselves in a situation where we are giving an awful lot of money to the hospital and we have not really thought through how this is going to work, how the money is going to be spent and where we can find cost efficiencies. I just do not know how much has been really thought through. I have not seen any plan. I have not seen any semblance of proof or discussion around how this is actually going to manifest itself and bring about a positive change for Bermuda.

So, with that, I take my seat and it is with concern. I really, really hope that the Government plans this out well, because it is the people who are working really, really hard in this country who are trying to find the funds to stay afloat will end up being hurt in the end.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Kim Swan. Mr. Swan, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened today intently. And if ever there was a philosophical difference that separated the Progressive Labour Party from the philosophy of the One Bermuda Alliance, it is certainly manifesting itself today. I have listened with particular interest to the amount of times that “Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda” has been used in sentences. And I would venture to say from my historical knowledge that some political advice has been given to say, *Listen, it is important that you refer to Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda as often as possible to give the appearance that you could very well be interested holistically in what matters to them.* But, Mr. Acting Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am minded when I make that comment of a very poignant quote from *Star Trek* “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.”

The Deputy Speaker: Member, Honourable Member, just letting you know, you only have 20 minutes—

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, sir. I am aware. Thank you.

“The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.” And nowhere has this been practiced more than the economic construct of Bermuda.

The Honourable Member from Sandys, Mr. Jamahl Simmons, spoke in what I would term *he who feels it, knows it.* Well, I would have to agree with him, having lived four and a half years without health insurance myself. And I have said it on this floor of the House, there is no better assurance than blessed assurance because—

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —between 2012 and 2017, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I prayed, *Dear God, keep me healthy enough.*

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when people are going through that it is people like you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who would show a little compassion when somebody tells you, *You know, that boy is up there teaching barefooted because he cannot put on his shoes, but he has still got to work.* In Bermuda? The land of plenty? The land where the same person would go away and promote this country as one of the top richest countries in the world and a person like you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would make a call and say, *Listen, I will pay just to have that person go and get themselves checked out.* I am not making it up. I am saying thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because that is a true story—in this country of milk and honey!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: It is a true story! He who feels it, knows it. And the persons who espouse in one breath, *Mr. and Mrs. Smith,* need to take a walk around and get to know some of the plight of Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. and Mrs. Smith in this country for many years during their tenure who could not afford to pay had to make the choice between health care and the like. And that is a reality. So, the philosophy that has been spoke about when you discuss the principle of this Bill is what separates them from us.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Point of order, Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order, Member?

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: My point of order is that if you do not have insurance, with this Bill you are still going to—

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: That is not a point of order—

The Deputy Speaker: That is—

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I am not misleading the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat, Member. Take your seat. That is not a point of order.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: He is misleading the House.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.
Continue, Mr. Swan.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: The reality is that in this country persons use capitalism as the reason and profits and the maintenance of that to gloss over the fact that there are many countries who temper capitalism with significant social policies that benefit their countries. I just happen to know through my trade some of the wealthiest people who have walked this earth. Some of them have actually lived in this country. Some have been my friends.

And I remember this, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. I remember one of my dear friends, an oil man out of the Canadian region, who had a home in Bermuda not too far from where I plied my trade in Tucker's Town. And I remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that person bought one of the largest houses in that region, conveniently sold [his house] and moved to Mexico. When it came nearer to the time when they had to retire, they ventured back closer to the Canadian border to the point that when they needed health care, they were not in Bermuda, they were not in Mexico, they were not in America—they were back in Canada. Why? Because the structure provided for them to receive the coverage that their country had invested in.

And when you look at quality of life in countries that are doing both a capitalistic model and providing for the people, those countries are unshamed at providing that. But in this House, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, you have had Members who have had substantial economic interests—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —and you have a political party, an Opposition party, who speaks for that substantial interest, whether they want to admit it or not. Whether they want to masquerade as being for Mr. and Mrs. Smith, they really are the party for big business in this country. And when the Progressive Labour Party, through the Health Minister, starts venturing into a sphere that makes that reality uncomfortable, you are going to hear the howls, you are going to hear the fearmongering, you are going to say watch out for that. You are going to say the sky is falling, long before—

An Hon. Member: Tale of two cities.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —and that is the tale of Two Bermudas in real terms. Let me tell you this—

An Hon. Member: Tell us.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: The Health Minister . . . I have been listening. She has been doing other things that need to change the dynamic in Bermuda. When speaking to—not only speaking to, putting into

place—initiatives that will encourage a generation of Bermudians to change their habits when it comes to a healthier lifestyle. Fortunately, they did not get through to the Whip so we can get some nice salad tonight, we have a little fried . . .

An Hon Member: Well?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Well, we will get past that—

An Hon Member: Yes, we will.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: But that is just an aside, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It is going to take a ways to turn around the country that caters for the few in great abundance. And I hear people talking about diversity. Diversity is practiced least in the boardrooms of this country and the sharing of the economic wealth of this country, and when this country went through its worst economic downturn since the war times—and quite possibly during the 1990s, early 1990s recession. Our people had to flee and we did not see the empathy that I hear about Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda from those same folks. I have to say that. We did not see it.

So, whilst persons hear those talking points, while they try to pour cold water on the initiatives of the Progressive Labour Party, in particular in this instance as it relates to trying to turn things around, make Bermuda more fair and equitable, bringing about a transformation. What does a transformation mean? A transformation means moving from one set of circumstances that benefit the few to make it possible for greater sharing of the economics of this country. That is what it really means.

So, in order to do that, you have to go where persons have not prepared to go before in this country, because all before the scaremongering was enough to chase people away from addressing what needed to be addressed in this country. And, so within my 20 minutes . . . Oh, Mr. Speaker—

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

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Within my 20 minutes, let me say this: Two Bermudas is real; not a fantasy. The economic disparity that exists in this country is real. The plight that impacts people who cannot afford health care in this country, who are making the choice between health care and other bills is real. The fact that the Government is taking steps to address this is real also, and do not be fooled. Do not be fooled.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Mr. Swan, thank you very much.

Now, Mr. Famous, would you like to add a few comments?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, I am going to say something I normally do not say. I was not planning on speaking.

The Speaker: Well, you do not have to!

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: But, somebody else spoke and they . . . I am going to take a different tack today, Mr. Speaker. I am going to ask some questions.

Mr. Speaker, a good politician listens to their voters. And over the last few weeks, people have been posting on social media, *Oh, my insurance is going up. Oh, I just got a letter from BF&M.* (Anybody know about BF&M?) *Oh, I just got a letter from this other insurance company, my insurance is going up.*

So, I am saying, *Wow, why are the insurance companies like going up so much?*

And then it says, *Oh, because the Government is putting in this policy.*

So, I am like, okay . . . I do not really understand it. I work at BELCO, so I do not know all about this insurance thing. So, I sent a text to the Honourable Minister, I said, *Minister, I need a couple hours of your time for you to break this down for me.* And, the gracious Minister said, *Come to my office.* And for two hours, I sat in her room, got some coffee, no sugar in it—

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: And she went through chart by chart—

The Speaker: She does not keep sugar in her office no more.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Well, I will not say anything.

She went chart by chart explaining meticulously what we have been going through as a country, where we are now, where we need to be, and how we need to get there. So, again, you know, she kept on saying to me, and I quote, “Chris, your eyes look glazed. Are you understanding?”

I said, “Wheel that back. Explain this graph for me again.” And she carefully explained it.

And, so I said, “Okay, I am starting to get it. I am starting to get it.”

Mr. Speaker, I am going to take liberty and read from my pay cheque, which I get every week—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am not going to tell you everything.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Let me go to the medical part—\$230.28. That is every week. So, if I round that off, that is \$1,000 per month, \$12,000 per year. I have been there for 26 years, so I am kind of figuring I am paying out a lot of money to insurance companies. I have probably only been sick in the hospital, accumulatively, maybe two weeks. So, of the hundreds of thousands that I have paid out, I have got very little back. Very little.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: So, I ask myself, *Self, should I keep going down this road, or is there an alternative?*

And self said to me, *Hey, you probably got another 10 years around here, 10 years times \$12,000 a year—that is another \$120,000 that you ain't never going to see.*

So, I said, *Self, my wife has a business . . . as a matter of fact, quite a number of people in my family have businesses.* So, I asked them, *Hey, give or take, what are you paying out in insurance?*

And they said different figures.

I said, *How often do your employees get sick?*

They said, *Very rarely, very rarely. Maybe the day after Cup Match if they are for, say, Somerset. But, very rarely.*

So, I am calculating what I am paying out. I am calculating what they are paying out. And it is in the millions of dollars going to certain insurance companies. I am saying, *Okay.* I am saying to myself (because I think a lot), *Self, I wonder if during the regular AGMs, if any of those shareholders say to themselves: 'Hey, self, we are collecting millions of dollars, why don't we just not take so much; why don't we make it easier for the working-class people?'*

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: No, I would not even say that.

So, I am wondering if anyone who is a shareholder within my hearing range is saying to themselves, *Maybe, just maybe, we should not have raised those rates every year. Maybe.*

So, I listened to the OBA and—okay, I heard the OBA, and I listened and I saw that, you know, there are some valid points being made here and there. Some valid questions are being asked. But the only thing I did not hear from the OBA was, *Hey, you guys have Plan A; we have Plan B.* I sat here and I listened. I said, they are asking, *So, what is the way to contain costs?* But they are not coming up with any [suggestions]. I am telling women . . . Mr. Speaker, a couple years ago they tried to tell women to only have mammograms once every two years. That was not acceptable. Anyway, let us move on, Mr. Speaker. Let us move on.

So, I am saying to myself . . . I am not going to get up here and argue and say, *Well, these guys are just representing the rich people*. I really want to hear from them, or anybody, what is the alternative to what we are offering here. Because my friend here, to my left, the Honourable Member Kim Swan, for years I heard him say, *Hey Famous, bye, I hope I do not get into an accident by here. I do not have insurance*.

I was like saying, *Well, how can we help those that do not have insurance?*

So, again, back to what the Minister explained to me. She explained, *Now, your wife has a business. This other person has a small business. In the long run, a pool will be created where different businesses can amalgamate (for lack of a better term) what they are paying out in their insurance premiums. That would help to mitigate the rise of insurance rates. That would possibly help those who find themselves in situations where they have no insurance. That is what we call . . . in Canada, what is it called?*

An Hon. Member: Compassion.

Mr. Christopher Famous: No, no. Universal health care?

Anyway, my point, again to the OBA . . . and I am hoping that the Opposition Leader gets up and is inspired to tell us what is Plan B.

An Hon. Member: He does not have a plan.

Mr. Christopher Famous: No, no, let—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker—order! Order! Order!

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Talk to me and you will be all right.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Just speak to me.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am hoping, in the spirit of altruism, that when the Opposition Leader gets up he tells us what is Plan B, because clearly, clearly, me paying \$250 a week—

An Hon. Member: That is not going to change.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Just hear me out, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, me paying \$250 a week for the next 10 years, if not more . . . it is not viable for me. Clearly, different business owners, small business owners paying out their rates, [which] keep going up, it is not viable for them. So, what is the Plan B? According to what I have listened to from the Minister, there is a plan.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Did I not—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, I shall not be distracted.

The Speaker: Do not be.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am looking right at you.

The Speaker: Stay focused and you will be all right.

Mr. Christopher Famous: And conveniently, you're facing the west . . . well, actually, you are facing the east.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Well, you see the west. You look this way, you will see west and you will be all right.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Just see that red and blue behind me and you are okay.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, when you are building a house, what is the first thing you do (besides get the money)?

The Speaker: Good foundation.

Mr. Christopher Famous: You have a foundation. Then you pour your deck. Then you pour your walls. Then you build your walls. Then, if you are going two stories, you pour another deck. Then you build up your walls. Then you put on your belt, then you put up a roof, right? So, without a foundation, that roof would not work. Right? All else is failed without a foundation.

If this is the foundation towards something better for this country, then we have to explore it, because the alternative, Mr. Speaker, is to constantly every year . . . shareholders, major shareholders, sit in a room and say how much more we are going to rake—R-A-K-E—people at BELCO, rake the people at HSBC, rake all the small business owners. Because, Mr. Speaker, I said it last week, we have a national

saying in this country. It is not *quo fata ferunt*. It is *greed is good*.

I looked online today, a quarter watermelon for \$12.

Mr. Speaker, let me stay focused, because I am about to wrap up. Again, I would love to hear an alternative. I would really love to because I am saying to myself the same people who are coming down here from the [reinsurance] companies that Honourable Member from constituency 20 spoke about—some of them are coming from the UK. Some of them are coming from Canada. And they are coming from a system where they have universal health care in different variations. So, I do not see how they are going to come here and say, *Oh, no, no. This cannot work for me*. I do not see that.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me end here. Let me thank the staff at the Ministry of Health, the staff at the Health Council, the Minister for taking her time to explain because Bermudians are generally slow to change, slow to understand. And I want to thank my party, our party, for being bold enough to take the criticism from those who do not quite understand yet, to take the criticism from those who are fighting for other reasons because we have no choice but to stand up for the working man that opens his cheque every week and sees \$250 gone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. No other speakers?

I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, Member from constituency 12, you have the floor.

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

Let me say that I do not envy the position that the Health Minister is in as we move through this whole process of trying to find more affordable insurance in Bermuda—and, more importantly, the technical staff and the difficulties of attempting to bring that reality home is not easy.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And I think as we have listened and discussed . . . and because it is my birthday, I am going to behave.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, I am going to behave, Yes, I am going to behave, I am going to behave.

The Speaker: All right.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: We will hold you to that.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It is not an easy task that the Government is taking on. We certainly know that when we were Government it was a major concern—the cost of health insurance in Bermuda as we watched it continue to escalate.

There is no easy answer to this here. And I think that is part of the challenge today as we have gone back and forth with the discussions about what is it that we actually do and what is it that we are doing. I think there are more questions than answers thus far. And I take to light the fact that we, you know, we have only had a couple of days to go through the Bill to try and understand a little more about the implications of this.

What we do know is that this is a valiant effort to seek out what the Government is saying, that it wants to reduce cost. But, as they say, the devil is always in the details in trying to understand how this is actually going to come about. And we have heard a lot of talk about the foundations being laid. We have heard a lot of talk about, you know, keeping the elitists wealthy and that the OBA, perception-wise, is defending the elitists.

You know, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, some of these guys need to stop the rhetoric. Just stop it. Times have changed and the political parties are changing and for them to continue on . . . it is fine if you want to single out certain people. But, as a party, do not dare get up and say that we do not get it or that we do not understand it or that we do not feel it.

We are coming from the same neighbourhoods that you come from. It just so happens that there may be some others that come from different neighbourhoods within the ranks of the OBA. But I can tell you what, it gives us greater opportunity to be able to ask some serious questions as to how do we get to where we are and why is it that the middle class continues to fall to the low class and the elites continue to gain more. And in the environment that we are in and [we are] trying to lower the cost of health insurance so it is fair and equitable for all, we understand the legacy and the history that Bermuda has had.

But I recall my grandmother. She was a wise woman. She bought shares in Stevedoring Services, a company that we would have said, well, you know, they are kind of elitist boys who started it. But she was wise enough to go and buy some of that stock. And some of these insurance companies, certainly, whether you are black, white, blue, green or yellow, Somerset, Dockyard, St. David's, St. George's, you can buy shares in these places and gain in some of the opportunities. But what we are after right now is understanding if this is the foundation, then how do we explain to Bermudians—since we do not like Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda—how do we explain to Bermudians how they are going to be affected by this and how this benefits them?

And, so what we are trying to understand, thus far what I have heard, is that the only benefit

from this here is that we are going to put a cap on the claims here. This dollar amount that is going to the hospital, we are going to put a cap on it. But then we hear after the fact that we are putting this cap in place to control costs. There is only one person that said that on that side. Only one. But then they said, *Oh well, you know, we are going to put in place, or there will be monies available if we blow through that money.* Well, that is kind of defeating the purpose.

And, so I think what we are looking for is to understand a little more about what regulations, what parameters we are going to put in place that ensure that the cap stays as it is. Quite frankly, what we have right now is that we now know that our insurance is certainly not going down. And I thought that the purpose, as I went through . . . and I enjoyed the reading of the [National Health Plan](#). It basically says here in context, on page 5, "The need for this initiative," talking about the National Health Plan, "arose from ongoing, long-term concerns about health care costs." And, so I am trying to understand where are we addressing the health care cost with this particular Bill? We have not heard that.

And so, when we are asking questions we simply just want to understand where are we going with this here? How is it going to take place? And the Honourable Member is saying, *Okay, OBA, what is the plan?* When we were Government, we told you what the plan was. Utilisation is through the roof and we need to control utilisation! And the fees! That is not being addressed with this Bill. It is not being addressed. So, we are just simply saying that if the mandate is to bring down health care costs, what we want to hear is how is this Bill leading us to bringing down health care cost?

We are not here to listen to the rhetoric about he who feels it knows it! We certainly do know about that. We know about that. So, reminding us of that is not bringing down health care cost. Reminding us of the elites in Bermuda is not answering the question of the main concern of this National Health Plan to bring down and to lower the cost of health insurance.

Now, one of their approaches could have been, as you were asking, as the Honourable Member asked, one of the approaches I think could be we have got 6,000 individuals, Bermudians, who are at risk, no insurance and the likes. We have got three major health insurance companies. Go to those three and say, *Listen to them. You are going to take 2,000, you are taking 2,000, and you are taking 2,000 and you are going to spread that cost and you are going to take care of this, since you have profited over the many years, that is what you are going to do. Yes, you are going to do it.* Sit down and say you are going to do it.

And then we can start looking at utilisation fees and the likes simultaneously because we still have not heard that, as we move with this Bill, simultaneously, we are going to bring down the cost of utili-

sation—because it is through the roof and we know that. We are going to after the fees. But what we are seeing from this Ministry is that we have not gotten to that point yet, but yet we are doing other things.

And so I appreciate the fact that the Health Minister is looking for ways and looking for a pathway to get to this point. But we have not heard from this Bill how it is exactly going to do this. And then when we started asking questions, because we had a very short period of time to try and understand exactly where we are, we are getting more questions from the industry and still trying to understand how the hospital is going to manage through this here, and understand how government also is going to manage through this whole thing, understanding that they need to manage through this Government and understanding also, declaring my interest as I was a general manager of a pharmacy and I have got a wife who is a pharmacist and the likes, sometimes some of the institutions that are out there that are providing health care services, they are waiting six to seven months for government to pay them!

And those companies hire Bermudians—and many of them 100 per cent Bermudians. So, we have to ensure that we are maintaining what we have and at the same the cost not being a loss of jobs, the cost not being, for instance, going into . . . we are talking about small- to medium-sized businesses and understanding . . . right now for my company, I have very [few] claims. And because of that, my insurance is lower than the other company next to me whose claims are through the roof. So, what does that mean for the company who has low claims, who is getting a better rate? How is this Bill going to address a black Bermudian who hires 100 per cent . . . well, sorry, 98 per cent blacks in Bermuda? How am I going to ensure that my people stay employed, that my cost is managed?

I mean, certainly, you know, as we have progressed, many of us as blacks, myself and others like Donna Pearman and them, you know, we have gotten to a point where we are trying to manage our costs and the likes. And all of a sudden the Government says, *Well, there is . . . you know, we are going to tax you on your dividends.* Well, we have not caught up with the white man who has not had tax on his dividends for the last 100 years! So, we are trying to get to that point.

And so what I am trying to understand is how is this all connected to helping small- to medium-sized businesses maintain their costs, because now, for the small- to medium-sized businessman who has got his business is going to have to cover the claims across the board. That company . . . the claims now are not just with his business. His claims now are across the board of Bermuda. So, does that mean . . . I do not know, does that mean that my cost for insurance is going to go down? Or does it mean that it is going to

go up? And so we are trying to understand the nuances as to how this is exactly going to work.

Defending the elitists, certainly, is not on the agenda of . . . quite frankly, I do not know anyone in here who is trying to defend the elitists. But what I am trying to do and what many of us are trying to do is seek clarification. And I am hoping the Premier who is looking at me will give some clarification to what we are doing here. Give us some answers. We have been asking the questions.

Step one (or Step A, whatever you want to call it), *Okay, well we are going to push through this Bill. We are going to send the money over to the hospital and we are going to take care of the claims.* But, guess what? My insurance cost has not gone down.

It has not gone down.

So, if that is the case, then just tell Bermuda, *Listen, at this point in time, listen, understand Bermuda, your health insurance is not going to go down right now as we build on this thing.* I have not heard anyone say that.

An Hon. Member: Why is that?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I have not heard that said.

An Hon. Member: Why don't you answer it?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Okay, so here comes Mr. Chirper into the room, always got something to say.

The Speaker: Speak to me, speak to me, speak to me.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And I said I would behave, but I certainly am not going to put up with that.

The Speaker: Speak to me.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: All right? We are still trying to figure out . . . we do not want this to be a situation where we put a schedule in place and we have to kill it after a month. We do not want that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, I did not say that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I just said schedule.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, if we are going to, if we are going to do something—

The Speaker: Just talk to the Chair—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —we want to make sure that it is all covered.

The Speaker: —and you will be all right.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We just want to make sure that it is all covered, and that we are looking at all of the different nuances which affect business in Bermuda, which affect average Joe Blow in Bermuda and that we truly are going to go get to what the mandate says here, and that is to lower the cost of health care.

That is all we are after. We want to hear that. We want to hear how that is going to happen. And certainly, there is enough to go around in this room of throwing mud back on this person and that person and, you know, this elitist and that elitist and all that comes up, and why is that and why is this. Well, I want to understand exactly what it is that we are doing.

Now, there was a scenario, I think, given earlier about \$1.00. And it was talking about with that \$1.00, \$.80 goes to the insurance companies . . . \$.80 goes towards covering claims and \$.15 goes towards administration, and then there was a 5 per cent that covered risk as well as profits . . . that covered risk as well as profits. And, so I guess what I am trying to understand here, what I am trying to understand at the end of the day then is if, in fact, that is true, and if, in fact, we are going after the profits that so-called elitists have been making and we are taking this money and we are moving it over to the insurance companies . . . not so-called; we know that they have been making money. But moving it over to the hospital . . . so with that amount, whatever that percentage is, because within that 5 per cent it is kind of . . . none of us are sure exactly how much actually goes to profit of that 5 per cent. If that is the case and we move this money, then why did our insurance not go down? Why is it not going down? If part of that building there is profit, then we should be able to give that back to the Bermudian. We should be able to do that.

And, so what . . . this is what we are looking at on paper, this is what we have been listening to as far as consultation is concerned and so we are looking for answers. We are looking to figure out how does this work. No one is sitting here trying to defend any large corporate business at all. At all.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: At all!

So, then I said, *Okay, well, look. Let me just look at some more statistics,* Mr. Speaker. And then I looked at the standard premium rate history that in 2017 the Health Council actuarial report put out. And, so, I am looking for clarification as well. The ratio is a loss ratio. So, the health insurance companies, Government, the likes, for the last decade—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The loss ratio is 106 per cent, they got here. Okay? So, so, so—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: This is across the board. This is across the board. Okay? This is across the board.

An Hon. Member: Ah!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Regardless, it is across the board. Okay? So, this is across the board. So—

An Hon. Member: What part of that don't you understand?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What part of that do I not understand? What I would like to understand is this: So, for every dollar . . . we know that in claims \$1.06 is being paid out. Maybe that is registering. So, I know that, you know, the insurance companies had been making money. But what we are wrongly doing—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What we are wrongly doing is casting these aspersions that, *Oh, well, you know* . . . yes, in some of the cases they may have been raping and pillaging. But what this is suggesting is that the insurance companies are not making all the money off of health insurance, they are making it off of other things. What we now need to figure out—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What we now need to figure out . . . yes, point of order me. Tell me—

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order, Minister.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I actually have been trying to hold my tongue, because I was going to try to address all of the questions at once, but unfortunately, this Honourable Member is misleading the House. In 2017, Mr. Speaker, yes, the overall loss ratio was 106 per cent. However, what he failed to do was to segregate it so that the public could—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: I am reading what you are reading.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: The public can see—

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: —the private . . . this is from the [Bermuda's Health Council's Actuarial Report](#) which was published. The private health insurance loss ratio in 2017 was 89 per cent. So, in other words, for every dollar collected, they spent \$0.89. On the other hand, for Government, the public insurers HIP and FutureCare, the loss ratio was \$143.00 *[sic]* which means for every dollar that was collected in premiums by the Government, they spent out \$143.00—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Sorry . . . \$1.43. So, collectively, the loss ratio is 106 [per cent], but it is totally disingenuous and misleading this Honourable House and the public to combine the two. You need to segregate them.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

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

The Speaker: Continue to speak to me.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I certainly . . . as I was reading through, I am not looking at the breakdown of that. I am looking at this spreadsheet here. And if the Honourable Member had listened, I did say that what I was trying to understand is, okay, what are the insurance companies really making with this loss ratio? So, I am looking for clarification. And I am glad she clarified that it is \$0.89 and not \$0.80, which is what we thought it was. It is \$0.89. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we still have not answered the question, How are we lowering the insurance cost for Bermudians with this Bill?

Now, we understand that there is a loss ratio and it is higher than what we actually thought. Higher than what we thought! We also know that with government, because we were Government we know that generics are not completely covered—they are not covered 100 per cent—that will go towards lowering costs right there. Make it 100 per cent like the private insurance companies. Maybe there is a reason for that. I do not know. But we have not heard that.

We also know that the co-pay for government insurance is much higher than the private sector. So,

when you go and you have to pay a co-pay, it is higher if you have government insurance than not. So, why is that? How do we now start looking at efficiencies—and we certainly should be looking at efficiencies within this House as we start to go looking outside to the private sector as well in trying to understand exactly what it is that we need to be doing to lower the cost of health insurance.

And in all the rhetoric that we keep hearing, we still have not been told how health insurance is going to go down. We do know this: utilisation is through the roof, and fees, and those are the two major contributors to why our insurance continues to escalate. Why are we not going after that with fervour? Why are we not going after that with tenacity, and how is this Bill leading us to that point? Because right now, where are the controls in place? We do not understand how the Government is going to control things with the hospital and these claims—we have not heard it.

So, we are hoping to hear how they are going to control. If they say they are putting a cap in place, but yet they are still making sure that there is a \$60-something million [reserve], if in fact the hospital does go through it . . . and I can understand that there are certain ways that this could happen. And one of those here is through the Mutual Re-insurance Fund. And for the general public, so that they understand what that is, it was established by Government, the MRF (Mutual Re-insurance Fund), to cover newly introduced benefits for which a claims experience history was unavailable, or for which premium forecasting would be difficult.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It does not matter where it came from, that is a fact!

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The point is—

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Here we go again, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Just talk to me and you will be all right.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: You know, rather than dealing with the facts, we got to get personal.

The Speaker: Do not get side-tracked.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I could care less where it came from. It does not matter where it came from. That is what the—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Do not let them side-track you.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —Mutual Re-insurance Fund is. And so we understand at the end of the day . . . And you can make all the noise you want, Premier—you have not brought insurance down. And that is what you said you would do. You have not brought down the cost of living in this Island and it has not happened, and we are still waiting for it to happen.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Still waiting for it to happen.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, we are still waiting for it to happen.

And so I understand the complexity here with health costs in many instances, defending no one, because, quite frankly, with the Mutual Re-insurance Fund there is no way to forecast some of these things that are covered because they are new things. So, how is the Government then going to bring that under wraps? How are they going to put controls in place to ensure that our insurance [premiums] go down? There are no indicators; there is nothing to say that this is going to happen.

And so I appreciate all of what has been said thus far. I entered into this debate seeking out answers. I will hold my tongue as far as the foolish rhetoric that I hear in this House all the time, but we want answers. Bermuda wants answers. Bermudians do not understand. They do not understand this here. They are all asking, *How does this work? I just need to understand how this works.* And, so we just want to make sure that they are getting the facts and that they understand the nuances to this here.

Listen, a National Health Plan is a beautiful thing. It is a beautiful thing if we do what we say we are going to do. And that is, as it says, to bring down the cost of health insurance, and to ensure that the 6,000 who are vulnerable are well taken care of. I have not heard the answer to that yet, so I am hoping that the Honourable Minister will bring about some more clarity and answers to this here.

I also want to say this here, Mr. Speaker. Based on this very short period of time trying to understand what is going on . . . my goodness, many of the government officials over there do not understand it. We have heard that because we have heard what was said today. They do not understand it. And so we just want clarity. Some answers to the questions that

are out there—and even some answers to questions that probably have not even been asked yet.

I know that the technical team is working over-time, but based on what I see coming down the line, it is getting more and more costly to live in Bermuda. And with that cost comes the dire need to be able to take care of everyone.

How are we going to do that? I am praying that there are some answers to this so that we can see the influx of new money coming into the economy so that we can afford to do the right thing and lower the cost of our health insurance.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Does any other member wish to speak? Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am sure you did not intend on being here this late.

The Speaker: You do not want me to answer that.

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: But, Mr. Speaker, health insurance is a very, very important issue. I do not know if the Minister of Health said it inside of her opening remarks, but she may say it in her closing remarks, but when she speaks at her various town halls around the country and other places, she says that she has a goal. And that goal is health care for all. That is the goal. All—A-L-L—everyone; universal, all around. Because, again, this is a question of philosophy. Philosophy. A question as to whether or not you believe health care should be something for profit, or whether or not you think health care should be something that a country should have.

So, let me say this, Mr. Speaker, this is the first step. It is a monumental step. It is likely a step that was recommended to the One Bermuda Alliance Government during their time in office.

An Hon. Member: But what happened?

Hon. E. David Burt: And they said, *Nah, we're probably not going to touch the insurers*, likely because some of the people sitting in the room on Tuesday were insurers.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Now you are making an assumption—casting aspersions.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: The Opposition Leader is saying that I am casting aspersions.

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair, you will be all right.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, it is all right, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair. No. No.

Hon. E. David Burt: Because I think the people of this country need to know and understand—

The Speaker: Do not get distracted. Just speak here.

Hon. E. David Burt: Because it is important, Mr. Speaker, you cannot bring—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. His words were that it was likely because there were members within the OBA that were insurance shareholders, or the likes. That is not the case at all!

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am just going to go on because every single person in the country knows—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: —that the Honourable Opposition Leader has a problem with the facts. So, let us just continue, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Just speak to—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Speak to the Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: No, wait, wait, wait, wait.

Premier, Premier, I have been pretty good all day with trying to get folks to just stay on track and not get caught up in the innuendos. So, you just speak to

me and you will not have to worry about getting caught up in those types of situations.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, did I ever—

The Speaker: No, no. Speak this way.

Hon. E. David Burt: So, I commend the Minister of Health—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: —for having the courage.

And I remember, I sent a message to the Minister of Health last evening because I know that when the insurers are coming after you and everyone is coming after you, you need a little bit of encouragement. And I think that she has heard encouragement here today. I even think she has heard encouragement on that side from members of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: Absolutely.

Hon. E. David Burt: Because I do not know if they are actually in opposition to it. I am happy to yield . . . the Honourable Leader of the Opposition keeps trying to get up.

I am happy to yield, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Opposition Leader because I do not believe the country—

The Speaker: No, no, no, no. Just use your—

Hon. E. David Burt: —knows whether or not he supports this Bill.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: And I think that is the real question to ask.

The Speaker: Use your time and speak to me. Speak to me.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: I will yield.

The Speaker: No, no. Use your time and speak to me.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Come on. Use your time. Use your time. Use your time—speak to me.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: The Opposition Leader—Opposition Leader, you had your chance.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Premier, it is your turn.

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

The Speaker: No, no, no. Do not yield. Just talk to me.

[Laughter]

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

The Speaker: No, no.

Hon. E. David Burt: But allow me to say this, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Yes?

Hon. E. David Burt: Transformational change is what this Government was elected to bring, and that, Mr. Speaker, is what we will bring to Bermuda because . . . let me give a little bit of history. Mr. Speaker, very often when I stand up here inside of this Chamber, I am reading things that were written before I was born.

The Speaker: You are a young fellow.

Hon. E. David Burt: Pardon me?

The Speaker: You are a young fellow.

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

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am going to read you something that was written before I was born. And it is from what was then called the [Hospital Insurance Act 1970](#).

The Speaker: Oh, that was not that long ago.

Hon. E. David Burt: And, in section 20 of the Hospital Insurance Act, it reads and I quote . . . well, there have probably been a few changes to it, but I am going to give you the broad outlines.

It is titled “Compulsory health insurance,” and it goes on to say, “Subject to this section, section 26 and regulations under section 40(1)[(d)], every employer shall effect and continue in force a contract of

health insurance with a licensed [health] insurer providing not less than standard health benefit in respect of himself, every employee and the non-employed spouse of every employee.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, understand, compulsory health insurance provided by licensed insurers in 1970—let us be clear.

An Hon. Member: Let us think about that for a moment.

Hon. E. David Burt: Let us be clear.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was 49 years ago.

So, we heard the figures going back and forth from the Honourable Opposition Leader talking about, *You know, I keep hearing this 80 per cent.* It is convenient that the Honourable Opposition Leader picked the one year in the last few years that the combined loss ratio, you know, was over 100 per cent. Just the one year!

You have to understand because there are a lot of other years where it was not over 100 per cent, you understand. But he picked the one year where it was over 100 per cent.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I did say, if he was listening, the Premier, over the last decade.

The Speaker: The 80 per cent over the last decade?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. E. David Burt: Allow me—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, just . . . I mentioned 2017 because that was when the report came out. That is what I was saying. The report came out in 2017.

The Speaker: All right.

Hon. E. David Burt: So, Mr. Speaker, in 2017, the overall loss ratio was 106 per cent, and the health insurers loss ratio, the private health insurers loss ratio was 89 per cent, as the Honourable Minister of Health said. But in 2018, which was last year, that commercial loss ratio was 80 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And so, Mr. Speaker, the estimated excess amount of money

that was collected by health insurers that did not go to pay for health, health care, was \$20 million last year. That is where the 80 per cent came from, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: And that is why I am happy to answer your question, because you asked me to answer it, and I am answering it. So listen a little bit, Opposition Leader, you may learn something.

Because the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that you can transform or you can manage the status quo. And we have had the status quo, Mr. Speaker, for 49 years. Forty-nine years of compulsory health insurance being paid to licensed insurers that are going ahead and extracting profits and not giving money to health care.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is important because you heard earlier what the status quo means. You heard, because what normally happens is the actuaries come up with the figure, and every Health Minister will come up here to this House and say the actuaries say that we have to raise the Standard Health Benefit by this much. And, guess what? We are going to raise the Standard Health Benefit by this much. That is what happens. It happens every year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, guess what happened this year? When the actuaries came with the figure and said you are going to have to raise it \$84, this Government said no; find a different way. Find a better way. And to the credit of the Minister of Health, the team of the Ministry of Health, and the Health Council, they found a different way, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, this is why it is important. And I often say it when I get up here, there is the past versus the future.

Now, you heard the past from a former Attorney General and a former Minister of Health. He got up and spoke for that side of the House. And you know what he said, Mr. Speaker? He said, you should have just raised the rate on everyone by \$84. Past versus the future, Mr. Speaker, because what he said is Granny on FutureCare, pay some more money. Disabled persons on HIP, pay some more money. That is what he said! Understand.

So, this is why it makes a difference, because the health insurers, while collecting the \$20 million of profits off of Government mandated care, Mr. Speaker, in statute and law for 49 years, while they are making the profit, that side of the House says let us raise the price of health insurance on Granny, so the health insurers can continue to collect their profits. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? No. Not under this Government, Mr. Speaker, because it is very simple.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Now, Mr. Speaker, we hear the noise, and there was this question about why are we not seeing a reduction in rates. Mr. Speaker, here is

what I can tell you. If the One Bermuda Alliance was in office right now, Mr. Speaker, we would be debating an \$84 increase to the standard premium rate.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: That is what we would have been debating. But, Mr. Speaker, we are debating no increase to the standard premium rate. That is what is happening, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Now, Mr. Speaker, let me go ahead and continue, because I think that it is really important to recognise that through all of the speeches that we have had from the Opposition, not one of them gave an alternative. Well, actually, they did.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: They did give an alternative.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point of order.

Hon. E. David Burt: Pay \$84.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point, point of order.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order, yes.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I did give an alternative. I said that you did not need to change the rate. I said you need to turn around and give cards to the people who are uninsured, because that is the thing that you have not done yet. You have not done anything yet to make those uninsured people get coverage.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I was getting to that.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: Because the other alternative that we heard from the Opposition Leader was the 6,000 uninsured people, tell the health insurers to give them free insurance.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is not what was said.

Hon. E. David Burt: Now, Mr. Speaker, I will just say something quick . . . and I am trying my best not to be too funny because this is a serious matter.

When the Honourable Opposition Leader gives 6,000 people free gas, then he can turn around and tell health insurers to give people free health insurance, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Oh! Oh! My dear! Oh!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Understand, Mr. Speaker, let us deal in the space of reality for a second.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Let us deal in the space of reality, Mr. Speaker, because the space of reality is that you are constrained in what you can do.

So, here there were the two choices: raise rates or find places to extract savings. Now, just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, we could have come up here and done like they did in 2017 right before an election and said, *Hey, we are going to lower the standard premium rate by \$1.* We could have done it. You understand what I am saying? But let us just be clear, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing in the space of reality. It is not realistic to say that you are going to ask the health insurers to cover everyone who is uninsured for free. It is just not realistic.

But here is the thing, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members! Members! We want to hear the Premier. We want to hear the Premier.

[Gavel]

Hon. E. David Burt: Because I think it is important, Mr. Speaker. I think it is very important, because the same people that the Honourable Opposition Leader thinks are going to give 6,000 uninsured people in this country free health insurance said this when the Honourable Minister of Health announced the changes to health insurance, and I quote, “¹The new system will inevitably slash this margin,” that is the 80 per cent margin I was talking about earlier, Mr. Speaker, “one source said, meaning health insurers would have to either increase premiums or exit the healthcare business, as continuing to underwrite unprofitable lines of business is not in the interests of shareholders.”

So, now let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, they will exit the industry if they are underwriting unprofitable lines. But the Honourable Opposition Leader

¹ [Royal Gazette](#), 28 March 2019

thinks they are just going to provide the health care for free.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Understand, Mr. Speaker, reality must set in. But I think it is important, because there was this question. There was this question about what is the next step. Because, as we saw and that quote which I just said, Mr. Speaker, what did the health insurers do? They raised their rates. Absolutely. And may I be clear, Mr. Speaker, because I know there are some people out there that do not think I walk around now inside the community. Well, I feel it. Oh, I hear it just like I said last week. Oh, I feel it and I hear it. But let me tell you something, if there is one way to get people angry at the Government . . . start jacking up prices. Start. But here is the thing, Mr. Speaker, here is the thing, greedy killed puppy.

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: That is my . . . yes, greedy killed puppy.

Because here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. The thing, Mr. Speaker, is that when you start hurting the people of the country, you have to find a way to help. And when we say this is step one, Mr. Speaker, this is step one. Because you either want a country that has a health insurance system that is built on a health insurance system for profit, or you have a country where you have a health insurance system that is there to provide for all persons and to make sure that people can access the health care which they need.

This, Mr. Speaker, as I said, is the first step. The question, Mr. Speaker . . . the question, Mr. Speaker, is: How do we take care of everyone? The Honourable Minister of Health said, and has indicated in the town halls which she has had across the country . . . it was said inside of our Throne Speech, and Honourable Members have indicated that we are waiting for the actuarial numbers to come back for the two options which were laid out in the National Health Plan. One was a dual option, and one was a single option. And we are going to make sure that we examine them very carefully to figure out which one is the best one for Bermuda.

But here is the thing. What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that if the health insurers of this country want to react like this to this change, then they are signalling what they will do when we try to provide a system of universal health care. They, in their reaction to this, have indicated and shown what they are willing to do. And it is a lesson to myself as the leader of this country, and it is a lesson to all persons on this side of the aisle, Mr. Speaker, of exactly who it is that we are dealing with. And those will factor into the choices that we make, Mr. Speaker, because what we have to make sure we do is take care of the people first. The

people first, Mr. Speaker, those persons who want and need access to health care.

So, yes, we will make sure that we spend money to have a healthier population, make those investments like we have [done]—fitness equipment in public parks and doing all the fitness stuff which we are doing inside of Government and otherwise, but also, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that we take care of everyone.

Here, Mr. Speaker, is where I will end my contribution today.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Here is where I will end my speech today.

Mr. Speaker, I was at the Bermuda College yesterday. And the graduation speaker, Ms. Demetria Packwood, said something in her closing remarks in her speech to the graduates. She said, and I quote, "Change will not happen overnight."

Mr. Speaker, change will not happen overnight. But this is the first step to providing a health care system that puts the people's interest over the interests of people's profits.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

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

No further speakers? We will call on the Minister.

Minister?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would certainly like to thank the Honourable Members of this House for their contributions in what has been about a—

The Speaker: A long day.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes, a very long day.

[Laughter]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Obviously, it shows the compassion of Members, and that this is a very, very important topic, health care, that is deep to everyone's heart. And, Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Premier just said before he took his seat, I have indicated and this Government has indicated on many, many occasions, that this is a progression. I like to compare it to a train. The destination is universal health care. The destination is ensuring that we have cost containment, we improve affordability, we have access for everyone. The destination is improved patient outcomes. That is the destination, Mr. Speaker.

So, the train has left the station. In fact, it left the station last November when we implemented RVUs, which had been proposed and suggested by people from the Oughton Report, Arthur Anderson, PwC, a host of other independent companies suggested that RVUs, Relative Value Unit, should be implemented with respect to the services that are rendered, and this Government took steps to do that as of last November.

We are looking at this block grant funding that we just spoke about. And as the Premier just indicated the final destination, which will include . . . and I cannot wait to be able to inform Honourable Members of the decision that the Government will take as it relates to how we will reform the financing of health care. We have heard a lot of discussion this afternoon about why have you not looked at this area, that area, et cetera. But we cannot talk about those areas in proper fullness until we address how we are going to pay for those.

And when we start discussing health care financing reform, and when the Government is able, in a very short time, to articulate to the community what that option will look at, we will then also be able to speak about a benefit packet, Mr. Speaker, that will allow for more preventative measures, more primary care measures, more drug benefits, and the like. And I am very, very excited—excuse me—and I am very, very—

The Speaker: Yes, you have a clearer view of me, yes, that is right.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you very much. And I am going to be excited because we are going to be able to roll that out and inform members of the public in very short order. That is our destination.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there were only actually a couple of questions that were asked. And most of those came, I think, probably shortly before lunch. So, I am going to try to address them, not necessarily in the order in which they were [asked], however, what I will do is I kind of grouped them together because there was quite a theme that was going on and I am trying to answer them in unison.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the subsidy, there was a question concerning the \$330 million block grant and the subsidy that Government pays now, which is about \$145 million, will go towards that \$330 million. And in 2018 . . . we have heard a lot, Mr. Speaker, about actuarial reports and obviously they are the ones that compile a lot of the data that we are being able to rely on heretofore. And based on the reports as well as the actuarial reports concerning the utilisation as it relates to the SPR, that does not apply to the hospital.

Like I said, the standard premium rate, 95 per cent of that actually goes to the hospital. But the one that goes to some of the community services

such as imaging and the home medical benefits . . . in 2018, Mr. Speaker, the sum was \$12.5 million. And this year, as of June 1st, that carveout that will go to the insurance companies as it relates to the SPR outside of the hospital . . . and I think the Honourable Member from constituency . . . the Honourable Member Jackson raised this question. That total that will go to the insurers will be \$13.7 million. So, from an actuarial point of view . . . and they are not anticipating that the utilisation will increase. Last year it was \$12.5 million, and this year they will be getting \$13.7 million. So, there will be sufficient funds for them to make the payments with respect to those outside services.

Mr. Speaker, with respect, there was a lot of discussion that came out as it relates to the adjudication of the hospital claims. In fact, I think almost every Member to a song raised that insofar as how are adjudications going to take place, whether the insurance companies will get this information, et cetera. When we sat down and spoke with the insurance companies . . . and I might add that the discussions concerning the SHP started actually in December of last year. And during those conversations, it was emphasised with the insurance companies, that the issue concerning the claims information, that information will be provided to them.

In fact, the first meeting that we had, one of the insurance companies said, *Well, if we are not going to be having to assist in providing that type of information, then we do not even want to be a part of this conversation.* Fast forward a couple of weeks later when we continued the conversation, the dialogue, and Health Council assured them that the information in the claims would be presented. Then they sang a different song. However, the adjudication of the hospital claims will be done by the HID department with the oversight, Mr. Speaker, of the Health Council. And each insurer will receive their respective data.

So, for example, Mr. Speaker, the data that relates to each service that the hospital provides for that individual patient will be assessable to the respective health insurer. This data, Mr. Speaker, will include the policyholder's identifying information, the dates of the services, the codes related to the diagnosis and the associated treatments. And the data will be provided to the insurers on a regular basis to help to support efforts for case management and utilisation trending for more robust accounting of the patient participation in the care continuum.

Now, we have also heard some discussion this afternoon and this evening concerning what will that do with respect to the block grant as it relates to employment. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you over 90 per cent of the claims adjudication is done by computer. It is all computerised. So the hope is that those persons, the few people that would have been assisting with the claims adjudication that are not computers, will assist with case management, so that they

can help better assess and manage their own clients as it relates to the insurance.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, there was some information . . . and I am a little bit disappointed because last evening at the town hall meeting, which I think was quite successful, we saw a lot of people answering questions and getting information that they were seeking. However, regrettably, this morning in the *Royal Gazette* the heading inappropriately indicated that this reserve of \$65 million . . . and I think that there were Honourable Members on the opposite side who referred to this as a slush fund. And the regrettable aspect of this, Mr. Speaker, is that the *Royal Gazette* unfortunately erroneously reported the issue concerning the \$65 million.

The Opposition will know that the Bermuda Hospitals Board had reserves in 2017 of \$100 million. In fact, part of those reserves you will see that in 2017 the hospital received a budget cut in the subsidy in the sum of \$25 million at that time. So, the OBA Government at the time realised that the hospital had those reserves, and then they did remove \$25 million for that . . . sorry \$25 million of that was taken away in 2017. And I cannot remember what the \$25 million was for . . . oh, the World Cup . . . the America's Cup. I am sorry, it was for the America's Cup. But needless to say, following the election—

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Well, that is what it said in your book. We have already qualified that. It said that in your Budget Book. But in any event—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: So, now the reserve is \$65 million—

The Speaker: Speak here.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The reserve is now \$65 million. It is not a slush fund. That represents the reserve from the \$100 million that I spoke about in 2017 to support hospital development. So, the Members opposite kept referring to the \$65 [million] because they were referring to an erroneous headline in the newspaper following yesterday's town hall meeting.

Questions, again, Mr. Speaker, arose concerning the management of the \$330 million. The Health Council will be working with the hospital using international standards for developing and refining metrics to hold the hospital accountable for the spend. And we will be using the data to track the trends and utilisation, Mr. Speaker, the complexity of the services used, the types of diagnoses seen, and the clinical pathways being used. [These] are just some examples of the tracking of this data and the matrixes. And

these reports will be made public for the public to also have a transparent view of how the money is being spent and utilised.

Mr. Speaker, there were some other questions concerning the actuarial modelling. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously, \$84 . . . the independent actuarial modelling determined that an \$84 per month premium increase would be needed to cover the projected fee-for-service claims. The change in funding model, namely from fee-for-service, Mr. Speaker, to the block grant at the hospital, this change in funding model has reduced the revenue that BHB would have obtained from \$350 million with the fee-for-service to \$330 million for the fixed block grant. This funding change, Mr. Speaker, prevented a \$20 million added spend in the health system.

The actuarial modelling was completed on the status quo method of funding the health system. And based on multi-year trends of utilisation, Mr. Speaker, the innate initiatives within the fee-for-service and from infrastructure and the disproportionate risk being born by public providers, it was determined that an \$84 month increase in the standard premium rate would be required. This is what the actuaries have presented. This \$84 increase to each policy equated to an estimated increase of \$49.42 million in additional system funding. Under the current fee-for-service model, the hospital would have generated additional revenue amounting to \$350 million for the fiscal year.

And through extensive collaboration—and I must emphasise this, extensive collaboration—and a review of the current hospital expenses, it was determined that there was a feasible pathway to a revenue target of \$330 million with incorporation of a more aggressive plan including implementation of an efficiency improvement programme for BHB. And, again, this collaboration between the Health Council, the Ministry of Health and the hospital, BHB aggressively saw a \$20 million reduction in the anticipated revenue for the hospital. And, as such, Mr. Speaker, in addition, the quality of care at the hospital will remain the same.

That is BHB's primary priority. And the funding change allows development of initiatives to ensure that the right care is delivered and developed efficiently. So the hospital has been the most important partner, Mr. Speaker, in this decision to streamline its funding mechanisms by utilising the block grant as opposed to the fee-for-service, because they recognise that this will truly be transformational and beneficial to the community.

We had in-depth discussions that have taken place to agree this \$330 million revenue target and this is based on, Mr. Speaker, BHB's financial analysis as a realistic goal that would not disrupt operations or the quality of care this fiscal year. The quality of care is cost-effective, because it means patients receive the right care at the right time in the right place. And, Mr. Speaker, in addition, the new funding model will incentivise BHB over time to develop innovative

partnerships with the community to help to deliver the right care at the right time, in the right setting.

Mr. Speaker, just for the edification of Members of the Honourable House, I did speak about this in the brief. But I think people need to understand that the standard health premium, the one that we have been speaking about, is what we refer to as community rated. It is not risk rated; it is community rated. And what that means is that this premium is averaged across the whole insured population—all 47,000 insured population persons—and it spreads the risk out equally to make it fairer, because it provides financial risk protection in the event of a catastrophic health event, which could happen to any one of us.

For this reason, the SPR has to be at a level that can support the whole population claims and this is the structure and the spirit of the Act that the Honourable Premier referred to previously, the Health Insurance Act 1970.

And we have heard a lot, as well, this afternoon about this two-tiered health system, and that this streamlining of BHB's funding by giving them a block grant would actually create a two-tiered system. However, Mr. Speaker, we already have a two-tiered system. The change in BHB funding will help to alleviate this. There is currently a tier for the healthy and a tier for the poor. A tier for the old and the sick. The lack of controls in the Health Insurance Act prevents individuals from securing basic cover of any insurer and there is no obligation to offer coverage. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? If you are a senior or you have a pre-existing condition and you are seeking an individual policy with a private insurer, they will reject you and they will send you, if you are senior, to FutureCare, and if you are [younger than] a senior with a pre-existing condition, to HIP. The government plans.

An Hon. Member: He says that they are going to give it to them for free, though.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Oh, yes . . . 6,000, right? Yes, let them spread around, see how that . . . they are fighting us? Imagine if that happens.

The Speaker: Have that conversation this way.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: I am so sorry.

[Laughter]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: But, Mr. Speaker, and this pushes persons who have a bad risk, like I said, a pre-existing condition, Mr. Speaker, to the public plans, which do not currently offer higher levels of coverage.

That is what is creating a two-tiered system. And the public plans currently receive \$50.35 per month subsidy from all insurance premiums via the Mutual Re-insurance Fund. However, with the BHB block funding to come into place, the subsidy will reduce to \$35.89, because the cost of operating the country's only hospital will be spread more equally across the community.

The Honourable Member, the Opposition Leader, also made a comment about what if you are a small businessperson and you cannot afford the increased premiums from the supplementals. What could you do? Well, that person's insured employees could actually join the HIP programme because, as we have indicated with this legislation, HIP will remain the same. We will not increase HIP, nor will we increase FutureCare. So those public benefits will . . . sorry, those public insurance policies will remain the same. They will not be increased.

My last comment, Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat: It is important to note that if we are going to improve health outcomes, access, and lower the cost, we have to change the way that we pay for health care. It has already been stated that three of Bermuda's main health problems are the high rates of chronic disease, ageing, and high health care cost. And to address all three, the way we pay for health care has to change.

This is health financing reform, and we need services and coverage so everyone can stay healthy and restore health when things go wrong. We need the 50 per cent of the population with risk factors for chronic disease to have access to the necessary care to control their conditions and prevent costly escalations. We need seniors and other vulnerable groups to be able to afford health coverage that will protect them. We need health services to be better aligned and properly integrated to deliver the right care at the right time in the right place, and none of this, Mr. Speaker, is doable without changing the way that we pay for health care to incentivise and cover the right care. And that is why health financing reform is needed and that will help us get to our final destination of universal health care.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that the Bill be committed.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Deputy?

House in Committee at 8:40 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Chairman: Honourable Members, we are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled [Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019](#).

Minister Wilson, you have the floor.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you and good evening, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move clauses 1 through 17.

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, the Explanatory Memorandum and clause by clause.

Clause 1 is self-explanatory.

Clause 2 amends section 1(1) of the principal Act (a) by making the definition of “the general hospital” reflect the definition given in the Bermuda Hospitals Board Act 1970 (see clause 10), (b) by adding definitions for “hospital fees” (which is given the meaning it has in the Bermuda Hospitals Board Act 1970), “insured person” (which clarifies that the insured person is an individual rather than a legal person), “Mutual Re-insurance Fund” and “Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium” (which is the prescribed portion of the standard premium that must be paid into the Mutual Re-insurance Fund each month in respect of each insured person), and (c) by amending the definition of “standard premium” to clarify that it is the premium payable in respect of standard health benefit and the Mutual Re-insurance Fund.

Mr. Chairman, clause 3 amends section 2(1). The effect of the amendments is that the use of dialysis facilities for those who qualify for subsidy will no longer be covered by subsidy, but dialysis for those persons will instead be covered under section 3A by the Mutual Re-insurance Fund.

Clause 4 amends section 3A in subsection (1) by redefining the “prescribed amount” as the “Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium” and clarifying that it is part of the standard premium. It inserts subsection (1A), which provides that the Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium must be paid to the Mutual Re-insurance Fund no later than 30 days after the start of the week or month (as the case may be) covered by the payment. And it also inserts subsection (2AA), which provides that the sums received by the Board from the Mutual Re-insurance Fund (increased by clause 13(c) from the current \$13.16, Mr. Chairman, per insured person per month to \$231.33 per insured person per month) shall be applied by the Board towards the cost of its provision of standard health benefit to insured persons. Subsections (2E) and (2F) and (2G) are amended to move cover for dialysis for persons who qualify for subsidy to the Mutual Re-insurance Fund.

Clause 5 inserts section 3B, which provides that where a licensed insurer, or an employer who

operates an approved scheme, pays (as required by section 3A(1A)) the Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium into the Mutual Re-insurance Fund in respect of an insured person, the insured person shall receive hospital treatment in respect of standard health benefit provided by the Board without charge, and the insurer or employer (as the case may be) shall not be liable to indemnify the insured person for any hospital fee in respect of standard health benefit provided by the Board to the insured person. Any licensed insurer, or any employer who operates an approved scheme, that does not pay the Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium into the Mutual Re-insurance Fund as required by section 3A(1A) in respect of an insured person shall, during any period that the Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium remains unpaid, be liable to indemnify the insured person for any hospital fees in respect of hospital treatment in respect of standard health benefit received by the insured.

Clause 6 amends section 13D to provide that nothing done by or on behalf of the Committee in carrying out its functions in respect of the Mutual Re-insurance Fund shall be construed as contravening [sub]section (1), which prohibits the Committee from offering to the public any contract or plan of insurance other than the health insurance plan or the FutureCare plan.

Clause 7 amends section 31 to clarify that a licensed insurer is not liable to indemnify an insured person in respect of hospital treatment in respect of standard health benefit under subsections (1) and (2) if the insured person is at the time he receives the treatment entitled to hospital treatment in respect of standard health benefit provided by the Board without charge under section 3B.

Clause 8 amends section 32 to enable the Bermuda Hospitals Board to recover the expenses incurred for hospital treatment provided by the Board where (a) an insured person receives, for injuries in an accident involving a motor vehicle, hospital treatment in respect of standard health benefit provided by the Board without charge pursuant to section 3B, and (b) a person who is insured under a policy of insurance issued to him pursuant to the Motor Car Insurance (Third-Party Risks) Act [1943] either admits liability for the injuries or is adjudged by a court to so be liable.

Clause 9 amends section 40. The amendment to subsection (1) clarifies that the standard premium is payable in respect of standard health benefit and the Mutual Re-insurance Fund. In subsection (1A), paragraph (b) is repealed because overseas treatment is an additional benefit of the health insurance plan and the FutureCare plan, and is provided for in Orders made under sections 13(2)(b) and 13B(2)(b), respectively. The reference to section 3(3) in paragraph (c) is deleted because there is currently no such section.

Clause 10 makes consequential amendments to the Bermuda Hospitals Board Act 1970. It defines

“hospital fees” and redefines “the general hospital” as being the KEMH and any other facility operated by the Board. It also inserts section 13AA, which sets out the circumstances in which hospital fees are chargeable. All hospital fees that are not standard health benefit are chargeable. Hospital fees are also chargeable in respect of a person who is not insured and does not qualify for fully subsidized treatment under section 2 of the Health Insurance Act 1970. No hospital fees are chargeable in respect of a person who is insured or a person who qualifies for fully subsidized treatment. If a person is not insured and qualifies for partially subsidized treatment, the portion of the hospital fees that is not covered by the subsidy shall be chargeable for the treatment. Section 13AA is however subject to section 3B of the Health Insurance Act 1970 (in particular, clause 5).

Clause 11 makes a consequential amendment to the Bermuda Hospitals Board (Hospital Fees) Regulations 2018 to clarify that hospital fees under these Regulations are only payable if they are chargeable under section 13AA of the Bermuda Hospitals Board Act 1970.

Clause 12 makes consequential amendments to the Health Insurance (Standard Health Benefit) Regulations 1971. Regulation 2 is amended to clarify that, to be standard health benefit, inpatient services must be provided by the Board. Regulation 3 is amended to clarify that, to be standard health benefit, outpatient services must be provided by the Board or, as the case may be, must be approved as such by the Bermuda Health Council. The standard premium under regulation 9 remains the same (\$355.31 a month) but the Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium portion of the standard premium increases from \$101.97 to \$331.97. The standard premium under regulation 10 (for persons over 65 who do not qualify for subsidized hospital treatment) also remains the same (\$1,227.53 a month) but the Mutual Re-insurance Fund premium portion of the standard premium increases from \$214.17 to \$1,025.96.

Clause 13, Mr. Chairman, makes consequential amendments to the Health Insurance (Mutual Re-insurance Fund) (Prescribed Sum) Order 2014. It changes the amounts paid from the Mutual Re-insurance Fund per month per insured person as follows: (a) to the Health Insurance Fund, \$50.35 decreases to \$35.89; (b) to the Bermuda Health Council, \$0.55 increases to \$1.00; and (c) to the Bermuda Hospitals Board, \$13.16 increases to [\$231.33].

Clause [14], Mr. Chairman, makes a consequential amendment to the Health Insurance (Maternity Benefit) Regulations 1971 to clarify that, to qualify for standard health benefit under these Regulations, “maternity treatment” must be provided in the general hospital.

Clause 15 makes a consequential amendment to the Health Insurance (Mental Illness, Alcohol and Drug Abuse) Regulations 1973 to make it clear

that to qualify for standard health benefit under these Regulations, the treatment must be provided in the hospital.

Clause 16, Mr. Chairman, provides that the Minister may make regulations and such transitional or operational arrangements as she considers necessary in consequence of the amendments made by this Act. The regulations would be subject to the negative resolution procedure and can be deemed to have effect from the commencement of this Act (namely, 1 June 2019).

Clause 17, Mr. Chairman, is self-explanatory.

The Chairman: Any further speakers? The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin. Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, in clause 3, which amends section 2 (this is page 2 of the Bill), where we are deleting “and the use of dialysis facilities,” the Minister indicated that these are no longer covered by subsidy, but they will be covered by the . . . under section 3A of the Mutual Re-insurance Fund.

The question that I have for clarity is, are these dialysis treatments, whether in or out of the hospital, going to be covered by that MRF irrespective of where the service is provided? And that is not deemed to be part of the SHB. I just wanted to clarify that. I think I understand that; I just wanted to clarify that.

The other question that I have is the amendment to the health insurance standard health benefit regulation . . . if I can just find out where this is—

The Chairman: While you are looking for it, let me ask the Minister, can you answer the first question?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Sure, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, all of the dialysis services are covered by the standard health benefit, and the transfer . . . the payments now, as opposed to coming from subsidy, will all come from the Mutual Re-insurance Fund, for dialysis that are all covered by SHB.

The Chairman: Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Sorry, just for clarity, I wanted to make sure, because they are SHB.

Is that saying that no part of that dialysis will enure back to the reinsurer for reimbursement as other community SHBs are? So, in other words, if we have some community SHBs comes out of that \$25 sliver that is left out of the standard premium, I just wanted to make sure that there is no dialysis portion of that that concluded there.

The Chairman: Can you clear that up?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated in the brief, the Mutual Re-insurance . . . excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Take your time.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you.

Sorry, Mr. Chairman, dialysis is not SHB. However, the payments of dialysis will continue to be paid by the Mutual Re-insurance Fund.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay, that is fine.

The Chairman: Any further questions, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, that clears it because the Minister had indicated that dialysis was SHB, which created confusion. So I appreciate the clarity.

The other question that I have is with respect to the health insurance standard health benefit regulations, and this is clause . . . I have to look and see which clause it is . . . we have a gazillion different clauses . . . 14, subsection (2), regulation 2, here we are, here.

Clause 12, and this is subsection . . . I am sorry, in the Insurance (Standard Health Benefit) Regulations, the inpatient services under [regulation] 2, which has been amended here under clause 14. It says "in subparagraph (xiv), by deleting 'or in an establishment approved by the Council.'" That clause, as we speak, in the substantive Health Insurance (Standard Health Benefit) Regulations reads (this is [regulation 2] (xiv), "hospice care" (this is standard health benefit) shall include the following inpatient services provided by the Board. And (xiv) says "hospice care in an establishment under the charge and management of the Board or in an establishment approved by the Council;"

So, that "in an establishment approved by the Council" has now been deleted. So I am just asking if the Minister can just clarify whether this is effectively saying that the only hospice care is going to be provided in a facility that is under the charge and management of the Hospitals Board. So if there is some outside hospice that it is not going to be covered and if it is not going to be covered under the health insurance standard health benefit regulations, how or will it be covered at all? I just need to have clarity for that.

The Chairman: Minister?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, yes, the hospice is obviously run by the hospital. And what we are going to be doing, when we see the next phase—Mr. Chairman, of the health reform financing, there is go-

ing to be quite a lot of repeal and replacement of these pieces of legislation. So, part of the clean-up exercise as proposed by Chambers was to remove the provision "as approved by the Council," because at this point the only hospice is through the Bermuda Hospitals Board. And, again, this Act is just being cleaned up, because it is going to be repealed when we move towards health financing reform.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Let me just . . . yes, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to speak to, on page 5, clause 10, consequential amendments to the [Bermuda] Hospitals Board Act [1970], and this is in section 13AA(1)(c). It effectively says that to the extent that an insured—

An Hon. Member: Where are you?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: This is on page 5 and this is clause 10, 13AA, "Hospital fees in respect of standard health benefit chargeable in certain circumstances."

When it says that if an individual is not insured . . . this is subsection (c). If an individual "is not insured and qualifies for partially subsidized treatment, the portion of the [hospital] fees that is not covered by the subsidy shall be chargeable for the treatment."

The question is, when we have indigent people, to whom is this bill going to be delivered if they are either not eligible for that subsidy or . . . sorry, partially eligible for the subsidy? To whom will that bill be sent, if we already know that they do not have the ability to pay in that instance?

Let me just—

The Chairman: Okay. Minister, do you want to respond to that?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, if the individual is an indigent individual, then they would be subsidized by the government. So, there would be no bill, because the government would actually pay that bill. That is what we pay for, the subsidy, that is part of the \$146 million that we pay for subsidy that will go to the \$336 . . . \$330, excuse me.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay, okay.

The Chairman: Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, just one other question, and I do not know that I can necessarily pinpoint which clause, but I guess I can go back to 10 in terms of the hospital fees.

I just want to know that if somebody presents at the hospital for services, and this would be in 13AA . . . I guess if you present and you are fully subsidised, there is no fee that is going to be chargeable. If you are not insured and you do not qualify for subsidised, the full amount of the fee shall be chargeable for the treatment (this is in (b)).

So the question that I have is, just for clarity, I believe I understand it, but for clarity in the community, I wanted to make sure how the hospital will be kept apprised of eligibility when somebody shows up to present for services if they are not insured, do not qualify for fully subsidised treatments, how will the admissions clerk at the hospital be made aware that this individual is or is not, or somebody showing up, is eligible?

So, in other words, if somebody does not have any coverage, they clearly have to pay the bill. But if somebody does show up, is there some listing, register, report in which the admissions clerks at the hospital will be apprised of who is and is not covered on a current basis by having already paid the standard premium?

The Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact, this was a question that was raised last evening at the town hall in which the Honourable Member was present.

The eligibility files will be sent to the hospital on a daily basis. So those files, as they are currently done, will indicate to the hospital who is insured and who is not insured. And those who are defined as insured will have the MRF premiums required to be paid for them by the insurer as a result of the law that we will be passing.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member, Mrs. Atherden.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In terms of clause 5, which is talking about the licensed insurer or the employer, and I think it tied back into just what the Minister said, the clause indicates that it is important that the funds be remitted within 30 days. And I guess, bearing in mind the history of people not paying their premiums on time, and then the Health Council sort of having to get a list of who has not paid, and sometimes it is a month afterwards, I just find that it is concerning as to whether the Minister thinks if—under the current system, sometimes people are a month or two behind—we are now saying that if it is not there by 30 days you are going to go on a list that basically says that you are not covered and, therefore, the individual is going to have to pay for the service themselves.

I am just worried about people having to pay or not pay, and then you have the whole reconciliation problem that has occurred in the past. And I thought that part of this system was designed to stop reconciliations to make sure that people understood whether they were eligible or not.

And I have another question with respect to people who are . . . this whole thing about if you get into an accident and if afterwards you are deemed to be liable. And therefore, people having to chase behind other people for the fees for the services that they rendered. And I just wondered, has the Ministry progressed far enough to have sorted out those sorts of questions, or at least in principle, in terms of how it will work?

The Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the MRF payments will have to be done and completed in a more efficient manner. And some insurers manage to do this now. In fact, there are a quite a number that do. However, there are some who are not as efficient, and we are just working with them to ensure so that levels of efficiency will improve so that the payments are made on a timely basis.

The Chairman: The Chair recognises Mr. Pearman.

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

Just one question for the Honourable and Learned Minister. It is page 8 of the Bill, clause 14. And the heading is Consequential amendment to Health Insurance [(Maternity Benefit)] Regulations 1971. And it says, “Regulation 1 of the Health Insurance [(Maternity Benefit)] Regulations 1971 is amended in the definition of ‘maternity treatment’ by deleting ‘a hospital’ and substituting ‘the general hospital.’”

The general hospital is defined earlier in the Bill at clause 10. It is now being redefined. It is clause 10(a)(ii). And the general hospitals are being redefined to mean “any other facility operated by the Board,” which I understand to mean must be a facility here in Bermuda. If my understanding is correct, then it would seem that clause 14 is narrowing the scope of coverage.

If one looks at the regulations that are being amended, the definition for maternity treatment there, which appears in clause 1, the interpretation, says, “‘maternity treatment’ means treatment in a hospital arising out of pregnancy.”

So, on the face of it, clause 14 would appear to be narrowing coverage only to treatment for maternities in this hospital here in Bermuda. And that would exclude, one would surmise, emergency maternity procedures that might require a mother and child to be flown overseas.

If that is right, is that what was anticipated, to restrict that coverage and deny overseas treatment in maternity cases of emergency?

The Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The SHB, Mr. Chairman, the subject matter . . . and I thank my honourable and learned friend for this question, but this particular provision relates, as all of these Acts do, to the SHB. And SHB does not cover overseas treatment.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Grateful. Thank you.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, can I just answer the other? There was another question that the Honourable Member had also put forward. And that is with respect to the recouping of funds following a traffic accident. I am happy to advise this Honourable House and the Honourable Member that asked that question that the provisions to recoup fees, and the processes are now in place, and that the GEHI, HIPP and FutureCare . . . I am sorry. . . . but the provisions to recoup those fees are currently in place now.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
Ms. Atherden?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Is it possible to tell us what the provisions are?

The Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes, if that Honourable Member will just give me a minute to get that information, I will provide that to this House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, I can undertake to provide that information to the Honourable Member.

The Chairman: Yes.
Any further speakers?
There appear to be none.
Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

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

I am just making reference to the question that my honourable colleague had on page 8 and clause 14 with respect to maternity benefits, but this is relating to other benefits. The Minister clarified that overseas care is not covered by standard hospital benefit, so the premium does not cover that. But the question is, Is there any intention to enable a portability aspect so that if we do have emergency situations,

you are paying your premium, you get up to King Edward and you have a situation that causes you to be flown out, for the premium that you have already paid, yes, there are differentials. But is there any intent to include a portability factor?

We used to have portability. It was removed probably five years ago, six, eight years ago, whatever. But my question is, with this block grant situation and the money that the hospitals likely will have as a result of the transfer of the MRF, is there any intention to include a portability aspect?

The Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If I can just answer the Honourable Member, Ms. Atherden's, question, and then I will come back to the Honourable Shadow.

The Chairman: Please do.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: With respect to the processes, Mr. Chairman, following an accident and then having to recoup if the individual was uninsured, the recouping of the current process is being conducted by the Health Insurance Department. However, the Bermuda Hospitals Board, moving forward, will have to develop their own process insofar as recouping those funds following an accident.

And, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the question concerning portability, as I have indicated, the SHB does not include overseas care. In 2014, it was actually the OBA Government that removed that aspect of portability for the purposes of reducing the budget by \$9 million.

Some Hon. Members: Ah! Oh!

The Chairman: Any further?
Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: My question was, with the revamping of the care system, is there any intent to re-include portability—understanding why it was eliminated before—with this new system? Is it appropriate to consider a re-introduction of the portability aspect? That was my question.

The Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, that will be a conversation that I will have with the Minister and the Cabinet.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
Minister, do you want to move these clauses?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Oh, yes, indeed.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that clauses 1 through 17 be approved and stand and form part of the Bill.

The Chairman: It has been moved that clauses 1 through 17 be approved.

Are there any objections to that?

There appear to be none.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 17 passed.]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: 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.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: 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.

An Hon. Member: Unanimous.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Unanimous.

The Chairman: The Bill will be reported to the House.

[Motion carried: The Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 9:10 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Speaker: Good evening, Members.

Members, are there any objections to the Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 being reported to the House as printed?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

The Speaker: Just one dissent? That sounds like it has been approved by the majority. So, it has been reported, approved.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Agreed. So moved.

That now brings us to the . . . well, the next item, that motion, is going to be carried over. So, it brings us to a close of the items on the Order Paper for today.

Would you like to do your third reading?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Continue on.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I am moving that the Bill be now passed.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?

No objections.

So moved.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you.

[Motion carried: The Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

[Desk thumping]

An Hon. Member: Well done.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Deputy, understand?

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, Mr. Speaker, with all of the hoorah in the background, I care to move that the House adjourn until the 31st of May, Friday.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

No one wishes to speak?

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: You all could not keep him in the kitchen a little longer?

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Mr. Famous, are you trying to get my attention?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Well, being as I have got to face the west, yes.

The Speaker: Mr. Famous, do you have a few things that you would like to say this evening?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Very few, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Very brief, right?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Very, extremely brief, but very pertinent.

The Speaker: Mr. Famous, you have the floor.

UK GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPTED INTERVENTION INTO BERMUDA'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, good evening to you. Good evening, colleagues, and good evening to Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the war that we are in right now is not political. It is economical. Our people, as duly noted by the Opposition Leader and his cohorts, our people, our people—Bermudians—are upset because—

The Speaker: His colleagues. His colleagues.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Our colleagues.

The Speaker: His colleagues, yes, our colleagues, yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Are upset because of rising prices. Whether it be food prices, electricity prices, health prices, they are upset.

So, let us go back a little way, Mr. Speaker, to 30 years ago. Bermudians were being extorted. I use that word liberally—extorted—for long-distance rates. You want to call America? Two dollars a minute. You want to call England? Three dollars a minute. You want to call the West Indies? Hand over your spleen. The then-PLP Government, under the leadership of Minister Renee Webb, said, *You know what? This has got to stop. We're going to break up this monopoly between the telephone company and Cable and Wireless (the interconnect fee, whatever) technicality.*

And they introduced the liberalisation of the telecoms industry. From there, the prices went down, down, down, down, down. Now people could call China for free on WhatsApp . . . well, free-ish, because you are paying for Wi-Fi somewhere along the line.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: *Free-ish.* It is cheaper than it was before.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, long-distance rates really are not our challenge right now. But we are being extorted once again for mobile data rates.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a customer of Digicel ever since it came here. And every year, I see myself paying more and more and more. And I said to myself, *Let me do a little study of what Digicel rates are around the region.* And would you know, in St. Lucia they pay \$2 per gigabyte. In Antigua they pay \$6 per gigabyte. In Bonaire they pay \$5 a gigabyte. Grenada \$5 a gigabyte. In Bermuda we are paying \$12 a gigabyte. In the Cayman Islands, our favourite island, \$16 a gigabyte. All of these are US dollars, so I do not want anybody saying, *Oh, this is a different exchange rate.*

My point is that in the Western Hemisphere, Bermudians are paying some of the highest data rates. So, once again, the Progressive Labour Party has to say, no, this is going to come to an end. And how is it going to do that? The Regulatory Authority of Bermuda, with the assistance and the approval of the respective Minister, has lifted the moratorium on data providers. And I am hoping and I am praying that somebody comes in here and offers better rates. Because one of the things we know is that our people are upset about the cost of living. We are trying to address it in many different ways. This is one way.

So, I want to thank the Regulatory Authority for taking that step. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? The prices we pay for insurance, the prices we pay for gas—all of that is based on our having a stable economy. What is our economy based on, Mr. Speaker? International business. So, what we are paying on mobile data, complaining about that is irrelevant if that international business is threatened.

We were recently removed from the blacklist, which I am thankful for—all of us are thankful for. But we have another grey . . . no, dark, cloud over our head. It is called potential action by the UK Government. Mr. Speaker, if you allow me, I will read something briefly from the *Royal Gazette*.

The Speaker: As long as it is brief.

Mr. Christopher Famous: May 13th, by Fiona McWhirter, Move to give Britons vote in Bermuda rejected.

Let me quote, Mr. Speaker: "The British Government has rejected a parliamentary committee proposal to come up with a timetable for talks that would give British residents in Bermuda the right to vote.

"It said the Foreign Office did not plan to publish any such schedule but recognised the importance of a 'reasonable qualifying process' to allow expatriates a place at the ballot box in overseas territories."

Let me go on, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: “[The response added:] ‘In the spirit of a relationship based upon partnership, we will continue to support and encourage consistent and open political engagement on belongingship and its territory-specific equivalents, while respecting the fact that immigration decisions are primarily a matter for OT governments.’”

Essentially, what they are saying is that for now they are backing down. I want to thank the Honourable Premier for moving that motion that we all spoke about. I think we were the only country in the Overseas Territories who spoke about it.

But let me move on to what the threat is. “In its reply, the British Government said it would prepare an Order in Council, which is effectively a decree from the UK, by the end of 2020”—that is less than 18 months from now—“with overseas territories ‘expected to have fully functioning publicly accessible registers as soon as possible, and no later than the end of 2023.’”

Key words—and *no later than*. It does not say *by*.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that we sit here every week. We have differences of opinion. But again, the can has been kicked down the road by the British Government. Eventually, they are going to come after us. And all this squabbling about data rates, insurance rates—all of that is going to seem pale by comparison. Because unless we protect our international business, right, we are not going to be in Parliament. So, I say to my colleagues on both sides of the table, Thank you for the spirited debate today. But let us remember, the British are coming! The British are coming!

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. I think you set a fire and others want to follow now, Mr. Famous. That was Honourable Member Famous, from constituency 11. It looks like your neighbour in number 10 wants to say a few words, as well.

An Hon. Member: It’s a Devonshire thing.

The Speaker: It is a Devonshire thing, eh? Well, we are trying to get Somerset.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, it is a Devonshire thing. We might disagree on a lot of issues, but we work hard for the people.

The Speaker: Hmm.

CREDIT CARD SERVICES FEE—INCORRECT INFORMATION RELEASED

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, just two things that I would like to speak to tonight, and I will keep my comments very succinct. The first point that I would like to address, Mr. Speaker, and I am surprised we have not heard more from the Honourable Government in this House, is what I would consider the embarrassment of the handling of the incorrect release of the credit card information a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Speaker, I think honourable colleagues are well aware that in the Budget Statement on February 22nd, on page 29, the Honourable Minister of Finance talked about tax collection and accounts receivable. And on page 30, Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me to just read for a second.

The Speaker: Briefly.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: “Mr. Speaker, over the years the government has been incurring millions of dollars in credit card charges due to taxpayers using their credit cards to pay their taxes. Effective from April 2019, government will start to recover these fees by way of a recharge fee for this convenience.”

So, we go on, Mr. Speaker, to May 2nd, when a press release came out. And I will just read some of the pertinent highlights from that press release. It says, May 2nd, 2019, the Government is reminding people that, effective May 6th, 2019, they will implement a 1.45 per cent service fee for all payments made by debit, credit card at TCD [Transport Control Department] DPT [Department of Public Transportation], Accountant General Cashiers, Registry General, Health [Maternal, Environment, Dental, Child], Public Works and Parks.

The Government is reminding the public that people who use their credit cards to pay these taxes will incur a service fee to do so. It goes on to say, “As announced in the 2019/2020 budget . . .” blah-blah-blah-blah. Effective May 6th, 2019, the Government will recover some fees.

“The Office of the Tax Commissioner,” it goes on, “the Department of Planning, the Department of Customs, and Magistrates and Supreme Courts will be implementing the new service fee in the coming months, after required system upgrades.”

Well, very shortly after that, Mr. Speaker, I think just later, much later in the same day, and certainly the next day, on May 3rd, there was another release from Government, Mr. Speaker. And if you will allow me to quote: Government has released incorrect credit card information. And the Minister of Finance, using very strong language, Mr. Speaker, says, “‘An inexcusable error,’ says Minister of Finance, Curtis Dickinson . . .”, adding that he learned of the Govern-

ment's release regarding credit card charges for payments from the media.

The Minister goes on, "Contrary to established protocols, the release was issued without my approval and without that of the Minister responsible for Communications. This is compounded by the fact that the release provides incorrect information to the public"

It goes on to say that, "In the 2019/20 Budget Statement I referred to the fees incurred by the Government through the payment of taxes with credit cards. Payroll Tax payments are the issue and my intention and the Government's policy is to recover these fees by way of a recharge fee for this convenience."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I clearly read, it does not refer specifically to the Payroll Tax in the budget. That is one issue I have with this. It says in the Budget [Statement], for taxes that Government is charged. And I read those pertinent sections, and I will not read them again. So, that is one issue. The Minister now appears to be changing his tune.

I go on to quote the last part. It says, "The extension of this policy to other areas where members of the public pay for permits and other government services was not authorised by me or at all."

Now, this leads me to the second concern I have. The Government seems to have changed their position from the budget, which is very clear in the budget. And so, many questions have to be raised, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Minister talks about protocols. Well, I would like to know who breached the established protocols? How were these protocols breached? If, in the Minister's words, there is an inexcusable error, what is or what has been done, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that this never happens again? Because I consider it to be somewhat of an embarrassment for the Government and for the Minister for one day [there is] a very clear and concise release by Government, and the next day, or later that day, [this needs] to be corrected by the Minister.

Now, we have to remember, Mr. Speaker, that we have a Minister of Finance who has a press officer. We also have a Minister without Portfolio, who is now, we understand, called the Minister of Communications, who has a paid consultant and a press officer. So, more questions, Mr. Speaker. How did a release as embarrassing as this for the Government slip through the cracks? Who drafted the release? It appears quite comprehensive, and it appears very clear. Who vetted the release, Mr. Speaker? Because we know that anybody who has been involved with government releases knows that it gets vetted by a number of different people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was pulled back very quickly. So, I have to assume that an error was discovered or the Government took so much flak by a policy that was announced in the budget that they decided to pull it back. Mr. Speaker, I am also aware that

there have been meetings between Government officials and the union about this challenge. Now, Mr. Speaker, in my time as a Minister and as a Premier, I would imagine that hundreds of press releases have gone out. And I cannot recall at any time any government release going out in an area that I had some responsibility or oversight for without myself or an acting Minister seeing it in advance. It would be quite strange.

I know civil servants sometimes, to a T, will go the extra mile to make sure another set of eyes have seen it, not only to cover the language to make it appropriate, but also to make sure that it covers all of the bases.

So, Mr. Speaker, if that is being the case, what has changed in two years' time? What has changed that a press release as important as that is has gone out? Why at this time, Mr. Speaker? There are more consultants available—all earning good money. There should be no excuse. And I believe the Government has been somewhat embarrassed. And I believe that the people of Bermuda are owed an explanation of how it took place, why it took place, and to ensure that it never takes place again, because it does not look good at this point in time, and it does not look good that, potentially, civil servants are being pushed under the bus.

Now, Mr. Speaker, well, *pushed* under the bus. They have not been thrown under the bus, as one Member says, they have been pushed under the bus, because this was like a slow-motion train wreck that happened. There was a release one day, and it was pulled back. The Minister was very upset about it, quite rightly so. And we have heard nothing since.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the Honourable Minister should come forward to the people of Bermuda, because, remember, we are talking about taxation. The people in Bermuda are very concerned about the level of taxation, the increased costs in the community. And the Minister of Finance has an onerous responsibility to make sure that the government coffers have the sufficient revenue to do the job that is available.

If situations like this happen, and it happened, people lose confidence in the Ministry and information that comes from the Ministry. And at no time, Mr. Speaker, would any of us want this to be the case.

So, for the civil service, for the Government of Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, I think it is critically important for the people of Bermuda to have some questions answered.

DISRESPECTFUL COMMENTS ABOUT SIR JOHN SWAN

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The final subject that I would like to speak to briefly tonight, Mr. Speaker, is in regard to a comment that the Honourable Member from constituency 21 made on the floor of the House

of Assembly last week. And I am glad that the Honourable Member is in the Chamber to hear about it. I had already spoken on the motion to adjourn, so I could not speak any more.

And before I get into the context of the comment, Mr. Speaker, let me very clearly state that I think any Honourable Member is entitled to come to the floor of the House and express their view to show support or to show disagreement on any issue they want. However, Mr. Speaker, when I heard the comment last week by the Honourable Member referring to Sir John Swan . . . *You're 83 years old, but still doing the tap dance for the most reactionary, racist elements in Bermuda society.* I was aghast—for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker.

As leaders in our community, I think we need to do better when we are talking about touching or pressing issues. And the Honourable Member spoke passionately about this issue.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: But, Mr. Speaker, and I will get back to the Honourable Member of constituency [21] [who is] interpolating. He will have a chance to speak.

The Speaker: Let the Member speak to the Chair. Let him speak. Let him speak.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: He says, “But in what way?” Well, here is the way, Mr. Speaker. Sir John Swan is the longest serving Premier in the history of Bermuda. Sir John Swan is a National Hero, our only living National Hero. Sir John Swan has worked very hard for this community for many, many, many years, Mr. Speaker. At the very least—

An Hon. Member: He is not immune

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members! Members!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And I hear the Honourable Members who will have their opportunity to speak.

The Speaker: Members! Members!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: *He is not immune.* Of course he is not immune, Mr. Speaker! No one is immune from criticism. But the way we criticise, the way we make a point, does not have to be outright blatantly disrespectful, Mr. Speaker! Anyone is owed that level of respect—certainly, our only living National Hero, Mr. Speaker. Because if we do not, we make a mockery of everything we stand for up here, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have had my disagreements with Sir John. I respect him. I consider him a mentor. I go to him for advice. But when I have my disagreements, I do not attack him personally.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just break down the comments a little bit. Forget about who said it about whom. But the first thing that struck me, *You are 83 years old.* That is a slap in a face to seniors. I thought about my own mother, who still deeply cares about Bermuda.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I hear a little cry from the other side like, you know, *So what?* Wait a second.

The Speaker: Just talk to the Chair.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: If we are going to disrespect our seniors in our community, we have got a real issue, because next week we will be up here trying to fight for them, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to fight for them, Mr. Speaker. So, do not disrespect our seniors. And do not disrespect seniors who still want to be involved, because they have something to offer. They have experience; they have hands-on experience. They still have callouses on their hands from what they have gone through, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker. He went on to say, “But he is still doing the tap dance for the most reactionary, racist elements in Bermuda society.”

Mr. Speaker, the Sir John Swan whom I know will not tap dance for anybody.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And you know, he can dance. Trust me; Sir John Swan can move. But he will not tap dance for anyone. He has spoken about the issues, whether you agree or disagree with him, for decades. He has spoken about the issues. He is not going to tap dance for anyone, Mr. Speaker.

So, while I am happy to have a conversation about anything we want, if we want to move this country forward we should do so with the modicum of respect that allows the people who listen to this debate and allows you, Mr. Speaker, to have the guidelines and the decorum in this House where we can have those tough conversations, but come out of it and not think about personal attacks, Mr. Speaker.

So, I am not standing here defending Sir John Swan; he can do it himself. I am standing here to say that I appreciate the Honourable Member who likes to speak to these issues. But let us remember, take out the personal attacks. Let us show some respect. And we will solve our issues together—with disagreement, if we have to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member Commissioning.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I will only say this, and I will repeat what I said, that Sir John Swan tap danced for the most reactionary and racist elements in this society—

DISRESPECTFUL COMMENTS ABOUT SIR JOHN SWAN

The Speaker: Ah! Ah! Take your seat. Take your seat a minute. Take your seat a minute. Take your seat a minute. Take your seat a minute!

You know what? Maybe I was wrong last week for letting you go as far as you did go. Maybe I was wrong. So, I am going to state that here, and state it publicly. But let us not go down there again. Taking out somebody who has given a lot for this country. Whether we agree with his politics or not, that is not for us to take on at this time. One day, hopefully, we are going to be that 83-year-old guy who has given a lot of time to this country. And we would like to know that we set an example of how we want people to respect us after we have served our time.

You can have the floor.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Mr. Speaker, Sir John Swan did not give any respect to black Bermudians in his comments on two occasions. And I am sorry. My mother and father did not feel that Sir John Swan showed any respect to them.

Bob Marley had an expression, *Who knows it feels it*. And he has always played that role in Bermuda.

Now, I make no apologies for that. When you have a man such as Sir John Swan get on TV and say, *Well, the white people in Bermuda weren't that bad. They never lynched us*.

Do you agree with that, Member from [constituency] 10?

And what about when he says—

The Speaker: Well, well, well, well—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Point of clarification.

The Speaker: No, no. No, no. No, no. No, no. No, no. No, no. We are not going to have this back-and-forth over a personal—

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: No, not personal.

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait! Remain in your seat! Remain in your seat! Remain in your seat! Remain in your seat!

I am trying to give you some latitude, but I already set a guideline before I let you get back on your

feet. I am asking you to respect the guideline without me having to get involved again. Okay?

CABINET COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I have made *my* point.

Mr. Speaker, I was getting up this evening because I am very pleased with the Premier's Statement this morning, the formation of the Cabinet Committee on Social Issues, particularly the following that he related to the House and the country at large. He said, "Public meetings on the living wage have now been completed and legislation will soon follow . . ." I am very happy about that, Mr. Speaker. We have had this final round of consultation.

As you know, the living wage issue proved to be a bipartisan one. The outlines of what the Government will do may differ a little bit from what may have occurred with the Opposition. But it was bipartisan at heart. We had both the Opposition and Government Members on that committee, as you know.

And for the benefit of Bermudians out there, we promised that relief was on the way, particularly for hard-working Bermudians, the working poor. And it is. The Government is committed to the establishment of a Wage Commission that will be legislated. It will be an independent body. That Wage Commission will determine and implement a statutory minimum wage. That minimum wage is likely to be one that will be a sectoral one that would be probably reserved for those owning gratuities and commissions, et cetera. The same Wage Commission will also determine and implement a living wage by 2021, which is not that long away.

You will see the establishment of a regulatory regime that will deal with compliance to ensure that employers are complying with what will be law as Bermuda takes its place amongst over 100 countries with statutory wages. There will be further recommendations that will be implemented, such as amendments to the Employment Act around overtime pay; amendments to the Occupational Pensions Act with respect to the disparity between persons on work permits and Bermudians, compelling them to have to pay into the Occupational Pensions, and thus for our Bermudian and other employers to also pay into it—the persons who hire persons on work permits. That created a major disparity between black . . . I mean, between Bermudians and foreign workers.

So, again, I am happy to say that relief is on the way. But it is not the only piece of the public policy response that is needed. In a country that has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, Mr. Speaker, this alone is not going to do enough to turn that ship around. But this Government in its wisdom is also committed to reducing the cost of health care, reducing the cost of energy, to embark on a process of progressive tax reform. We could not do much

of it at all this year, but next year we will. That is the commitment I have.

All of these things together, in terms of public policy, are designed to make lives materially better for Bermudians. And so, as I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, I want the people out there to have patience. Some of these measures are going to challenge very entrenched interests in the country. Persons and groups and entities that will want to maintain the status quo, they will tell you that the sky is going to fall every time we begin to address these matters. But you will wake up the next morning and see that, actually, a better day has arrived.

And so, I would ask again for you to stand with us here, Mr. and Mrs. Public of Bermuda as we try to move this country into the 21st century. The Premier has stated earlier, they are the past; we are the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member?

I recognise the Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will say I will not be long. This is a matter that has been concerning to me for some time. The House has heard me speak to it. I have spoken in the newspaper about it, as well. And that is our young people.

As I looked at the newspaper article published on May 10th, we had a judge who made the statement, "the court is aware that this is not the first instance of the police acting beyond their powers at the request of the DCFS [Department of Child and Family Services]." This in relation to a young 15-year-old who was to be sent away, and he simply wanted to go pick up a few personal items. And because of that, he was incarcerated. And then, the judge making the statement that he just made, that this is not the first time that DCFS has used the police in like manner, and now a minor has been . . . his rights have been infringed upon.

And then, when I looked at the newspaper on May 15th, the title, Civil servant accused of assault, this is in relation to a 17-year-old young lady who also was to be sent away. And apparently, there now has been an altercation that has taken place whereby she has sought—

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: One second. Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, the matters that he speaks about have not appeared in court. These

matters are *sub judice*. It is improper when allegations are made to bring them up in this forum.

The Speaker: Yes, yes. I understand *sub judice*. I am watching how he has walked. He had just referred to the headlines and has moved on in each case. Had he started going further down, I would have pulled him taut on it.

As long as you are just touching the headlines and moving on, you are fine.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate that, which is exactly why I was only speaking to the headlines on the matter. We know that there are still more details to come.

But what I am speaking to is . . . then again on May 16th, we saw another. Thursday, the title, Concern about untreated sex offenders. And as you go through the article, it is talking about the abuses of minors. And, of course, again we see on May 17th, today, where the bishop stepped up to speak to the Catholic Church about child protection.

And what I am getting to here is this: I have been calling for clarity as to what is going on within the Department of Child and Family Services. We understand that there are challenges. And we must get this under control. We can no longer continue to see issues being played out in the public and concern for our minors. So I am imploring this Government. The Shadow Attorney General and I have had meetings concerning this here with Government. And all we are seeking is a unified effort in ensuring that we have protection for our young people and that we are doing as much as we can to safeguard them, Mr. Speaker.

And I only bring this to our attention because I know that our young people are important, and I know that this Government certainly does not want to be reading the headlines saying what they are saying. So, we need to get it under control.

So I will leave it there. I have made requests already to former Minister Weeks to give some clarity to some of the issues that we are seeing here. But they are still being played out in the public, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that there is going to be more being played out. And we just want to get control of it. That is all. Let us see what it is that we can do. As I said, we have reached across the aisle, myself and the Shadow Attorney General making recommendations to give assistance in this area, because this can no longer happen.

So, with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I will leave that at that position. We are now heading towards May 24th, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

BERMUDA DAY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Bermuda Day. And I know that we will not be meeting before Bermuda Day. So I would like to say to everyone here and to the listeners and to Bermuda, for some of us, Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, *Happy Bermuda Day!* I look forward to that time. It is a beautiful time when we can get out. And hopefully, it will be a wonderful day. And I am looking forward to the celebrations by Bermudians in our history and how we have gotten to where we are, and how we also, even today, recognise that we still have a ways to go. We have made progress; and I look forward to more progress, as in this House we continue to celebrate the most important things to us, and that is Bermudians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Minister of National Security. Would you like to have a few minutes on your feet tonight?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, continue on.

GANG VIOLENCE REDUCTION INITIATIVES

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, as the Minister with responsibility for national security, as you know, Mr. Speaker, one of those things within my responsibility is Bermuda's National Violence Reduction strategy. We have seen over 55 men who have senselessly had their lives taken as a result of gang or gun-related violence. Over the last year, I have had the opportunity to go to the Westgate Correctional facility and to the Co-Ed facility, and I sat and was a part of the major plans to reduce gang violence.

I sat through two programmes, and sat in the graduations for two programmes, where men who had been convicted of significant offences, where they espoused the benefits of the learning, the things that they have taken from a seminar that was given to them over a period of months on how to conduct themselves, how to deal with difficult situations, how to handle difficult sets of circumstances.

And I wondered, why do we oftentimes wait till we get to that point for our young men, our young women, for our parents and for our families to come to that *Eureka!* moment? And I think, oftentimes, about how we as a country abdicate our responsibility, whether it is to be a present father, whether it is to be in the home, whether it is to be active in our community. And we oftentimes look at our society as being broken. And the finger is pointed at the teacher. Then the finger is pointed at the politicians. And the finger is pointed at the police. And very rarely do we look at what is the epicentre or the genesis of the problem.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to now start to hold our community to account. And I hate the

term *Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda*. I think it is trite. But we have to start to look at what some of the challenges are in Bermuda.

We use a term in the gang violence reduction strategy, and we talk about multigenerational non-addressed trauma—multigenerational non-addressed trauma. It is simply a method of thinking of where people who suffer trauma in their lifetime . . . it is actually perpetuated on them based on what they learn at home or what they see in their communities. Studies from Johns Hopkins University show that people who suffered trauma in their life . . . over a period of time, the DNA of the people changed as a result of being exposed to trauma.

We see in the black community where we have seen generations of men not being in the home, young men being exposed to violence, young men not being able to see role models. And oftentimes, we see that replicating itself in our community through violence.

There is an opportunity now for us to look within the fabric of this community to get back and to understand why the breakdown is happening within our society. We have been forced! We must now be forced as a community to look at the family unit. We must be forced to look at the community unit.

And so, when we go to a sporting club and the club is closed because of antisocial behaviour and we fight to keep the club open as opposed to understanding what is the purpose of the club . . . what was the purpose of the Workmen's Club? The purpose of the Workmen's Club was not just where you came to drink. It was a place where this community came together. They had the club hands. It was a place where you banked. It was a place where you re-created, a place where you shared oral tradition. It was the epicentre of our community.

The sporting clubs, evolved through the working clubs and through the Friendly Society, which became the absolute tapestry where our country was interwoven. And we see the advancement of ourselves politically and socially and economically. But the only thing that does not seem to keep up, or catch up, is the social fabric of our country.

On Thursday afternoon, I went to the Elliot Primary School. And the Elliot Primary School had the Kings programme. And this was the programme that has been put in the primary schools to help young men who are not off the rails. They are programmes that we feel to be [for those] at risk. And "at risk" is our word because if our young men at the time had [us] working with them, they would not be "at risk."

I thought it interesting, because there were 14 young men who were in the programme. And I looked, and I surveyed the audience. And there were the politicians from the Progressive Labour Party. There were the senior people from the Department of Education. I looked, and I saw all of the mothers in the audience. There were all of the teachers. Absent from the room

were the fathers. There were three fathers in the room out of 14 young men. I do not know the reason why they were absent. But let me tell you something that was clear. All of the mothers were in the room. I saw a grandfather in the room.

But what was evident . . . what was evident was that the people who were carrying these young men's hopes, dreams, aspirations, who were present to support them, present to congratulate them, [were] present to share in this momentous occasion . . . it was not the men in our community. It was the women in our community.

Again, it is easy for everyone to point the proverbial finger at the Government, point the proverbial finger at the police. Mr. Speaker, it is an opportunity for us now to look at the conversation. We now look at the surge in individuals dying on the road, the road traffic accidents. If you look at the numbers of people who are dying on the road, it is actually higher than the number of people who are being shot and killed as a result of gang- and gun-related violence.

If you were in any other country, it would have been declared a national or a public health crisis! You see everything that has been done by the Road Safety Office or by the Minister of Transport. But if you go back to the very epicentre of this, that is our community and the valuing of life.

There was a recent death on the roads. And we talked to the young men. I went to the funeral. And as I was at the funeral, everyone donned their T-shirts. And they had the name emblazoned on it. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? A month before, we were at another funeral. We had [the exact same thing]. I looked at my calendar. To the very next month, we were again sitting at another funeral.

We have to make a decision in our community. Where and what is the sanctity of life?

What is important to us?

What is the life of our brother and our sister worth?

How do we, as a community . . . do we wait on Pastor Bean and the Gang Violence Reduction team to help out in our community? Or do we put together a volunteer band of men, whether it is a church, whether it is a fraternity, whether it is one of our lodges? Do we put together a society that goes back into the central parishes and says that we want to mentor young men?

As a community, we all talk about our National Heroes. And we get mad when Mr. Commissioning states something that is blatantly obvious. But something that we have to realise is that, as a community, we must fight to save each other within our community. And oftentimes we do not realise it is our very absence that stokes the fires of our young people believing that they do not matter. We believe that if we throw money at a programme, it solves it. Sometimes, they need us to be present.

Men, specifically black men in our community, for too long we have gotten away with being nice. We have gotten away with being nice. And we understand because we talked about the multigenerational problems that we have had in this community. But we will not rise until everyone gets up and takes a young man by his hand, takes a young man and teaches him a trade, takes a young woman and shows her things that need to be learned. That is our responsibility. Because I can promise you that no other segment of this community is going to help us get our act together.

We have seen this country and what it needs. This country is in the need of a community to come together, Mr. Speaker. My heart is heavy when we talked a few Saturday nights ago. Minister Burch and I met with the mothers of lifers, beautiful women. They sat and they advocated for their sons. They sat and they asked for better conditions in the prisons for their sons. They asked for more treatment. They asked for more programmes. And they asked for more.

And I sat there, and the thing that was going on in my mind was, *How do we prevent these young men from finding themselves in this state before we all rally around the bloodstained banner to keep them and make sure that they are on track?* And do not tell me it is the schools. Do not hold up your hand and say it is the police. It is the community that has to get involved. It is the community that has to start seeing it as a problem.

And I get the advancement of social media and the benefit of being online. But sometimes, we have to put our phones down and put Facebook down and interact directly with our young people. Whether it is through mentorship, whether it is through direct programming, whether it is through writing and holding them and teaching them . . . Bermuda College. And we were very excited about the number of young people who graduated. And we should have been proud! But there are enough young people in our country who could use guidance.

I spoke with the Clerk of the Legislature. And she is passionate about teaching manners, decorum, how men should carry themselves—a lost art. I go in meetings with our young men. I watch them in the Magistrate's Court, the very essence of decency. We have lost a bit of that. And guess what happened? When they go for an interview, when they go for something, they do not have the basics in which to succeed. And again, we all want to point our finger at the government, at our society. We must all now realise that these are our young men, that these are opportunities presented for all of us.

We talk about the immigration crisis and people coming to our country, everyone taking jobs. And we have seen the advent of looking closely at mixed categories, closed categories, special categories, open categories. But guess what? We have something that we all have to work on. And that is passing down the traditions of Bermuda. And I am not just talk-

ing about the traditions of working in dealing with slate or the traditions of carpentry. There are some traditions in this country that have gone unspoken for generations.

And, Mr. Speaker, a hard day's work for a good day's pay, being to work on time, carrying yourself with honour. My grandfather . . . I am told that he was a carpenter. He worked up in Dockyard. He came to Bermuda in 1927 from St. Kitts. He had to leave Happy Valley on a bike, ride to Dockyard, work a full day's work in Dockyard, come all the way back home on a pushbike and then attend to his family and do homework with his kids.

There is something about that generation that made a strong generation. And we have gotten a country that is full of the accoutrement of the trappings of Mammon. And our society is in a worse position, Mr. Speaker. It is an opportunity for us now to accept the responsibility that our community played in raising our young men and making sure our children do their homework and sacrifice and do without things so we can have a stronger and a better society.

I get the fact that as Government Ministers my colleagues and I must be held to account. And we will be held to account. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time for us to hold each other to account, our community to account, our brothers to account, because we have an opportunity to make a strong generation.

The inferences I spoke to this week and what spawned this in my mind . . . Mr. Speaker, I was talking this week to a CEO of an international company. As you know, we are doing consultations and having discussions around immigration, Mr. Speaker. And I asked him, *What is your view of Bermudian workers, unvarnished, your truthful views of Bermudians?*

And his response was, *Bermudians do not work as hard as the expat employees.* He said that his experience being in Bermuda is that the Bermudians do not work as hard as the expatriate employees.

I was incensed. As my daughter would say, I immediately got into my feelings. I started to immediately get mad at the messenger.

I started to listen to him. As I listened to and dissected what he was saying, I realised this was an excellent learning opportunity for the country. And I decided, after that conversation, to start building the rubric, or building on the rubric that allows us to show our greatness. The greatness did not leave with my grandfather's generation. As a matter of fact, there is genius and greatness in all of us. Our young people are bright enough. They are strong enough.

There is a Bermudian doctor in California. His name is Sheldon Holder, MPH, a PhD and an MD, one of the most sought-after doctors on the West Coast. People ask him all these things, and he was recently doing some teaching seminars. And as I watched this online, I watched everyone proverbially sit at his feet. And I smiled because he is from Happy Valley. He is from Crisson Avenue, right around the

corner from Mr. Cannonier's homestead. And I thought a young man being from Crisson Avenue, a young doctor, a PhD and a medical degree and an MPH, leading. And I thought about his being from California.

I thought about my best friend, Dr. Lou Matthews, a man who is in charge of teaching educators all across America, over 3,000 teachers within his remit. And I started to think about, *Where did he go to school?* He went to Victor Scott. He was sent to Robert Crawford, and then went to the Bermuda Institute. He grew up on Parsons Road. And I reflected that it was not his circumstances that defined him. He had grit! He had moxie! He worked hard. He put his shoulder to the proverbial wheel. His mother worked hard. He found educators who believed in him. And what is he now? He has taken the benefit, the learning of 22 square miles, and he is now giving that to the world.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on with the greatness that lurks within us that is demonstrated locally in this Island. I met a young man. He is an ironmonger. I did not know what an ironmonger was. I did not. And I saw some ironworks. And it was a lion with a fist with something in its claw. So, I am asking everybody, *Where did this get made, and how do you bring this into Bermuda?*

He said, *That is a local ironmonger.*

By the benefit of Google, I hit "ironmonger," and I saw that this is somebody who fixes, melds, moulds and makes iron.

And I looked at this man. He was an unassuming man who you would have thought that was just a regular guy sitting in the barbershop. This was a man who had been to England, who had trained under the masters, has come back to Bermuda, taken his rightful place. He is not a man of fanfare. He is not a guy who you would look up and say, *Oh, what we call a big shot.* He is a man who had a level of discipline. He is a man who had a trade. He is a man who applied hard work. And that is what makes up Bermuda.

And so, when I told the CEO, I said, *I understand that you have had a bad experience with certain Bermudians. But that does not define who we are.* And I started to list the name of luminaries both in international and local business, and as workmen and as tradesmen, highlighting what we do and what we have done, what we do locally, what we do internationally. And I was reminded as I espoused the greatness of our people that we are great!

We are in Heritage Month. This is a month where we celebrate the greatness of this people. We have much, Mr. Speaker, to be proud of. We have much to hold high. Like anybody else in the world, we have things that we need to work on, and we need to work on a few things. But in our Heritage Month, we must be proud of our heritage. We must be proud of the things that we do well. And those things that we are struggling on, we must put a plan together to make it stronger. We must work harder to make our

young men see differently. We must give opportunities for those who need summer jobs and mentorship and guidance.

Those who have, Mr. Speaker, must impart not just the money, but the experience, the traditions, both oral and cultural, the working, the hand-man-ship, all of the things that make us great. We must pass these on to generations. We are trying to fix broken men, and we should, those who are incarcerated. But it is equally as important for us to be a country that is whole, that is well, where men are able to take their rightful place, where women are able to take their rightful place, where they are able to look at opportunity.

Ah, Mr. Speaker, but be ready for the opportunity. It is our responsibility to get them ready. It is our responsibility in Heritage Month to be reminded of our greatness, to be reminded of our sacrifice, to be reminded of people who lurk within.

This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, my last point. I listened to Kim Swan talk about his experience in Bermuda. I have known him in my adult years. And I went on his Facebook page. And I was looking through his pictures. And I was looking at what he did in golf, what he has done in golf, the people whom he has trained, the people whom he has taught. That is a National Hero. That is a man who has given his all for this country. That is a man who has sacrificed his all. That is a man who has put it all on the line. That is the man who gets up by the sweat of his brow and works hard every day. That is the Bermudian man we should hail. He is the prototype. He is the example. He is the effigy of what this country was built on—greatness, hard work, sacrifice, dedication, Mr. Speaker. That is the Bermuda man. That is the Bermuda woman.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PARLIAMENTARY DECORUM

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No other Honourable Member wishes to speak. I am going to rise to my feet. And I am going to do something just slightly different before we close tonight. I am going to take on a point that the Honourable Minister just made in reference that we all need to be holding ourselves accountable, particularly when we come in this House.

We are never going to agree on both sides of this House on political issues. But there is no need for us to kill the messenger, go after the message. The personal debates, the personal attacks on individuals need not to enter this room—need not enter the room. And I am saying it for all to hear. You are open to have any debates you want on the principles, on the issues. But let us set the example.

Because the young people out in this country who hear us hear the personal attacks, hear the fights

that we have with each other. And they think that is the tone. They do not listen to the message; they just listen to the fights. So, we are sending the wrong message out there to our community. If you want the community to do better, we need to do better in here with how we conduct ourselves.

So, I am imploring all of us to take the message to heart, all 36 of us who sit in this room, and let us practice a new way of doing business when we come here.

On that, everyone, enjoy your 24th of May, your Bermuda Day! Make the most of it. And we will see you on the 31st of the month. Have a happy holiday!

[Pause]

The Speaker: Oh, I was going to leave you here all night. See that.

[Laughter]

[Gavel]

[At 10:06 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 31 May 2019.]

BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****31 MAY 2019****10:01 AM***Sitting Number 21 of the 2018/19 Session*

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

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Mr. Clark Somner, Deputy Clerk]

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

[Minutes of 17 May 2019]

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any objections to confirming the Minutes?

There appear to be none. Minutes confirmed.

[Minutes of 17 May 2019 confirmed]

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Deputy Speaker: There are no messages from the Governor.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING****APOLOGIES**

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Today we have received word that Mr. Lawrence Scott and Ms. Leah Scott will be absent from the House.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: There are no messages from the Senate.

**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.
Mr. Deputy Premier?

**OFFICE OF INFORMATION COMMISSIONER
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT MARCH 31, 2018**

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. On behalf of the Premier, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Office of Information

Commissioner Financial Statements as at March 31, 2018.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Finance Minister, Mr. Dickinson.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Good morning.

**BERMUDA MONETARY AUTHORITY
2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Bermuda Monetary Authority 2018 Annual Report.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Finance Minister.

Mr. Furbert, Honourable Member.

**CONSOLIDATED OVERALL REPORT OF THE
EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE APRIL 2019**

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Consolidated Overall Report of the Efficiency Committee April 2019.

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

PETITIONS

The Deputy Speaker: There are no petitions.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS
AND JUNIOR MINISTERS**

The Deputy Speaker: There are three Statements, [the first] one is by the Education Minister, Mr. Rabain. Mr. Rabain, you have a Statement?

UPDATE ON T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

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

Good morning, colleagues and good morning, Bermuda.

Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to provide a status update on the progress made to address issues at [T. N. Tatem Middle School](#). It is important to me that I honour my commitment to inform all stakeholders about this matter before the end of the school year. Allow me to briefly take a moment to recap the work that has already been done at T. N. Tatem.

In December 2016, T. N. Tatem was closed due to mould issues. A report submitted in December 2017 included the following recommendation: "While results of air-quality testing through the majority of the T. N. Tatem Middle School campus showed no cause for significant concern, a visual assessment of the building indicated several factors, particularly relating to water intrusion, which will result in worsening of conditions if left unaddressed."

On February 3rd, 2017, a few weeks before the school was to reopen, when asked about T. N. Tatem, via a Parliamentary Question in the House of Assembly, "Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House of . . . cost of the repairs and [mould] remediation?" The then Minister of Education, Wayne Scott, replied, "A total of \$93,000 has been disbursed for repairs and mould remediation. This comprises air quality testing of \$18,000; heavy-duty cleaning of \$38,000; and mould abatement of \$37,000."

We now know that these repairs did not address the water intrusion as recommended by the air quality report received in December of 2016, and I must reinforce that the report stated that there would be a "worsening of conditions if left unaddressed."

In October of 2018, scheduled health and safety inspections were conducted at T. N. Tatem Middle School. The report showed that the school was safe for occupation except for one room, which was closed in order to have necessary remediation works carried out.

In February and March of 2019, additional reports were done, as mould and air quality issues once again began to show. The report stated, "The issues that we noted today are the same issues which we noted back in 2013 and are the same issues that closed the school in 2017" The department's Facilities Team immediately began to look at how to address the source of the issues.

On April 8th of this year, the Ministry and Department of Education received a letter, from the T. N. Tatem PTSA, voicing concerns regarding the health and safety of the school building. As a result of these new concerns, students and teachers from T. N. Tatem were temporarily relocated to Purvis Primary School, Paget Primary, Heron Bay, and the Hamilton Fire Station while the school was inspected by the Health and Safety Officer, Mr. Titus Gordon, as requested by the PTSA and school staff.

By the end of April, after the temporary relocations, all current T. N. Tatem students were transferred to Sandys Secondary, Dellwood and Whitney Institute Middle Schools, with the T. N. Tatem staff redeployed to the same middle schools. The decision was then made to close T. N. Tatem for the rest of the school year while the reports that date back as far as 2013 were reviewed to decide whether all necessary repairs could be completed to enable the school to reopen in September 2019.

We can report today that the Department of Education Facilities Team, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works, utilised the reports received in 2013, 2017 and 2019 to complete an assessment of the school building to determine the extent of the repairs and maintenance required, as well as the potential costs. I have been advised that repairs will take at least 10 months and cost approximately \$3 million. The length of time and projected cost to effect the necessary repairs have informed my decision not to reopen T. N. Tatem Middle School for the 2019/20 school year.

This decision is critical and was not made lightly, as a safe and healthy learning and teaching environment is paramount for our students and staff at T. N. Tatem Middle School. We are invested in ensuring that this remains at the forefront of all decisions made in regard to our schools.

Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, to date I have met with the T. N. Tatem PTSA Executive, the T. N. Tatem School Principal, the T. N. Tatem Health and Safety Chairperson, T. N. Tatem staff, and the parents of current T. N. Tatem students to inform them of my decision. I have also corresponded with the parents of current P6 students who have applied to attend T. N. Tatem in the next school year. It was critical to meet with school staff and the parents of T. N. Tatem students, to listen and obtain feedback as we discuss next steps, before making this Ministerial Statement. My goal is to maintain a transparent and collaborative approach with all stakeholders in the best interest of our children and staff.

Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, the Ministry and the reports which date back to 2013 have confirmed the issues with the school and also, sadly, confirmed the failure of the previous Administration to address these concerns when given the opportunity during the school closure in 2016. These are the very same issues that have brought us to the place we are today—a place in which our teachers feel as if their opinions do not matter; and this should never happen. I wish to commend the teachers and the parents for standing up for their students and for themselves.

Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, moving forward, we are in the process of reallocating the students who would have been admitted to T. N. Tatem as M1 students for the next academic year, as well as talking to current parents of T. N. Tatem students about their current school placements. The Ministry of Education will also

do all we can to assist our parents and students to ensure that their learning experience during the next school year is as productive as possible. Additionally, parents will be provided with vouchers, as necessary, to mitigate the pressure of having to buy new uniforms for the new school that the students will be attending.

In regard to the future of T. N. Tatem, this decision to close is, at the moment, applicable to the upcoming school year only. As we move forward with our plans to reform education and phase out middle schools, the outcome of those discussions will frame the decision-making process on the future of T. N. Tatem. At this point, I cannot say what will happen with the school beyond the upcoming school year of 2019/20. We will continue to engage with the staff, students and parents of our community so that safety, health and high-quality education are central to every decision we make on behalf of our staff and students.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Minister who has a Statement down this morning is the Minister of Works.

Minister Burch, would you like to present your Statement?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Good morning.

RAILWAY TRAIL AND GIBBETS ISLAND

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I rise this morning to report on developments surrounding a portion of the [Railway Trail and Gibbets Island Beach](#), more commonly referred to as Police Beach, located in Smith's Parish at the Flatts Inlet.

A portion of the Railway Trail was leased to a private trust in June 1998, for 21 years, to the 31st of May 2019, to provide access to privately owned land off of the Railway Trail. Mr. Speaker, the grant of this lease effectively blocked access to that entire portion of the Railway Trail from the general public, who cannot access it without traversing land that is now privately held.

Mr. Speaker, Gibbet is a beautiful island off of the Railway Trail that now belongs to a private trust. The beach, although not accessible to the general public by land, one can see [the island and] its wonderful, tiny beaches from the North Shore. Gibbets Island also is, unfortunately, known as the Gallows Island due its dark history. There in the 1600s and early 1700s, executions were held in full public view. That was the time when slavery was highly prevalent in Bermuda. A pole still seen there is sometimes wrongly identified as being part of the Gallows. It is

actually an earlier version of a navigation light for passing ships.

One of the more prominent executions held there was in 1681 when a slave named Indian John from New England was executed. He apparently tried to escape, lit the owner's house on fire and wanted to kill all members of his family. After his execution, his body was left hanging from the gallows for days after. Such a gruesome practice of the public display of executed bodies was meant to serve as a warning to other slaves who contemplated rebelling or escaping.

Mr. Speaker, from our research, the name Police Beach is derived from a 1977 agreement between the Bermuda Police Force, as it was then known, and the private landowner to allow policemen almost exclusive access to the beach. In practical terms, that meant white policemen only. That agreement formally ended in 1992.

Mr. Speaker, Gibbet Island is now part of the African Diaspora Heritage Trail and bears the dark historical marks of slavery in these Islands. The Railway Trail in Smith's Parish passes through this area and into the Flatts Inlet. There used to be a railway bridge there that the train used to reach Shelly Bay and beyond, and plans are afoot to replace it.

Mr. Speaker, with that background of both the trail and the beach, I have decided to take a number of actions. At midnight tonight, the 31st of May 2019, at the expiry of the current Railway Trail lease, it will not be renewed. And thus, from tomorrow, visitors and locals alike will regain unfettered access to that portion of the Railway Trail that has been denied for the last 21 years.

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: The former leaseholder, like any other member of the public, will still be able to access their property from the trail.

With regard to the beach, Mr. Speaker, the Railway Trail currently dissects the land that people refer to as Police Beach. That land on either side is still under private ownership. While the beach is public from the high-water mark, it is important that land access for the general public is provided. Presently, the beach cannot be accessed from the Railway Trail without traversing private land, permission for which in recent times has been denied.

Mr. Speaker, in the first instance, the Ministry will begin discussions with the owners of land to the North Eastern side of the Railway Trail to gauge their interest in selling it. Should that route be unsuccessful, the Government will pursue ownership under the terms of the Acquisition of Land Act 1970, specifically the provisions for compulsory purchase contained therein.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to acknowledge our past—all of it. But when the opportunity arises even in a very small way to take steps to correct past

injustices, we must. It is never too late to do the right thing, and I believe we are doing so in this case.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Statement this morning on the Order Paper is that in the name of Minister Furbert.

Minister, would you like to present your Statement?

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

The Speaker: Go right ahead.

EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to provide this Honourable House with the outcome of work undertaken by the [Efficiency Committee](#).

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall that, in March 2018, the Premier and Minister of Finance appointed the Efficiency Committee under the authority of Section 61(4) of the Bermuda Constitution. This committee met 32 times between the dates of 13 March 2018 and 31 March 2019. Its purpose and remit were to review the functioning of all government departments to recommend improvements in the efficiency of operations. This provided an extensive scope for the committee to structure its approach.

Mr. Speaker, the committee consisted of the following individuals: yours truly, Wayne Furbert; Ms. Cherie-lynn Whitter, Permanent Secretary of Government Reform; Ms. Tina Tucker, Director of Budget; Ms. Ianthia Fox, Senior Management Consultant; Edward Ball, Jr., BPSU representative; Glenn Simmons, BIU representative; Senator James S. Jardine, JP; Mr. Richard James; and Karamoko Darrell-Dickens, Bermuda IT representative at that time.

Mr. Speaker, the committee determined to focus on those areas where the greatest value could be achieved. Its work included reviews of the following: the Office of the Tax Commissioner, Registrar of Companies, Social Insurance, and the Office of Project Management and Procurement; overtime and wages in various departments, boards and committees; and cross-ministry expenditure on materials and supplies, to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, at the Office of the Tax Commissioner [OTC], the department charged with administering the collection of the taxes and undertaking duties in accordance with legislative requirements, the committee observed significant deficiencies in the area of the adjudication of stamp duty, collection, staffing levels, as well as IT infrastructure. The committee identified processing deficiencies that had resulted in \$354,972 worth of expired, uncashed cheques. One

cheque dated as far back as 2006. Further, “unadjudicated” stamp duty on some 1,590 property conveying files highlighted a huge backlog of work, with the resulting loss in significant amounts of revenue for the Bermuda Government, representing in the region of \$8 million. What is more, some 318 files dated as far back as 2013.

Mr. Speaker with the committee’s intervention, I am pleased to report that the OTC has now recovered a total of \$315,578 of the \$354,972 expired cheques. Further, of the \$8 million of unadjudicated stamps, the OTC has now received \$3,859,731 in cash, and a further \$2,951,238 has been billed but not yet collected.

Mr. Speaker, Parliament should be aware that the Efficiency Committee identified a significant shortage of staff due to the hiring freeze of the former Government. This had a significant impact on auditing businesses to ensure that they were paying payroll tax and collecting accounts receivable.

Following a series of meetings with the Tax Commissioner and his management team, which included the review of extensive data points, the committee advanced recommendations that, to date, have resulted in the addition of four temporary resources and the collection of over \$3 million of old debt.

Mr. Speaker, the support of the Efficiency Committee to the Office of the Tax Commissioner has resulted in the significant strengthening of administrative processes relative to the adjudication and collection of taxes, with that office now in a position to complete a full review of its systems requirements and take the necessary steps to maximise efficiency through the further automation of processes. As a result of the committee recommendations, the OTC will now recoup about \$800,000 paid in credit card processing fees, which has historically been paid out of the Consolidated Fund. Mr. Speaker, the committee’s work at the Office of the Tax Commissioner alone has had a multi-million dollar impact on the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. Speaker, at the Office of Social Insurance, the committee reviewed, in consultation with the director, the matter of outstanding accounts receivable for Social Insurance. As at November 2018, this amounted to \$44 million, of which, at that time, some \$28 million was over 120 days old. The committee has advanced a raft of recommendations to address compliance, collection and IT infrastructure issues at the Office of Social Insurance to arrest this long-outstanding debt collection issue. The committee highlighted the synergy between the Pension Commission and the Social Insurance Department, and have advanced a recommendation that could result in a joint board to oversee both, as there could be some cost savings in doing this.

Mr. Speaker, the Efficiency Committee worked with the Department of Immigration, other relevant government departments, the Chamber of

Commerce Real Estate Division and a representative from the local legal fraternity to review the processing of alien licences for the purchase of Bermuda property. It had long been advanced that extended processing delays negatively affected sales and, as a consequence, potential buyers had lost interest and were terminating purchases. The processing impediments represented a loss of revenue to the government.

Mr. Speaker, based on recommendations from the Efficiency Committee, steps have now been taken to automate the circulation of alien licence files within the government, with a view to considerably reducing the processing time for properly executed submissions. Further discussions with realtors led to a more progressive way of calculating leases, by which government will now receive millions of dollars of additional revenue.

Mr. Speaker, other Efficiency Committee recommendations related to procurement of material and supplies have reignited the drive towards framework agreements for the government, and work is currently in channel via the Office of Project Management and Procurement to consolidate government's buying power across a number of areas. It is expected that the Office of Project Management and Procurement will complete an evaluation of the purchasing of goods and services throughout government. The office will then make recommendations for cost savings to secure the best price, and further, to evaluate and implement short-, medium- and long- term goals and opportunities for cost savings.

Mr. Speaker, the committee made 93 recommendations covering a wide range of departments. These included 24 recommendations for immediate change and 69 recommendations for medium- to long-term changes. Mr. Speaker, the cost to the taxpayer for the work of the Efficiency Committee was [approximately] \$130,000. However, with the improvement in efficiency and better controls, the committee was able to obtain revenue for the taxpayer of over \$12 million, a return of investment of over 9,130 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the committee remains grateful for the candour and keenness shown by the public officers with whom we met. All expressed an appreciation for the support of the committee in advancing collaborative recommendations to address long-outstanding issues.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank those members of the Efficiency Committee for their time and efforts in this venture. Particularly, I would like to recognise and thank Senator James Jardine and Mr. Richard James, who did extra work on the side. Their contribution was valuable. Their advice was very much appreciated.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

There are no more Statements. We will move on.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: Ministers, we have questions this morning for the Statements that were read. And we will start with the Minister of Education.

Minister, you have three Members who have indicated that they have questions for you this morning. And we will start with the Opposition Leader.

Opposition Leader, would you like to present your questions?

QUESTION 1: UPDATE ON T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

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

On page 2, the Honourable Minister states, "In October of 2018, scheduled health and safety inspections were conducted at T. N. Tatem Middle School. The report showed that the school was safe for occupation except for one room, which was closed in order to have necessary remediation works carried out."

Just curious—were those works actually carried out concerning that particular room?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Yes. The works were underway at the time that the school was closed.

The Speaker: Supplementary or new question?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, no—supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary? Yes, continue.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. In consideration of the work actually having taken place, I guess what I was curious about was, as the Honourable Minister also states on page 3 that it is approximately \$3 million for the works to be done to get it, I guess, habitable back again, can the Honourable Minister give us an idea of the additional work, outside of this room, in order to get it up to par? It seems like quite a bit of money in order to get it back up to par. Can he give us a better idea of what else needs to be done?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for that question.

Mr. Speaker, I asked our facilities departments to look at the school and come back with a thought to repair the entire school to a point where it was completely safe for occupancy. Some of those works included replacement of the roof, replacement of floors, electrical work, replacement of HVAC systems, some plumbing work that needs to be done for leaky pipes, and all that sort. It was an extensive list that was given, but at this point, it was an approximate list of what needed to be done. And it did list some of those items.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, supplementary.

The Speaker: Second supplementary. Go ahead.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Taking that into consideration, I guess what I wanted to understand then, coming up with this \$3 million figure, is the Minister still receiving bids for this work?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. The work has not gone out for bid. As I stated, I asked the Ministry of Public Works to give a cost estimate of what it would take to repair the work.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you.

The Speaker: Further question? No? Okay.

Minister, the next Member who has questions for you is the Member from constituency 23.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question now?

QUESTION 1: UPDATE ON T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

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

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister: His Statement, on page 1, indicates that in December 2016, the school was closed for mould issues. Reports submitted in December 2017 included various recommendations concerning how negatively impacted the school would be without further remediation being carried out.

The question is, Why, if this report was in December 2017, is the Minister now referring back to what the cost was likely to be in February of 2017 when, in fact, in December 2017 his Government was in charge?

The Speaker: Thank you, Member. Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I thank that Member for pointing that out. That is actually a typo. That should say January 2017, not December 2017.

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I have a supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary. Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Is the Minister in a position to actually submit that report that was done, as he said, in January of 2017? Is that report available here at the House, or is that already in the public record?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my Statement, we want to be as transparent as possible. All of these reports have been made part of the public record. They have been issued to the parents and to the PTA and to the teachers at T. N. Tatem. And I have released them during various press statements I have made concerning T. N. Tatem, as well.

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

The Speaker: Yes. Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: A new question.

The Speaker: New question.

QUESTION 2: UPDATE ON T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The question is, Given that the Minister had access to these various reports, what follow-up was done to . . . Since it was clear to the Minister that nothing had been done based on the report to which he referred, which we now realise that the date was wrong, what follow-up did he do, given that he had the information, to make sure that it did not wait until the school was almost irreparably damaged in order to decide that something else needed to be done?

The Speaker: Thank you. Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Again, thanks for that question.

Mr. Speaker, the report that the Honourable Member references, the January 2017 report, was not brought to our attention until we got to the point of having to close the school when I requested all previous reports. The assumption was always that if a report was done the work had to have been carried out and the school was safe to occupy.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Member, you have a supplementary behind you. We will take the supplementary from the Honourable Member from constituency 19.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister: Recognising that we have technical officers, civil servants whose job it is to keep the Ministers informed, did the Minister ascertain why this information which is so critical to this problem was not brought to his attention by any of his technical or public PSs?

The Speaker: Minister.

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

I have already raised that with the technical officers as to why the report had not been forwarded to me when we were looking at the issues. And that has been addressed in house.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes.

Can the Minister give us some indication as to what the outcome of . . . he says it is being addressed. What is the outcome? Because it seems to me to be not just untenable, but inexcusable, to have reports that are necessary for the safety of our children that are not shared in the particular areas where something could be done. What exactly is being done? What can the Minister share?

The Speaker: Minister, she is still talking.
Now you can stand.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Again, thank you for that question.

Actually, I take that . . . and actually I am grateful to that Member for supplying that question,

because it lent itself to our trying to figure out what happened when the school was closed in 2016. A report was submitted nearly a month later. But the actions were not actioned on at that point by the current Administration. This Administration has made it very clear that reports of this nature are not to be put on shelves. And if issues do come up like this, we have to look back into previous reports and see what was and was not done prior to just doing another report and moving forward with that.

So, the answer to that Member's question is that I have directed my technical staff to not withhold any report of this nature in the future as we move forward with any of our schools.

The Speaker: Thank you.

New question? Third question. Yes.

QUESTION 3: UPDATE ON T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. My third question is, the Minister has indicated in his Statement, at the bottom of page 4, concerning the closure of the school, that they really have no clue what is going to happen to the school beyond . . . between 2019 and 2020. If the Minister has no clue as to what is going to happen with the school, is the Minister satisfied that, in spending approximately \$3 million to remediate the school, it is going to be money well spent?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank you, Member, for that question.

Mr. Speaker, it is currently in the public domain via the press statement that was released yesterday at the press conference I had yesterday, and the conversations I have had with the teachers and with the students. We, this Government, are in the process of having a holistic look at our school system from preschool through high school as we move forward with school reformation and the phasing out of middle schools. That conversation is currently in place. And those conversations will invariably include T. N. Tatem.

As we have not completed those conversations, this is the sole reason I have stated that we cannot state what will happen with T. N. Tatem beyond the next school year. Once those conversations have concluded and we have done the appropriate consultation with all of the stakeholders who need to be consulted with, a decision will be made and put forth to the public.

What I want to make crystal clear is that the school will not be open for the next academic year. Beyond that, what will happen with the school will de-

pend on the outcome of the current discussions around school reformation and the phasing out of middle schools.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

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

Mr. Speaker, in his response, the Minister mentioned a press conference that he held yesterday on this particular topic. Is the Minister suggesting that this Parliament ought to be operating based on ministerial conferences that he gives in the public domain before coming to this Honourable House?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: The answer to that question simply is no, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Just a supplementary for clarity, Mr. Speaker.

If the answer is no, then why would the Minister refer to the fact that he held a conference yesterday?

The information was discussed in the conference that he held *yesterday*, and somehow, we as parliamentarians *today*, in the absence of specifics in his Statement, are meant to know what he said in his Ministerial Statement [*sic*]?

[*Inaudible interjections*]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Sorry, in his press conference.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Was that a question or a statement?

The Speaker: I was waiting for the . . .

[*Crosstalk*]

The Speaker: Your question was whether there was information in today's Statement that was omitted from yesterday, MP?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No. The question today is . . . the Minister indicated that information was given in his press conference yesterday. My question

was . . . The Minister said, No, Parliament is not meant to be operating based on his ministerial conferences, any press conferences that he has given. The question that I have resulting from that is, If we are not operating based on *ex post facto* information from yesterday's press conference, would the Minister not have deemed it appropriate to at least start by saying, *Yesterday, in my press conference, I declared X, Y, Z.* Because this is not doing it.

The Speaker: It was more . . . You are trying to ask the Minister that you feel the Statement should have been presented here with more of yesterday's details. We are trying to get to what your real question is so he has something to respond to.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: My question is, for clarity, why would not the Minister have come to this Honourable House initially to advise us, who have oversight of what happens in the public domain and the concerns that we have for our children . . . why would the Minister not have come to this Honourable House rather than to tell us to listen to his press conference yesterday to figure out what is going on?

The Speaker: The question here is, Is the content of the two the same? If the content of today's Statement is the same content of yesterday, then he is using the opportunity today to inform the House.

[*Inaudible interjections*]

The Speaker: Well, well, well, well . . . Let us not go to that level. Let us not go there. Let us not go there. We do not want to start that type of tone.

We are going to move on. The next question, Minister, for you is from the Member from constituency 8.

Member.

QUESTION 1: UPDATE ON T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: On the works and engineering side, my question to the Minister is this: A few weeks ago, the Premier indicated that renovations would cost approximately \$1 million. Now the Minister of Education said the renovation cost will like around \$3 million. Can he substantiate the difference?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak for the Premier, who is not here. I believe what the Honourable Member is talking about was the Premier's Question Period, when he referenced T. N. Tatem. And I recall the information that I gave him, that the approximate cost was \$3 million. If he said \$1 million, that would have been a mistake.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Just a slip of the tongue.

The Speaker: Supplementary or a new question?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Second question.

The Speaker: Second question.

QUESTION 2: UPDATE ON T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Given that T. N. Tatem Middle School will not be open in September, what plans does the Minister have in place for the teachers and the principal?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to my Statement, where I said, and I quote from the Statement, “moving forward, we are in the process of reallocating the students who would have been admitted to T. N. Tatem as M1 students for the next academic year, as well as talking to current parents of T. N. Tatem students about their current school placements.” That was contained in the Statement.

We are discussing with the parents about school placements. Once we know where our children will land, discussions will be had with the teachers about which schools they will be reallocated to. Those discussions have already started taking place with the teachers and the parents of the students.

The Speaker: Thank you.

That is it.

Supplementary? We have a supplementary from the Opposition Whip.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Yes, please.

Given the school closure for a year, what assurances from the Works and Engineering perspective do we have that, after this building has been closed for a year for remediation, that we will not have further issues? What assurances do we have that there will not be another layer of maintenance issues after this set?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I am trying my best to understand the question. Because I do not have a crystal ball that can tell the future. However, what I did state is that we have a cost estimate of what needs to be done and a time [estimate] of what needs to be done. What will happen is, as I explained

earlier as we talk about the reformation of our school system and the phasing out of middle schools, it will be at that point a decision will be made on what will happen with T. N. Tatem. So, we are not at a point where we can say, *Yes, it's going to be repaired*, or we are going to do something else with the building.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Yes, supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: So, if \$3 million is going to be invested in a building to do remediation—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Just a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: It might be, it might be.

The Speaker: I do not think you can take a point of order on this. We will let the Member finish her question.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: So, if \$3 million *might be* invested in this building for remediation, and there is no assurance that we will not have further maintenance issues after this \$3 million is done, and then on top of it, after consultations, this building may not be used for educational purposes anymore, what would the building be used for if we have invested this money in it and we are not even sure that it is going to fully remediate the issue?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate and try and say it much more clearly. We will not invest any money in the school until we know what we are doing with the building. And until we get to that point, then we will have the conversations of what will be done, what will be invested in the building, what remediation, what rebuilding, what renovations. We will have that total conversation once we have reached that point of what we are going to do with the building as it relates to the entire school system.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Any further supplementaries?

No further supplementaries.

Minister, that is the last of the questions that were put for you this morning.

We now move on to the next Statement, brought by the Minister of Works.

Minister, there is a Member who would like to put a question to you regarding your Statement this morning. And that is the Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: RAILWAY TRAIL AND GIBBETS ISLAND

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

I will start off by saying that this was actually quite good news. On page 2, I guess what I wanted to find out, the Minister speaks, "it is important that land access for the general public is provided." Many of us who have seen and driven by the beach do know that there are gates that are locked in many cases. Can the Minister give us an idea as to whether or not the technical officers have looked at what the public access might look like? Does that mean that maybe those gates, those heavy metal gates, will come down?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, just clarification on that. I am trying to figure out where the access might be.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I believe the gates he is talking about are the traditional parks gates that go on Railway Trails. They will remain in place. What will come down are the Private Property signs. And if you are walking, you can gain access now. And that is what will occur immediately at the expiry of the lease. The current lease is across that entrance. And so, that has been the challenge so far. You have to cross private land in order to get on the Railway Trail itself. So, it made sense to not renew that lease. And the landowner who has that sliver of land at the entrance to the Railway Trail will still have access to their property via the Railway Trail just like anybody else does. But the public will also now be able to utilise that access and not be trespassing on private land.

The Speaker: Thank you.

No further questions? Minister, that closes the questions for yourself. We now move on to the third Statement from this morning, from the Minister of Cabinet.

Minister, you have two Members who have indicated that they have questions for you. The first is the Member from constituency 23.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

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

Mr. Speaker, on page 2 of the Minister's Statement, just the pre-penultimate paragraph, he has indicated that \$8 million of unadjudicated stamps, of that [\$8 million], \$3.8 million has been received, and \$2.9 million has been billed but not yet collected. The question is, when will the additional \$1.189 million be billed? Or has it yet to be identified?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: They are still working on it, to do the assessment.

The Speaker: Okay.
Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I have a new question.

The Speaker: Continue.

QUESTION 2: EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: On page 3 of the Statement, when the Minister speaks of "about \$800,000 paid in credit card processing fees, which has historically been paid out of the Consolidated Fund," I wonder if the Minister is able to advise us, while this is specific to, presumably, things like social insurance, payroll tax and the like, are there any other . . . do these credit card processing fees being charged back to the public extend to any other Ministries?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: This has only to do with payroll tax.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Supplementary? Any further questions?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I guess just a supplementary, for clarity.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Minister indicated that this has nothing to do with any payroll tax.

He just said the credit card processing fees . . . is this just specifically relating to stamp duty?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. This had to do with payroll tax. As you are aware, there are companies out there that pay their payroll tax by credit card. No, I said *payroll tax*.

Again, I did say payroll tax. So, the Government is recovering for the cost of individuals paying their payroll tax by credit cards.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Just a supplementary for clarity, Mr. Speaker. I am just confused. I just said, *Is this relating to payroll tax?* The Minister said, *I'm not talking about payroll tax.* But now he is saying he is talking about payroll tax.

If he could just clarify for me. This \$800,000 is going to be money that will be no longer charged to the Consolidated Fund, that will actually be recouped from people who are paying payroll tax by credit card? I just want to make sure that I am clear.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, as we all are aware—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: There are companies out there that pay their payroll tax by credit card. And the reason why, because you know you can get points on your card for traveling. The Government was losing between \$800,000 to \$1 million a year by individuals doing that. There is no problem with individuals—they can still transfer their money to the Office of the Tax Commissioner by wire transfer, or they can still use a credit card. But they have to cover the cost for that charge.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Just a new question.

The Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION 3: EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Is the Minister aware that people using credit cards are not necessarily [doing so] because they want to collect points, but rather that they may be experiencing cash flow issues?

And a credit card can be repaid on terms. So, it is not necessarily a negative thing. I wonder if the Minister can speak to whether he would anticipate more delinquencies in the payment of tax because people do not have the money and they may not want

to put the additional charges, or they may not want to pay the extra on credit fees? I am just curious.

The Speaker: Minister. Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, most of these companies that were paying payroll tax by credit cards were large companies, millions of dollars of payroll tax, that is, on a yearly basis. They are large companies.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Were there only large companies paying payroll tax? Because, Mr. Speaker, I pay my payroll tax by credit card. Thank you.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about mainly the large companies. But the Government will be recovering this payroll tax. The individual Member who just spoke just now, she could transfer by wire if she wants to and save an 18 per cent monthly credit card charge.

The Speaker: Supplementary? No. Okay.

Honourable Minister, the next Member who has a question for you is the Member from constituency 19.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE REPORT

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister: On page 3, the Minister refers to the outstanding accounts receivable for social insurance, which at November [2018] was \$44.8 million. And he indicated at which time \$28.9 million was over 120 days old. I just wondered if the Minister could indicate to us how much of that money is outstanding since 2017?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Most of it.

The Speaker: Supplementary or new question?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I just want clarity so I can make sure that everybody heard that I said *since 2017*. So, that means that most of that has been out-

standing while the current Government was in the Government. Thank you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Current Government. Thank you.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: The question was, since 2017, which means it would be the current Government, if you said “most of it” as your answer?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Sorry. Let me correct myself, Mr. Speaker. Most of that money that is ageing comes from the former Government.

The Speaker: So, it would be before 2017. That was her question.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I will repeat my question so that the Minister can answer my question.

Could the Minister indicate to us how much of that 120 days is outstanding since 2017?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, the exact amount. But I can tell you the very old amount of ageing is prior to 2017.

The Speaker: Next question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Will the Minister undertake to get the information?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Efficiency Committee is finished. I am not the Minister of Finance.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: Supplementary—.

The Speaker: For clarity, the question was, *Will you undertake to get the information?* Are you denying getting it, or are you passing it on to the other Minister?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. I am saying the Efficiency Committee is finished. The Efficiency Committee is finished, and I do not have the right to that information, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Are you passing it on to the other Minister to get the information?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: All right.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Ah! Ah! Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!

An Hon. Member: She moved! She moved!

The Speaker: I do not think you want to be on that side of the House.

[Laughter]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to get the information for the Honourable Member.

The Speaker: Thank you. Thank you.

Are you good, Member? Member, are you good? Are you good, Member? Are you good? Member, you asked the question. Are you good?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. I am good.

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I have a third question.

The Speaker: Ask your third question.

SUPPLEMENTARY

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

And that is on page 4 of the Minister’s Statement, in which the Minister indicated that the cost to the taxpayer for the work of the Efficiency Committee was approximately \$130,000. The Minister did indicate that two individuals did extra work. But given that the majority of the committee members are government employees, could the Minister give us a breakdown of what constituted the \$130,000 cost that was paid out for the Efficiency Committee’s work?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is easy. I will also . . . I will also be giving a breakdown on the revenue, also. Interesting that you did not ask that question. But the breakdown of the \$130,000, there were members who received an amount of remuneration, I think it was \$2,000, per month. And the Chairman, which was myself, received \$5,000 per month.

An Hon. Member: Wow. Wow.

The Speaker: Thank you.
No further questions?

No further questions. That brings us to a close of the question-and-answer period this morning, and we will move on.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: Would any Member like to speak to that?

I recognise the Deputy Premier.
Deputy Premier, you have the floor.

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

I think it is fitting that we take note, and perhaps this will be for the Honourable House, and send a note of condolences from this Legislature to the Legislature of Jamaica, on the passing of Edward [Phillip George] Seaga, former fifth Prime Minister of Jamaica, longest-serving member in the history of the Jamaica Legislature and clearly a figure of some note in the regional politics. He died a few days ago, clearly a moment of some contemplation for the people of Jamaica.

And although we on this side did not share the same political ideologies or positioning of Mr. Seaga or his Jamaica Labour Party, of which he became the Leader in 1974, we certainly share respect for service to country, service to people, and respect for service to community. And irrespective of the political allegiances of Mr. Seaga, he was a leader of his people. He received the mandate of his people when he ran and when he led his party to victory.

And he is deserving of appropriate tribute from us who consider ourselves a part of the Caribbean family, as well, for his service. And certainly, this Legislature, in our view, should send the appropriate messages to the Legislature of Jamaica and to the Government and people of Jamaica in recognising the passing of clearly a very important political figure in the history of the Island, as he was also one of the architects of their constitutional movement in 1962. And so, clearly an important figure which we recognise for his service to his country, as the fifth Prime Minister and a leader in the Commonwealth and of the Caribbean. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy Premier.

I recognise the Opposition Leader. Honourable Member.

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

I wanted to give congrats to the Community, Culture and Sport Ministry over the May 24th holiday. I must say that it was a wonderful, wonderful celebration. I even had the opportunity to sit with Tinee and a few in an interview outside of Global House. It was a great occasion to celebrate Bermuda Heritage Day. And I just want to send congrats to them and all those who were involved in putting on such a fine event that

we could celebrate. I am sure others will go on to celebrate some of the . . . like [Lamont], who won the race.

What I wanted to talk about was one of the events over the weekend, on Saturday, the 25th, that I had the opportunity to attend. I believe I saw Minister Weeks [there]. I do not see him in the House right now. I did see the Premier, as well. And that was the football game. I am not talking about in Government, but certainly the Honourable Sylvan Richards was there, as well. It was a game between the Bermuda Select [football team] and the Azores Select Team. It was a fantastic match. Quite frankly, in the first half I thought that we were going to give in to about four or five goals. The Azores team had quite a commendable team there. But Bermuda held its own and wound up pulling out a victory there.

So, I just wanted to congratulate both select teams, and congratulate the Vasco da Gama [Club] and . . . I cannot recall the other committee that was involved with the Azores in putting that together. The Honourable Minister Foggo is not here at present; I know she is here in the House. But I just wanted to also commend her for ensuring that we had a wonderful event with that football game. There was a lot of cheering going on. But it was good to see that we could come together in such an event to enjoy a good game of football, and I just want to again congratulate all of those who were involved in ensuring that it was a safe match and that all had an opportunity to enjoy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member Tyrrell.
Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I have two items I would like to give. The first one is on a sad note, the passing of one of my constituents, a Mrs. Ionie Webson, of Lusher Hill.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: I certainly know that she will be sadly missed by her husband, Everton, and children, Christopher and Topaz. Mrs. Webson went through a fairly long, lengthy bit of bad health, which obviously led to her demise. And I think she will be sadly missed, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on a more upbeat note, I would ask that congratulations be sent to a young lady, Janae Armstrong, who recently graduated from Mount Saint Vincent University with a Bachelor of Business, concentrating in HR, Human Resource. And she got several write-ups in many outlets. And one of them that I read particularly described Ms. Armstrong as a "fearless female." She had this comment, Mr. Speak-

er, if you do not mind if I quote the comments, so I have her words.

The Speaker: Continue.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: She said, "Meeting the requirements to graduate from university is a daunting task within itself. Imagine having to balance working a full-time job and being a single mother of four!" Ms. Armstrong really needs to be congratulated. As a mature student, having previously obtained an associate's degree from the Bermuda College, [she] did not feel that that was enough for her and applied for a Mature Student Award from the Ministry of Education to start her programme at Mount Saint Vincent. And she did it by virtual—she did virtual classes, which obviously is not easy in itself. So, basically, her comments—it was tough going for her, but certainly well deserved.

So, I personally congratulate her and again ask that congratulations be sent from this Honourable House. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that this Honourable House join me in sending congratulations to our Pool [players] team, who have just finished competing in the Valley National 8-Ball Championships in Las Vegas. And while they left here with the intent that they would finish in the main bracket, they actually ended up 33rd in the tournament, but at the top of the losers bracket, having come 33rd in the tournament out of a total of 300 teams.

I can just mention the names of the players: Gary Bascome, Kino Zuill, Matt Garrett, Clarkie Trott, and I declare an interest, my older son, Trevor Mouchette, who is actually the President of the Pool Association and has pushed to see excellence in our players in going over to compete at Valley National Championship.

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting that, in speaking with my son, he said, *I was locked out of the first two games with table runs.* And I said to him, *When somebody is playing pool against you and they run the table, there is nothing you can do. You don't get the opportunity to make a shot.*

An Hon. Member: You can sneeze.

[Laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member says, *You can sneeze.* That is probably all you can do.

But I think that for our players to go over to Vegas on a very well-organised tournament and a very well-organised local involvement, to ensure that our players are up to marks with their preparation, I think that they acquitted themselves well. I certainly hope that in future they will come through the main draw and come back in the money. They did get some money for their efforts. But it was very interesting to be able to hear the level of competition against which they had to face and to know that they still held their own and acquitted themselves well and did Bermuda proud.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2. Honourable Member Swan, you have the floor.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And good morning.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the condolences going to the Government and the people of Jamaica on the passing of Mr. Seaga, whom my family have connections with in Jamaica, and recognise that, outside of politics, he was very much involved in the music industry and had a very close connection with the evolution and development of ska music. And I would just like to be associated with the comments made by the Deputy Leader.

On a sad note also, [condolences to] the family of Joan Cooper Wade, a constituent from Wellington Lane. She leaves to mourn her son, Kim, my good friend. And the Honourable MP Renee Ming would like to be associated with that, and I am sure Minister Foggo, as well.

And also, Mr. Irvin Hayward, the long-time proprietor of the St. George's Esso Station and a former Corporation of St. George's alderman and many other committees.

Those two families are well-known families. The Swainson and Hayward families, and we will be mourning their passing.

Mr. Speaker, on May 24th, I want to commend the Minister and the department for putting on another good Bermuda Day. And I also join in in congratulating the winners. But I also want to recognise that it was the 40th anniversary of Bermuda Day, which was born out of the Pitt Report as a consequence of a very sad period in Bermuda's history that required the Pitt Report. And I thank a former director of that department and human affairs, Mr. Roger Robinson, who continues to write in the UK about the untold stories that impact the African community. And he actually

wrote a very important piece about this history of which he was prepared to call in and share on the radio.

And I am very grateful that, at his advanced age, he is still making a contribution to society on the issues that matter a great deal to him. So, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 4. Honourable Member Furbert, you have the floor.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to send out [condolences] to [the family of] one of my constituents, Mr. Junior "Pop" Swan, who has left us. Pop Swan was a resident of Easter Lily nursing facility, and he will be missed greatly. He was one who would often engage with the public, standing up for their rights. And he was often in talks with me. And so, Pops will be missed dearly.

I also just wanted to give congratulations. I believe someone has mentioned it already, but I join in congratulations for all of the Bermuda Day Half-Marathon Derby participants, as well as the winners, Lamont Marshall, and one of my fellow colleagues, occupational therapist, Rose-Anna Hoey, both who had won the Bermuda Half-Day Marathon. So, congratulations to them.

I also wanted to give congratulations to the organisers and executors of the Relay for Life programme that occurred a couple of Fridays ago. There is a lot of work that goes into planning that event. All the people who participated and the planners, including the Bermuda Cancer & Health Centre, congratulating them again for a job well done and going forth with a cause for promoting proper cancer care and detection. So, we would just like to continue to congratulate them and support them with their ongoing efforts for cancer care and awareness in Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 8. Honourable Member Simons.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to send congratulatory remarks to Ms. Maude Bassett. She celebrated her 100th birthday. And I wish her all the best. I have a special affinity for her, being that my family is from Somerset and the fact that she is a retired teacher.

The Speaker: Yes. She is from Somerset. She is from Somerset originally.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: She was the Deputy Principal at Sandys Primary School, West End and Boaz Island.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: She also taught in the UK. So, I would like to congratulate her for her 100th anniversary and salute her for her contributions to education.

While on education, I would like to also congratulate Shelly Grace of Warwick Academy. She has been teaching for 40 years. That is a monumental period to be in the profession. She teaches health and wellness, and that is important to our people.

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Oh! Not yours. Continue.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I would like to also send condolences to the family of the late Robert Hedges. He was instrumental in forming a reinsurance brokerage company in the 1970s. He hired a number of Bermudians. He has two athletic sons, Trevor and . . . I forget his other son's name. But he made the reinsurance brokerage industry what it is today. He went about his work quietly. He was always a gentleman, and I wish his family my deepest thoughts and prayers, and especially to Jennifer, his wife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Any further Members wish to give condolences or congratulations?

Member from constituency 1.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I like that bright, bright colour you are wearing this morning.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Happy St. George's Day to you today.

The Speaker: Good morning to you, as well.

Mrs. Renee Ming: I rise today on my feet to, first of all, give happy birthday congratulations to Ms. Ida Alice Lodge. She celebrated her 100th birthday on Monday, May 27th. Ms. Lodge is from the Top Square area, which is where I moved to when I was 12. She is definitely one of the few—I call her Granny Lodge. Not a family member, but definitely I would say that she would be part of my family. She used to watch out for all of the children in my neighbourhood. I am really

good friends with her grandchildren. And so, we were happy that she was able to see, experience and live out her 100th birthday. I would like to associate MP Kim Swan with that, and also the Deputy Leader, who attended her birthday party with me, as well.

And also, just a big shout-out and a thank you to the RAA Seniors [Activity] Club. They hosted a seniors bingo a few weeks ago. And I could tell you that I learned a lot about bingo on that day. I even learned how serious bingo can be. And I would also like to give a special shout-out to Aunt Elsie Crane Shaw, who takes the time out, even at her tender young age, to make sure that there were loads and loads of prizes there and that the bingo games ran smoothly. Because she was not about to have any nonsense at the game. And I would like to associate MP Swan with that, as well.

I believe that events like this are critically important in our communities. And I look forward to attending many more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You are welcome.

We recognise now Minister Burch.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the House send congratulations to the newly ordained Reverend Ralph David Stuart Trott II, who was ordained at St. Matthew AME Church last week Saturday in Philadelphia. Mr. Speaker, Reverend Ralph, as he has decided to title himself, is affiliated with St. Paul AME Church in Bermuda. A decade ago, he as a summer student worked in the Ministry of Public Works. And I think it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, if you meet Ralph, you are never going to forget him. He is bigger, and his spirit is bigger than life. But it is a testament to his parents, as well, Mr. Speaker, because he happens to be the brother of one Carmen Trott—

The Speaker: Okay.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —who was honoured by this House last week. And I had the privilege of being in Philadelphia to attend the ordination, without his knowledge. That is called an ambush, Mr. Speaker, which I am pretty good at these days.

[Laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And he just could not believe that I . . . well, I did not travel just for that. But I did find out where it was.

What is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that his sister feels a little put out, too, because I got all of the information from her. And she did not realise that I was going to use it to my own advantage to not only ambush him, but also to participate in what was a glorious celebration last week Saturday in Philadelphia. So, I would ask that warmest congratulations be sent

to Reverend Ralph. I think that he is going to make a difference in our community, not only in St. Paul, but in the wider context, as well. And I would ask that MP Gordon-Pamplin be associated with those remarks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

We recognise the Honourable Minister.

You have my attention.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the House, and good morning to my fellow Bermudians.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to just make—this being the last day of Heritage Month—to offer congrats for all of the hard work that has been done in celebration of Heritage Month. We had a great parade. We saw the discussion of the Pitt Report. We have seen many things happening this month, the derby, all of this to celebrate the theme of heritage, which was Bermudian excellence.

And so, it would be remiss of me if I did not say a hearty thank you to the Department of Community and Culture for their herculean efforts to ensure that this Heritage Month did not go by without paying tribute to all of those who are deserving of tribute, and for not recognising the excellence that was displayed in many of the activities that did take place. And so, I thought that I would get up and say a hearty congratulations for work well done. And I also want to say, as this is the last few days of the director's tenure in government, I want to wish her well as she goes on to do other things.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 11. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, colleagues.

I want to give condolences to the family of my constituent, Mr. Hubert Franks. He used to be a bus driver years ago.

Also, I would like to give congratulations to the PTA and staff of Elliott School, Hermitage Road, Devonshire, who put on a wonderful spring fair a couple of weeks ago. I also want to associate with the congratulations given to Mr. Lamont Marshall, of Valley Heights, Devonshire, for sweeping the floor on Heritage Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Oh, Mr. Speaker, can I leave to go to my constituent's funeral?

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Thank you.

The Speaker: We will excuse you for a moment, momentarily. How is that? As long as you do not take all day.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Would any other Member wish to speak?

No other Member.

We will now move on.

Minister, do you have some comments you would like to make?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I sure do, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: You almost missed it.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I know that, because I saw you glance to the left. And I figured I would take the opportunity.

The Speaker: Minister, you have got your three minutes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not need that long.

I rise, Mr. Speaker, this morning. I would like to send out congratulations to our former Premier, the Honourable Dr. Ewart Brown, and his wife, Wanda Henton Brown, who celebrate their anniversary today. I would like [to send] a special congratulations to his wife for putting up with him all of these years.

Thank you very much.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: You associated the whole House with that?

[Laughter and crosstalk]

The Speaker: Real quickly, real quickly, real quickly. Premier, I see you are on your feet.

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

Mr. Speaker, this morning I would like to ask that the Honourable House send condolences to the family and friends of my constituent, Mr. John Arthur Murray Kennedy, affectionately known as "Pilot," from 13 Table Rock Avenue. And I will associate the entire House with those condolences. I do hope, of course, that his loved ones find comfort, and may he rest in peace.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that there were congratulations that were given not only for the events of Bermuda Day last [week], but also on the recent exploits of our National Football Team. And I just wanted to be associated with those particular remarks.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I may be associated as well, as I am unsure if this was given. But I do want to send a happy birthday wish and ask the House to send a happy birthday wish—it should not just be, I think, Her Majesty—for two lovely ladies who turned 100 this past week. And, of course, that is Ms. Maude Bassett and also Ms. Ida Lodge who celebrated their 100th birthdays. I am uncertain if they were recognised.

The Speaker: We will associate you with the earlier comments. Both have been done.

Hon. E. David Burt: But I would like to ask that I be associated with those particular remarks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Is there any other Member who wants to rise to their feet at this last minute?

No other Members.

We will now move on to the next order on the [Order] Paper today.

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

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Speaker: There are two Bills to be introduced by Government Ministers this morning. The first is in the name of the Premier.

Premier.

FIRST READING

BERMUDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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

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: The Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Minister of Finance, would you like to present the second Bill?

FIRST READING

GOVERNMENT LOANS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill which, according to section 36(3) of the Bermuda Constitution, requires the Governor's recommendation, so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Government Loans Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

OPPOSITION BILLS

The Speaker: There are none.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

The Speaker: There are none.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The Speaker: There is one motion to be tabled this morning, in the name of the Minister for Cabinet. Minister.

MOTION

CONSOLIDATED OVERALL REPORT OF THE EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE, DATED APRIL 2019

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

I give notice that I propose to move the following motion at the next day of meeting:

That this Honourable House take note of the Consolidated Overall Report of the Efficiency Committee, dated April 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: Thank you.

Members, that now moves us on to the Orders of the Day. And I understand that the agreement is that we will do Order No. 3, and that is the second reading of the Premier, Ministers and Opposition

Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, in the name of the Premier.

Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 be now read a second time.

The Speaker: Continue.

BILL

SECOND READING

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFF ACT 2019

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

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before this Honourable House is the Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall that when this Bill was tabled, I gave a Ministerial Statement to this Honourable House setting out the rationale for the Bill. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members who have served as Ministers will know that there is very often a need to have the benefit of political or expert advice. The public service is an impartial entity serving Ministers and the Government of the day, and it is important that the impartiality of the public service be maintained.

The ability of Premiers and Opposition Leaders to appoint personal staff has been enshrined in law since 1983, while the advent of the Ministerial Code of Conduct after the 1998 general election has made provisions for Ministers to engage advisors and consultant experts. Though this permission has been in existence since after the 1998 election, it has not been subject to any legal underpinnings.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill of 2019 replaces the 1983 Act and now includes provisions modelled on the section 9.1 of the Ministerial Code of Conduct (advisors and consultants), to permit Ministers, subject to the written approval of the Premier, to appoint a personal staff consisting of one or two persons. Mr. Speaker, the Bill ensures that those appointments are not part of the public service, but affords them the appropriate scope to properly advise Ministers by providing access to confidential information.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that this Bill will now require the Premier to make an annual report to the Legislature, specifying details of all persons appointed during the previous calendar year. This, of course, Mr. Speaker, will create a new level of transparency inside of this particular regard, removing, I would say, the *gotcha politics* of asking Parliamentary Questions on a regular basis. It will now be

for this House to learn on an annual basis who has been appointed to these particular roles.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to also advise Honourable Members that a code of conduct for special advisors has been prepared, and the final draft will be made available to the public.

Mr. Speaker, as I commend this Bill for consideration to the House, I close this overview of the Bill in terms similar to my Statement earlier this month. And I quote, Mr. Speaker, that “Bermuda is a complex society with a delicate economy, and is facing equally complex issues around economic diversification, social change and building a fairer society. We must ensure that Ministers . . . can call upon the expertise and support” (more importantly) “required to properly discharge their responsibilities as demanded by the modern era of public service.”

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the comments of other Members. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member, Mr. Premier.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Leader of the Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Premier for bringing this to the House and tabling this Bill..

I found it interesting as I went through the Bill, understanding that much of the procedure that is outlined already exists, outside of the annual reporting, per se, and maybe the 30 days of remuneration that we will talk about as we go through it here.

But at the end of the day, this is something that has been in place. This has been a code that Ministers and Premiers have lived by. I understand, as the Premier has stated, this kind of *gotcha* type of political banter that goes back and forth as to really who is being hired. And I also recall, just recently, with the last appointment by this Government with its consultants or personal staff (whatever you wish to call them), that it was important that we dispel . . . and I am attempting to be very clear here. It was important to dispel some of the rumours that were out there. You know, the minute that a Government, and not just to say this Government, but when we were Government, the minute that you hired someone, there is always someone who has something to say. There is always someone who is going to bring up or question the appointment.

And I felt that the appointments had been made, Mr. Speaker, without giving the qualifications. And giving those qualifications of these particular individuals would have gone a long way to dispelling many of the rumours. And so, hence, I understand why we want to do the reporting. I am a bit concerned, and I hope that we will get clarification as we go through this particular Bill in the committee that, with

this annual report, it does seem to be retro. In my estimation, I think that when we make these appointments, quite frankly, these appointments should be made in a statement to the public: *This is who we are bringing on at this particular time.*

I note with interest also that, you know, the Bill takes into consideration the Premier’s, the Ministers’ and the Opposition Leader’s personal staff. Maybe this might be a time—and [this might be] a bit cheeky—where we look for a little bit more money in the Opposition’s office, because certainly, with what we do have, it is difficult. And the Premier has been in that position in the Opposition office. Maybe it is time to start looking at the total allotment for the Opposition’s office.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, again, that I am still trying to understand exactly why this has to be a Bill, I mean, because the procedures are already in place. And I kind of think I heard the Premier give some sort of an answer as to why—because of the rumours. But that certainly, as I said already, could be dealt with by ensuring that when these appointments are made, that they are being given to the public at the time by the Minister or by the Premier or even by the Opposition office to announce that it has made this appointment.

Certainly, doing it at the end of the year will create all kinds of confusion and [will raise] questions as to the potential of bringing someone on and then they are gone within two months or gone within three months. And then you go and bring on someone else . . . all of that will be saved to the end of the year for questions, which I feel is probably not the best, prudent way to go about this.

Now, the Premier made the Statement in these Honourable Chambers (I do not have the date on here; I do have the Statement), entitled “A Revised Construct—Consultants and Advisors,” Mr. Speaker. But the second paragraph says, “Honourable Members will recall my reference to the recommendations of the SAGE Commission and the 2011 Civil Service Review which recommended the creation of a ministerial private office to ‘relieve Permanent Secretaries of the day-to-day tasks associated with Ministers’ . . .”

And, quite frankly, you know, I believe that these appointments are prudent. I believe that the premise behind having personal assistants or consultants to help with the day-to-day efficiencies of the Minister makes a lot of sense. The Premier can speak to the fact that, as myself, when we travel, especially to the UK, we go into a room with the Minister, and he has got several assistants in the room.

What I did find interesting was that many of those assistants—not all of them—were staffed from the civil service. And if we go to the recommendations that were made by the SAGE Commission on page 33, it was interesting because the Premier quotes the fact that the SAGE Commission says, “to relieve Permanent Secretaries of the day-to-day tasks associat-

ed with Ministers' . . ." to which we agree. I think we all agree to this here. I do not want the Premier to believe that we are saying, *No, this is not the route that we should go*. But what I do want to clarify is what the SAGE Commission meant when it talked about these appointments to, especially the Ministers. If I could read this, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

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

And it says here, "A Ministerial Private Office should be created to relieve Permanent Secretaries of the day-to-day tasks associated with Ministers' needs." And, quite frankly, yes. I believe that some Ministers could use a little bit more help than others, quite frankly.

"To again quote the 2011 Civil Service Review . . ."

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Now, I was not necessarily talking about the Government itself, just governments, period. Some Ministers require a bit more assistance than others.

But then, the Civil Service Review says this, Mr. Speaker: "We believe that a Private Office would relieve the Permanent Secretary of the day-to-day managing of Ministers (tasks such as detailed briefing, speech writing, intelligent prioritisation of the Minister's diary, 'gate-keeping' . . . I can say first-hand that gate-keeping was always, and continues to be, a challenge for Ministers, and primarily the Premier and the Finance Minister, in particular, where gate-keeping is vital in order to keep our Ministers online.

But then it goes on to say this here, Mr. Speaker: "[S]uch a role close to a Minister would be a good one for Civil Servants who are judged to have the potential for rapid advancement." And, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has spoken in the past about looking out for those who are up and coming within the civil service regime, whereby, you know, promoting them and moving them along is something that he wishes to do. This Bill in no way, as you go through it, speaks to this here. And hopefully, the Premier can come back to us and say that he is actually looking at civil servants for this role.

But what we have seen thus far is that this is not the case, that the Premier has continued to allow appointments to this personal staff to be made, and there does not appear to be any consideration [given to] considering some of the civil servants who are up and coming who could assist greatly in the effectiveness of our Ministers, the Premier, the Opposition [Leader] as well, and the likes.

And so, with qualifying that, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we understand what the SAGE Com-

mission really was attempting to say, that this is a great opportunity. If we want to look at our up-and-coming bright people within the civil service, this is a great opportunity to do just that.

We do not see that [there] is a reference [to this] within the actual Bill itself. And so, I am hoping that the Premier will speak to this, after several people have spoken, to sum up to say that he will make it a priority of first looking at civil servants in this capacity. Because there are going to continue to be a whole lot of questions, particularly not necessarily around just the Premier, but particularly around Ministers and the kinds of appointments that are actually made.

And, you know, I mean, all you have to do is walk around town and listen to folks. Everybody is a political advisor. Everybody believes that they are a political expert. And they have got all kinds of things to say as to why they feel this should be done and that should be done. There is not anything in here that speaks to the qualifying of what a political expert is or what makes those qualifications of a political advisor. It would be nice to hear what the Premier is thinking concerning that because not just about anybody on the street who has something to say should be brought in as a personal assistant or political advisor. There should be some qualification which speaks to the fact that this person is coming from such-and-such, whether it be the PLP as the Government speaking to the many years that people have been involved in politics; I do not know. But we will go a long way if we give those qualifications and satisfy the fact that people feel comfortable that this is a good appointment, because, obviously, it is taxpayers' money that is going towards this here to take care of this here.

It would be good in an objective way to ensure that there are qualifications that are being given. This Bill does not speak to qualifications. It does speak to functions that should be told, but it does not say qualifications. And so, we will get back to that in Committee to see if we can get some clarification on some of these things.

The Bill will continue to talk about conflict of interest and the likes, Mr. Speaker. And we already see that we have an instance where an appointment has been made to a particular Ministry, and I do not know if it was a personal assistant or whether it was a political advisor. But whatever it was in this particular Ministry, we also see where this particular consultant who was brought on, a personal assistant or whatever we want to call them, goes and has an interview with the same department, Ministry, that he is a consultant to, on the radio station, which clearly is a conflict. And so, to avoid these kinds of things from happening and people getting upset, we need to ensure, just like in this House we have to declare our interest. If there is a member who is a consultant and they have a radio show, say, for instance, and they interview people, they should be declaring that interest, if they are inter-

viewing people, that they are a consultant for that Ministry. This is a clear conflict of interest.

And so, to avoid these kinds of things, I am hoping that the Premier will address these issues to ensure that they are not happening. Because, quite frankly, I feel like this Bill has come into place because of all of the noise. And we want to ensure that what we are doing here makes sense. It does make sense in some ways that we want to bring it to the Legislature. But the whole process, really, has already been in place. And really being transparent about the issue goes a long way, so that we probably would not have had to have even deliberate this here in the House as a piece of legislation.

But be that as it may, the Premier has found it fit to be able to go ahead and bring this to the House as a piece of legislation. We will go forward. We do agree, Mr. Speaker, that the outline that is here does make sense. But I think that there needs to be some more qualifications to some of these things. And as I said already, we will go through some of this stuff in Committee as we seek clarity on exactly what the Premier is looking to do.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the Premier did say that the issue really is that (and I am paraphrasing, basically, here) we want to do away with the bickering going back and forth or questions being asked. But that is not going to be resolved, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to be doing this in retro and announcing the folks who are to become consultants, personal assistants to these Ministers, the Premier and the Opposition, in retro. And I think that needs to be fixed because reporting it at the end of the year is not going to stop the questions. It is not going to stop us as an Opposition from bringing political questions to this House about these appointments.

So, what we want to see is that when these appointments are made, the Minister, the Premier, the Opposition makes that announcement in this House so that all are aware of these appointments.

So, with that in mind, we are supporting this here. There will probably be others who have a few questions considering this here. And I will leave my comments at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Westminster system of parliamentary appropriateness and party politics dictates that to the victor go the spoils, which means that when we face a general election, at the end of which there is a result and the party that enjoys the majority gets

to form the Government. The one thing, Mr. Speaker . . . and again, Mr. Speaker, let me apologise for my voice because I am still a little hoarse and I am still recovering from my recent surgery.

The Speaker: I suggest you keep it short then. How's that?

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am so appreciative, Mr. Speaker, for the concern. I am so appreciative.

The Speaker: I am so concerned for your health, see? I am concerned for your health now.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am so appreciative, Mr. Speaker, of the concern of all of my colleagues for my well-being and my health.

However, I would be remiss in my responsibility to the constituents of this country if I failed to bring out what is an obvious truth within our system. That is, we have an apolitical civil service. Irrespective of what we may have, as individuals, thought about some of the personalities that occupy certain seats in certain areas, the idea of having a civil service is to be apolitical. When a Government is elected, they are elected for all of the people of Bermuda. They are not elected to decide what their politics are going to be in terms of having the public purse pay for their political consultants.

Political consultants, in my estimation, Mr. Speaker, should be paid for by the political party. We should not be expecting the public purse to come out and say, *Let me pay as a way to bring in people through the back door.* Now, let me say, as a Government, I was a Minister responsible for Health. So, I am going to declare this and put it up front. I brought on board a political consultant in the person of Mrs. Louise Jackson, which was done for a specific period for a specific purpose.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And she was a party-political appointment. But it was so that we as the Ministers were able to get information.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members! Members!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Now, who paid for it? It was paid for out of the public purse. But, Mr.

Speaker, that individual did not have pension appended to that appointment. They did not have GEHI appended to that appointment. So, while we have a Bill coming very soon which talks about the costs to government, and what is happening here is that, through the back door, we are creating a separate level of civil service, it would appear to me, Mr. Speaker, a separate level of civil service that is costing the taxpayer.

So, if we were suggesting that people can be brought on for a specific period to do a specific job, and that the terms and conditions are defined, I do not have a problem with that, Mr. Speaker, because I can understand not just a necessity, but the wisdom of doing such. But when these people are coming on board, we heard certain Members in a previous debate (not that I wish to reflect, but just by way of quick reference, Mr. Speaker), people saying that they had no health insurance, and therefore they could not . . . you know.

So, now we see that you bring people on as a political consultant because they may not have a job. They may not have health insurance. We are now enabling people to come and feed at the public trough, Mr. Speaker. And I do not think that this is an appropriate use of public funds. I think that the civil service does a great job. I think political consultants need to be defined. I am not saying “eliminate.” I am saying “define.” And they should not be deemed to be civil servants by the back door.

I believe that if we did not have the information that caused us to ask the Parliamentary questions that effectively revealed the extent to which this Government has brought on people to assist them in this regard and to assist people who otherwise may not even have a job to be able to have some kind of revenue, this bothers me, Mr. Speaker. When I heard the Honourable Member indicate that he is being paid \$5,000 per month for a particular function that he was performing, things like this, I do not care if they collect \$12, \$90, \$100 million. When you are being paid as a Junior Minister in this House, Mr. Speaker, out of the public funds for the job that you are doing, \$5,000 on top of that seems to me to be a little bit over the top. But that is my opinion. As I said, to the victor go the spoils. The Government has a 25-to-11 majority, and they can do with that majority whatever they will.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And what they have chosen to do with that majority, Mr. Speaker, is to utilise the public purse to their advantage to ensure that they are, in certain instances, bypassing the civil service.

Now, I understand the Premier, in introducing this Bill, indicating that the civil service should be specific, and they have work to do. And that there are

Ministers, as I heard my Leader say, there are Ministers who need a little more help than others. I think I tried to correct him, and he ignored me. But I am going to say it. There are Ministers who need a *lot* more help than some others, Mr. Speaker. Some are proficient, and some can use additional assistance in specific areas, Mr. Speaker. That is a known fact.

I can look at a Minister opposite me and I can say if he had nobody to assist him, it will be fine because he will be okay. But there are others who perhaps do not have that degree of . . . I would not say “aptitude”; that is not the correct word . . . who do not have that degree of confidence in the job that they are required to do, that they are able to do it unilaterally without this political consultant.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that unless we are asking people, we are now saying that we want to have somebody that, when they leave, they get an extra 30 days of pay. So, it is really a job for them. It is the terms and conditions under which the civil service operates, Mr. Speaker. We are saying that they are entitled to GEHI. Perhaps GEHI will go on in perpetuity after they leave the civil service. They are entitled to pensions for which the Government has to put in its contributing factors.

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member, if will you yield for a point of order.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Absolutely.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. E. David Burt: The Honourable Member has raised the pensions issue twice. There is nothing inside of this Bill that speaks to pensions. The only thing in here is social insurance, which is required. There is a difference between pensions and social insurance. The Honourable Member knows that.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Sorry. Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you for the clarification.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And I accept the clarification, Mr. Speaker, because I do not wish to misspeak or to mislead, and I did say “pensions.” And I did mean to indicate “social insurance.” I look at social insurance because I get this little pension cheque every month that comes out of social insurance. It is very little. It is very little, Mr. Speaker, not even sufficient to pay my health insurance for what I get, Mr. Speaker. So, I do apologise. And I certainly do not wish to mislead.

But when you have social insurance contributions, 50 per cent are being paid by the employee and 50 per cent are being paid by the employer. When you

have GEHI, presumably, 50 per cent of the premium is paid by the employee, 50 per cent of the premium is paid by the employer. So, effectively, we are bringing people into the system, causing them to add additional charges to the public purse, Mr. Speaker. And none of that is going through the system of vetting and controls that are normally afforded to people who are coming in to work for the civil service.

The civil service members have to go through an inordinate level of scrutiny in order to qualify for the positions they hold. Mr. Speaker, if anybody can be brought in to say, *Come on in! You don't have a job. Come on over here. I'll make sure that you get your insurance. I'll make sure that your social insurance is paid. We're going to make sure that . . .* It does not matter that it is costing the taxpayer more money. That, to me, is a political job. A political job as a political advisor should be paid for by the political party.

An advisor for a specific function, for a specific period, it is appropriate for that to come out of the public purse. But for this to go on? There is no term limit other than if the Minister leaves, the staff member coming on board, the advisor coming on board is peculiar to that particular Minister while he holds that position. There is nothing . . . we have got people who will now be on the public payroll, having failed to have to undergo the scrutiny of hiring that is necessary for people who have jobs in the public service. And we are expecting the taxpayer to pay for it.

Mr. Speaker, I would not have wanted for Members opposite to pay for my personal advisors if they were there in perpetuity. For a specific six-month period of time, that this is your monthly pay and you know exactly up front what you can budget for, Mr. Speaker, and how much it is going to cost so that the public is aware of what their liability is with respect to these people coming on board. That I can understand.

But, Mr. Speaker, to say that we are going to allow almost open-ended, and this could be up to two people per Minister, I would be curious to know whether the Minister who has no real portfolio also has the ability to have assistants, political assistants when you are a Minister with nothing else to do other than sweep. What else do you need additional—

The Speaker: I think their responsibility takes on a little bit more than that.

[Laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I do not mean sweep the floors. I am sorry. I do not wish to be pejorative at all. I do not mean sweep the floors. I mean sweep the Ministers in terms of, if this Minister is absent, you come in and you fill in. If somebody else is unable to do something, somebody else comes and fills in . . . Minister without portfolio, somebody who does not have specific responsibilities. That is what I intended to say.

The Speaker: I can see the cartoon now of the Minister with a broom in his hand. I just wanted you to clarify that.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I just want you to clear it up.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Well, I will not make any comments further on that, Mr. Speaker. We will just leave that to the imagination.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But with that said, Mr. Speaker, I just think that we must recognise that the Government is the Government for all of the people of Bermuda. That their political consultants, who are now becoming employees of the public purse, I believe it is an inappropriate use of public funds. I believe that we can achieve the ends to which the Premier is attempting to go by utilising a slightly different model. But as I said, the Opposition will have its say; the Government will have its way. By virtue of their numbers they will bring on board whomever they choose to. They will buffer their income however they choose to. And they will allow them to be there however long they want.

There are people whose children are out here, Mr. Speaker, and they cannot get jobs! But because they may not be politically affiliated with Members of the Government, your kids, who have come back from college, do not have a job, are not going to get one! Because the preference in this scenario, Mr. Speaker, is going to go to those friends and family of Members of the political party who will be able—

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Sergeant! Sergeant, will you deal with that, please?

Continue on, Member. Keep going.

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

The Speaker: No, you continue.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Sorry. I thought I had a problem.

But that is the situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, having recognised and admitted publicly and acknowledged that I had a political person, a person who was politically affiliated with my party as a consultant for a specific period of

time for a specific job that they had to do, and it was paid for out of the Consolidated Fund, I have no problem with that specific. But to give all the perks and benefits that go along with an employee of the civil service I believe is entirely, entirely inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, the other point that I would like to raise would be the point that my Leader raised. And that is in respect of the annual report. It is fine to come *ex post facto* with information. But I believe if you wish to really be transparent, it would be better to approach it up front to say, *Today I hired Louise Jackson for a period of six months. Her salary for that period of time is going to be "X." And at the end of it, that appointment will be finished.* Or, as the Government has now allowed for within this legislation, to say, *I can bring on my favourite individual to come and be my political consultant.* We have not seen what the outline of criteria is, but that is going to be up to the Ministers. And the Premier has to sign off on it. So, if he believes that any particular individual is appropriate to fulfil the position, then they will be able to do so.

But it would be good to see the code of conduct for advisors that the Premier said was coming afterward. You know, sometimes it is nice to see the package that we are signing on for. If the Premier were able to bring to us, in conjunction with this Bill, the code of conduct for advisors, then perhaps some of the unsettling attitudes may be able to be alleviated, because the information would be there. At the moment, we do not have that information. It is coming, I have no doubt. And I do not know when.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that as we consider how we wish to run our country and deviate from the norms of what is appropriate, in my estimation, Mr. Speaker, I think we should think very carefully that there are young people who do not have the ability to get a job and are not going to get one because these particular positions are being filled by people who are handpicked because of their affiliation, political advisors.

And I will end where I started, Mr. Speaker. Political advisors should be paid for by the political party and should not be a burden on the public purse.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak? No other Honourable Member?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 19. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously, this particular Bill does some things which regularises some things that have been done in the past and adds some new things. And I think, for me the thing which is of interest is not so much the fact that it is talking about the personal staff. But when I read it, it indicates in [clause] 3 that "the

Premier and the Opposition Leader may each, if he so wishes, have a personal staff to assist him and may, by instrument in writing, appoint such number of persons as he deems fit to constitute his personal staff."

Now, I am hoping I am reading correctly, because when I read that, that to me said that the Opposition Leader could have more than one person. So, and that is when I read it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: You want to give me a point of order?

The Speaker: Would you like a point of clarification?

Hon. E. David Burt: If the Honourable Member would yield, just so she is aware—

The Speaker: Yes.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. E. David Burt: The language, of which you have read, Honourable Member, is no different than what exists in the 1983 Act, just so we are clear. So, that is the same language that existed in the 1983 Act. That language has not changed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Regardless of what existed in the 1983 Act, what I am hoping is that our Opposition Leader will look at the Bill and start to raise the question as to whether the Opposition Leader can have more than one person in their office. Because this is what it says. It says, "such number of persons as he deems fit . . ." And if that is the case, recognising that the Opposition needs to be viable and that the Opposition needs to be able to represent the people, then it will be good. Because then, recognising that if the Premier provides the budget . . . because, remember, all of these things go through the budget. Nothing happens relating to this unless budgeted monies have been allocated. So, I am just putting the marker down that any Opposition Leader should recognise that this provides a question that you can ask.

Now, whether the Premier of the day decides to find the funds, at least be aware that the Bill seems to indicate that you can have more than one person.

Now, the second thing that it relates to . . . and this goes down to the financial provisions. I am mindful of the fact that if we are going to have this, it is very important that people know where to look for the staffing. And I am a firm believer that it is important for us to know when people are brought on board at the time they are brought on board. Because then it means you know what they are doing; you can look at what they are doing as they do it to see whether the

expertise is appropriate, whether the delivery on what they are supposed to do [shows] results. And then, at the end of the year, I totally agree that at that point in time the Premier should indicate what has been spent during the year.

But I think you need to do it at the time so that you can evaluate, because at the end of the year if you suddenly realise all of the people who have been brought on board . . . you have no way of reflecting back to say, *Did that person deliver on what they said they were going to do?* And also, that is not the time to talk about whether the expertise was there to justify their appointment. So, I would like to think that the Premier, in terms of some of the other things that he said with respect to being transparent and providing information, would take on board that it would be good if the appointments were given to the public at the time they are made, and the rest of it, which talks about the expertise in the areas, given at that point in time. And that would supplement what the Bill already says, which is to give the information as to what they have been paid and what they did.

Now, I also believe that this then ties into what I think is important (and it does not say it here, but I would like to think that the Premier would consider it), that in order to be able to clarify who has been brought on as personal staff, it would be good if that information was all together. Right now, the Opposition Leader's and the Premier's staff are in a budget. And I think it would be appropriate if everybody's money was there. Because then you could look and you could actually see the money. And if the Premier has already told [the public] at the time [these consultants] are brought on board, you could see the budget. You could see who is there. And at the end of the year, you could find out (1) whether the money has been spent, and (2) whether it was an over-budgeting.

Then you can truly assess what happened with respect to that category—not have to try and figure out, if it is stuck in the various ministries, what happened? How much was spent? What they did, and whatever else. If you really want to talk about saying that this is a way of being transparent, this is a way of saying this is a necessary function and the people should know about it, then put it all together so that the public and the House would know what is actually happening.

I must admit I really do believe that . . . and I am looking forward to the code of conduct for the special advisors, because I think that when this happens, as I said, this will mean that people will understand what people are doing, and then you can assess whether it is money well spent. Now, I recognise that each person, each party makes a decision on whether it is money well spent. But recognising that it is coming out of the public purse, it is important to be able to say whether there has been either a delivery of information or a delivery of performance which says that it

justifies the special nature of their functions, whether it is the expertise or whatever else.

So, that is why I think the code of conduct is good, because you do not want people to inadvertently, in their desire to be able to support their party who has appointed them—whether it be the Premier or the Opposition—do something which causes them to either breach something in their enthusiasm to deliver on something or to make sure that they get a point of view out there, because there still has to be what I call an appropriate conduct. And I do not think that anybody wants to go over, above and beyond, inadvertently, not realising that the code of conduct is not a code of conduct that would normally be occurring.

It is just like here in the House. You have to remind us now and then when, in our enthusiasm, we say and do something which goes outside of the bounds to rein us back in. And that is why I think you have to make sure that this code of conduct does something, too, because sometimes, enthusiastic people can go outside of the bounds.

As I said, I have already talked about reporting at the end of the year because, as I say, this retro is something that I just think flies in the face of what we want to do. I do realise, and maybe people do not appreciate the fact that although you have a civil service whose job is to carry out the policies of the Government of the day—and I am reminding everybody that the civil servant's job is to carry out the policies of the Government of the day—sometimes you can get people with a dilemma, where they find themselves having to do things which their job requires, things which they might find difficult to do.

Whether it be the Government or the Opposition, this will make it easier for them to get the person whom they need to either write a statement or do something according to what their policy is, and their goals and objectives, and not create what I call a dilemma, where someone feels that they are between a rock and a hard place, because their job actually says that they are supposed to give the best, deliver the best information, deliver the best report, et cetera.

So, I think that, whether we like it or not, the reality is that in an island this size it is important for us to have the ability to be able to have your particular person appointed so that they know what they have to do.

I think those were generally the concerns that I had. And I would just hope that, as we go forward, as I say, the leader, our Leader, will take advantage of what I think is an opportunity. And in the meantime, I think my colleagues have covered the other concerns with respect to making sure that people have the expertise. I am very pleased that there is this thing about the conflict of interest. But as I say, if you have the code of conduct, that should make it easier for people not to do things which create a conflict of interest, because it should be very clear in terms of what people do. But also, I think it should make it easier for Minis-

ters not to appoint people into areas where they might find themselves having a conflict of interest, because it is drawing everybody's attention to what things should and should not occur.

So, with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member Simons. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be very brief.

Generally, I think the legislation has merit. My colleagues have addressed most of the issues, but my question evolves around remuneration packages. The question that I have, obviously, you know, we could have different types of consultants. We could have a communications consultant. We could have like a research advisor. We could have a chief of staff. And all of those consultants have various degrees of technical skills and abilities.

So, my question to the Premier is, How are they classified in regard to . . . in government you have the salary grades. Will that salary grade apply to these special employees, or consultants, so that there is some framework in place to ensure that the salaries are adequate, that they fall within a reasonable guideline, and that the Government gets value for money?

I would suspect that, you know, a chief of staff may make more than a research analyst who will be engaged by the Opposition Leader. So, can the [Premier] speak to how he arrives at the salaries or at the fees charged for the consultants, and if they are in line with other guidelines that exist that are similar to the salary grades within government?

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Opposition Whip. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am cautiously optimistic with the implementation of this Bill. My focus today is really to dig a little deeper into the actual functioning of the personal staff. So, in a perfect world we would have very clear guidelines and a very clear framework on the responsibilities of our various subject-matter experts within the civil service. And as we are beginning to build out the framework and structure around the higher levels of office, such as the Premier's personal staff, the Ministers' personal staff, this is an opportunity for us to be very transparent and very structured in our approach.

In my understanding, the personal staff, whether they are political advisors or policy analysts, are really there to provide the direction and accounta-

bility for not only the political strategy of the government, but also for the implementation of policy and making sure that what a Minister or a Premier may put in place as a policy is actually carried out and that it is reported back to the Premier.

So, if we are going to go down that road, then I am highly supportive of the implementation of this Bill today, because I do believe that it is important for the higher office to have political advisors who will make sure that the Premier and the Ministers are staying on direction, that whatever their strategies and their mandates are, that they are being carried out. I mean, it is what it is. Other governments do it. This is not unusual. But the important part is not to have political advisors or policy analysts who are going to come in and not have the subject-matter expertise or the qualifications to be able to carry out those duties, because they are, oftentimes, going to be difficult. Sometimes, the policy analysts might be in a position where they have access to something like a Cabinet paper, and they may be the ones who are actually coming up with suggested policies to be presented to the Premier, who may then take them to Cabinet.

So, it is a very high-functioning position. If you are going to go that route, the qualifications of the people who have those roles need to match the level of seniority and responsibility of the task at hand.

Now, in my research I notice that there has been, with the hiring of consultants . . . and in particular I am looking at a very recent advertisement, the [request] for a consultant for Education. There was an in-depth article that was made public on not only the qualifications of the consultant or consultancy, but also the terms under which they would be employed, what they would be tasked to carry out and a time frame by which to get it done. And it is that kind of transparency and level of understanding that I believe helps the taxpayer to understand the value-add for this kind of investment.

And if we are able to produce some sort of . . . you know, it would be nice, rather than retrospect, if it were before an analyst or a personal staff were hired that there would be some level of explanation and some sharing of the qualifications of that applicant in order to provide us with the information that we need, so, as taxpayers, there is a level of comfort that the job will be done. And if the job is getting done, then whatever Government happens to be in power at the time, we know that there is somebody there who is guiding it along and that the policies and the platforms which that particular governing political party won the [election] on, that those things will be carried out and will not just kind of wallow about and not sort of progress.

And a perfect example of this, whether it was the former Government or the sitting Government, you know, when you have a situation like the T. N. Tatem Middle School, if there is a policy that is being put in place by a Minister, by a Government, and that policy,

if there is no one there to check, if there is no one there to identify reports, if there is no one there to follow through, if there is no one there to push through the Government's mandate, then we are going to run into these kinds of stalemates on a regular basis.

And so, it is going to be our job as parliamentarians to have a level of oversight to say, you know, if Education decides to hire a policy analyst or a policy advisor, then we would expect that when the Government says they are going to do something, that there is somebody there who is going to see it through, who is going to make sure that whatever policy was established is actually going to happen. And we are not going to find ourselves in a situation where nobody can find the report, nobody knew who was supposed to do what, we do not know how much . . . whatever the stumbling blocks and the hurdles may be, that we are not running into a lot of challenges in the future and that we see policies implemented on a smooth and consistent basis. And then we can start to see some real results.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 22. Honourable Member Pearman, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just really have two high-level points. I will make some comments in Committee, but I have two high-level points to make about the Bill. The first relates to the issue of good governance, and the second to the issue of financial expenditure.

As to the first, the Deputy Premier earlier this week gave a speech to a gathering of ombudsmen from the Caribbean, in which he reaffirmed the PLP Government's commitment to good governance, transparency, and allowing the public to know what is happening. And I commend him for that speech, and I hope that this Bill will be modified to take into account that pledge made by the Deputy Premier earlier this week, or reaffirmed.

This Bill is about really how government works. And one of the benefits of the Westminster-type system and British and Commonwealth Governments is that we have an independent civil service. And yes, there are political appointees, and we see that in other jurisdictions. This does happen, and it is what I would describe as a necessary evil. But when you have political appointees, the thinking behind that, or the justification for that is because they stand next to the civil servants, and there is a difference between the independent civil servant and the non-independent political appointee, when that person is standing there, or in this case, persons (because the Bill envisages up to two for each Minister), it is supposed to be

this person providing some level of particular expertise to the Minister or to the Premier. It is not supposed to be an opportunity to appoint people to salaries paid by the public purse simply because they happen to be friends or family or political cronies of the particular political party in power at the time.

So, it is a necessary evil, but we do need to be careful about surrounding Ministers with political advisors who are paid by the taxpayer and who can have a detrimental effect on the other independent civil servants who are trying to do their job properly and with independence. So, with that warning, and if I could also adopt a comment made by the Honourable Member Jeanne Atherden earlier, which is that it would be beneficial, if we are really pursuing good governance, to see a code of conduct produced for these individuals. And there is no reason why that should not be so. If anything, these political consultants, political appointees, may well have more influence over the relevant Minister than the independent civil servant professional. So why should they not have a code of conduct that applies to them?

Turning to the second point, Mr. Speaker, the financial consideration. With respect, and I recognise the motivation behind the Bill, but is this really the best time to be using the people's money to expand the entourage of the Premier? Is this really the best time to be using the people's money to be giving paid political consultancy roles, one or two, presumably, for each of the 10 ministries? I respectfully suggest that it is not the best time, and I think it is a bold move by the current Government to bring this Bill. But on the head, be it.

Other than that, Mr. Speaker, I will speak in Committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 9. Honourable Member Moniz, you have the floor.

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

I will start off where that Honourable Member finished up. I do not think that the public has a very high regard for the political class. And that certainly includes OBA supporters; it also includes PLP supporters.

And the people assume—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: The Member says he does not think that is true.

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair. Just speak to the Chair, and that will keep you out of trouble.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I think he had better read his mail.

[Laughter]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: He was mentioned at *Dispatchers* recently in a very humorous blog post. But I think they are out of touch if they do not realise that the public is not in favour of spending on large entourages for politicians. And I know that, you know, as the Member who spoke before me said, the Honourable and Learned Member, the public do not support politicians having larger and larger entourages. This country is in economic trouble. We all know that. We have got a huge national debt. We are paying interest on the national debt that is over \$100 million per year. We are in trouble. We have seen 12 months of declining retail sales, month after month after month after month after month.

Need I really tell anyone that, Mr. Speaker? We have seen a severe loss of business confidence. We have seen a severe loss of consumer confidence. Consumer confidence you can see is down just from people not buying cars anymore. Car sales have plummeted—

An Hon. Member: Thank God.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: —because people are saying that they are not going to spend that amount of money.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members! Members!

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Members!

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable and Learned Member Michael Scott can get up and speak any time he wants.

The Speaker: Members!

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Now, those retail sales are down. We have seen job losses, major job losses in the international business market. We have seen it through mergers. I think we saw it through RenaissanceRe and Tokio Millennium. Some 60 people lost their jobs. We have seen several others with about 30 people who lost their jobs. And those jobs are both expat and Bermudian, guest workers and Bermudians. And they are both a big hit to our economy. We obviously do not need more Bermudians out of jobs. And when guest workers lose their jobs, that is somebody with an empty apartment out there who is not earning any income.

And we know the land tax has gone up. All the taxes are going up. Everybody is getting hit, and everyone is having to pull in the reins of their purse at home and spend less money. And we are saying, *Has Government got the message?* The answer is no! This Government has not got any message! You have seen the great echo of silence on that side, a little bit of chirping, but that it is. Members do not want to get up and speak about this. They know they are severely embarrassed by the nepotism that has been shown out there, with Ministers' wives being hired, with Ministers' children being hired.

The Speaker: Stick to the point. Stick to the point.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: The problem is that people have seen through it. They have seen through it. And they have seen abuses by this system which the people might put up with in politicians, but not at a time of this sort of economic hardship, when people do not have jobs! The man in the street sees these politicians, *There they go. They have got their snouts in the trough again.* That is the view of the person in the street.

Government should be pulling in its horns. And what the person in the street sees this as, and you just go on the blogs and see it—and this is PLP supporters—they see this as a rear-guard action to paper over the cracks, to put some sort of respectability on the abuses that are taking place. And everybody knows that from the person-in-the-street point of view it looks like the “friends and family” plan is back in place.

So, the Premier is saying, *Well, how can we paper over the cracks and look like what we're doing is above board?* But people are not going to accept that. People are hurting out there. People are hurting out there. This Government is not producing. And we know the litany of those things. They cannot keep the buses running. They cannot collect the trash. It goes on. They cannot keep the schools running. I mean, one after the other, we have disaster after disaster after disaster.

We should be talking about the education system here today. We should not be sitting here talking about how Ministers can fatten themselves by having a larger entourage! That is not what we should be doing in this House! We need to address the needs of the people, not fattening politicians.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 7. Honourable Member Richards, you have the floor.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to follow on from the comments by my honourable colleague. You know, it is interesting being a Member of Parliament and also working in the private sector. And I always view things through the lens of, *what happens outside of the realms of politics?* And we live in a time, Mr. Speaker, where businesses and companies are looking for increased efficiencies. *How can we reduce costs? How can we become more efficient?* And I have to give credit to the Government for putting together this Efficiency Committee to look at how they can do the basic things such as collect the taxes that are sitting out there uncollected, and how they can streamline processes and whatnot. That is good.

But where this Government is falling down, Mr. Speaker, is when it comes to staffing levels. Okay? All I have seen since I have been here, since this Government has been elected, is that they are increasing staffing levels hand over fist. And that goes against what happens in the real world. In the real world people are being asked to do more with less. Okay? Everybody is tightening their belts. The Government lives in this ultimate reality where they do the exact opposite. And it is baffling to me. It truly, truly is. I do not see the logic in it. I do not see the necessity in it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was a Minister. And when I was made a Minister, I was told by my PS, first day, *You know, Minister, you can hire a consultant. You can hire two consultants. You can do this and do that and do the other.* And, Mr. Speaker, my personal view was like, *If I need somebody to come in and assist me other than my Permanent Secretary and a whole room full of civil servants who are out there, something is wrong with this process.* And I said, *I don't need a consultant.*

It is the same reason why I did not drive a GP car. I never drove a GP car. And it is a little thing, but it is a big thing to the people of Bermuda who, like my honourable colleague said, have a very tarnished, terrible opinion of all politicians. We are all being labelled as fat cats who do not care about the small guy, who lie, who are hypocrites, who backtrack on what they say. We all know that is what is out there!

And I heard one Honourable Member say that is what they say about me. That is what they say about all of us. And you know it to be true! You read the blogs just like I do. We have to do better as politicians!

So, when I see a Bill before us that is not new, it is not doing anything but formalising a process that is already in place that is being abused, this is called backfilling. Okay? The Progressive Labour Party got caught out because of what was revealed about their consultants and people whom they are hiring and people whom they are rewarding because they are supporters of the Progressive Labour Party. They are

mouthpieces for the Progressive Labour Party, and they are being rewarded financially.

So, I have questions with this legislation. It has already shown that sitting Members of Parliament are going to be employed as consultants and paid extra. So, you are going to use this to bolster the pay of an MP who probably feels that he is not paid enough. And I know that there is a sentiment over there where MPs, particularly on the backbenches are: *We want more money. We're not paid enough. So, how can we do this and make it look clean?* It is ridiculous!

It is a ridiculous situation. And that is why it is quiet over on that side.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

Premier, it is now three minutes before 12:30. Would you like to take a break, or would you like to start now?

Hon. E. David Burt: I will start now, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

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

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the Members Opposite. There are some persons who are speaking from positions of being misinformed, and there are some persons who are trying to make a meal out of something where a political meal does not have to be made. And if Members were so interested in hearing what I actually had to say, I would not think that they would get up and leave, especially as they finish speaking.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me just help Honourable Members opposite, because what we are doing here is not creating and/or changing anything. Let us just be clear. So, what exists currently right now is a ministerial code of conduct. The things which will transpose from the ministerial code of conduct will now go from a policy into set and established law. That is the first thing.

The second thing is, Mr. Speaker, that just as in the ministerial code of conduct, all positions need to be budgeted for. This is now stated inside of law. It is similar to the law of which existed when it only applied to the Premier and the Opposition Leader, Mr. Speaker. So, the comments from the former Attorney General, who, of course, threw his bombs and left, says that there are increasing entourages. There are no increasing entourages. Let us be clear on what this lays and sets out, Mr. Speaker. This is putting a structure around a particular process.

But here is something when there is a question and an issue of fairness, Mr. Speaker, because it

seems as though persons opposite do not understand, even though they should understand, as they were in these roles recently. There are different dimensions to political advice and/or consultants which exist. There are full-time consultants. There are part-time consultants. There are limited-term consultants. There are persons who are open-ended, who may be persons who are working with Ministers on a day-to-day basis or working with the Opposition Leader on a day-to-day basis. There are differing dimensions to this. So, in order for persons to try to throw it all into one box and say that this is the case . . . it is not.

Regarding a comment, I would say, from the Opposition Leader, there are a few things. Number one, there is a general term which has been said by the Members opposite about the question of things being done retroactively. The thing is, Mr. Speaker, that we set out in all of our legislation timing of where reports are made to this Legislature and the timing when these reports are made to the Legislature on the budgetary process. If Members want to ask questions or other things, otherwise, then they are welcome to do so. But we felt that it would make the most sense to lay it all out in one document on an annual basis. And that is the decision of which we have come to.

What I think is also interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that we spoke about, and the Opposition Leader spoke about, the recommendations of the SAGE [Report] and the civil service reform. Well, yes, Mr. Speaker, those recommendations were stated there. But I think it is very important that we recognise what the dimension of a private office should be. Private offices are not just . . . Private offices are not just . . . I would say private offices are not just the person assisting the Minister directly, or the Premier. But there could be multiple dimensions to that. So, there was a suggestion that, you know—

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: —there are public officers who should be used—

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: —inside of these particular issues.

The Speaker: Let me assist you with the time right now.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh. You do not want me to just finish, Mr. Speaker? Because I will be about two more minutes.

The Speaker: I was about to ask you. Are you going to be short? Or would you like to move into Committee before lunch?

Hon. E. David Burt: I am going to be short. I would if I could, Mr. Speaker. I will be two more minutes.

The Speaker: Okay. Well, we will let you continue. You move us to Committee before lunch.

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

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, because there was a discussion about, you know, whether or not civil servants should be involved inside of this, as well. But here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. So, in *my* office, I have a public officer who is assisting me, because there was a public officer who was found who was very good and could assist. But just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, even that was criticised by the other side. So, a public officer is used in support of the office—that is criticised. When a public officer is not used in support of the office—that is criticised.

Here is the challenge, Mr. Speaker. The challenge, Mr. Speaker, is what is important is that Government function and function well so that we can deliver. There will be persons who believe that Ministers themselves should . . . one of the challenges is that Ministers get sucked into the minutia. And we know what the “minutia” is, because I see the Honourable former Premier nodding his head. We know what minutia is. The minutia is great, whereas there are the issues of overarching policy which sometimes get missed, Mr. Speaker.

And so, for this, I think it is important to recognise that inside of—inside of—what it is that we are doing here, Mr. Speaker, there is very little change except for formalising a process and putting it into law. Now, there is one distinction, Mr. Speaker, which is important. And that one distinction is for full-time officers who serve Ministers, for those ones who are appointed under the existing Act, the Premier and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act, they have access to health care and social insurance contributions to be made on their behalf. Currently, persons who are not appointed under the Premier and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act are not given those benefits.

One of the things which we said, Mr. Speaker, across the board, in fairness, and some Members have indicated to me, is that there may still be places inside of the public service where there are persons who have been serving for long periods who do not have access to health insurance. What I will say, Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fairness as a labour Government, that what we do not want [to have] is persons who are employed for long periods of service without access to benefits. And that is the difference and the challenge.

As was stated in my Ministerial Statement in March, all contracts that currently exist will be re-

viewed in line with the fact that the benefits package may or may not be changing. And when this Act is brought into force, we will be able to publish those particular items. We want to set it out so that there is not a question in discrepancy on this, because here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. It is an important part of Government to function, that Ministers be able to have access to the services and support which they need and that the public service be made to be impartial, Mr. Speaker. That is a key point. And it is a very important balance to strike. And that is why these provisions which have been put here in law are similar to provisions which exist in other jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom and Canada.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I will wrap up my remarks there. And I will ask that the Bill be now committed.

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

House in Committee at 12:34 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019

The Chairman: Mr. Premier, it is at that time. Do you want to move that we adjourn for lunch?

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now adjourn for lunch.

The Chairman: We will return at two o'clock and go into full Committee. House adjourned.

Proceedings suspended at 12:34 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:00 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019

The Chairman: Good afternoon Members. We are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled [Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019](#).

Mr. Premier, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, also I would like to note that I have asked the staff at the House to print the original Bill—the Premier and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 1983—just for sharing with Members, as during the general debate there were lots of conversations on particular provisions which were lifted exactly from the existing Act and I think that will help at least inform Members as we are in Committee of the whole [House].

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to move all clauses.

The Chairman: Yes, you may.

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

Mr. Chairman, clause 1 is the standard citation clause and is self-explanatory.

Clause 2 defines “personal staff.” And I think it is identical to the existing Act.

Clause 3, Mr. Chairman, provides for both the Premier and the Opposition Leader to appoint such number of persons as he deems fit to constitute his personal staff.

Clause 4, subsection (1), provides for each Minister, subject to the written approval of the Premier, to appoint a personal staff consisting of one or two persons. Subsection (2) specifies that these persons shall be either experts in their professional field or political advisers. Subsection (3) requires that before making an appointment, the Minister must ensure there will be no conflict of interest between the matters on which the person will be providing advice and assistance and his private or professional concerns. This section is modelled on section 9.1 of the existing Ministerial Code of Conduct as it deals with advisers or consultants. And this is a new clause to the specific Bill.

Clause 5 provides that the terms of appointment of a member of a personal staff shall be specified in the instrument of his appointment. And this is broadly similar to the 1983 Act, section 4(2).

Clause 6 caps the total remuneration of whatever kind payable to the personal staff of the Premier, a Minister or the Opposition Leader out of public funds to the amount provided for that purpose by the Legislature. And Members would note that this clause 6 mirrors the original 1983 Act section 4(3).

Clause 7 clarifies that the personal staffs do not form part of the public service of Bermuda, and persons on those staffs shall not be public officers of Bermuda, for any purpose. However, subsection (2) provides for their access to confidential information, and subsection (3) deems members of the personal staffs to be Government employees for the purposes of contributory pension (or better known as social insurance), payroll tax, and health insurance.

And, Mr. Chairman, I just want to make it very clear here on this particular issue, as I had mentioned

during the general debate that there was a discrepancy between personal staffs that worked for the Opposition Leader and myself, and then personal staffs who worked for other Ministers. And the fact is that, out of those persons, there was a disparate level of benefits. So persons who were in the employ of the Opposition Leader and myself did have access to health care, contributory pension and payroll tax, and those persons who were not, were paying all of those fees themselves.

Now, in some instances and cases that is fine, because for persons who are on a short-term consultancy basis, et cetera, that is just the regular part of the contract. And there have been some of those persons who have had short-term consultancies overall. Then there are others who are on longer term and engage in more of a support capacity for Ministers and in that particular instance is where this provision is here. That is one of the larger things that this is actually changing . . . that is the biggest impact or effect that this particular change would have.

The one other thing which . . . sorry. I will go on to clause 8, if I may, Mr. Chairman?

The Chairman: Yes, you can.

Hon. E. David Burt: And clause 8 references the 1983 Act, section 6 of the original Act.

Clause 8 provides that a personal staff constituted by a particular Premier, Minister or Opposition Leader shall cease to exist as soon as he himself leaves that office, but persons will be entitled to continue to receive remuneration for a period of 30 days. Subsection (3) deems a Minister whose portfolio is amended to have left office for these purposes.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in particular, regarding clause 8, subsections (1) or (2), are a direct reference to section 6 of the original Act. Of course, because there are now Ministers being brought into the fold underneath the provisions of this particular Act, clause 8(3) is new and just lays out the issue. But clearly, for persons that are inside of these positions, these staffs have always been personal to their appointers and so the same conditions which have existed currently are immediately the same transposed on clauses 8(1) and 8(2), for the avoidance of doubt, as there was some conversation in the general debate that there were some new provisions being inserted in regarding the notice period, I think, the 30 days.

Clause 9 is new and requires the Premier to make an annual report to the Legislature specifying details of all persons appointed to the personal staffs during the previous calendar year, Mr. Chairman. And that is self-explanatory in and of itself.

I do recognise that there was some conversation during the general debate on whether or not that was sufficient. The Government believes that it is the most efficient manner in which to do this, to ensure that every year a declaration will be made and that

declaration will be made so there can be no ambiguity on these particular things. There was some suggestion that it should be every single time there are different appointments and all the rest. And I think that it is also important to note that this is just for persons that are appointed underneath this particular Act.

The fact is that these “consultants” (as they are termed) or “contractors” or “temporary employees” or whatever way they are [described], there are those that are appointed underneath this particular Act, but there are also many others who work inside of the Government on many short-term or longer-term projects through many various departments and this is just counting for the ones inside of this particular Act.

One of the things we want to make sure we do is not to cause additional reporting burden, so we felt that this is the quickest and simplest way, so it will be done once a year.

Clause 10, subsection (1), repeals the Premier and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 1983. Subsection (2) provides that the repeal does not affect the appointment of any person who, immediately before commencement, is a member of the personal staffs of the Premier or the Opposition Leader. Of course, that is a transitional provision.

Clause 11 provides for commencement.

And just for Members’ information, the commencement of this Act will be brought into place following items which I have said which were done previously. And those are: (1) the Code of Conduct; and (2) the revisions of the contracts which currently exist. Because there are contracts which currently exist for persons who are not getting health insurance or are responsible for their employer portions of their payroll tax and their full contribution to social insurance, those types of changes will be modelled and adjusted accordingly.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, that is the end of the clauses. I await comments from colleagues.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Mr. Pearman.

Mr. Pearman, you have the floor.

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

Premier, my first question is on clause 3 of the Bill. You quite rightly drew a contrast between the previous Act and the Bill, and you quite rightly acknowledged that one of the new elements appears in [clause] 3 where the Premier may “appoint such number of persons as he deems fit . . .” So there is no restriction for your appointment.

Are you able to share with the House whether you possibly intend to appoint more people to your current staff level? And if you do plan to appoint more people, is that going to increase your current budget for your team?

Hon. E. David Burt: The question is a little bit odd but, Mr. Chairman, I am happy to answer. At this point in time there is no such desire. And I guess I am confused as to the basis of the question because I am not sure that there is much difference than what exists inside of the current Act. The current Act said: "Subject to this Act, each of the Premier and the Opposition Leader may, if he so wishes, have a personal staff to assist him" and defines "personal staff."

So I am a little bit confused as to the basis of the question, but to answer it, not at this point in time, but things may change.

The Chairman: Mr. Pearman.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Chairman.

Premier, I am grateful for the response.

The next question I have is at clause 4 of the proposed Bill. Again, this is a clause that you rightly pointed out is new and not contained in the previous Act. This provides (and I will paraphrase) that the Ministers can provide either one or two persons. We know the Attorney General's political consultant is receiving \$104,000 a year because that was said to this House during the Budget Debate. Have there been any projections on budgeted costs for these, if we assume . . . you rightly pointed out in the debate previously about full-time and part-time. If we assume full-time people and two persons per Minister, have you budgeted out what that looks like for this clause addition . . . this additional clause?

Hon. E. David Burt: I would say that there are probably a few incorrect things, and I want to make sure that Ms. Renee's staff gets it right. I do not believe that the Attorney General's person (or the Minister of Legal Affairs) is being remunerated at \$104,000. I do not believe that is correct. I believe that this person . . . I am just letting you know—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: No, no, no, the House was not told that. There was an assumption that was made. It was reported of the hourly rate and it was the assumption that was made that the individual was full-time and [it was] extrapolated. So let me just be very clear, as was stated previously, so I just wanted that to be known for the record. I am happy to go back to the questions and answers which were provided previously on those particular topics.

As for the budgetary constraints which exist, right now those things are captured inside of the Cabinet Office budget and also inside of the Opposition Leader's budget. Going forward, as I have stated previously in this House, I support the SAGE Commission's recommendation . . . sorry, the Sage Commission which was echoing what was laid down in the civil service review of 2011 for the creation of ministe-

rial private offices. Some private offices require a political dimension, others do not.

However, Mr. Chairman, I find it a little bit offensive, this term as we have heard throughout the general debate of talking "friends and family" and all of the rest. The fact is that Ministers have to trust the person who is their personal staff. These are individuals . . . so I know the way that my personal staff and many other personal staffs are, that personal staffs have access to the Minister's email account. And so from the perspective of us actually thinking that, you know, that someone is going to, I do not know, hire someone that they do not know, to give them access to their own email accounts kind of flies in the face of what this is.

And I do not want us to make this any more than what it is. This is providing a legal construct and [clause] 4 is transposing precisely what was inside of the Ministerial Code of Conduct that is here. Ministers have to: (1) have budget for this; and (2) make sure that it actually is justified and makes sense and is, therefore, approved by myself.

And, Mr. Chairman, I am happy, as I will have to on an annual basis defend what is done or what I have approved to constitute personal staffs for various Ministers. But to go back and to say that there is . . . and I will repeat, there is no intention at this present point in time to expand. There are some Ministers that do not have a personal staff, and I have actually implored them to look to take someone on because I want Ministers of Government focused on the transformational initiatives and I do not want Ministers of the Government focused on day-to-day management and responses to emails from queries here or other persons on small matters that do not necessarily require the Minister's immediate attention.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Mr. Pearman.

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

Premier, with respect, the question I asked was a very simple one, and it was just whether the new clause 4 had been costed, speculating that there are potentially 20 new full-time political advisors.

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of order.

The Chairman: What is your point of order, Mr. Premier?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. E. David Burt: The Honourable Member is deliberately trying to mislead the House. I have tried my best to answer. The whole issue about stating that, *Oh, all of a sudden the Government is creating 20*

new full-time employees is not correct. Let us be very clear as to where this is. We all know—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Potentially—

[Gavel]

Hon. E. David Burt: —just to be clear, it could—

The Chairman: Let us, let us—

Hon. E. David Burt: —be potentially now underneath the existing Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Can we . . . so, let us just make sure that we are actually debating the facts here. The former Premier, who sits across from his Opposition Leader, the former Premier who sits over in the corner, also had access underneath this Bill. All Ministers of the Government, under the Ministerial Code of Conduct, were permitted to hire up to two persons—consultants and/or advisors—subject to budget. That has not changed. And I want that to be clear. Instead of that being contained specifically inside of the Ministerial Code of Conduct, it is now here.

However, it is also important to note that you have to refer to [clause] 6 and [clause] 6 says: “total remuneration of whatever kind payable to the personal staff of the Premier, a Minister or the Opposition Leader out of public funds shall not exceed the amount provided for that purpose by the Legislature.”

And in that conversation or discussion during the drafting of this it was noted that these budget line items and allocations are not currently inside of ministerial budgets and they will need to be added through the future budgeting process, so we will see.

But no, there is not an intent to hire 20 new persons to fill these roles. This is already what exists. We are formalising the process and making sure that long-term persons have access to benefits, which is fair, which mirrors what we have done in other positions inside of Government where people have been working for a long time without benefits, because it is fair to do that in the public service, just like it is fair to do that inside of the private service.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
Mr. Pearman.

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

I do not accept that I was misleading the House in asking my question. I will just pose it one more time, Mr. Chairman, and then move on—

The Chairman: No, no, hang on, we are not going to pose that again.

The thing is, in the legislation . . . that comment you had, that question, is for the debate. We are in the Committee of the whole [House]. It says nothing in this legislation that they are going to hire 20 people.

Now, you could have asked that question before this debate, we are in Committee now.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Chairman, the question that I posed was whether or not this new clause in this new Bill has been costed. And I used my words very carefully—I did say “costed.”

The Chairman: Yes, yes, I am sorry.

Mr. Scott Pearman: And I do not think I have had an answer to that question. And I am happy to move on if the Chair directs, but that was my question, and if that could be answered, I would be grateful.

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: There is no costing particularly required as there is no view to increase what already exists. Remember, these are costs that are not transitional. In some instances, as the contracts are reviewed, there may be a saving of money. That is the . . . so let us be clear here, when the contracts are reviewed and revised. But I think we need to be careful as to the specific point here, and the specific point here is what we are addressing. And the implication that we have to cost and budget something because all of a sudden Ministers are going to hire two per . . . is not fitting in with reality.

The Chairman: Any . . . Mr. Pearman, you have the floor again.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, and my question was answered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would now direct a question in relation to clause 8 of the Bill, and specifically [clause] 8(2): “A person holding an appointment on a personal staff immediately before the date on which the Premier, the Minister or the Opposition Leader who appointed him left that office shall be entitled to receive, for the period of 30 days commencing on that date, the remuneration provided for in his instrument of appointment.”

The question I have is this, it is just what this language is intended to achieve. As I read it, I think what it says is, if there is a political advisor appointed by a Minister, and that appointment ceases, the political advisor then receives a further one month’s or 30 days’ compensation. And that is how I have understood that clause to read.

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Chairman, I will read to the Honourable Member from the 1983 Act.

The 1983 Act states: “[6] Personal staffs personal to appointors. A personal staff constituted by a particular Premier or Opposition Leader shall cease to exist as soon as he himself leaves that office; but a

person holding an appointment on such a staff immediately before the date on which the Premier or the Opposition Leader who appointed him left that office shall be entitled to receive, for the period of 30 days commencing on that date, the remuneration arranged for in his instrument of appointment." Which is precisely the same item which we have inside of this Bill.

However, the exception is that it adds "Minister" as we are expanding the remit of this particular piece of legislation. It is the exact same provision that was in the existing Act and that is what it is intended to achieve here. And I am certain the Learned Member understands what is being achieved here.

The Chairman: Mr. Pearman.

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

The defect that I think exists in the original legislation, and is maintained in [clause] 8(2), is that someone who is no longer serving as a political advisor to Minister A is collecting salary thereafter, but they, nonetheless, [are] appointed to be a political advisor to Minister B and would, therefore, be paid twice by this language.

Would the Premier consider adding a caveat where that person would not continue to receive payment if he was appointed, or she was appointed, to another political position?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Chairman, I do consider that the Honourable and Learned Member is trying to stretch this very carefully. But what I will just let him know, and it is very clear, because he is a Learned Member, I am not going to take his trying to find this type of situation here.

Here is what I can say, and what I can say is that the situation which he mentioned happening is very unlikely to happen. And I think that when we talk about public officers who are (what is the best way I can say it?) responsible for the expenditure of public money, in this particular instance, that I think that they would make sure that someone is collecting redundancy from one place while serving in another aspect—that would defeat the spirit of this.

And given that these persons have to be approved by myself, I would make sure that this provision would not happen. And if there was a case where someone went to go work for someone else, if they were still being paid, then they would either not be paid or there would be a different arrangement. And I am happy to make sure that as part of any type of code of conduct that those types of things are reflected in that, just to make sure that particular provision does not happen.

The Chairman: Mr. Pearman.

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

Just to that point, I mean, obviously, this subsection in this Bill is creating a statutory right. You as Premier, or indeed anyone else, would not have the ability to override that statutory right. And, therefore, what I am respectfully suggesting, given what I see as a problem with it, is just to add a caveat to the end that makes clear that payment would not be made where that person was appointed as political advisor during that same period. And I would think that you would welcome that change to clarify the situation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Chairman, I am just going to not . . . I am going to just say this to . . . I know the Honourable Member is new. I am going to learn him up a little bit.

If you have . . . if you have an amendment that you wish to bring during the Committee, the Standing Orders require that said amendment to be typed and done. And if there was a thought or a process—as we have had this Bill for quite some time—that there were some suggestions for changes, then that could have been done at that particular point in time to fine tune the language.

So I am sure that as we move forward on other Bills, the Honourable Member may submit those types of items. As it is written here and constructed, we do not necessarily believe that what he is suggesting is necessary, but we will be mindful of the . . . the . . . the possibility of this taking place. And I am certain that the person who will administer this particular Act, whether it is reflected in the Code of Conduct or otherwise, will make sure that it is carried out properly.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Mr. Pearman.

Mr. Scott Pearman: My last comment, Mr. Chairman.

As the Premier has very kindly offered to "learn me up," I would respectfully suggest that it is the duty of all Members of this House to pass the best possible legislation. And if we, having had a Bill for only 14 days, identify something that is potentially flawed, it is my duty to raise it and, indeed, your duty to consider it.

But I make no further comment, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

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

Mr. Chairman, I just wish to refer to clause 4(2)(b). And as was discussed before in the debate in the whole [House], the question was, Is there necessari-

ty for political advisors to be brought into this Bill as opposed to engaging consultants?

The difference between the two being that consultants will have their specific terms of reference and not be an additional strain on the public purse, where the individual has not been vetted for appropriateness by the process.

The Chairman: So the question for [clause] 4(2)(b), again, if you can repeat that?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: As to [subsection] (2)(b) political advisors, is it not more appropriate to eliminate “political advisors” and just leave it at that such that we can include consultants so that Ministers can have the benefit of a consultant with defined terms of employment as opposed to being an ongoing charge to the public purse?

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I will try to answer in the best way I can, the Honourable Member’s question.

The fact is that these things are flexible because needs may be different in each particular time. As I have said, there have been instances in the last year . . . or not the last year, in the last two years or so, where there have been expert political advisors which have come on to work for Ministers for a short term and then they are done. So it is not an open-ended thing; it is a short-term arrangement.

But I do believe that the part where it says “political advisors” is lifting from the Ministerial Code [of Conduct]. This has been in existence for a very long time. This is not something that is particularly new. It is something that is putting put here, that is being codified in law, understanding these particular things, so we know going forward that if there is any type of change to these provisions they have to come here first in order to be blessed by the Parliament.

But I think it is very clear that we have to recognise the example which I gave earlier. There is an importance to protect the impartiality of the public service. And I can give no better example than in the situation inside of my office where I have persons who are public officers and persons who fall underneath this existing Act. And persons who are public officers do not get involved in the things that are inherently political. And that does not mean doing party stuff inside of government coffers—that is forbidden. That means, whether you are dealing with political advice that has to be given to Ministers, whether or not you are dealing with responding to persons inside of this House or others, making sure that the questions and queries which people have are addressed, or questions and different things that may come from constituents, which may require you to speak to other Ministers at other levels and get that type of intelligence.

And that is the reason why this separation is something that has occurred.

It is something that I have become more cognisant of the longer that I have been in this position—the importance of protecting the impartiality of the public service.

And so, in my office, I know that there are public officers who do certain things and then there are others who are not public officers, who are allowed to touch other things. And that is the way to make sure you preserve the impartiality of the public service.

The Chairman: Any further questions?

Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, in the absence of the Code of Conduct for advisors I would hope that—

The Chairman: What . . . what clause are you speaking on?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: [Clause] 4(2)(b) “political advisors.”

The Chairman: Okay, right.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am saying the Premier had indicated that we would have a code of conduct relating to the operation of political advisors or a code of conduct that would cover what they can and cannot do. I am just wondering if the Premier can give us some indication as to when to expect the Code of Conduct relating to the political advisors so that this whole area can be clarified.

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I thank you very much. I thank the Honourable Member for her question. I know that I have a draft copy here; I know that it has not been finalised. It is largely finished and when it is done—which I would not expect to be any later than the end of June—I will be happy to table it inside of this House. But I am happy to show the Member, after the debate, the draft if she wants to take a peek at it.

The Chairman: Any further questions?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I just have one question, and let me just get the proper clause. And it is with respect to the social insurance . . . the contributory pension, so this is clause 7(3)(a) and [clause] 7(3)(b). It is clear that a consultant working

with the government is not entitled to be on the Contributory Pensions [Act] or Payroll Tax Act or for GEHI.

So the question that I have is: If we do not have advisors, but rather have consultants (this is going back to [clause] 4(2)(b)) . . . if we have advisors rather than consultants, we will actually end up saving that money which could be built into the terms of their consulting agreement.

So my question is: Is the Premier concerned that under [clauses] 7(3)(a) and 7(3)(b) we are visiting on the public purse additional costs that really ought to be borne by the political advisors? As I said, in the absence of the terms of reference under [clause] 4(2)(b) there is no clarity. But under [clause] 4(2)(a) if somebody were an expert in their professional field then, clearly, the terms and conditions of a consulting contract could be easily defined and very clear. But under section 4(2)(b) this is literally anybody who can be picked up as the Premier decides.

Now, I am not looking so much, and this is not intended to suggest anything pejorative about the existing Premier, but any person holding that position . . . this is legislation that does not cover Premier David Burt, this is legislation that covers the office of the Premier. And while I have no doubt that the Premier himself may enforce certain vigilance in terms of what he signs off on, I do not know that this is appropriate to assume for anybody else coming and taking the office. So the question begs, Can we not focus on consultants rather than political advisors?

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much.

The only thing I will say to the Honourable Member is that it is officially broad, but the fact is . . . and as I said during the general debate, there are always different types and constructs. So underneath this particular Act there may be a short-term consultant appointed for . . . who may also be doing other matters, you know, on a fixed-term contract, 15 hours per week, this type of work, until doing this where social insurance and GEHI may not be. And then you have the difference where you have persons who like to serve the Opposition Leader, who like to serve myself, who are constantly with Ministers, especially the busy Ministers, to make sure that all the various items which they have outside of their ministries, their private offices, you know, speech writing, tackling different things, appearances, calendars, gate-keeping, that all those types of particular items are also handled as well.

So as I said, there are different constructs and I think we have to be careful in trying to over specify the different constructs.

And I want to repeat, again, because, as you said, it is not personal to my office, but the office here, and it must be recognised and understood that any Premier or leader of the Government could appoint

consultants at any point in time, whether it is under this or outside of this. This Bill deals with persons who are under the Ministerial Code, specifically. But they can appoint someone else at any point in time and that happens—outside of this particular construct—and we need to be clear on that.

What I am saying is that for these items where persons may be of a political nature or something, to make sure that there are clear boundaries around it, and that is the reason why this is here. But I do not want you to think that, you know, when you were the Minister of Health or the Minister of Works and you might have had a consultant here doing that, that it may not fall under this particular Act, but it was handled a certain way. That right still remains and exists.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Cannonier, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Clause 9 speaks to the fact that the Premier will make a report to the Legislature specifying details of all persons appointed to a personal staff. And I guess what I wanted to . . . and that is commendable. In fact, I am glad to see that this will happen as we go forward. But I did speak concerning this during the general debate that, you know, there is potential for conflict of interest and the likes. And I am wondering if the Premier can let us know that, as a policy, will he allow the Ministers, himself, Opposition, myself, in this capacity, that, as a policy, we will announce if we make new appointments?

And the reason I say that is if the civil service has a job to fill, it is put out in the public notice what that salary might be, the position that they are looking for. And here we are now not covering that specific area with this clause here. So we may hire someone, but will not find out about it until the end of the year. As a policy could we agree to—when those appointments are made—that we would announce them in this House?

Obviously, you know, they could make a statement; I could make a statement, to the effect. So, I am just wondering if he would consider that to avoid some of the conflict and the rumours and the rhetoric that goes on that we both have experienced as governments.

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I thank the Honourable Opposition Leader, as we both experienced this as a Government, because I remember when I was sitting over there.

Here is the thing I will say, Mr. Chairman. I will say I welcome what the Opposition Leader has said. I am not going to commit the Government to that

course of action or policy. I believe what has been stated here inside of this Bill, which adds new transparency—an annual reporting of these particular topics—is far and above where we have been previously. Before it would always be the obligatory question that was asked . . . during our time, last time in Opposition, we asked the question only twice. We did go back and look. The question was asked twice. This will provide for an annual reporting of those particular things and I think it lays it out very well.

And so I do not believe I am going to commit the Government to any particular policy. But I understand what the Opposition Leader is saying, and I will certainly take it under advisement. I think that it is important for us to recognise that if the Government—any Government—is going to make sure that it has the ability to deliver on the actual changes that matter to the people of this country, then we need to make sure that the Government and requisite Ministers have the support which is necessary in order to support that delivery.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Mr. Pearman.

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

Also on clause 9, I support the Premier's indication that he wants to make the House aware of what is going on. However, what is going to be tabled in the House every year is only those people appointed during the previous calendar listing. Would it not make more sense to table a list of all political consultants each year?

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Just so I am clear, clause 9 states that each person employed in that calendar year who has been appointed underneath this particular Act will be reported to the House. I am trying to figure out what shortage there may be.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Well, the obligation under clause 9 is only to table the name of anyone appointed in the last 12 months. If someone was appointed 13 months ago, you would not have their name tabled. If someone was appointed in the previous year, you would not have their name tabled. Would it not make sense, or more sense, just to table the names of all political advisors, as per clause 4(2)(b), and experts in their professional field as to [clause] 4(2)(a)? I mean, just an annual tabling of the political consultants.

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I . . . again, we are not talking about political consultants. But let us just roll this back.

On each year they are published. So in March of 2020, the list will be published and it will cover the period and point in time during the fiscal year. And given that a Parliamentary Question was asked by yourselves, I think that will fill the gap. And then we will . . . it is going to be a new process. So this is new and every year the item will be announced. If the Honourable Member feels that we may have appointed someone between the last question that was asked on this and the beginning of the last fiscal year in April, I believe I have it on authority, given I am the one who approves those, that we have not.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

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

Mr. Chairman, just for clarity, if someone was appointed in the prior year . . . let us say somebody comes on board in January of 2019, as of March 31 they would not have been appointed within this calendar year. Therefore, the report that will come out on March 31 of 2020 would not include those people appointed between, say, January and March of 2019, because it is not within the calendar year. I believe it is important . . . and this is under clause 9. I think it is important that the public is aware of who is still serving.

So I believe the question that my honourable colleague had is that if we have somebody who was appointed, notwithstanding that they may have been . . . we may have known about it because of a Parliamentary Question, what would be the harm in saying at March 31 of next year, *These are the people who are still on board. A, B, C, D persons were appointed prior, and F to J or L people were appointed within this calendar year?* That way we will know whether there is continuity, whether there is somebody who was there before . . . because it does not say that we will speak to the people who have ceased to hold positions during that period. It only says the people who were appointed during that period.

So if somebody ceases their appointment, we will not be able to capture that if we do not know . . . if you were appointed in January you might have stopped in March or April—in April, let us say. You were not appointed during this period of time, but it does not show up. So, if you have somebody who was appointed last January [and] they are still there next March 31, this legislation would not list them.

So, the question is: Is there any way that we can see who is still current as political consultants or . . . what's the other name . . . experts in their professional field?

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I thank the Member for her question and her point. I would see it a completely different way. But I will state the undertaking which I will give. And given that the Hansard is recording this . . . on each and every time that this report is given it will show the persons who were hired under this Act under that calendar year, whether or not they were appointed that year or appointed the year before and all the rest. I am not going to, all of a sudden, not report someone who was being paid out of the public purse.

So, on an annual basis it requires inside of the previous calendar year. So it may be as early as February, or, if the House decides, in January. It may come that soon where the persons who serve underneath this particular Act would be reported to the House. Not whether or not they were actually appointed, but persons who were appointed underneath this particular Act.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

There appear to be none.

Mr. Premier, do you want to move these clauses?

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

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?

There appear to be none.

Approved.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 11 passed.]

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

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.

[Motion carried: The Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 2:43 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members.

Are there any objections to the reporting to the House of the Bill entitled the Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 as printed?

There are none.

So moved.

We will now move on to the next Order, I believe . . . We are actually biding time for a few minutes just to do a little housekeeping here, and then while the housekeeping is being done, we will just move on with that matter at that moment.

And the next Order is actually a motion, and that motion is in the name of the Honourable Premier.

Premier, I was going to read your motion out, but it is very lengthy, so I will let you read out your motion, how is that?

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

The Speaker: Yes.

MOTION

REVISIONS TO MANDATORY PUBLIC SERVICE RETIREMENT AGE

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 10th, 2019.

Mr. Speaker, the Motion reads as follows:

“WHEREAS the Government undertook in the 2018 Speech from the Throne to ‘revise the mandatory retirement age to take account of a longer lifespan, the necessity to add additional stability to pension funds and to promote greater choice among the working population about when one retires from full-time employment’;

“AND WHEREAS the Government undertook to cause the Legislature ‘to discuss options for such revisions to the age of mandatory retirement from the Public Service, which will preserve the right to retire at sixty-five but permit a post holder to work beyond that age without the requirement for permission to do so’;

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House supports the recommendations of the Subcommittee of the Labour Advisory Committee as contained in the Report ‘Reviewing the Retirement Age.’”

The Speaker: All Members heard that. Premier, you can proceed.

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

Mr. Speaker, the concept of retirement is a relatively modern one. For centuries working men and women continued in their trade, field or profession until their health forced them to stop or at least slow down. The modern era of pensions and retirement was introduced in Germany in the 1880s as a means to stave off the growing movement towards socialism. Throughout history the implementation of pensions has been tried with varying degrees of success.

In 2013, in an article for the *Seattle Times* there was a short history of retirement that paints the background for the path pensions and retirement benefits have taken. And if you will give me permission, Mr. Speaker, I will quote from that.

The Speaker: Yes, continue.

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

It reads:

“In 13 B.C., the Roman Emperor Augustus began paying pensions to Roman Legionnaires who had served 20 years. The troops’ pensions were financed at first by regular taxes, then by a 5 percent inheritance tax, according to a 2009 history by Frank Eich, an economist now with the International Monetary Fund.

“In the 16th century, Britain and several European countries offered pensions to their troops, starting with officers and gradually expanding to enlisted men. The first civilian public servant known to have received a pension was an official with the London port authority. In 1684, he was paid half his working income—deducted from the pay of his replacement.

“Thomas Paine, the Revolutionary War firebrand famous for his essay *Common Sense*, called for a 10 percent inheritance tax. Part of the tax was to be used to pay benefits to everyone age 50 and older to ‘guard against poverty in old age,’ according to a history by the Social Security Administration.

“The idea went nowhere.”

Mr. Speaker, here at home the mandatory retirement age of 65 has its origins as far back as the 1950s when it was a set age at which it was likely higher than the average life expectancy. The age has remained unchanged since that time and this, in spite of actuarial advice over several years, is driving the issue surrounding the health of pension plans today.

Mr. Speaker, history will record that it was the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party and the Bermuda Industrial Union that forged the path towards the insti-

tution of pensions for working people in this country. Part of Dr. E. F. Gordon’s landmark petition to the British Government in 1946, then as part of the Bermuda Workers’ Association, the forerunner of the BIU, was the lack of social security or pensions for workers.

It is no coincidence, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation around pensions first came into being in 1968—a year of significant global change. One of the key issues at stake in the 1972 construction strike was the demand for joint contributory pensions on behalf of working people in the skilled labour force.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we come to the present circumstances where, today, we have an opportunity to signal our support for an overdue change in how we approach our working lives. Honourable Members will recall that in last year’s Throne Speech this Government promised to, and I quote:

“Revise the mandatory retirement age to take account of our longer lifespan, the necessity to add additional stability to pension funds and to promote greater choice among the working population about when one retires from full-time employment.”

Mr. Speaker, it is almost trite now to state that we are living longer. The average life expectancy for Bermuda is now 81.3 years. In 1970, the year we introduced compulsory medical coverage for working people, it was 71 years. The retirement age, however, has been unchanged in that time frame.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members and the public will be aware of the various reports that speak to the health of the publicly administered pension funds that are designed to support people after retirement. The Contributory Pension Fund, funded by private sector workers and employers, is underfunded, and increases to the rate of contributions alone will not compensate for the perfect storm of an ageing population and the declining birth rate.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, the Public Service Superannuation Fund, which is to benefit public sector workers, has an unfunded liability. But as my colleague, the Minister of Finance, indicated earlier this year as part of the Pre-Budget Report, the policy of increasing contribution rates by 2.5 per cent above the rate of pension increases has allowed a significant level of funds to build up and, thus, the plan is partially funded, which provides further security benefits.

Mr. Speaker, let me pause and say at this point that those who simply say that we need more people living and working in Bermuda is to do a disservice to that argument when they fail to include those men and women in this community aged 65 and over who can and want to continue working. They, too, will continue to contribute to the economic activity in Bermuda and it is a limited view to suggest that the only lever to be pulled in support of economic growth is that of immigration.

We have other tools to employ in the growth strategy, Mr. Speaker, and this debate must be viewed as one of them.

The last element of that 2018 Throne Speech promise, Mr. Speaker, is that of choice. Personal circumstances may dictate that a working person can retire comfortably at the age of 65. Within the public service to start, that choice will be retained. That leads the second portion of the Throne Speech promise, Mr. Speaker, which also forms part of the motion before this Honourable House (which I read earlier) and that is to invite the Legislature “to discuss options for such revisions to the age of mandatory retirement from the public service, which will preserve the right to retire at 65 but permit a post holder to work beyond that age without the requirement for permission to do so.”

Mr. Speaker, the retention of the choice of the retirement age at 65 is important for those currently in the public service and I wish to make it clear that it is the Bermuda Constitution, section 91(1), which prevents the imposition of any pension term less favourable than those under which a post holder was engaged.

Now, Mr. Speaker, moving on to the report.

Mr. Speaker, having provided the context and background for this debate, I turn now to deal with some of the more significant features of the report of the Sub-committee of the Labour Advisory Committee, [entitled] *Reviewing the Retirement Age*.

Mr. Speaker, the report comprehensively sets out the issues for the consideration of this Honourable House and the wider public. And I am grateful to members of the committee—Senator Jason Hayward, Dr. Claudette Fleming, Lindell Foster, Donald Lottimore, Lauren Smith, Peter Sousa, and Stephen Todd—for the methodology they have applied and the diagnosis of the problem, which extends beyond the natural process of ageing.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, at page 4 of the report in the section headed, *What is the problem?*, the committee states:

“Retirement has become a problem in Bermuda primarily because many persons are not financially prepared to retire. As a result of:

- The lack of access to appropriate pension plans and savings products;
- The lack of opportunity to begin savings at an earlier age; and
- The low levels of financial literacy to make sound financial decisions.”

Mr. Speaker, if we accept the premise of those points it speaks to a systemic flaw in our personal economies exacerbated by the systemic flaws in the general economy. Living longer—and certainly beyond the age of 65—is a demographic reality that must now be married with economic reality. As legislators and representatives of the people, this is an area ripe for our intervention on so many levels. It is a fresh challenge to us to change the paradigm of how we educate our people around financial decisions, investing and money management. More than long life we must want a quality of life for our citizens that can only

be achieved if we are prepared to challenge some of the systemic approaches to finances and personal economic growth in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda is, to some extent, catching up to a number of other democracies. Honourable Members will note on pages 9 and 10 of the report there is a retirement age comparison which sets out how other countries have approached this issue. In some cases, there has been an abolition of mandatory retirement on the basis that it discriminates. Elsewhere minimum retirement ages have been instituted as part of pension reform or to reflect stark declines in the birth rate. In a familiar geographic representation, page 6 of the report draws on the 2016 Census data to reflect Bermuda’s ageing population. Honourable Members will note that between 2010 and 2016 the number of persons aged 65 and over increased by 3 per cent, resulting in the median age of the population increasing from 41 to 44 years.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, as at Census day 2016, 49 per cent of the population is over the age of 45, an increase from the 44 per cent recorded in 2010.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on to the options and recommendations that are contained inside of the report.

Mr. Speaker, the motion now under consideration invites this Honourable House to support the recommendations of the committee as set out in the report. I would invite Honourable Members’ attention to pages 11 through 15 of the report, which canvass these matters.

Option 1—that the status quo should continue, is untenable and, in my opinion, should be dismissed out of hand.

Mr. Speaker, Options 2 through 5 all have merit and will be further examined as we determine how best to effect the implementation of the revision of the retirement age within the public service.

I must highlight, Mr. Speaker, that the options presented are either cost neutral, or present no cost to the Government in their adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise this Honourable House that the committee’s recommendations have been subject to other discussion in Cabinet and that in addition to the views of the Honourable Members in this debate, my expectation is that we will introduce amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Act to give effect to the Government’s policy, which will see an increase in the mandatory retirement age of public officers while preserving the right to retire at the age of 65.

Mr. Speaker, a constant theme that binds the findings of the report is the view that mandatory retirement provisions in our current construct, whether applicable to the public service or as adopted by the private sector, constitutes a form of age discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, the demographic realities of Bermuda mean that there is some force in this argu-

ment. Therefore, I can advise Honourable Members that I have asked the Minister for the Cabinet Office, the Minister responsible for the Human Rights Commission, to advance consultation in conjunction with commissions on the best means by which to further strengthen provisions that deal with age discrimination ensuring, in the words of the report, equality in “recruitment, hiring, compensation, benefits, training, working conditions, and career development.”

And, Mr. Speaker, before I move on with my prepared remarks on this particular matter—and I think it is an important part of the discussion in this debate on this Motion today—and I am looking forward to hearing the contributions of various Members, because, obviously, Mr. Speaker, there certainly is a challenge. Age discrimination is real in Bermuda. It is real and it is something which we experience on the doorsteps.

And the challenge that we see right now with age discrimination, Mr. Speaker, is that it is not just for those persons who may reach the age of 65 and then wish to retire. It is for those persons who are in their 50s who may have been let go from a previous job and who want to work, who may be qualified, but are not given the job because of their age . . . because they are 55, or close to retirement, and for other reasons et cetera, as opposed to someone who may have had longer terms, Mr. Speaker. It is an acute challenge. And I want the persons in the public who are listening to recognise that Government understands that particular challenge. It is more than the conversation of those persons who are over the age of 65. It is also, when dealing with the question of age discrimination, those persons who are close to retirement who still have challenges working.

And the painful stories of those persons who are in their 60s, who may have been let go from a particular job, who literally cannot find work because persons say they are too close to retirement . . . that has to come to an end, Mr. Speaker. And I give the commitment to the persons who are in those particular circumstances that we will deal with that particular issue as it has been dealt with in a lot of other countries. Because it is unfair for persons in that particular circumstance that they are denied the right or opportunity to work just because of their age and their closeness to retirement. I will go on with my prepared remarks, Mr. Speaker.

Likewise, Mr. Speaker, we must address with urgency the financial awareness of our population. So often we work hard and become consumed with meeting the demands of today that the future seems distant. The ability to work longer must be accompanied by the knowledge that enables us to work smarter. We must promise people more than a longer working life, but longer lives of financial security and quality of living.

In the first instance, the Policy and Strategy section within the Cabinet Office will work with the

committee, unions, churches and sports clubs and other key constituencies to implement the recommendation of a financial and retirement planning toolkit, which was recommended inside of the report.

Mr. Speaker, as I commend this motion for the further consideration of the House and the recommendations for the support of its Honourable Members, it is important that I add additional context around the discussion.

All of the dialogue in health care, financial assistance, employment, and now retirement age, may seem as if it is to the exclusion of young people in Bermuda. I wish to make it clear, Mr. Speaker, addressing these issues today will make for a lessened burden on younger, healthier Bermudians today and tomorrow. There is a balance to be struck in the development of any policy, and this Government is keenly aware that we must ensure that Bermuda is open to its young men and women who [on the] whole, and as we have seen, have longer lives ahead of them. This Government is determined to strike that balance.

And while the subject of this debate confines us to targeting a population of over 65s, young people form a key foundation for the growth and diversification of this economy and the cultural nexus of this community. The financial and retirement planning starts with those who are closer to my age than to 65, and the change in the systemic flaws, to which I referred earlier, begins with those who we now support in full-time education and who have long careers ahead of them.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to now commend this motion for the consideration of Honourable Members, and I look forward to the hopeful unanimous support of this Honourable House from the recommendations that have been set out in this report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Leader of the Opposition.
Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will follow where the Premier left off to say that, yes, in fact, we spent some time [considering] this in years in the past and in this current period of time, and we do believe that this is a very well justified move that the Government is taking.

Certainly, I have had the opportunity to read through this report that was provided by the Labour Advisory Committee and I will take just a little time just to go through some of the highlights, as the Premier did, because many in the public have probably not had the opportunity to read this. But it is a great read and the committee did a great job at dispelling some of the myths that are out there about seniors and the fact that we certainly do have a challenge in some

instances where seniors are being overlooked, and those who are not seniors who, as the Premier said, in their 50s, are being overlooked for potential jobs.

What I will say is this: In my working experience I have noticed a continuing trend that many of the 65-year-olds can run circles around some of the 30-year-olds that are in the workplace. And what I have found in my experience, quite frankly, is that the more senior members in the workforce are by far more dependable and accountable in the workforce. Now, that is not to say that young people are not accountable and dependable. But it is becoming more and more apparent that the experience that a 65-year-old has and the vitality and youth that they have has lent themselves to being able to bring a whole lot to the dinner table.

And to have a position whereby it is compulsory for you to retire at 65, quite frankly, goes against the grain of one of the biggest challenges that Bermuda has. And that is a limited number of people—a limited number of people that are paying into the health plan, a limited number of people that are paying into the pension plan.

And I believe that the motion lays out clearly the three approaches to increasing the age of retirement. And that is to take into account the longer lifespan of Bermudians, those in the working field; and to add some stability to the pension fund, which we know we need. And it also offers greater choice, greater choice to Bermudians who own businesses to be able to look at a field of people that cross the spectrum, whether it be . . . in the field of age, per se, which is what we are talking about.

I go back to the fact that . . . and I have said this many times in the House before, Bermuda's birth rate is extremely low. In fact, I have gone as far as to say that it is almost in the negative levels, that we certainly are not providing a next generation after the previous generation—enough of us—in order to be able to pay into the pension funds and the health insurance and the likes to sustain us. And it is one of the reasons why I have pressed and pressed and pressed on the issue of immigration and how we need to get more people into the working field, because we certainly are not having enough Bermudians that we are feeding into the system.

And so I have even jokingly said that we are going to have to ask some people to come out of retirement and have some more kids in order to get our birth rate to a positive level. But it is a major concern.

And one of the ways of being able to address this . . . I believe that the Government is addressing this, and has come to the conclusion that if we do increase the retirement age . . . you know, I am looking at my friend over in the corner there. Cousin, you know there is still availability for a job for you, man, after politics.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And I am extremely concerned about the numbers of those in the working force in Bermuda. We need to start doing something about it immediately. This is one of the ways that we can address it—by extending the age of retirement to 70.

I still was not quite sure, specifically, the recommendation that the Premier is going with. As I read through the report, there were several options that are there. And at the very end of the report it does clearly state what it recommends to Government. And I will go through that as I speak just briefly here.

I also recognise that since 2006 the report states . . . and let me just go to it to quote it exactly, on page 4. It states that “the population aged 65 and over grew by 23 per cent . . .” I think that is a typo, so hopefully whoever is in charge within Government will take a look at that. I think it should be 3 per cent. If you look at the graphs, I believe it should be 3 per cent. But please just check that. I think it is just . . . it is just a typo, I believe. But to have our senior population grow so quickly—in six years—by 3 per cent is quite incredible, and it speaks to the longevity and the health of our older and ageing population in Bermuda. And, certainly, we have some of our challenges when it comes to health, but we are certainly living a lot longer and doing a lot more at a more senior age.

It was highlighted also that if we do not . . . if the problem . . . on page 4 it says, “If the problem is left unaddressed, the financial stress on individuals, pension plans and the Bermuda Government will [continue to] grow.” So I do say and recommend and support this direction that we are going in. I kind of cheekily said to my wife, *Well, you know, you're not going to be able to retire at 65.* Which is, quite frankly . . . well, I should not give her age, but it is literally with—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Not even close to that, man. On one hand, less than half of one of my hands, incredibly.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: But that . . . she may have to wait a couple of years. I must say, she started throwing things around.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, I am just teasing there.

But one of the challenges I have recognised is that too many think of a retirement plan far too late in Bermuda. And maybe that is because, you know, Bermuda has done so well financially over the past years . . . decades. That is not the case now, and we are seeing more and more and more where our sen-

iors are finding it far more difficult to survive in the economic environment that we are in. We also recognise that employers are having difficulty—those of us who own our own businesses—in being able to maintain Bermudian staff. And so we need to be able to know that we have an option, and this provides one of those options for us.

But, again, there are far too many of us . . . we need to get (which is addressed in this report) to getting the information out there. And I am glad to see that the recommendation in here says that the Government needs to get more information out there about the options and how to start that planning early on in age, and even at a later age, that you should be taking this into consideration. Because all of us, you know, I guess at some point in time we feel like we have been drinking from the fountain of youth and pretty soon age does catch up with us, and so we do need to be planning.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Speak for myself, yes.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We do need to start planning so that we can continue to have a healthy workforce at a later age.

Now, I wanted to go over to page . . . if you do not mind, Mr. Speaker. Let me just find it here very quickly. Again, I will just say hopefully that we can get that typo fixed so that the public, if they do get a hold of this report, can actually get the right numbers.

On age discrimination, on page 8, it states that during the same period (talking about from 2000 to 2030) it is expected that the 65-plus will go from 11 per cent to 22 per cent. I mean, that is not too far from now, when you think about it, and that is a tremendous number of members of the 65-and-over age [group] that will be in that bracket.

And many companies, as we heard the Premier speaking to this here, were using the justification that if one senior goes out then that provides an opportunity for another young person to come in. And I get that kind of thinking; I understand that. But one of the things that is challenging is it still does not fit within the challenges that we are having here in Bermuda.

Now, certainly, there will be job categories where it would be adverse to have seniors—maybe which require more physical-type work—in those particular positions. But I do believe that we need to come up with a plan. We need to come up with a policy that addresses this issue which is fair to everyone, because certainly young people might start saying that this is age discrimination as well. And so it is going to be important that this Government, as they move forward with this motion, comes up with something that addresses all the needs. When we start talk-

ing about age discrimination, it may not just be a case of seniors; it could be a case of those younger as well complaining about this here. But I do believe that we can strike that balance in Bermuda, knowing that we have a limited number of people that are working within that workforce.

Now, when it comes over to the recommendations that were made by this report, I must say that some great detail has gone in to come up with . . . not creative, but just some very logical approaches to what it is that we need to be doing. And I take note that on the very last . . . on page 15, Mr. Speaker, I will read this out because it is important for us to be very clear on the recommendation for the Government. So it will be interesting to see what the Premier comes back with, but the recommendation number one says that this committee recommends:

“Create a single piece of legislation that sets a retirement age, a pensionable age and allows for re-employment provisions. The aims of the legislation will:” (Bullet point one) “Gradually increase the retirement and pensionable age simultaneously from 65 to 70 over a 10-year period, with the retirement age moving to 68 within a 5-year period.”

And then, of course, that second half period moving it to 70, and this makes sense. I see the logic in that. It gives people the opportunity to prepare. It gives anyone within the private sector who wishes to do this also to move in that direction. We do understand that this has to do with the civil service, the public service, and not private business itself. But this is setting a precedent for others to be able to follow. And, again, I want to be sure that the public is aware that this motion refers to civil service, the public service of Bermuda, and not to the private sector. But, certainly, we want our Government to be leading the way when it comes to this.

And the second bullet point says to “Allow for annual re-employment contracts to be utilised for five years after the prescribed retirement age.” And I kind of like that one because you can allow someone to retire, Mr. Speaker, at 65 with this recommendation that is being made and it gives the employer the opportunity to bring them back as a consultant. It is kind of like the employee having his cake and eating it too. He gets to retire, is receiving his pension, but at the same time he can be brought back as a consultant for the company and this allows the company to be able to do this and reduce its costs at the same time. Because one of the challenges that we have, as Bermudian business owners, is the increased cost in running a business in Bermuda, and it is becoming increasingly—increasingly—difficult to survive in the environment that we are in. And by doing this recommendation it helps aid in the overall running of a company—and I am talking about Bermuda businesses—running of Bermuda businesses so that they can survive in the environment, the challenging environment, that is there.

It continues on to say, “Ensure early retirement provisions are in place for workplace pensions and CPF payments.” I mean, these bullet points, they have gone into great detail to have options that are creative, but at the same time are hitting home at what really needs to be done.

It also goes on to a second point: “Create new legislation or utilise existing legislation to [avoid] age discrimination.” I do not know how far this administration is going to go with that, but certainly starting out from the blocks, what we do want to see is a single piece of legislation coming forward—they will have a policy in place, obviously, for civil service which will move it from 65 to 70 over a 10-year period which, again, as I say, really does make some sense. I do not know if that is the case. I did not hear the Premier say that specifically, so it will be interesting to see whether or not he is making that commitment now or he is going to be coming back after having gone through this report.

I do want to say thank you to those who put this report together. I would encourage all Members of Parliament, if they have not had the opportunity, it is a fairly easy read, it is about 15 pages, but it does lay out clearly where we are as an Island, the challenges that we are having, and it does seek to address those challenges when it comes to the increasing [number] of those who are of retirement age.

And so I will say this, Mr. Speaker, we do support the addressing of this issue. We thank the Labour Advisory Committee for going through the process of seeking out solutions to this challenging situation that we have, and it will be interesting to see how the public responds to this here as well as we move forward. But I do believe that the seniors of Bermuda have a great amount of resources, information, experience, that is invaluable to us. I certainly would love to see more of our seniors in the school system, *per se*. They may not have gotten the educational certificate to teach, but certainly through life’s experiences and the history of Bermuda they have a whole lot to offer to our young people in understanding what it means to be a good citizen of Bermuda.

And so with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I will leave others to comment to this here and we welcome this Motion.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member . . . we recognise the Deputy Speaker.

Deputy, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear that the Opposition Leader is supporting this motion and hopefully the legislation will follow very, very, shortly in removing this discrimination based on age.

Some folks think that age discrimination only happens to older people. It happens also to young people, as the Opposition Leader alluded to, but mostly to the older folks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what puzzles me is that when the age of retirement was set in the 1950s . . . that is what? It was over 80 years ago, almost, . . . 70 years ago, I should say. No adjustments have been made since then. And one must ask, why not? It could be a personal conflict of interest because I think the actuarial fraternity should have been the ones who should have been addressing this to keep it up to date, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in Bermuda the government has a policy that you can work until 70, but you have to write a letter indicating that you want to do it, and then the decision is made by one person. And, Mr. Speaker, with the 5,000-odd workers that the government has, there are only 14 people working past the age of 65 in government—four of them are permanent. That is ridiculous! It is shameful, it is embarrassing. To have a policy just for show . . . that is what I am going to call it. It is just for show because the way that we have treated seniors in this country is criminal. Those are my words—it is criminal, Mr. Speaker. All the good work that they have done, come at 65, you send them home. You are competent at 64, but you come 65, all of a sudden you become incompetent.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you have reports from the OCED [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development] and the United Nations, and what they are saying to countries is to expedite the eradication of this age discrimination in the workplace. That is the report from them. So I know we are on the right track, even though we are late, we are on the right track, and I am happy that we are on that track, Mr. Speaker.

Now, why should these funds, particularly the fund, be adjusted every so often? Because, Mr. Speaker, when you are on a defined benefit plan, you have to adjust those funds according to the demographics as they change. If not, we are going to be, as we are now, we are millions and millions, almost a billion dollars underfunded.

And, Mr. Speaker, some folks have got it . . . they are probably misunderstanding because if you work in government and you retire, you can retire on up to 60 per cent of your salary. But that is provided you worked the maximum 40 years. If you worked 40 years, you can retire at 60 per cent of your fund. Now, if you worked less than that you get less. So I want to make it clear to folks that you do not retire on 60 per cent of your fund—that is the maximum you can retire on under the defined benefit plan—you can only do that if you worked 40 years.

And, Mr. Speaker, for the social insurance, in order to get maximum benefits from the social insurance you must work, you must contribute, 2,178

weeks. That is 40 . . . just under 42 years of contributions in order to get the maximum.

Well, Mr. Speaker, now let me say this, also . . . I must mention the Bermuda Hospitals Board. They have a policy that . . . just prior to 65 you write in for an extension. You can stay to 70 providing you provide the necessary requirements every year of a doctor's certificate to say you are healthy and so on. But, Mr. Speaker, they too have just got a policy, [but they are] playing with it, because I do know of, just recently, two nurses, Bermudian nurses . . . a world shortage of nurses and they let [them] go. And, in fact, they start the process of replacing them when they are 64 because they advertise for the job. So the policy they have is a fallacy. They have no intention of keeping anybody on at 65-plus, particularly with nurses, where there is a worldwide shortage, they let these people go. So they have got their own policy they are not adhering to, Mr. Speaker.

Now, what makes a fallacy out of all of this here [is that] teachers and judges can stay to 70 providing (and this is under legislation) the same criteria, they write in. And let us say a judge stays until 70 and he has to retire from the bench, but he can be called to be a judge on the Privy Council, the Court of Appeal.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, until . . . ever. That makes no sense. You are telling judges, *You can stay until ever, but Miss Smith, you've got to go home at 65, you may be able to stay until 70.* It makes no sense.

In fact, down at the hospital, you are telling nurses and others they have got to go home at 65, but you have got doctors in surgery at 70. It makes no sense. It makes a mockery of the whole system. And that really annoys me.

Mr. Speaker, we have one hotel in Bermuda that has a policy that you can stay until 70. But what they actually will do at 65 is ask that you resign. And then they take you back on for a period. And each year you have to apply again. And all your seniority starts over from zero, Mr. Speaker. But do you know what makes a mockery of this, the policy they have at this hotel? The person administering this policy is 74.

An Hon. Member: Seriously? No!

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: You know it makes no sense. This is what annoys me, Mr. Speaker, how they are treating seniors.

In fact, a government worker, if you will permit me to read these few lines, Mr. Speaker, this person says, *I can no longer work in my present job in the Bermuda Government. I am an able-bodied person*

that received an excellent report from my doctor stating that I am quite able to continue in my present position. But I have been told that my extension request has not been approved. The appraisal process was completed early this year along with my FJP and I have received nothing but excellent reports. And this person has to go home.

I really do not think those that have the authority to approve these extensions really know the trauma that they are causing to these folks. You see, blacks and poor whites only just started getting pensions, and it is not that much that they get. They do not have the excess funds via investments to supplement any pensions that they may be getting, so they have to work.

And when you send them home and they have got the bills, one thing that goes up automatically is their health insurance. That is another discrimination, where insurance companies, if you want to continue . . . now, some companies are very good. Some companies will keep their people on at a reduced rate. I know one person, they have kept this lady on, they made her redundant at about 62, and they kept her on their insurance policy until she leaves this earth and does not pay a dime—that is an exempt company. And so some [companies] treat their people good, but some . . . and you do not have to because they cannot afford it or do not keep you, that does not mean the company is bad, but they have to get an insurance policy.

And really, the insurance companies really do not want you after you go 65 because, I guess, they figure you are digging into their profits—and that is a no-no for them, Mr. Speaker. And the policies, if they do not go on FutureCare or HIP, if you get a policy . . . I am sure at least one of the seniors in this House can tell you what they pay for health insurance is more than paying rent. And that is not right. And we should not be allowing insurance companies to discriminate against seniors who have, as the song would say, *I built this city . . . and now this is the way you're treating me?* It is not right to treat our seniors like that, Mr. Speaker. They just send them home.

Mr. Speaker, the retirement age . . . in fact, in an OECD report it says that the life expectancy of a 65-year-old has increased five years over the average. But they said that over the period of 2010 to 2020 a 65-year-old woman could expect to live at least 22 more years on average. That is 87, and that is great.

Our people are living longer, times have changed, and in 20 years' time we will have many centenarians living in this country. When I think of my good friend, Mr. Place, who I think is 103 or 104, he has got more hair than most of us up here. He drives. He goes to church on Sundays, and he walks every day. Great! And I think last week Friday, it was Dismont Knight, and he was dancing in the streets. You know, this is good stuff!

And you tell those people who have gone 65 who come to work despite any pains they may have . . . they are reliable. They know what they are doing. I know there is a lady (I am not going to call her name) who works in this law firm, she does not have a law degree, but none of the lawyers can tell her about conveyance, she does all of the conveyances. She knows it. And hopefully they will not send . . . I think she has gone 65 and she is still working. So I guess the company understands that this is a great person that is working there so they keep her, Mr. Speaker.

But setting a mandatory retirement age . . . that is not the answer. You should take retirement based on a case-by-case basis. That is how you should take retirement, because some people at 40, [they] should retire. You have them, right? So let us not think because some are 65 you should retire these folks, that is not so. We should not be treating our seniors like that, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, in Bermuda . . . well, in the UK in a report that was done, they said by 2020 a third of the workers in the UK will be people over 50 years old. Well, in Bermuda, by 2020 just over 50 per cent of the workers in this country, will be over 50 years old, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think I have said it before, when the baby boom crowd matures very shortly to that age 65, they will be asking people to come back to work.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Well, in fact, in Canada . . . well, in fact, Switzerland has the highest percentage of seniors in the workforce. And in Canada there is a labour shortage of people in the health industry, education, and construction and they are trying . . . they are encouraging people to come back out to work, Mr. Speaker. And this will happen because we have produced fewer babies.

And, Mr. Speaker, the fund, the pension fund . . . many countries are doing reform on their pension funds because they are all . . . most of the pension funds are not sustainable based on the defined benefit plan. Now, you will find that most companies—a lot of companies, private companies—will have a defined contribution plan. And the pension is based on how well the fund has done. So they cannot tell you whether you can get . . . they will not tell you if you are getting 60 per cent, 20 per cent, or 70 per cent in returns for your contributions. But what they do is, once you retire, they give you the money and you have to buy an annuity and that is where you get your pension.

But that is . . . and the value of that pension that you get from them is based on how well the fund has done. Not so with defined benefit plans and that is why they are so underfunded. And that is why, whatever the legislation that we write, we need to treat the

fund as we treat the census, it has got to be visited every five years to see . . . in order to sustain the fund's health.

In fact, in France they have just done that and they have done it where the fund will be able . . . it is improved, [it will] probably sustain itself (I did not see the report, I am just reading it) up until 2040 when they will do another one. But what they have done in France is they have increased, starting in 2020, how many years you put into the fund, how many contributions you put into the fund. That will determine what you get. And I think the objective in France is to have you . . . before you can get the maximum pension that you contribute for 43 years.

And in Switzerland what they do to supplement their fund, they use some revenues from the VAT to supplement it. And so we have a very serious problem here. We have obviously got to make some adjustments. We cannot continue the way we are going with fewer people in the workforce and, certainly, our birth rates are not outnumbering our deaths. And we hope they would . . . if we can stop the deaths, but I guess we cannot stop that until Jesus comes, Mr. Speaker.

But here in Bermuda what we are doing . . . we are breaking the law. What we are doing in this country would be unlawful in other countries. You know, in Canada and in the United Kingdom, when you advertise for a job you cannot mention anything about age. If you had it in your advert, *Come join this nice young dynamic team*, that is discrimination. You cannot mention that. In fact, in the job interview you cannot ask them their age. The only time you can ask them their age is when you are offering them a job. You cannot do that. You cannot ask a lawyer in Canada how many years they have . . . what year they were called to the Bar because you are trying to indicate their age. When you are ready to offer a job, then you can go there.

And what we are doing in Bermuda [is] sending people out to pasture and [we] really do not know the effect that we are having on our people. And we must stop that, and we must stop it immediately! Hospitals, sports must stop it! The government must stop it immediately because I can tell you there is not a day that I walk the streets of Hamilton . . . and I do not like to come to Hamilton, it is not the best place in Bermuda, you know where the best place is, in the Holy Land down in Hamilton Parish, but—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: But many of our folks ask me about this retirement age, you know, because they cannot afford to go home. And so they are concerned about it because once they go home, their life certainly will change in terms of the income and we cannot have that, Mr. Speaker, not in this little Island like Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, you know, in Bermuda once somebody goes 55 they probably do not even send them for training. That is discrimination. That is against the law in Canada, it is against the law in the UK, and even in the United States—that is against the law. You cannot pass up somebody because they are 55 or 60 and you are not going to send them for training. You cannot not recruit people gone 55 or not recruit them because of age. That is against the law. But we do it in Bermuda. We do it every day.

But I was reading . . . I do not normally read the . . . whatever the thing [is] that comes out every day, but yesterday I was somewhere and I saw a piece of it and I was reading the classified and they had “Help Wanted” and one of the companies was an exempt company and they said, *We do not discriminate*. And their advert was on time and their discrimination is . . . no discrimination on age or anything. I will not name the company. Maybe I should, but I am not going to do that. So we do have some folks in Bermuda that are doing the right thing, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I am asking again, because some people are concerned, yes, if you . . . the intent of the Government [is] if you want to retire at 65, you can. But the intent is to take it to, in the first instance, 68. I would go right to 70, but 68, that is fine. And so you will not get your pension at 65, but when you get your pension at 68, you will get a larger pension because you are putting more into it. So you do not lose out; in fact, you gain. You cannot get your pension and expect to stay on the job and get your full wages. That is not going to happen.

So there will be some adjustments there, but the Government is not saying that you cannot go at 65. Some people can afford to go at 65, and that is fine, let them go.

But those that cannot go at 65, we need to keep them on and let them continue because what you have today in a lot of places, particularly in government, we are promoting people before their time and they really do not have it together yet. It is not their fault; it is their age. But if they stayed there along with that senior who can mentor them, the mistakes that Pat made when she was 20, she can tell that younger person, *No, no, don't do it that way, I made that mistake*. So that person will not have to go through that. They will be that [much] further ahead. And so my message to young folks [is], you need to treasure the seniors around you, they have got a lot to give, and you can learn a lot from them. There is a lot of wisdom there. These are some of the best employees you can find today—people who are 65 years old.

So, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of the fund, the sustainability of the fund, and the interests of the financial health of our workers, I certainly support this. I have been supporting this for many, many, years. And I just pray that the legislation will come here within 14 days so we can pass that before Cup Match.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, the Premier included in his remarks about the 1947 petition that was taken to London by the late Dr. E. F. Gordon. And you will know—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Deputy Speaker said, *That is my sister's daddy*. He is also my daddy. So you will know, Mr. Speaker, that when one grows up in an environment where that sort of attitude permeates the home, even before I was born—1947—before I was born—

The Speaker: You were born in 1947?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I said *before* I was born.

An Hon. Member: Yes, yes, she was born in 1947.

[Laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, I . . . you can certainly understand, Mr. Speaker, that the concern for seniors is something that is ingrained in my DNA. It is who I am.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just took his seat spoke to the idea of people being pensioned off and remaining on the job. If you get your pension, you cannot expect to receive a full pension and stay working in the workforce. Well, let me say that I took that, not just to heart, but literally, because you will know that we have a social insurance plan that is in place. And because I was still working in the workforce, I was unaware—and that is because of how woefully inadequate the systems are, that I was unaware—that because I was still working I was entitled to have the pension that comes out of the social insurance at the age of 65. So I was still working. A year later, making some inquiries for my CEO, I realised that I was actually entitled to get that pension on a monthly basis from a year before—a year and three months before, truth be told.

So because I was unaware of it, I have had a mandate—a personal mandate, subsequent to that—to make sure that everybody is aware that just before you turn 65, you call up the social insurance office, you make sure you fill out the necessary paperwork, so that you are not done out of a years' worth of contributions, which has been my experience. I made the

appeal, the appeal did not matter. It was like, no, you should have known.

The Speaker: It is need-based.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Well, and it is not even need-based, Mr. Speaker, because I do not believe that there is any one of us who serves in this Honourable House . . . I would not say *none of us*, but, certainly, very few of us in this Honourable House have an independent wealth whereby whatever the amount was (it was something like \$1,200 per month) it would be unimportant to receive that money. That money stayed in the government coffers.

I believe that in the absence of the department advising people that you are entitled to A, B, C, that this money is there and you should be able to get it. As opposed to somebody deciding that, *Oh, I'll look at your case and I'll give you three months back pay, but I won't give you any more than that.* It was my money. It is there, it is in the system, give me my money. With that said, I am trying to ensure that nobody else suffers that fate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we seem to have an attitude toward our seniors which is tantamount to the teaching that I had when I was studying accountancy and doing inventory. In inventory you had what was called a LIFO or a FIFO—LIFO being last in, first out and FIFO being first in, first out. And Mr. Speaker, we treat our seniors like the FIFO. They are first in the system, they have got to be first out the other side, without paying homage to the value that they bring to the equation for the experience that they have in their industry.

Now, I look at the report on page 4 and it speaks to the problem having “lack of access to appropriate pension plans and savings products; lack of opportunity to begin savings at an earlier age; and the low levels of financial literacy to make sound financial decisions.”

Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand that this is getting better with time. Now, we did not have in place from way back when in the 1930s and 1940s and 1950s what we actually ended up putting in place . . . I believe it was in the late 1990s, in terms of the contributory pension and . . . or the occupational pension requirement of 5 per cent of your pay. So that is something that has come up that has been relatively new. Therefore, people who had been working prior to that had not had that mandatory setting aside of funds out of their occupational pension money in order to build up money on which they can afford to retire when they hit the age of 65 or whatever age was going to be deemed to be appropriate.

So obviously one of the challenges that comes as a result of that is that we have lots of people who are now forced to go home because they have reached that magic age—whatever that magic age happens to be—and they do not have the means, they

do not have the income to support the expenditure that they had, as the Honourable Member said, yesterday. They had to pay the rent. Next month, when the first of the month comes, the rent still has to be paid, but there is no revenue coming in, there is no pay cheque coming in to be able to support them carrying on.

So, clearly, if one has the ability to be able to work and carry on and be able to continue to have an income, especially in the absence of new people coming into our workforce, you know, we cannot look at the first in, first out. If we had a one for one, if we had a plethora of new people coming into the system, maybe my attitude might be a little bit different in terms of how I would address the problem, but I would certainly never say that somebody, just because they hit a certain chronological milestone, that they are deemed to have to be put out to pasture. That is definitely inappropriate.

Now I know that the recommendations of the Committee were to the extent that they think that Government ought to be able to implement certain policies and that they cannot enforce within the private sector those things that the Government ought to do. But I can say that there is certain legislation that we have that does delve into the private industry and I think that there are times when we should be looking at things like this.

Let me say there are things such as health insurance, Mr. Speaker, you have people you retire . . . and I am going to . . . I may have mentioned this situation in Parliament before and I am happy to mention it again. When people retire from work, they may have been carried on their company's insurance up until the date of retirement. You retire and now you find yourself out—no revenue coming in from a pay cheque, and no insurance coverage because you are terminated from the company.

Now the question begs, why can we not, as the Government, mandate that companies carry their seniors after retirement? Now that can be done in a myriad of ways. They can say we will carry that senior, or retirees, we will carry them on our company policy, but you pay the premium. That is fine. You can say, as the Honourable Member said, they can carry the retirees on their pension . . . I mean, sorry, on their insurance, and they pay the premium, if they are a good company, or some combination of the two in varying degrees of contribution. But to drop somebody coldly and to say, *Sorry, you don't work here anymore and we don't want to keep you on.* And what is the reason, Mr. Speaker? *Because we don't want you now as a senior (who is likely to have more health challenges) which is going to end up pushing up the premium rates for the rest of the employees who are young and healthy and are not going to have the claims experience that you might have as a senior. So, go figure it out.*

So one can go (as I have seen happen) from paying \$1,100 per month for an insurance premium for health insurance to almost \$1,700 a month for health insurance, with that differential coming at a time when there is no revenue coming in from a salary perspective. That cannot be right. There is no reason why we cannot mandate that coverage to carry on, because companies, when they incorporate in Bermuda, have certain civic responsibilities. And in those civic responsibilities we can dictate the things that they should and at the very least they should be able to do.

And I do not see that because companies, just by their nature, have the ability to negotiate better rates . . . because if one could pay \$1,100 this month and next month one is not insured, I mean you are not working, and next month you pay \$1,600 . . . it is the same employee, the same circumstances, the same claims experience. There is no reason why an individual could not stay on that plan. The company should be made to do that. And they may have certain criteria.

As an example, let us say if an employee has been employed for over, let us say, five years—pick a number, I do not care what the number is—but to say that at least if you have worked for a company for “X” number of years, then you will qualify so that you do not find . . . you know, a company does not pick up somebody and six months later they find that they are encumbered for the rest of that person’s natural life to hold them on their insurance policy. There is certain give and take. So I am not prescribing specifically the terms and conditions that must be employed, but certainly something that the Government can step in to do to say that this is what is fair, if you are really looking out for the workforce.

Because we do have a new phenomenon within the health industry, Mr. Speaker, in which people are just living longer. So you are finding people who are 80 . . . I think in the past week we have seen a couple of centenarians who have celebrated their 100th or 100-plus birthdays and the like. These people still have to be looked after. They have health issues, they have housing issues, some of them, if they are blessed enough to have their own homes and what have you. Then maybe they have got halfway decent children who will make sure that momma keeps a roof over her head.

But we also look at the discrimination that happens, from a seniors’ perspective, when they have children who do not particularly care to look out for whether momma and daddy are okay. That mom and dad have worked for their house and for some reason (and I call them) a worthless child is going to say that, *Oh, you know what? Momma needs to move out so that I can move in.* These are things that we have to look out for. We have to protect our seniors and in so doing, to the extent that they can remain in the workforce, they remain vital, the creative juices continue to

flow and they do not stay home and vegetate. That is what we need to do.

Now, I want to speak for a moment on the occupational pension funds. Because what happens, Mr. Speaker . . . the legislation dictates public and private sector. The legislation dictates that a person must contribute to the occupational pension fund. The pension legislation dictates that when a person reaches the age of 65 and they retire . . . and this is not taking away the ability of anybody to retire, based on the recommendations, but if one retires after 65, one can claim from their contributory pension balance 7 per cent of the amount that is outstanding at the end of the prior financial year. So in 2019 they figure out what your balance was at the 31 December 2018, and you can take 7 per cent of that money and you can do that on an annual basis until you reach the age of 70. When you get to the age of 70, they allow you to take 10 per cent of the balance that existed at the end of December of the year before.

Now, while that might look on the face of it like it is okay, when you stop to think about it, those pension funds are subjected to the vagaries of the markets. Those pension funds are invested by pension administrators, and there is nothing to say that an investment would not go south. So you might find that, you know, last year end your pension value might have been, let us say, \$200,000 or \$300,000, and you get to the end of next year and because the markets have tanked that same pension is only valued at maybe \$100,000 or \$150,000. There is nothing you can do about it because you cannot go down to the pension company and say, *I want my money out*, because you are prescribed by law that you can only take 7 per cent out.

But here is what is very interesting about that, Mr. Speaker. If one should die, once one becomes deceased, their beneficiaries of their estate get *all* the rest of it all at one time. So you can work really your whole life. Let us say, you have saved up and you have got \$100,000 in your pension account. You managed to get 7 per cent out of it last year. The current year going the money has built up again because the markets have been favourable, and then you get to the end of that year and you take out another 7 per cent, and then you drop dead. So you have effectively got very nearly \$100,000 that you could not get that you children can come and say, *Oh well, momma’s dead, momma’s gone—*

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: One hundred per cent after death—100 per cent.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Oh, I do not know, it might work differently on government.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Parliamentarians, well, they treat us like the forgotten stepchildren so, we do not count—

[Laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —and I think that is important to recognise, that we are not . . . we are talking about real people, in the real environment, in a real workforce. That is what I am referring to. That is what the law prescribes.

So I say that to say that we have some people who have mortgages when they retire, but they cannot go and say, *I want a lump sum out of my pension to pay my mortgage money so that way I do not have that stress month after month after month.* There have to be hardship reasons and only twice in a lifetime that one can go and take all of their pension funds.

Now I would like, while we are looking at hardships on seniors, for consideration to be made that maybe a senior, or seniors . . . there can be an availability for a senior to go and say, *I don't care if I pay a penalty for early withdrawal of my money—take 2 per cent of the balance—and give me my money and let me do it now.* However, if I have it, I will make myself ineligible to sign up for government assistance for “X” period of time. And I think that something like that is fair because people will take their money out, they will do with it what they think they must do with it, they will pay their mortgage, they will pay their bills, and they will be able to manage it and manage it well. And that can be elective, so it does not necessarily have to be prescribed, but certainly the capacity for it to be elective might be worth considering.

Now, we have also looked at the report in which the committee has spoken to reducing the financial stress on government's pension plans and their financial assistance programme. I am not going to speak to FAP, but certainly the pension plans, because from a government employee's perspective the PSSF [Public Service Superannuation Fund] and other pension plans are a defined benefit plan. In most civilised environments and jurisdictions, they have moved away from defined benefit to a defined contribution.

While defined benefits may be more appealing than defined contributions, certainly, knowing that it is difficult . . . I think when we looked at the chart, the committee had decided that there was almost a billion dollars of unfunded liability in the Public Service Superannuation Fund, or \$848 million. That is a significant [amount] of money, which will never be made up. So as long as we have these defined benefits, it is going to get worse.

So how do we arrest that negative trend? In order to arrest that, we have to change the system. Now, you do not necessarily change the system for

people who are already in. What you could do is say to anyone coming into the civil service as of a certain date: *You know you are coming in under different terms and conditions than what existed before because we cannot afford it.* Now, we are going to move from a defined benefit to a defined contribution methodology so that we can afford to pay people. Because the way this is going, you are going to get some people that are not going to get any money when it is time for them be paid off. There is not going to be anything there for them.

An Hon. Member: Jesus might come before then.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And Jesus might come before then, as the Honourable Member says. And I accept that because tomorrow is not promised to anybody. But I think to the extent that we have the ability to show how we can make recommendations to make sure that things work out for people, then we have a responsibility to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I am mindful of the criticisms that I have gotten since this motion has been tabled, that we have people saying that, you know, their parents have educated them, they have come home from school, they cannot find jobs, and now you are saying that these older people should stay in the workforce and preclude [these young people] from getting a job. Well, we have already seen, albeit we have not been given any empirical evidence, or even statistical evidence at this point to say that there is not a one-out, one-in kind of environment going on. I think that we still have to look at . . . we have to explain to young people that, *You also have to play your part. We want to make sure that we embrace you.* As a Government, we have to ensure that we are providing an environment in which job creation is rife, such that our young people coming in from school have something else to look forward to and not necessarily at the expense of seniors who are already on the job.

So those seniors have a value as the Honourable Member from [constituency] 5 indicated that people can learn from others' experiences. I would not even say mistakes. You can learn from others' experiences. So to the extent that you can have somebody who has done a job in a certain way, even though there are new and innovative methodologies by which those jobs can change, the person who has the depth of experience and knowledge in what the corporation requires, in what the government requires, they can assist somebody coming into the workforce to be able to help to train them.

I can remember not too long ago, I cannot remember the exact year, but in any case a particular senior civil servant had reached the age of 65, had made the mandatory application for extension, had good reviews, had been deemed to be a well-qualified individual, but was told by whoever was the final arbiter of the situation, *Sorry, the answer is no.* So you

have somebody who is vital, who is healthy, who is alert, who is educated, who is intelligent, who has all of the attributes that a senior may need to have . . . and, interestingly enough, I laud the praises of the individual because that individual actually has a birthday which is the same day as my dad. So I can live to that, I can speak to that. But [this person] was basically told, *Sorry, no; go home*. But the Honourable Member indicated that this was predicated on a decision that was made by one individual. And I think that we have to start to look at that.

So we cannot pay lip service to situations where we consider it to be serious enough that we have to protect our seniors. We have to protect the intellect that they have developed. We have to protect what they have put into our community, and what their circumstances are, that we cannot just throw people out to pasture just because they have hit a chronological sequence of age. So, I just wanted to support what the committee has written and have the Government actually consider how they can change that pension, especially the Public Service Superannuation Fund from a defined benefit to a defined contribution so that we do maintain a level of stability and sustainability within the Public Service Superannuation Fund.

I also, Mr. Speaker, want to underscore that when somebody else dictates whether you can or cannot afford to eat or sleep or drink or have a roof over your head, then, that is not a healthy thing. So I think that our seniors have to have a certain level of input and that input has to be respected and taken account of when decisions are being made. Notwithstanding this report was done and it was done with great intentions, I do not think that this report is the be-all, end-all. I think that this report, or this situation needs to have broader input from the community. I think we should be doing much more and going further and having far more town hall meetings and getting input from people who found themselves in a situation where they feel as though they may have been discriminated against.

Some people do not even want to speak up because somehow when you speak up that kind of goes as a strike against you. But I just want to make sure that whatever we do, that we consider that there is value in our seniors and that we respect them for what they have contributed to our economy and to our country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 21. Member Commissiong, you have the floor.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Mr. Speaker, thank you. It is great to be here today.

I think that this is a very important conversation. I think there are few seminal issues which will have as much of a profound impact on our economy, more broadly, and more specifically in the areas of health care, our pensions, [and] our labour market. I could go down the list. There are few issues that are going to have such a profound impact on our lives than this issue that we are talking about here. And I am not just specifically talking about age discrimination. I am not specifically talking about the increase in retirement age. Those are reactions to this underlying trend of a rapidly ageing population.

I remember reading a book . . . I forget the title now, going back about 12 to 15 years ago. And I am happy to have amongst us Ms. Claudette Fleming, if I may say so, Mr. Speaker. She has been a champion of our seniors for going on two decades and she needs to be commended for the work that she has done, not only on behalf directly of our seniors, but in raising awareness around this issue over those last two decades. And I remember . . . I still have this book. I still have it at home, I think. It was written by a very noted demographer. And the thing that stood out to me, he talked about when those populations enter into what he described, a very powerful metaphor, as *demographic winter*. When an ageing population within their respective country reaches a certain point, that is what it is.

And I can tell you right now, along with Japan and a few others who may be far more down the road than we are, it may not be that far actually, we are right there and probably in the top five or six countries of having an ageing population. And that is what has brought us to these public policy considerations such as raising the retirement age and some of the other things from the work of this excellent committee.

And I want to commend this committee as well, Mr. Speaker, from the Labour Advisory Committee. That subcommittee, and the names have been read already, and I just want to reiterate them: Senator Jason Hayward, President of Bermuda trade in Congress; Claudette Fleming (we made mention of her) Executive Director of Age Concern in Bermuda; Lindell Foster, Bermuda Employers' Council; Donald Lottimore, First Vice President of Bermuda Trade Union in Congress; Lauren Smith, Labour Relations Officer, Governmental Labour Relations; Peter Sousa, Chief Executive Officer, Pension Commission; and Stephen Todd, Chief Executive Officer, Bermuda Hotel Association.

They have done some excellent work. Because, Mr. Speaker, when you get to a point where 49 per cent of your population is over the age of 45, then you know you have a major challenge. And I might just add that I gave a list of the more specific impacts on the issue of immigration. That is going to be another one; let us be honest about it. Let me just [get] down to the brass tacks here. This issue is going to transform Bermuda in a way that many of us can

hardly imagine over the next 25 years, the way Bermuda looks, its racial and ethnic composition, it is all inevitable.

Back in the mid-1980s is where Bermuda began to go underwater in terms of fertility and birth rates. I think it was around 1983, 1984, 1985, or 1986. Forgive me for not having the precise date, but it was around that time. And that trend, particularly on fertility rates, has only continued. So now I believe we are just about hovering around 1.5, which is well below the reproduction rate that will see an increase in the population. You would need to be around 2.1 or 2.01 (and again, I [stand] to be corrected) to see a positive increase in your population over time. So we are well underwater here, and it will have profound impacts.

I just want to also commend the Member from constituency 5, Mr. Derrick Burgess, the MP, who has been a long-time advocate on behalf of our seniors, an advocate on behalf of those who have been saying that we need to tackle the growing incidences of age discrimination. And so I thank him for his work. One thing about Mr. Burgess is, we often hear about Mr. Chris Furbert and his brilliance around numbers. Well, I think that Mr. Burgess can give Mr. Chris Furbert, when it comes to numbers, a run for his money.

So we have an ageing population, we have public policy choices to make and what will those choices be? That is the question we have to ask ourselves. I think we will have, at least, a population . . . at least 20 per cent of our population by 2020 that will be over 65 years of age, Mr. Speaker. I mean, think about that. Twenty per cent of your population will be over 65 years of age. Already when it comes around to our health care system, that is now being addressed. The ageing population makes the “fixing” (if I can use that term) of this system even more of a challenge.

So, for example, we had the census that came out in figures the other day (and when I say the other day, about eight or nine months ago) that revealed that a significant [increase] in the amount of people who go without health insurance in the country, and that substantially increased by almost 100 per cent within five years. So, for example, you had in 2010 at the time what I call that “half census” being undertaken. It did not cover the whole decade, but a half of a decade, from 2010 to 2015/16. In 2010, over 2,000 persons, black Bermudians, did not have health insurance coverage. That also included some children. And I have said this before on the floor of this House, Mr. Speaker, over 2,000. In only five-plus, six years, that figure had roughly doubled to over 4,000 and it did include children.

The corresponding figure for white Bermudians was at 200-odd persons—200, not 2,000—in 2010, and just over 400 by 2015/16. Now, already that is like three years ago—three years ago. So we know the trend has continued. I would like to know what that figure will be in 2020, next year, if we can get those

types of numbers. I suspect that it will have only been exacerbated.

Of course, the Members are right. We talked about the health insurance impact here, issues around unemployment with persons 65 years and over who cannot afford to retire, needing to maintain having a household income. In many respects, being forced to work in a situation where you are living in a country with the highest cost of living, arguably in the known universe—not just the world, the known universe. And accompanying that, of course, is living in the country with the highest, or near-highest, levels of income inequality.

So that is an issue. How can we [accommodate] the legitimate needs of persons who are over 65 and who, frankly, need to be able to work? And that is why you get around to the issue of raising the retirement age. I will get more to that in a second. Then, we have the issue about those who are in the working population. And we find, as per the data that came out of this report that “In 2016,” (and I quote, Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence), “the working population aged 65 and over increased to 2,530 persons, up from the 2,382 persons recorded in [only] 2010.”

I might just add that there was a stat[istic] that came out about eight or nine months ago as well from the Government that indicated that the number of civil servants who were ageing out of the service was phenomenal (my word). I believe we were talking about maybe 500 over the next . . . that period, maybe 2019/20. And it will only increase as persons of my generation, what I call the younger cohort, what they would refer to in the US as the baby boomer population, begin to by the current set of rules age out of the system.

I went 62 a few weeks ago (unbelievable still to myself, I might add) and I know that we are probably, as it says here, the biggest bulge in the population in Bermuda.

I have to marvel when, Mr. Speaker, we often hear some of our younger persons who want to get involved in politics, or younger people in our party, and they always keep emphasising about the young people and the youth vote and all the rest. Well, I am not saying that we should not focus on the youth vote. But, believe me, it is a diminishing percentage of our overall population. We will be concerned with the senior vote, the older vote, over the next three, four, five, six election cycles easy, as they will become an even bigger portion of the overall electorate, so much for the youth vote.

Financial assistance. Again, living in a country with such a high level in terms of the cost of living. It is phenomenal. It places an inordinate burden on persons, particularly those who are coming from low income, lower to middle income status [and] worked hard all their lives. We have right now in 2017, 993 seniors receiving financial assistance—993. And of course, replete through all of this are very pronounced

racial disparities. And, of course, I think about maybe a third of my listeners now just turned off the radio, but nonetheless, it has to be said. That is the reality of Bermuda. That statist[istic], which we do not like to face straight on, is snaking through all of these statistics. And it is my job as a public officer, if you will, to point them out.

Everyone talked about the threat to the pensions, particularly the Public Service Superannuation Fund. Mr. Burgess, from constituency 5, says that it is very much underwater, just under a billion dollars that we need to deal with.

The National Pension Scheme, the Contributory Pension Fund. You know, it is just sad that . . . I always thought it was . . . well, it was like a sign of the times, going back a quarter century when you had growing moves, not just in Bermuda, but throughout the west, to move away from defined benefits in terms of the pension schemes to contributory pensions. We know that over at BELCO, where my mother worked for probably going on four decades, they had a very good pension plan over there. Now, by way of court action, or I believe it was a civil case that was adjudged, they have sort of grandfathered in now a generation that is probably over 40 who will, thankfully, be getting those same benefits. But the newer workers coming in, they will have to face a new reality. They will not be enjoying defined benefits in terms of the nature of the plan and they are now locked into the contributory-style pensions.

And we know that coming out of the 1930s and 1940s, as a response to the Great Recession and moving into the post-World War II era, in America that became the norm. It has proven to be unsustainable. When persons had a life expectancy of mid-to-late 50s, early 60s, it was sustainable. But we have seen persons living longer, and that has been one of the key factors in why it is deemed not to be sustainable now.

Well, Mr. Speaker, just moving on, I am just going through the report here. I think this is interesting, too, in terms . . . let's get down to what are our options here. And we have in the report on page 9, Mr. Speaker, what is called, *Retirement Age Comparison*. And it says, "Countries where mandatory retirement is not permitted at any age." And I was not aware of this, so there is going to be some very important information here. Now those countries . . . and I do not know if this is the extensive list, but it says that USA, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia are countries [where] a mandatory retirement age is not permitted at any age.

Then you have another list of countries where mandatory retirement is permitted, with a minimum permitted mandatory retirement age set by legislation, and that includes Japan (again, it is one of the older ageing countries in the world) France [and] Sweden. And then we have Ireland which has no minimum age set by legislation. Countries in which mandatory re-

tirement is legal, with no minimum age set by legislation. And Ireland is the only country cited. Then it moves onto cost of living for seniors and I touched a little bit on that, but I think that it bears repeating here.

For example, as it states here, "the . . . Household Expenditure Report suggests that the average senior spends \$647.45 per week or \$33,667.35 per year on housing and healthcare, representing 44% . . . of seniors' expenditure. The expenditure figures exceed the average pension benefits received by our seniors. In contrast, working, seniors have a median annual income of \$39,227 which will allow them to cover the cost of average expenditures."

I might just add that this \$39,227 figure, Members, would not even, I think, amount to a living wage, for example, calculated on a per annum basis.

Now, what are the options? We have talked about this. They have come back (this fine report here) in saying, which is the obvious option, to increase the retirement age beyond 65 years of age. They are positive that that range, probably initially, should be somewhere between 66 and 70 years of age. And the Government will make that final determination. I think perhaps we could start it at 67, which I think will mirror what has been reflected in some of the other countries that are on the same glide path as us in respect to this issue. And it makes the analysis on what will be the cost impact on Government and what would be the legislative and policy support required in order for us to do that.

There are a lot of complexities around these issues and, Mr. Speaker, you know, on so many of these issues now, because . . . and I think I have said this before. There are no easy options left for Bermuda on a number of key issues or key matters that in some degree are even existential as to Bermuda's future and its position geopolitically in the world. And again, this is one of them.

The complexity around these issues can be phenomenal. I do think that Bermudians would do well to keep up with the debate and endeavour to get as much information as they can to inform themselves, so they can readily understand as to what the Government is actually about to do on this and so many issues because, like I said, there are no easy options.

Again, back to the issue of immigration, for example, we will have to have more immigration into the country. The question is, What will be the nature of that immigration? To me, it's the only good question. Certainly, we do not want to have what took place in the 1960s and 1970s, Mr. Speaker, when we had racialised immigration that favoured the importation of just whites into the country from Western Europe and Canada, primarily. We should not go down that road again.

But we have to be open to the idea that we need a re-think, a profound one, on our immigration policy because the bottom line is that these trends indicate that the birth rates that we are seeing, the

fertility rates, are not going to turn around any time soon. And so it is going to be somewhat of an economic imperative. But we can do this the smart way, and I think we can do it in a way that helps us to transcend the very, very, even in some cases, bigger debates that have revolved around this issue. So I am hoping that we can accomplish that.

So, finally, Mr. Speaker, I am going to just wrap up here by saying that this is a very important discussion. I support the rise in the retirement age. I am viscerally opposed to age discrimination. And just to put it into context, when we were in demographic summer, when I was a little boy in 1965, 1966, or 1967, that was demographic summer. We are in demographic winter now. But when we were in demographic summer, [oh], we had burgeoning, youthful populations in my neighbourhood at Spanish Point, and the same thing for Mr. Cannonier. If you had a neighbourhood that consisted of 20 households, there were at least two to four children in each household. Ok? Now, if you go into these neighbourhoods you can hear the crickets sing, or whatever. It is that quiet because there are not that many children. So, we need to ensure—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: No, it's true. It's true, it's true.

An Hon. Member: Crickets?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Yes, or you hear the birds singing, or whatever.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Yes, exactly.

So, let's have this debate and then on the issue on age discrimination I, again, I just want to thank, if I may, if I may, I just want to thank again Brother Burgess, the Member from constituency 6 *[sic]*—

An Hon. Member: [Constituency] 5.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: [Constituency] 5, (I keep getting it wrong) for his advocacy around age discrimination. I know that he, and persons like Dr. Eva Hodgson over the last five or six years have been very keen on this issue being addressed. And it looks like that we are rapidly working our way to address it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 1 *[sic]*, Honourable Member Swan.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Two.

The Speaker: Two, rather.

Honourable Member Swan, you have the floor.

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

Ever so briefly on this occasion, I would like to lend my support to this motion, Mr. Speaker, and join the cause of those who are advocating on behalf of, particularly, our seniors. But discrimination towards those of any age is something that we must deplore, eradicate, and do all that we can to eliminate.

I am minded of a verse in scripture, of which I think we have been somewhat short of in our country. Genesis [chapter] 1, [verse] 28: "Be fruitful and multiply."

"Be fruitful and multiply."

We do have an ageing population. I am minded of many of my friends, some of whom worked for me, who, when they went 70 years of age were still out there trying their best to find work, some [of them] doing security jobs and the like. Some participated in the Bermuda dream: Own a piece of the rock. Particularly, in the black community that was what was encouraged, mainly.

Many of our seniors today are land rich and cash poor. Many did not diversify their portfolios. As we have heard, many people are living older. But living older does not always come with increased quality of life when the expense of living far outstrips that of which your pension may have been. And the difficulty of living older is that companies, as we are seeing, in Bermuda and globally, are doing all they can to reposition themselves to carry less of a burden. And what do I mean by that?

If a company may have been around in the 1980s and 1990s or up into the early 2000s, and doing very well some twenty years later, that company would be ageing. It could very well be that this company does what people call "diversify," or they might have been bought out and all of a sudden, the packages that people carry into retirement get changed.

Or, people nearing retirement age become more burdensome to those persons who are running those companies and you would see repositioning, which certainly takes them out of the equation.

I am reminded of when this particular item was mooted in real terms last year. First thing, I received a call from a constituent. And I hurriedly went to see them. Their concern was they were amongst those who had actually planned for retirement. Not everyone doesn't plan for retirement. We have persons who are going to find the going tough when they reach that age, because not everybody thought at one point in time that they would live to have grey hair and

no hair and not be as agile as they once were when they were in their 30s and 40s, and the like. But there were those and there are those who plan for their retirement.

I remember the conversation that went like this: *Mr. Swan, please assure me that the plans that my wife and I have made to reach 65 doesn't make it mandatory that we must stay longer, because we are prepared for that. We have made plans for that and we are looking forward to that. It is not that far away.*

And I made those calls on their behalf, and I could assure them that no one is going to tie you up and make you stay longer. And they were appreciative of that. And that is what we need to encourage persons to do, to plan better for the future as those good persons in my constituency have done.

I am also mindful that this particular topic goes hand in hand with a subject that is talked often. It was on the television last night carried by the Minister of Health, and the like. And it forms into a theme of the importance of, you know, healthier living and the like. They all are intertwined, of which the Government is very much focused on ensuring that we encourage our people to be more mindful of. And as I started off with that scripture from Genesis 1:28: "Be fruitful and multiply." One of the problems that we have in fulfilling that obligation is the exodus that took place in this country around 2009 with the downturn of the global recession. It was not a Bermuda-made recession. It was a global recession [that] caused many Bermudians to take a hike out of this country!

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And that concerns me because they are the ones that I hope that we can repatriate to encourage to *Go ye into this Island and multiply*, to help us have the type of sustainability to make the contributions. That is something that we need to have an earnest look at! I do not think anyone in this country does not accept the fact that, whilst we will not admit it or not, we are very much like the Jamaican motto, "Out of many, one."

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: We are! We had a football game last weekend, Bermuda versus the Azores. We cannot deny it! Out of Bermuda, there are many different versions of us. Some of us have a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and something of the other too. And something that we do not even know we got!

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: You might be going too far now.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: No, I am not. It is true! I can speak that! I know it better than any! A little bit of

this and a little bit of that and a little bit of something else that I ain't too sure about. You know, it is part of the diaspora that has made us the good, the bad, the ugly. But as we recognise that we need more contributors to fund the pension, which is calculated at about 2049 as that date . . . about 30 years from now. But, you know, I do not want them walking up to me, because I plan to stay a lot fitter. I am starting to hit the ball every day a little bit, to get the turn coming—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —get the turn, you know, I am signed up for a yoga class.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I have been talking to a Pilates instructor. I need that turn! Now, I don't want to be out on the golf course at 90, shooting in the 70s, and somebody come up to me and say, *Hey, Swan! It is because of you that . . . you know, you got your pension put in last, you know, 27, but you, you burnt it up for us!*

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: No, no, I don't want to be in that boat. I plan to be around, Mr. Speaker, and I know you do too.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And you know what? We will be the *byes* that are going down or going up . . . whatever it is called in 30 years' time, having a little bit of lunch, and guys saying, *Well, you know, we guys are still good and spry because we made a conscious decision—I, a little sooner than Swan. He caught the light a little later than me, but you know, we are still around today.*

I want them to say, to come and pat us on the back, and say, *Thank you for what you have done.*

The Speaker: Uh-huh.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: *Thank you.* And maybe those persons that are patting us on the back are the ones who were out in Birmingham and Nottingham and other places that are "hams," that have "ham" at the end of the name and decided to come home because we showed them that *we* would like *them* to be a part of those who could help to boost her up, our economic needs.

An Hon. Member: That's right.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say this: Our seniors today, our

emerging seniors of today are faced with a set of circumstances where they must be able to work to make ends meet. They must. I have not found an insurance policy available to anybody in this country under \$400 per month. And for a senior, that is a significant portion of that pension that they would receive. I have not found too many seniors who do not need the benefit of some type of medication to be able to make it through the day and night. And the cost of it is the choice between purchasing something to eat or getting that medication. These are the things that we are challenged with in this country.

Steps such as this, notwithstanding targeted [steps] just at the public servants, need to be taken in further context in the wider spectrum of a thought process in Bermuda. Looking at the value that a senior holds, I have seen in my recent . . . I teach. I am around a lot of people. I have seen companies that have come here that show value for seniors. I am not talking about Bermuda seniors either. I know companies who value that mind trust in the boardroom. There is no reason why that mind trust could not be extended to include the black community in Bermuda in greater measure. That is a great mind trust. I know there are persons out there driving taxis in the country who are . . . Bermuda has the most educated working class, I would say, in the world.

Now, that is anecdotal. But I would urge an academic to look at it. Because I know there are taxi drivers who are engineers, who are doctors. I know there are security guards who have more degrees than I, more qualifications than I, and are disproportionately black people in Bermuda. It is not a matter of not getting the opportunity. It is worse than that.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And I do not want to be in a position with you, Mr. Speaker, in another 25 to 30 years when we are having that lunch down at Angeline's and he has got a Chelsea sign up on his wall instead of the Manchester because the new proprietor is a Chelsea fan, God bless him. The Europa league champions.

An Hon. Member: Please!

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And, Mr. Speaker, I want us to have the opportunity to look back on this period more favourably. And the way in which we can do it is to cause the right decisions to be made in this country. We have a talent pool that exists, because I often hear, and I often hear it in the political realm, persons who just want to look at the young person. I was young once. I was at one stage in my life the youngest political candidate on record in 1983. And you come to a country and you understand far more when you get older, when people do not want to then value what you have.

And so, part of the way out of the problem is to embrace some of the people who have been overlooked along the way, and many of them are seniors in our community today, or emerging seniors in our community today, and they are here because they love this country as much as each and every one of us in this House. Because each and every one of us in this House loves this country and has a different view of how we need to move it forward. But you cannot overlook those who have been disenfranchised and are disproportionately impacted by what we are talking about here today.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: You cannot deny it! It is a serious social impediment that needs to be addressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak? We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 11. Honourable Member—

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good evening . . . sorry, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, colleagues, and Bermuda.

The Speaker: Yes, good afternoon.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am going to be very short, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will hold you to that.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am going to read off some names.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Nancy Pelosi. Anyone know her?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Age 79.
Bernie Sanders.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Anyone know him? Age 77.
Joe Biden. Age 76.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Hillary Clinton. Age 71.

Now, these are persons who are way past the age of 65, but no one questions their competence to be a leader. I mean, they have enemies; but for the most part people know that they are competent leaders. So, age, as we know, Mr. Speaker, does not prevent someone from being a competent leader in public service.

I am going to read off some other names, Mr. Speaker. Honourable Derrick Burgess.

The Speaker: Hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Age unknown.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: Oh! Forty-three! Forty-three.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Tuckers Town Hole.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: That is classic!

Mr. Christopher Famous: Honourable Neville Tyrrell. Age unknown.

Honourable Michael Scott. Age unknown.

An Hon. Member: Really unknown!

Mr. Christopher Famous: Lt. Colonel David Burch. Age unknown. I mean, I could google their age, but—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Anyway, I got to deal with them on Wednesday. My point, Mr. Speaker is—

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: —whether in America or Bermuda, we have persons over the age of 65 who are competent to lead their countries. That should transcend not just in the higher echelons of politics but in the civil service as well, because as we know, it is truly the civil service that runs the country.

Mr. Speaker, all of us here, all 36 of us have a growing number of constituents that are over 65. And these persons, the same as these leaders I just spoke about, are extremely competent mentally and physically to carry out their duties. Many of these persons are the chief breadwinners in their family, for whatever reasons. Unfortunately, for some, they rely on a steady pay cheque to pay their mortgage, put their child through school or their grandchild through school, or whatever the reason may be. And when the prospect of retirement comes up, they look at their pension and are saying, *I can't quite make it.*

The Speaker: Hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I have a lady in my constituency, a very nice lady. Two years ago, I knocked on her door. She said, *Come in.* She said, *By this date, I am going to be 65. I am raising my grandson and paying my mortgage and if I have to retire, I am either going to not be able to put my grandson through college, or I may lose my house.* She is a government worker, has been there for years. And because of the pay scale that she is on, her pension is not going to be all that favourable. Every six months without fail, this lady calls me—

The Speaker: Hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: *Famous, what is happening?*

I say, *Well, I talked to Bishop Burgess (age unknown), and he is on it.*

Today, I was able to text that lady and say, *Tune in to 105.1 because what you asked for is going to be delivered.*

Now, am I saying that every person over 65 should stay on? Obviously not, because as a gentleman said earlier, *What about the young people that need to work? Companies are not just going to keep [those] over 65 years old and hire people just out of college.* It's not going to . . . everybody has a finite number.

What we do have to do, Mr. Speaker, as a country is educate ourselves [and] educate our people about financial education. How to save money, how to invest money. Yes, we all like to put money in our house. But sometimes we have got to put it in stocks, right, Scott?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: We have to educate ourselves, Mr. Speaker, because as we see, people are not going to die as fast as they used to.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Sure. That is a reality. That is a good thing!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Well, you know . . . you know what I meant.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: You all know. [Age] 83 is now the life expectancy. Many people are even living past that, especially if you are a lady. Go to a Seniors

Tea, it is 90 per cent women. You say, *Well, where are the guys?* [Laughter]

They all say, *We outlived them. We outlived them.*

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: My point, Mr. Speaker, as I close up, I work for BELCO. I have been there for 26 years. Most people I work with have been there for 25, 30 years. BELCO recently changed their policy to allow persons to work after 65, if they choose to.

The Speaker: Hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: This year a gentleman, one of my constituents, Mr. Cornell Dunkley, is going to retire after 50—not Michael Dunkley, Cornell Dunkley.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Okay. I did not want you to get confused, now.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I am old, but I can hear.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Okay, all right.

After 50, 5-0, 50 years at BELCO. I looked at him and said, *Well, when did you start? At age 10? [Weren't there] some child employment laws?*

He was like, *No, but I just keep fit.*

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that if someone is able mentally and physically to carry out their duties, they should be allowed to within reasonable age. And so, I say to Bishop Burgess, I want to thank you on behalf of my constituent. I want to thank you on behalf of a lady who called me yesterday and said, *Famous—a different lady altogether, Famous, I am too young to retire.* She is a secretary at a school. She has seen generations come through there for 40 years.

An Hon. Member: Hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: If you saw her, you would be like, *Nah, you shouldn't retire.*

So, I want to thank you on behalf of those ladies because we know on Wednesdays you have been the biggest advocate for this. So, I say to all those who have spoken up about it, yes, we know that there are parameters, but let's continue to educate ourselves and let's continue to be empathetic toward ourselves, because eventually, Mr. Speaker, you will reach 65 and I think you should stay in that Chair, because I want to look at your face when I have got that Cup! Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: It will be a long time before that happens, but I won't be here that long! Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 19. You have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we will both be looking at him when we have that Cup.

The Speaker: For a long time.

An Hon. Member: Ooh!

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Mr. Speaker, I think when we talk about this, I have to remind myself of, you know what is that expression? *You have come a long way, Baby.*

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: You have to stop and think because . . . do you remember, and some of us who are older can remember, that there was such a thing as early retirement at age 55? And at age 55 you could decide that you had worked long enough, you had that financial stability and you looked forward to saying, *I am going to retire now at 55, and I am going to go off and I am going to do something else,* and you would feel really happy about yourself.

And when I look at what we are doing now, I think to myself, *This is the modern version of early retirement.* Because if I am reading what the Premier is saying, what is going to end up happening now is 65 is going to be early retirement and regular retirement is going to be 70.

But I must admit . . . and I have a question. I am hoping that the Premier will answer it. Because when I read the recommendations from the Advisory Committee, it seemed to be suggesting that 70 wasn't what I call the equivalent of the 65 when you had early retirement at 55, because there was some mention of annual re-employment contract. So, maybe, maybe the recommendation from the committee has been overtaken, and now it truly is that early retirement is age 65 and regular retirement is age 70. So, I am hoping at some point in time the Premier might actually clarify that.

But having said that, I just want to remind people as to how we got here. Because I think if you do not remember . . . you have to remember, though, that when we started years ago, you had people retiring and they had such a thing as a defined benefit plan. And the defined benefit plan meant that people knew that when they retired, they got a certain amount of money. And back then, that certain amount of mon-

ey actually was quite good. And it was quite good for two reasons: One, you had a lot of people coming into the plan, which meant that it was growing. [Two,] you also had a situation where the investment income that people were getting from that plan was also quite substantial. So it meant that the benefits that they were paying out with the assets that they had there actually were not too bad. And I say that because we have to think about how we got here in terms of the issues and what has happened to us. Because when we are trying to solve these problems we have to remind ourselves that sometimes if you know where you came from and you know where you are going to, then you make sure that you do not do anything that helps you recreate something that was bad in your past.

So, that is what I just want to remind ourselves that what happened after that was two things happened to change this and it impacts on us now. The numbers of new people joining the plans back then, the benefit plans, started to decrease, and also, the rate of return on those plans started to also go down. So it meant that a lot of plans, defined benefit plans, started to find out that they were struggling with respect to what they should do, and that is where you got what I call the introduction of the defined contribution plans, which were designed to say, *Okay, let's figure out a way whereby when people put their money in, what they get out of it is related to what they put in.*

But that also had some issues which is referred to in this report, the fact that you then put your money in and then you were forced to make choices as to how your money was going to be invested. Lots of people did not understand. There was a tendency for people to be very conservative, which meant that their plans were growing very slowly, and then later on when they retired, they found that they did not have this nice big nest egg.

Now, the other side of that was the fact that we keep forgetting then when government put in its contributing pension plan, what we call social insurance, that also was not going to be set up to sort of grow at the pace that one would think is going to create this big nest egg, which is how you came up with private pension plans in the beginning. Private pension plans were supposed to supplement the government one, the social insurance. So, what has happened . . . the fact is that you have now the situation where these plans, the private ones, are either not growing as much as they should, because of the declining numbers of people, because of the investments going down. The defined contribution plans are also not growing as much as one would like because the rates of returns in the industry are not that much, not like it was years and years ago. And then the government plan which you are also relying on, the amount that they came up with was not growing as much as we would like. And what I am saying is that

we have to remind ourselves that this is where we are today.

And then the Government, and I would say the Government because whether it is the Government of 40 years ago, 20 years ago, or 10 years ago, you started to have the issues of how much money was Government putting aside to start funding these plans. And that is also where the numbers of people that were in the plan impacted it as well, because the numbers of the people . . . we talked about the working population. As the working population started to shrink, that meant that the amount of contributions into the plan started to shrink, and then we are back to where we are right now which is talking about more people living longer and then they are going to expect to use the plan, the benefits, their pensions in their later years.

And the other thing which has come to haunt us is the fact that whether we like it or not, back then the cost of living in Bermuda was not where we are today. Bermuda is very expensive and the cost of living that we have to try and stretch these pension plans to cover, is much, much greater than where it was. So, as MP Swan was talking about, I know when I was out talking to seniors when I was a Minister, you are out talking to people and they are saying, *My money does not go as far, and I have to decide whether I am going to buy drugs, i.e. prescription drugs—I better make that clear for—*

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: —make that clear, make that clear.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Make that clear.

Whether I am going to buy prescription drugs or food, which is why I was always trying to get the cost of prescription drugs down. But I am saying that these are some of the dilemmas that [we face] when we start looking at allowing people to work longer, I just want to make everyone realise how we got to where we are.

Because the other side of it, as we progress, was you had companies when people were getting older, the companies had good workers, they liked the fact that their workers were really, you know, working really well. And so, the companies started to say, *Okay, we will keep you on.* And they kept them on and some companies even had health insurance plans just for their retirees, because that was their way of saying, *We will keep you on, but we know that you won't have something different from the regular workers, because plans, whether you like it [or not], have claims, and claims result in premiums, and therefore, you want to ring-fence them.*

So, a lot of people . . . and this gets back to the people we have talked about, even those who took the early retirement at 55. A lot of people used to just work because they wanted the health insurance and that made it easy for them, whether those people went and played golf every Friday and worked for two or three days, or whether they drove a taxi, or whatever else, health insurance allowed people to do something, and where we are now today is the fact that the cost of living and the amount of pensions that people get are not matching, and therefore they need to work longer, in order to be able to not only get that income, but more importantly to get that health insurance. Because that health insurance enables them to take some of that money and deal with their regular requirements, whether it is a mortgage, or whether it be food, et cetera.

So, it is not just about the fact that they want to be part of the workforce. It also means that it gives them an added supplement. You sometimes do not realise that you are taking something out of your pocket by paying premiums. But if you figure out how much you are getting back by . . . if you are working for a company, the premiums that you pay for your health insurance are so much lower than if you are in the regular system!

So, you know, if you had to go into a stand-alone policy, what you would pay and what you would pay if you were in a company plan, you save money. You get money. So it is almost in your interest to pay the employer to employ you because you are going to get something back.

And I am saying this so that people understand that there are a number of things that we are trying to solve and there are a number of knock-on effects. The real thing that I think is important is what we need to understand is that our seniors are important to us. When we go out and talk about our seniors, and we talk about what they have done and how this country has been developed and, if you will, that Bermuda has reached the heights that it has on the backs of our seniors, I think it is important for us to make sure that they are accommodated [and] that we do whatever we can to recognise that they are important.

And there was something . . . I know that I read [about] something that happened in the UK. And, Mr. Speaker, if you will allow me for two seconds, I just want to read a little something.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: This was something that was written. It was talking about changing attitudes about ageing. It was basically reminding us that we had to . . . that public services and the things that we do here and the decisions that we make . . . "Public services should be designed with the aims of promoting equality between people of different ages. Ad-

ressing the future needs of an ageing and diverse population and eliminating discrimination against older people."

Now, that is something which has been in this report and it is something that, as we go forward, I would like to think that we would work on. But the one thing that this report said, which I think is important for us to address [is], "We need to be [alert] to trends that appear to exacerbate age segregation and to seek initiatives which can bring different generations together around issues of shared interests and importance."

I say that because the last thing we need to do, while we are turning around and making sure that we do something for our seniors, we let them contribute more, et cetera, is that we do not turn around and have our young people feeling, *Well, what about me? You know, I'm here. I want to be a part of the workforce. I want to be a part of the contribution.*

And I do not believe we want to ever have a situation where you have to make a decision between a young person and a senior person, because Bermuda does not have enough people. We do not have enough. So everybody that needs and wants to work . . . we have to figure out how to make them work.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I started to look at some of the things that were in this report, I also realised that there are some things that we have to look at because the private sector obviously is going to take its lead from what we are doing. But I am also recognising that because we have things like the Social Insurance not being able to cover the cost of living, then . . . and even with the Government trying to turnaround and have periodic updates, you know, the idea of saying to people that seniors need to start retirement planning as early as age 50 is really important. And it is funny because I think a lot of people at 50, you know what they do? They like the idea of being 50 and they like the idea of going into a shop and they say, *Oh, are you age 50?* And they like the idea of getting that 10 per cent discount, but I do not think anybody is taking that 10 per cent discount and saying, *Let me go home and put it in my bank account because I need to start saving.* And this is what we have to have start happening.

People have to start saying at age 50, *It's time now to plan for [my] retirement.* Do not just think about taking that benefit. You need to turn around and say that this is a recognition that, starting now, you have to start planning. And I think that this is what is in this actuarial report.

The other thing that I think is important for us to deal with [is] health issues that seniors have. If they do not turnaround and deal with them, that also results in their ability to be able to [stay] in the workforce and, therefore, the greater demands that will be put on the health system will also mean that from the point of view of the ageing population and the pension fund, if you do not have enough people in the pension fund to

be able to make those contributions, it is not going to work.

Now, there was something that I just wanted to mention because it was in this report, the Labour Advisory Committee report, and if you will allow me, I will just find the little page . . .

The Speaker: Okay. Yes.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Okay. It is funny because there is a section in there which talks about “the evidence.” And this was evidence that the committee used to talk about where we are, and it was talking about the health insurance. Okay? And it says, “iii. Health Insurance”—

“The category of persons most commonly without health insurance coverage are 45–64 years of [age]” And this says, “This category represented 1,541 persons.” Okay? And then it said the category of people over 65 “increased by 354 members to total 564 persons.”

But what this said to me was not just about seniors, but it also said to me about the people who we have to worry about coming behind. These people who are 45 to 64, if they do not have health insurance, then, because the law technically requires if you are working you should have health insurance, it raises the question, *Are these people not working?* And if they are not working, then it means that we should be trying to get them also into the workforce because by getting seniors to work longer, based on this, you are only going to get 354 people in the workforce, but if you can get these other people who do not have health insurance and presumably are not working, you could get 1,500 people. And we have a lot of people that we need to get into the workforce.

But what really concerned me was when this report talks about what you want to do in terms of the working population. And it talks about unemployment and saying that it increased from 36 persons to 95 in 2016. That still says that there are a large number of people out there who are working, and therefore there are not quite as many people that one would think that are going to join the workforce. So, I take the position that if the Government really wants to do something about, as it says “Reducing dependency on foreign labour,” it is not just about the seniors that you have to work, it is about the people who do not have health insurance who are presumably not working.

And, really, what I want to find out is not just this bit about allowing them to work longer, I would like to think that the Minister, or whomever brings this forward, needs to address something more about, *How are you going to educate these people so that they can take some of these other jobs?* Because they are going to need some training. They are going to need to be able to go from the jobs that they had before to some of the new jobs that are coming up. So it makes no sense to turnaround and suggest that you

are going to reduce the dependency on the labour force and you are going to get them in there, unless someone addresses the issues of making sure these people have better employment opportunities by having training and looking at what we need on this Island.

I really get concerned when I see something written out and I do not see some substance. Because to me, I do not want to see something just written on a piece of paper that sounds good. The people out there want to see that we have a plan. That want to see that we have something here that says, *I am going to get involved. I am going to be able to work and I am going to be able to do something for this Island.* Most people, especially at that age, have been used to making contributions. They are used to being part of the solution rather than part of the problem. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to be able to see that when the Premier and his team start to look at what they are going to do, that they do something more. Make it not just this little bit here, but they do something about really reducing the dependency on foreign labour and talking about making accommodation for the ageing workforce. I want to see something of substance.

And, Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up, I just want to say that if we are going to do something so that our seniors really feel that we are going to do something about where they are hurting and what we can do about [that], I would like to think that whatever legislation is going to be brought forward, that it will address some of these issues. That we will be able to say that it is not just a little box that is ticked, but actually there is something coming behind it that says . . . I mean, I know that at one stage, as the former Government, we used to have the Ministry of Health and Seniors. And that is because we believed that seniors were very important. We had a national ageing plan. We had people who were out there working on all of these things. I would like to think that the current Government has something along those lines and that somebody is going to be out there talking about some of these things, because I am sure that everybody wants to make sure that our seniors are recognised.

So, Mr. Speaker, it was interesting for me to just basically say that if we are going to do this, I would like to find out, and I would like to have the Premier answer the question about whether it is going to be as it says, the re-employment or whether, as I say, 70 is going to be the new retirement age and 65 is going to be the early retirement age. Because that I think clarifies it. But as I say, I believe that our seniors make their contribution and whatever we can do to allow those people who want to continue to work, is going to be very important.

And whatever we can do to allow them to have the ability to change jobs, to make contributions, do all those things [that] will make them more of a viable contributor to the growth of Bermuda is going to be what we need to do because, as has been said be-

fore, with the declining birth rate, we need all the Bermudians that we have to be working Bermudians, making contributions.

I think there was a notation here with respect to talking about financial assistance and the fact that this was growing, et cetera. We do not want that. And most seniors that I come across are not out there taking advantage of financial assistance, because they are the ones who feel [they] would rather starve and not eat, or have medicine and not have food, just because they have grown up on the basis that says that you suck it up.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want us to let them know that the things that we are doing here right now are designed to make sure that if they choose to, they can work longer. And as I said before, [we need to] do whatever we can to allow them to be part of the workforce, the growing workforce. Whatever new opportunities are out there, let's have them being a part of that. But as I said earlier, not at the expense of our juniors because we have to make sure that all people in Bermuda have the opportunity to contribute. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak? We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 22.

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

The Speaker: Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: There used to be an expression that 40 is the new 30. Then it was 50 was the new 30. And now it probably is that 60 is the new 30. And here we are looking at . . . perhaps it will be 70 is the new something. In principle, Mr. Speaker, like everyone else who has spoken before me, I am supportive of an increase of the retirement age. Ultimately, the devil is in the detail. We do not have any details yet. And we have heard that we will see some soon.

We do know that this is likely to be for the public sector and we understand also that this is a proposal that is likely to give people a choice, so that when they hit 65 they are not obliged to remain but will have the option. And, of course, "choice" is one of the most important things that employees can be offered.

It is an interesting thought, but it is one we often overlook: We spend more time at work than we do doing anything else in our lives; more time at work than we do sleeping; more time at work than we do having time off. It can often define who people are. Therefore, this is a very important thing and it is a very important aspect of society.

Mr. Speaker, the report, which I have had the pleasure of reading . . . one of the people who pre-

pared it was Ms. Claudette Fleming, of Age Concern. One of the things that she spoke out recently on was her hope to see that any legislative changes in this area, generally, would also include changes to promote antidiscrimination on the basis of age. Now, that is a subject about which I have had a lot of experience. Before I returned home to Bermuda, I was a discrimination barrister in the UK. I spent a lot of time in a lot of conversations with clients talking about age discrimination. It was in 2006 that the age discrimination regulations came into effect in the UK, and at that time a chap called Simon Cheetham, Queen's Counsel, produced the first book on age discrimination and I had the pleasure of proofreading and working with him on that book.

That then morphed into the Equality Act in 2010 with the age discrimination aspects of the 2010 legislation coming into effect in 2012. So that is where the UK got to in 2012. And some of those thoughts . . . they were not moving the retirement age. What they were saying was that if someone has a retirement age, you could not dismiss someone before 65 without valid reason, and you also had to consider any applications for people to remain beyond 65. And this was private sector, not public.

But as I say, the devil is in the detail. As this report notes expressly, the question is that of unintended consequences. I do not know if it is a mistake, but it is one of the points people often overlook when talking about age discrimination, and they imagine that age discrimination is only discrimination against seniors, those above a particular age. But, of course, age discrimination is far more than that. Age discrimination against anyone on the basis of their age, and therefore, it is also discrimination against the young. This had some rather comical results in reality in the UK when this was brought in. And let me just be permitted to give two slightly light-hearted examples.

One is the apocryphal story of Saga Holidays. And Saga Holidays was and is a travel company that used to focus on trips and voyages and cruise ships mainly for the over-50s. Perhaps it was for the over-50s and single, I don't know. But they found themselves on the defensive end of this new antidiscrimination legislation because people under the age of 50 would not normally have been permitted to go on these holidays, and that was potentially discriminatory. Although that was a bit of an apocryphal story.

But there was another very practical and real example, and that was a large chain of home stores in the UK who had, quite rightly, in my view, recognised the benefit of the elderly (if I may use that term, in no pejorative way) worker. What did they find? They found that the 60-plus worker was more likely to show up on time, was more likely not to take sick days, was better able to help their customers and therefore they deployed a policy of hiring older workers because they thought it was better for their business. And indeed, arguably, looking at the bottom line, it was. Looking at

the way customers were served, it was. And yet, unintended consequences that, in theory, is discriminatory; to say that I will only hire those 60 and above is, technically, discriminatory against the young.

And so if Ms. Fleming is right and if these changes will also usher in, as I hope they do, consideration of the antidiscrimination in relation to age, let us just make sure that we do not get ourselves stuck by some unintended consequences.

Let me just touch on two more quick points and I will sit down. I know most people have spoken about this already. He is not in the Chamber at the moment, but I do find it ironic that perhaps for the first time the Honourable Derrick Burgess and I agree. He said this: he said we should go right to 70. Let's not stop at 65, 68, 67, let's go right to 70. I agree. If this Government is going to seriously try and tackle this issue, why not go straight to 70? Why mince around?

There is, of course, not just a moral and ethical reason for this change, but there is a financial one. It would be a disservice if I did not pause to mention it. Some people have mentioned it already. But that, of course, is the pension fund. In this very useful report, which those who have not read should take a quick look at page 8, we see that the total liabilities of the pension fund are \$1.4 billion, give or take. And yet, the actuarial unfunded liability is \$848 million. That is an \$848 million black hole. Now, no doubt some actuary could tell us how soon the pension monies is in that pension that we have, the funded element will run out. But one would reckon that this is a matter of decades, if not less. So this is a serious issue. And I am lawyer and not a mathematician, and it has been pointed out to me that I need to be careful with my numbers. So I try to be. Taking my calculator out, as I calculated, that means 58 per cent of our pension fund is unfunded. That is a shockingly high number and something that should concern us all.

So perhaps 60 is the new 30. And let's very much hope, Mr. Speaker, that when those who are 30 today come to have their retirement there is still money in the pension fund for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

No other Member speaking?

That brings us to a close of this matter and we will move on to what is on the rest of the Order Paper.

We now move on—

The Deputy Clerk: There is a resolution.

[Crosstalk]

An Hon. Member: He has the right to reply.

The Speaker: Oh. Well, no one was getting up in his seat.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: We were about to move on.

Premier, if you would like to use your right to reply, I suggest you be in your seat on time.

Mr. Premier, you almost lost your opportunity.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I had no idea that the Honourable Member was going to be so [brief]. I just stepped out of the Chamber to get my computer.

That much being said, Mr. Speaker, I was trying to get some information because I know the Opposition Leader had a question. He had a question specifically on page 4, which said there was an "increase of 44 per cent reported in 2010. Additionally, the population aged 65 and over grew by 23 per cent between 2010 and 2016." And he asked if that was a typo.

I have had a chance to look back at the actuarial report and I think that is a typo, and I will get the actual thing. I actually think it is only about 3 per cent of the total population was how much it increased and expanded to, but the absolute numbers may be different. But that is . . . so thank you for that, particularly.

I do know that there were a number of questions which came from a number of Members and one of the things that I think is important is that we consider the totality of what it is that we are doing here. It seems that there is broad support. I am thankful that it seems there was broad support for the need to retain the retirement age, to increase the retirement age. And when we talk about the options, Option 1 was status quo. Option 2 was to increase the retirement age beyond 65. Option 3 was to introduce re-employment contracts. Option 4 was to include age discrimination in the Human Rights Act, and Option 5 was to increase the population's financial literacy level.

I am uncertain if there was any particular opposition to any of those particular points. But I think, Mr. Speaker, what is the most important thing to recognise is that there is broad agreement that the retirement age should increase. I think that is something that we will certainly do.

For the Honourable Member who just took his seat, his experience in the United Kingdom is certainly interesting. I think it is an issue that has faced a lot of us, the issue of age discrimination and how to tackle that, it's knock-on for the young and the not-so-young inside the private and public sector. But I happen to have the belief, as I said in my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, that we should not look at these things constrained by narrow views. And that is to say that more people living and working inside of a population, persons with expertise, persons who may be productive, persons who may know how to do stuff and who are told to stop working for no other reason than the fact they are 65, may also have a negative effect inside the economy. And if we are talking about overall

growth and overall expansion, then I think we can look at persons working longer. And those persons working longer of course will help our public funds and also our private funds, but I think they will also help the economy as their contributions are certainly needed and valued.

There was a question from the Honourable Member, Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, speaking about consideration for seniors to withdraw some money from their pensions if they elect to be ineligible for financial assistance. What I will tell the Honourable Member is that the Government will certainly take that under its particular advisement.

I can let Members know that I believe the Minister of Finance will be bringing amendments to the National Pension Scheme which governs private sector pensions, and I know there will be certain provisions in there, and certain flexibilities which we asked for. I am not entirely certain if this particular provision is in here, but that is something that I am sure with the debates (and the Minister of Finance was here earlier) is something that may be willing to factor in, Mr. Speaker.

The final note which I wish to raise and to add . . .

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Did I get your point? Because you asked . . . you said the devil was in the details. I just want to make sure; did I get your point?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: No.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, can you just clarify a point for me again? If I may? I am sorry.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that the Premier would clarify, the recommendation from the report, which was the re . . . re . . . what is it?

Hon. E. David Burt: Re-employment.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Yes. Versus . . . whether it was 70 is the new thing and 65 is the early employment [sic]—

The Speaker: Early retirement.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Early retirement.

The Speaker: Right.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

What I will say, Mr. Speaker, is regard to the recommendation of the “introduce re-employment contracts” . . . and just for Members who are listening. Option 3, one of the things that was there, “Re-

employment contracts can be utilised as a viable option to help older/ageing employees remain economically productive. Re-employment contracts will be used to enable [people] to continue to work using agreed flexible employment contracts up to 5 years after statutory retirement.”

Now, statutory retirement is a very interesting concept in and of itself, given that there is no technical statutory retirement. Even though the Public Service Superannuation Fund Act says that retirement age is 65. Other Acts—

[Gavel]

Hon. E. David Burt: —inside of Social Insurance and different things it is assumed . . . it is assumed at the age of 65, but there is no actual age there. I think to answer that question would be beyond whatever the *de facto* retirement age ended up being. So if the *de facto* retirement age right now is 65, there will be employment contracts after 65. If the *de facto* retirement age moves in five years to 68, as per the recommendations of the report, then it will be employment contracts after the *de facto* retirement age of 68. And if it goes to 70, then it will be after that point in time.

But I know that a lot of Members spoke about the devils that were in the details, and I think, broadly, Mr. Speaker,—

An Hon. Member: Devils?

Hon. E. David Burt: The devil.

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: I think broadly, Mr. Speaker, the most important point for consideration is the fact that on its overall recommendations about the gradual increase in the retirement age from 65 to 68, over the next five years, and then to 70 over the next five years is something that the entire House can support and it is good that we have that particular support from Members today.

The Government will commit, as I said in my opening Statement, Mr. Speaker, that there will be forthcoming amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Fund Act, which sets the retirement age for the public service, and that will be amended, as it was stated inside of the Speech from the Throne.

There is the National Pension Scheme Act which is coming up this year as well, which will have certain things and provisions related to this which may have to also factor on and impact on the retirement age.

And then in the next parliamentary session, which will begin in November, there will also be changes to the Social Insurance Act, as the Government has said previously, that we want to make social

insurance contributions, as they are in every single other country in the world, progressive based on a percentage of income as opposed to a fixed rate.

And inside of those changes, which we are doing for social insurance, will also possibly be the additional things to bring effect to the Government's policy on increasing the retirement age.

But there are a number of questions which have come today, those will be helpful and formative for the policy as the Government looks to finalise what will go forward. But it is gratifying, Mr. Speaker, that the entirety of Members on both sides recognise the need for us to move from a construct which is about 50 years old right now, and that is the retirement age at the age of 65.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Honourable House do now vote . . . or ask for unanimous consent that the Honourable House supports the recommendation—

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: —of the Sub-committee of the Labour Advisory Committee as contained in the report, Reviewing the Retirement Age.

The Speaker: Members. Are Members in favour of that?

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

[Motion carried: The House supported the recommendations of the Labour Advisory Committee Sub-committee as contained in the Report "Reviewing the Retirement Age."]

The Speaker: Yes. Good.

That now brings us to the close of items that were to be debated today on the Order Paper, so we will go to our third reading.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 be read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?

None.

Continue.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?

No objections.

So passed.

[Motion carried: The Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: Yes.

Premier, all other items are carried over, so we are now to that . . . motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that this Honourable House do now adjourn until Friday, June 7th at 10:00 a.m.

The Speaker: Thank you. Does any Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 10, Mr. Dunkley.

EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE—CHAIRMAN'S REMU- NERATION

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good evening to you and to Members in this Honourable House and to the listening audience.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here tonight to talk about the march on Parliament by the teachers. I am not here tonight to talk about the Work to Rule in Corrections and the lack of progress in the issues of dealing with the corrections officers because there might be a march. I am not here to talk about that. I am not here tonight to talk about the challenges in transportation with the buses and the Work to Rule and the cancellation of routes. I am not here tonight to talk about the challenges with the taxi industry. Mr. Speaker, I am not here tonight to talk about retail sales. Mr. Speaker, I am not here to talk about twelve months of retail sales being down. Mr. Speaker, I am not here

tonight to re-debate the amendment that was passed in this Honourable House just two weeks ago that is causing great consternation in the community because I do not have enough time to talk about all of those issues, Mr. Speaker, and they are critical, important issues.

But I am here tonight to talk about two other important issues and they go back to transparency and accountability—what the current Government talked about so much when they were in the Opposition, and they seem to have forgotten in the short period of time when they have been the Government.

Mr. Speaker, today the Honourable Minister Furbert, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, read a statement and tabled a report on the Efficiency Committee that he said had met 32 times starting in March of last year and convened their work early in this year. Mr. Speaker, while I have not had a chance to read the whole report yet, because it seems to be quite thick (I am not sure how detailed it is), but what concerned me, Mr. Speaker, is after debating legislation today on consultants and advisors, what disturbed me, Mr. Speaker, was in the back and forth during the question period today, we learned that the Junior Minister at the time was paid \$60,000 to conduct work during this Efficiency Committee report that went on for a number of months.

Mr. Speaker, \$60,000.

Now, let me be clear because very shortly after the report was finished the then Junior Minister at the time, Mr. Speaker—and for those in the listening audience who are listening on their drive home show tonight, they are going to get a real treat to some transparency and accountability from us in the Opposition.

The Member at the time was a Member of Parliament and he was a Junior Minister within Finance. And lo and behold, because of questioning by Honourable Opposition Members, we found out that on top of that he was getting paid \$60,000 to work on a committee, Mr. Speaker.

The report was tabled. The report was written up. The Minister read out a statement and never once did we hear that there was \$60,000 being paid for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know the PLP talked a lot about what is in their platform, what they committed to—the 100-day report, and the longer timelines to that. So, I refreshed my memory. I looked through it. In the platform there is not one mention of consultants or advisors. But we have seen a plethora of consultants and advisors over the past 18 months.

Reflecting back, Mr. Speaker, to the questions that [we as the] Opposition asked on March 11th . . . we found out that the Minister of Economic Development had a consultant. And that was a Minister without portfolio.

The Minister of Education had a consultant. The Minister of Transport and Regulatory Affairs had

a consultant. The Minister of Legal Affairs had a consultant. The Minister of Public Works had a consultant. The Minister of Transport and Regulatory Affairs had a consultant, Mr. Speaker. And today we learned that an MP and a Junior Minister at the time got paid \$60,000 on top for the regular work to be done.

But if you look at the platform for the PLP, it mentions *We will focus in on good public education*. Well, clearly, we are still having challenges on that because we had the march today—which I am not going to talk about on the motion to adjourn tonight, Mr. Speaker.

It said in the 100 days of the PLP, they would conclude negotiations with the public sector unions. Well, it is clear, Mr. Speaker, that they are not concluded because the corrections officers are still at the table and on the Work to Rule. The police officers still have not concluded their negotiations, and it is clear that the BTU has some challenges.

In the platform, it talks about a code of conduct for MPs. We have not seen that yet, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I know that some Members would like to see that, because I think it would raise the level of accountability for us. In the short-term platform objectives, it says, Mr. Speaker, and this one brought tears to my eyes, *Conduct a review of all school facilities to identify and correct health and safety issues*. That was a short-term initiative, but today, in the longer-term—it is almost two years now—we find that T. N. Tatem is going to be closed and it is going to cost us \$3 million to remediate that, Mr. Speaker. Three million dollars, without hearing [if it] was put out to bid, what is the scope of the work, who else bid on it, or who was the successful bidder, Mr. Speaker. A bull in a hurry—

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —will never make a calf, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: The Minister never said that he had any quotes, [or that] he put anything out to tender. That was a report from within the Ministry. So, it has not been out there to anyone. It is not out to tender.

The Speaker: In fact, let me help on that. There was a question that came from one of your Members about that, and the Minister said that it has not gone to bid yet. That was the report that came back, and the report suggested it was going to be \$3 million, but it had not gone to bid yet. So, that was a question that was

directly answered by the Minister when he was on his feet.

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

Then, if that is the case, when will it go out to bid? Because I understand that there are a number of companies in Bermuda who specialise in this type of work, and they would be willing to get on with it as quickly as possible. So, the school could be opened and not closed for—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —the longer period of time.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The Honourable Member, Mr. Speaker, obviously was not in the House this morning, and is sort of . . . all that information was given out. I would suggest the Honourable Member attend the House when he should be here.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Because all of that was talked about this morning.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, that is just not a point of order. The Honourable Member has not been in the House this afternoon, but you could listen on the radio.

An Hon. Member: You did not hear anything.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: You could listen on the radio, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Members—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —so, you know, the Honourable Member—

The Speaker: —we are not going to go up and down on this.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: You know, I am bowling a good line and length and the Honourable Member should just stay in his seat.

The Speaker: We are not going to go up and down on this.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: Just stick to your point.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Just stick to your point. Stick to your point and get on . . . but do not go over what was missed this morning. I will put it in those terms. Okay?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: So, Mr. Speaker, getting back to what was in the platform, I mentioned all of those, but nothing on consultants and advisors.

And this subject comes up over and over and over again, and on the day that we debate a Bill to crystallise it, formalise and type it up to some extent, we learn that \$60,000 has been paid out to a Junior Minister to conduct this work. And when the work gets finished, all of a sudden the Junior Minister becomes a Minister.

Mr. Speaker, while the people of Bermuda struggle, while we discuss a living wage, while we discuss cost of living, while we realise that there are brothers and sisters out there in our community that are finding it hard to make ends meet and finding it hard to get a job, we learn that somebody is paid \$60,000 to sit on a committee and do work that is expected to be done anyway. Because, Mr. Speaker, last time I checked, as a Member of Parliament and as a Junior Minister, you have a responsibility to work significant hours taking care of issues. But all of a sudden it is thrown out there that as a Junior Minister he has got another \$60,000 on the side.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Honourable Premier to identify all extra payments to Members who sit on committees, because the public has a right to know. The public has a right to know how their money is being spent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this report could be a good report. But if it gets shrouded in the fact that after the report is released, we learn that somebody is paid \$60,000 it is going to be lost—all the good of that report is going to be lost in that, Mr. Speaker.

It is unacceptable that it had to be found out this way and, you know, Mr. Speaker, if it is found out this way you think that the Government is trying to hide something. The Minister, who was a Junior Minister, who got paid the \$60,000, could easily have said, in the report, because on the last page it says *The report cost \$130,000*. Break down the \$130,000, be open and transparent.

ARBITRADE

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, Mr. Speaker, the second item I would like to talk about tonight is the issue of Arbitrade.

Mr. Speaker, two days ago a Government spokesman put out a statement [with this] headline, and I will quote, Mr. Speaker, ¹“Government will focus on making strides in Fintech.” And there are a number of parts of that statement that really jumped out to me, and my first reaction was, *I really cannot believe that somebody is saying this.*

The first part of it, Mr. Speaker, if you allow me to read—

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: “The Government ‘will continue to focus on making strides in the Fintech space’ and ‘will not be deterred by the Opposition’s myopic focus on one of the many tech companies that have incorporated in Bermuda’.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, why do I start with that? Simply put, and importantly, Mr. Speaker, one bad apple can spoil that whole bunch. Mr. Speaker, one company with a reputational issue can cause Bermuda challenges that we will have to try to ameliorate for weeks and weeks and years and years and years. We have worked hard to create a reputation as a very sound, stable, business environment, following best practice, being open and transparent. One bad apple can spoil that whole bunch, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we focused on it.

That is why Members of this House, on our side, have stood up and focused in on that issue because from the beginning, it just did not seem to be on solid ground, Mr. Speaker—from the very beginning, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke to this issue probably a year ago for the first time, Mr. Speaker. A year ago, the first time, and shortly after that, a couple of months later, when they had one of the most interesting press conferences that I have ever seen in my life. In fact, it could have been a skit on *Saturday Night Live*, Mr. Speaker, when the company talked about *we are going to give \$1 million to the Government, we are going to have a chicken farm, we are going to have a gang violence reduction programme and we are going to do all of this in a couple of weeks.*

Well, here we are a year later, and nothing has happened other than we know they have not got a licence to conduct much of a trade in Bermuda. They did get a licence for a building, Mr. Speaker. We do know that a civil servant tried to chase down the \$1 million that was promised, or committed to, and we have not heard anything or feedback from that.

But, interestingly enough, in the statement that came out by a Government spokesperson, Mr. Speaker, it says, ²“On May 9th,” this year, “the Premier issued a statement stating that the Opposition can use the opportunity at the Premier’s Question Time to ask about Arbitrade. When the opportunity arose, the Opposition failed to bring any questions.”

Mr. Speaker, that is outright fabrication! And the records of this House will show that, Mr. Speaker, because last year I asked questions on two separate occasions to the Honourable Premier—two separate occasions, to the Honourable Premier. The first occasion was after Arbitrade became public, probably the first time because of the social media message by the Honourable Premier himself, I believe it was in late May last year when the Honourable Premier said that he was pleased . . . and these are my words because I do not have the Tweet message in front of me, but I can research it, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier is probably pulling it up right in front of him because I think it was May 31st.

But the Honourable Premier said he was pleased to see the platform that was demonstrated by this company Arbitrade that . . . blah, blah, blah, going on applying for licence in Bermuda. So, I asked him, *Honourable Premier, can you say who the principals are that you met with Arbitrade and who the local contacts were?* It was asked right here in the House of Assembly.

The Honourable Premier said he could not remember, and he would get back to me.

I followed up with the Premier and to this day, it has been a year, and there has not been a reply. The question was asked, not answered, Mr. Speaker.

And that continued on because in the next Premier’s Question Period, I think it was in July, we asked more questions of the Premier, and it was all pushed off to the side and there were no answers given, Mr. Speaker. And it is apparent why that was the case, to me anyway—until I am proven wrong. But, Mr. Speaker, when you are on solid ground, you stay on that ground.

I remember the Honourable Member for constituency 29 after I had spoken on the motion to adjourn about Arbitrade, stating that I was trying to tarnish a good company trying to come to Bermuda. Asking questions is not tarnishing a good company that is trying to come to Bermuda. Asking questions and getting no answers raises that level of suspicion even more. And so, the process goes on, Mr. Speaker, with this . . . the Premier has a statement issued that the Government will happily answer questions from the Opposition, but we just have not asked those questions, Mr. Speaker. That is fabrication.

Then the statement goes on to say that, “Bermuda has an extremely high standard, and the government, in conjunction with the Bermuda Busi-

¹ [Bernews](#), 29 May 2019

² *Ibid.*

ness Development Agency, will continue the work of attracting companies that can meet the Bermuda Standard . . .” and we support that 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We support it 100 per cent. But in this case, with the company that is mentioned, they have not shown that they can reach that Bermuda standard.

So, we are in a bit of a conundrum here tonight, Mr. Speaker, because the Government clearly supports this company. And so I ask the Honourable Premier or anyone on that side: What is the current situation? What licences have been granted to that company? They own a building. They own land and a building that was bought from Bermudian entities. And at this point it does not appear that they have the ability to do anything out of that building, Mr. Speaker. It appears that the cart somehow jumped in front of the horse with the PLP Government, Mr. Speaker.

We have stayed on this one because from the start we knew, we had the feeling that this company was offering a lot more than they could ever do. And now we have learned recently that they have appeared to run to other jurisdictions in conjunction with other companies, Mr. Speaker. So, it is best now that this Government not duck and weave, not hide from this, come clean, say what the current situation is, show how we are going to clean it up and move it forward. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that no one is continuing to call and ask for that \$1 million.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 21.

Oh . . . he sat down.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Oh, okay. The Honourable Member from constituency 11, then. I saw the Honourable Member on his feet, I thought he was wanting to get my attention.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY CLUBS

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good evening, colleagues and good evening, Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, there is a character on *Game of Thrones* called Arya Stark—Air-ee-yah, Ar-rye-ah—she had a saying, *A girl is no one*. And the Member from constituency 10 started off, I was like, *Whoa, this sounds like Game of Thrones*. I am not here to talk about . . . but he mentioned it. I am not here to talk about . . . but he mentioned it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Wow. Guess what? I am not here to talk about an OBA Senator that got to work as an aide for the Premier. I am not here to talk about an OBA MP that got to work for the Gaming Commission. I am not here to talk about an OBA Senator's wife who got a million-dollar contract from this *[sic]* Government. No, I am not here to talk about that.

An Hon. Member: That Government.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Sorry, *that* Government. What I am here to talk about, on a positive note, Mr. Speaker, is community clubs.

Mr. Speaker, for the last year and a half I have been serving on the Liquor Licensing Authority. Part of the remit of the Liquor Licensing Authority is to examine the functions of members' clubs. As we all know throughout this country, from east to west, there are workmen's clubs built by black men, our grandparents, through the sweat of their brow. And these people built it for reasons of recreation, sporting, education—multi uses. Over the years, the functions have diminished and part of the remit of the Liquor Licensing Authority is to examine the membership, make sure that their membership is in order, make sure that their books are in order, securities and all of that.

Recently, there has been some bad press around . . . sorry, bad *printed* press around members' clubs. So, I am here today to speak to that.

I want to speak about Bailey's Bay Cricket Club. I want to speak about the president, Mr. Arrim (I might be pronouncing it wrong) . . . Mr. Perinchief, the work they are doing down there—\$5,000 towards school supplies for children, back to school, every year, going even further, to create employment for some of their members, by teaching them trades, starting off with working around the clubs.

Let us move on. Hamilton Parish Workman's Club or as we know down in the east, Crawl Club. Mr. Nigel Burgess and his committee, youth programme for 100 young people, seniors' outreach. Moving farther towards your side of the country, Southampton Rangers. *Once a Ranger, never a stranger*. Coincidentally, their colours are . . . do you know what their colours are, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: I think you should move on.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Jason Wade, president Jason Wade and his committee. They have family fun days every time there is a cricket game. They have a seniors' night every week that provides free meals for 40 seniors.

You see, Mr. Speaker, these clubs, these bastions of our community, have been tarnished over and

over because of, let us just say, incidents at the club. Not from the club itself, but persons visiting the club. Oh, so yes, part of our remit is to make sure safety first.

So, in speaking with these young men, and when I say young, most of them are 40 and under. These people are all volunteering their time to help evolve their clubs to move away from the image of their clubs just being a glorified watering hole. So, I am asking Bermuda, please, please, please, when they have family events, please give them your support. I am asking each one of my fellow MPs. Find out the club in your area, support them, join as a member, even if you are not a functioning member, be a financial member. It means a lot.

And most of all, I am asking the printed press to stop being so negative to our clubs. They are trying their best to turn things around because this is part of Bermuda.

Let me move on, Mr. Speaker.

PUTTING BERMUDIANS FIRST

Mr. Christopher Famous: In the year 2011, the OBA came out with a slogan *Putting Bermuda First*. At first, I was like, *Wow, this sounds pretty nice*. Putting Bermuda First. Then I read a little deeper, and I said, *Well, where are the Bermudians?* because they are talking about the country. So, somehow, they forgot to put Bermudians first. But I am not going to digress.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are an Overseas Territory, one of 14. One thousand miles directly south of Bermuda, is a place called Tortola, British Virgin Islands. The Premier, Honourable Andrew Fahie made this statement recently . . . one minute, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Would you like to read it and make a comment of his statement?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Well, basically what he said is that there is going to be some new investors coming to his country. Financial investors, different sorts of investors. But he wanted to ensure that his people got jobs first. They are not just coming here to just come, bring in your own people and we cannot work.

I think there is an Honourable Member here who has some business down there. I will not say who, but . . . anyway, the point I am getting at, Mr. Speaker, he was chastised because he said he wanted to put his people first—vilified, even. Putting your people first seems to be a problem for some people.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Honourable Immigration Minister Wayne Caines put out a release and it essentially said that we are going to put immigration reform, looking for balance, but a primacy for Bermudians. Once again, vilified.

Let me read some of the comments. “Apart from broadening the tax, pension and healthcare load we seriously need to increase the gene pool given the level of intellect and in-breeding of many [of us] Bermudians.”

This is comments because we want to put our people first. You see, Mr. Speaker?

Last week, many of us attended Bermuda College graduation, let me be clear. One hundred and thirty persons graduated. I am going to go on a limb and say 120 of those were born Bermudians. Over the next few weeks, 400 to 500 young people are going to graduate from high school. Over the next few weeks, another few hundred Bermudians are going to graduate from university. Logically speaking, those young people, when they finish university and whatever they learned, should be looking to come back to their country to get employment. But, yet, when we say putting Bermudians first, we are vilified.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak to everyone in this House, everyone in the listening audience. Everyone in this House, bar none, has children. Everyone in this House has or will sacrifice to send their children to university, or high school, whatever they do. Every one of us, bar none, wants their children to be successful. So, why is it, when we sit here and we make legislation to ensure that OBA people’s children get [put] first, PLP people’s children get [put] first, the children of people who do not vote for nobody get [put] first, why are we being vilified?

I keep asking myself, *Why is this?*

You see, Mr. Speaker, if we do not put this legislation in place, we are going to find ourselves like a country that you and I visited. That even the most educated of our people are on bread lines, doing stuff that they are more than qualified for but cannot get a job in their category. So, I am saying to all my fellow MPs in here, no matter if you are green or red, the immigration reform committee is a bipartisan committee. We have mandates for Bermuda status, for mixed families. We have mandates for work permits. We are working hard. We are not going to just put things out there and then somebody say, *Oh man, this policy is a failure. This has put Bermudians backwards.*

Every day we hear it on our phones. Every day we see it on Facebook. *Bermudians cannot get jobs*. Go to any grocery store nowadays. Go to any restaurant. You ask yourself, *Where are the Bermudians?* You got to look underneath the tables, any Bermudians in there? These are things we have to turn around, Mr. Speaker.

So, again, I am going to end on this note. OBA, *Putting Bermuda First*. Mr. Speaker, we cannot put Bermuda first if we put Bermudians second. Bermudians must come first in Bermuda because they are not going to come first anywhere else.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. I recognise the Deputy Speaker.

Deputy, you have the floor.

COST OF THE POLICE INVESTIGATION INTO DR. EWART BROWN

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

Mr. Speaker, I was reading the Bible the other day . . . not intentionally any particular book of the Bible, but I was reading John 19. And in John 19 it tells us about how Pilate had Jesus flogged, they put a crown of thorns on his head. Jesus was slapped—and when Pilate came out to present Jesus he says, *I do not find him guilty of any crime.*” But when the High Priest and the police saw Jesus, despite what Pilate said, they said, *Crucify him, crucify him.*

Mr. Speaker, I learned this week that the Bermuda police are now trying to freeze the bank accounts of Dr. Brown. Why would they do that? Cripple somebody so they cannot fight them. Mr. Speaker, it is shameful. It is shameful in this country to be investigating somebody . . . Bermuda will have the record in the world, investigating somebody going on nine years. Shameful, Mr. Speaker.

I do know the Minister of National Security has asked the police for a breakdown of the costs of this investigation. Mr. Speaker, I want that report to be tabled in this House. Not only one lump sum figure, but I would like to know: What is the hotel cost in Bermuda and overseas? What is the air travel cost? What is the cost of food in Bermuda and overseas? What is the ground transportation cost in Bermuda and overseas, Mr. Speaker? What is the miscellaneous expense? What did it cost them when they broke into Dr. Brown’s clinic [and had] to repair that?

I want to see all of that in the report, Mr. Speaker, because this has gone too far, that you can investigate somebody for nine years based on a comment from a convicted perjurer. And when you have crimes committed by others and recorded in the audit report, and there is no investigation. There is no special report—that is shameful. It shows you that we still live in a country where it is divided and they sometimes call it Two Bermudas, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to see that report as soon as possible. I know the police have asked for an extension to get it to them to next week. I want to see that report tabled here because, you know, we are spending millions of dollars on this investigation when Mrs. Smith cannot even afford her medicine or proper food to eat. And we have got people . . . in fact, we had a couple of officers travel to California here recently to question Dr. Reddy’s wife. For what? This is nonsense. You know, you cannot find nothing now and it becomes dangerous now, they will put anything there.

And not only the investigation of Dr. Brown, but anybody that is connected with him, anybody in this party, we want to know what the cost is. And so, I hope those true figures come back here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 16. Honourable Member Weeks, you have the floor.

BERMUDIANS OF PORTUGUESE DESCENT

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I go on, I want to say that I concur with the Member that just took his seat. For as long as I have been in Parliament, which is 10 years this year, there has been a witch-hunt to try to destroy one of our best Premier’s that I think this country has ever seen.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity, like many other Bermudians, to attend the Bermuda versus the Azores game at our National Sports Centre on Saturday evening. But I want to pause right here and take a minute to thank the president [*sic*] of Clube Vasco da Gama, Mr. Paul Franco, and his club at large for inviting me and my wife to attend the game.

You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

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

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: —I went on a fact-finding trip last year to the Azores, when I was still Minister of Community, Culture and Sport. Joining me was Mr. Jekon Edness, he is a representative for Youth, Sport and Recreation, and Mr. Rick Richardson, who had a programme along with Mr. Clyde Best, called Bermuda International Football Festival that is reaching and teaching our young sons through football. This programme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was borne out of the upsurge of antisocial behaviour.

While I was in the Azores, I met many of the officials who actually accompanied the team to Bermuda and I met them again on Saturday. They were led by a Mr. Robert De Camara. He was the perfect host when I was in the Azores. So, I just want to mention that.

Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, Saturday night—for those that went—was a very exciting night. As we know, or those that do know that Bermuda walked away came away with a 2-1 victory and our national pride on Saturday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was at its highest and, you know, in the words of one of my younger children, they were saying *Ber-Ber*. That is all you heard leaving the stadium, the stadium on Saturday night.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, anyone who attended the game I am sure noticed that there was a level of excitement. But also, there was an obvious disconnect between the Bermudian of Azorean descent and the Bermudian of African descent. What do I mean by that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well, watching the game, and the feeling in the atmosphere, I realised as I looked around and listened that we had a language barrier that actually separated us.

So, looking around, I saw the different pockets, I tried to read people's perceptions and the position that they were taking. And if we are honest with ourselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were desperately trying to figure out what our Portuguese counterparts were saying—most of them Portuguese Bermudians—in their native language, what they were so vehemently and passionately and whatever else they were shouting at the players and the officials, sometimes even in jest. You know, my group of people watching the game would laugh and shout, *Say that in English! Say that in English!* And, of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned . . . and I must stress that this was all in fun and it was all in jest. So before anybody takes it a different way, it was just in fun.

But, having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker (on a serious note), the language barrier was so clearly evident. I can recall, briefly, vaguely, in 1999 when Dame Lois Browne-Evans . . . you may remember because I think you were here back then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she brought a Bill that would give Portuguese and other members of our society, long-term residence, I think that was about 20 years ago.

The Deputy Speaker: Paula Cox.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Paula Cox brought it? Okay, well, you have to excuse my memory, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: No problem.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: And that, to me, is another indication, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of our then Attorney General or the Honourable Paula Cox was looking out for those that had a long history and a connection to our country and the development of our country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the phrase that it is time for *Verdade e reconciliação*—that is Portuguese, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Was it?

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: For truth and reconciliation.

[Laughter and inaudible interjection]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: I spent last—

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I think you skipped a beat, but we got the message.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Well, I spent last night practicing, and—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: One more time.

The Deputy Speaker: You got a teacher here.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Give it to us again.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: *Verdade e reconciliação*.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay. Appreciate it.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Ta bom! That is truth and reconciliation.

[Crosstalk]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Because for truth and reconciliation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is something that we must not just speak about when it comes to the reparations of the African Bermudian. But it must all be looked at when we talk about the history of the African Bermudian and the Portuguese Bermudian in this country. There needs to be some truth and reconciliation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The reason that we are celebrating Portuguese Day on November 4, 2019, I think, is an indication that we recognise the contribution of the Portuguese community in Bermuda.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: We understand that they did not come here like the African Bermudian came here, but they were brought here by the same people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, largely through the English Bermudian. Those of us [from] Back o' Town came to call the English Bermudian the "Forty Thieves." So, I will refer to that as I go further on in what I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We live side by side with our Portuguese neighbours, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were an integral part of our community and they brought another cultural perspective to our country.

Back in the 1960s, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I am warming up now . . . back in the 1960s, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the party system was first formed, when this illustrious party of whom I am a member, the Progressive Labour Party was formed . . . I am humbled by those members, those founding members that saw fit to put our party together to fight for democratic rights, justice and equality in these isles of Bermuda. The English Bermudian, Mr. Deputy Speaker, used his power at the time to persuade the Portu-

guese Bermudian to separate from the black Bermudian by using the law of white privilege.

These are the things that I was thinking about while I was sitting there watching that game, wondering what separated us. And what little history I do know, it was the law of white privilege. They were crafty. They were crafty, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as it was their way of separating our communities for their benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the historical perspective . . . it must be understood. When the PLP was formed, it was not formed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for only the black Bermudians. It was formed as a labour party for all Bermudians. But truth be told, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the English Bermudians, the Forty Thieves back in those days were highly instrumental in getting the Portuguese Bermudian and the black Bermudian to separate.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I speak of history. I speak of culture. I spoke of sports, and now I want to speak of language. It has always been my assertion that we have Portuguese taught in our schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Not as an elective like French or Spanish. Oh, no. Not to just have a foreign language taught in schools, but given the size of our Portuguese community, the Portuguese language should be Bermuda's national second language, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and therefore taught as such in our schools—Portuguese as a second language.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be some who fall on both sides of the divide. Some will agree and some will disagree. That is fine, because we live in a democracy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And because this is my opinion, we all have our own opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But beyond that, we need to begin to think about our country one day becoming independent. We have to think of our country one day becoming independent.

We must start thinking independent and all roads should lead to independence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because independence will not just drop out of the sky, as I have had conversations with one of my colleagues. Everything that we do in this Honourable House should be . . . we should have in mind that one day this country will have to stand on its own. And this is why I am talking about the language and how we have to bring our communities together, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have to get the Portuguese community re-immersed into the overarching Bermudian community and culture. No more of “us” and “them.”

Of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, there will be some in both communities that may not agree with my philosophy. There are some of us who may enjoy the separation. There are even some Portuguese who do not even speak a lick of Portuguese, but are of Portuguese heritage. And I have a colleague who does not speak Portuguese—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Who are you talking about, Trevor Moniz?

[Laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Mr. Deputy Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: I, for one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, am minded by a comment that the Honourable Member from constituency 2 said earlier. I am one of those that is a little of this and a little bit of that. As my great-grandma, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on my mother's side, was a Portuguese from the Azores and her maiden name—

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Oh, yes. I thought you said another word, but I am glad—

[Laughter and crosstalk]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: I venture to say that there are a lot of us, there are a lot of us . . . a significant percentage of our black Bermudian population who have those similar ties, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And just for the record, my great-grandma's maiden name was De Minx Ferrera.

Mr. Deputy Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: You are related to Trevor Moniz.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: He is my cousin, but it is nothing else.

[Laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: It is nothing else, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But as I mentioned prior, the black Bermudian and the Portuguese Bermudian, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we lived among each other in the same communities and we intermingled, went to school together, before the Portuguese was bamboozled and tricked and lured away to benefit the few, to continue to control the men, economically and in all kind of other ways.

So, I venture to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to now look at a way to bring about healing, to heal the divide, to bridge the gap between the Bermudian of Portuguese descent and the Bermudian of African descent. What better way to do this than through language, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Starting with our schools.

We need some truth and reconciliation . . . I am not going to say it again, what I said earlier, because I got tongue-twisted, –but we need some truth and reconciliation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need some real talk. What better way to bring them back into the fold, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to show our Portuguese brothers and sisters that it is time to heal the divide and to understand why the divide came about in the first place? You know, if we do not talk real about it, we will never understand why the divide came about in the first place, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But when I was at the game on Saturday, this is what started my mind wandering when I was watching the game. When I was at the game on Saturday, I was talking to a few of my Portuguese Bermudian friends, and they were wearing red and green, the colours of Portugal's national team. But they had hats on that said Bermuda. And when I saw that, I said, *Hmm. Look at that—*

An Hon. Member: They were covering their bases.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: —because they too understand . . . yes, they covered their bases, but what I am saying is that they too understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they are a part of this community. And we need to open our arms and welcome them back.

That picture that I described? It shows that we are confused, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on many levels. But I must stress, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is not an educational issue that I speak to. But it is a community and cultural issue. Those persons of Portuguese descent, they have helped to cultivate and contribute to this country. They have helped to grow this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all the ways that we can think of, they have assisted in making this country what we know it as today.

So, it is time to openly acknowledge the ills of our past. It is time to welcome our [Bermudians of Portuguese] descent as a true part of this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The dialogue must begin, and the divide must be closed.

So, I say again *verdade e reconciliação*. Truth and reconciliation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, must happen. Portuguese as our second language must and should start with our young people and as I close, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say *muito obrigado, Mr. Orador*.

The Deputy Speaker: I say good night.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: That is thank you, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Minister, the Honourable Zane De Silva.

Mr. De Silva—
[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: No, he cannot speak anything.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: *Bom dia*, everybody.

An Hon. Member: Keep it above board. Keep it above board.

[Laughter and crosstalk]

EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE—CHAIRMAN'S REMUNERATION

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I will give you a little Spanish when I am finished, too! I am going to speak English now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member, former Premier Michael Dunkley, spoke tonight. And he talked about the things that he was not going to talk about.

I am going to take a similar line and length, and tonight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to talk about how their former Attorney General shredded paper. I am not going to talk about how the former OBA Government cut our former Premier's fees up to 87 per cent. I am not going to talk about the former Government, the OBA Government, wanted to issue status to thousands of non-Bermudians, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in one fell swoop.

I am not going to talk about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about how our people were pepper-sprayed under their tenure. And I am certainly not going to talk about how they gave away our airport without tender.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Honourable Member Dunkley seemed to really have a bee in his bonnet about now Minister Wayne Furbert being paid \$60,000 for work he had done as Junior Minister. Well, what the former Premier Mr. Dunkley does not know, probably, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is how many hours Wayne Furbert worked as Junior Minister.

Quite frankly, I do not know he did it. I have done some calculations because I happen to have worked a little closely with Mr. Furbert during that period, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would venture to say . . . first of all, let us clarify something else. He was not paid \$60,000. He was paid \$5,000 per month. He just happened to work for 12 months. Now, you might say, *Well, why do I clarify that?* Well, the Honourable former Minister of Health Pat Gordon-Pamplin, very quickly, when she was Minister hired the former Honourable Member Louise Jackson for \$30,000 for six months, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now, why do I bring that up? Only because former Premier Mr. Dunkley

brought up Wayne Furbert, the Honourable Member's consultancy wage during that period. So, you have to draw some analogy. The difference that I—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member is, I believe maybe inadvertently, misleading the House. Mrs. Jackson was not a sitting MP on a government salary at the time she was hired as a consultant.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my point was . . . that is a good point of clarification. But the fact of the matter is, she was still . . . the ink was very, very wet on that paper, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The ink was very wet.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me say . . . and I certainly would not want to degrade former Member Louise Jackson. Not at all, because she was a very good friend of mine and so is her daughter. But I just want to clarify one thing. I would think that everyone in this House would realise that the qualifications of Mr. Furbert for his consultancy contract certainly outweighed the qualifications of former Member Louise Jackson's qualifications to do what she was doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As a former Health Minister and someone that worked closely with Mrs. Jackson, I think I am qualified to make that statement.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me say something else. For those who may think that that \$60,000 figure that got repeated over and over and over again by the Honourable Member Dunkley during his presentation . . . I have done a little calculation and I work. I do not know why . . . well, I do know why . . . I do not know how he did it. But Minister Furbert during that period, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I venture to say that he got paid \$4.16 per hour.

And, I will tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to use up all my time giving you the breakdown, but I will tell you what. It does not take one too much time to figure it out. But if they spend a little time . . . the Honourable Member Dunkley I am sure the amount of time he spent getting ready for that presentation tonight, by the time I am finished he will be able to work it out—if he is honest with the hours that the former Junior Minister worked.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whilst we are talking about these things, we will also know that the former—I know they have had so many leaders in their

party over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker—certainly the Honourable Member Jeanne Atherden got paid a nice little sum for working for the Tax Commissioner while she was a sitting MP, I do believe. I stand to be corrected.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: She is not a Minister? Oh, because they are not a Minister, but they are Backbencher and they get paid it makes a difference.

Hmm.

Okay, all right.

Which, then, I guess, if you want to prorated that as Junior Minister to just a regular MP, one making \$23,000 one making \$63,000, I guess if you prorated it, it might be the same.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other thing that the Honourable Member Dunkley seemed to have a problem with this morning is when we talked about the estimate that was given for the T. N. Tatem. It was an estimate only—an estimate only, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And then he had the audacity, because he was not in the House, you know, maybe someone told him . . . I do not know, maybe he said he was listening to the radio. But he obviously was not paying attention, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And he was corrected on that.

But, you know what? It is amazing because he mentioned something that caught my ear when he said, *Well, who bid on it? Who got the bid for it?* This is the same Premier that gave [BCM McAlpine], Mr. Deputy Speaker, a multi-million dollar contract and no bid! None whatsoever! Multi-million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Wait a minute. I did not hear a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Why is that?

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will certainly recall that when they had members on this side of the House, there was a certain law firm, Mello Jones & Martin, had one of their members who sat in another place whose wife worked for Mello Jones & Martin, again, millions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, millions of dollars spent with that firm.

Was that put out to tender?

You see? So if you are going to talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you are going to talk . . . and before I leave, I do believe we had a sitting Member of the House for the OBA by the name of the Honourable former Member Nandi Outerbridge, she was a Junior Minister, too. How much time did she put in her Ministry? How much work did she do?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Junior Ministers are nothing new in this country; nothing new in this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. None. They are not new. But it seems like Members on that side want to try to pinpoint things. But they do not pinpoint millions of dollars—I am not talking about \$60,000, I am talking about millions of dollars—going to friends and family, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, I say to the Opposition, if you want to bring things to this House and you want to talk on the motion to adjourn and the Honourable Member finished, I think he finished off his speech talking about Arbitrade and wondering where they are. Well, I am not surprised they have disappeared. Not surprised, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I mean, they have been slamming FinTech—

An Hon. Member: Why aren't you surprised?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They have been slamming FinTech since we got in power because we are trying to bring a third pillar to this economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We talked about it on both sides, about strengthening another pillar in this country. And FinTech technology is the way of the future, even though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to admit, I am not your techie kind of guy. I have to, you know, rely on my children to guide me all the time when I want to operate my phone or do something different. But we know that is the way of the future. We know that is the way of the future.

But the Opposition . . . and we have had how many? I think 85 companies register since we have been in power, Mr. Deputy Speaker—85 who have registered—bringing income to the country. And let me tell you, if we could get our banks to cooperate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we could get our banks to cooperate, I think we would be well on our way. We have gaming that we complained about when we were in Opposition. They could not get it done and now we are struggling to get it done, too. You know why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We do not have support.

An Hon. Member: You are going backwards.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: We do not have support.

But hopefully, hopefully that will bear fruit soon because we know that it is good for the country. We want to get tourists to the Island, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you know that it is a passion of mine. The problem we have in the country is entertainment at night. We struggle to give our visitors something to do after dinner at night and I think that is a segue into it.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Let us start up a band.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It is certainly a way.

Start a band? You and I, Pat? Okay, I am game.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I can beat a drum, but I cannot sing too well. My name is not Wayne Furbert.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all I want to say to the Opposition . . . and it seems like it is only maybe one Member on that side that seems to try to bring about . . . and he mentioned it tonight, the “C” word, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The transparency, non-transparency is going to start surfacing again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: What “C” word?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: “C” word—the “corruption” word.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I didn't mention it.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, oh, he says he did not mention it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But we have heard it already.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: We have heard it!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Oh, you are struggling now.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, no, I am not struggling, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hey, come on, come on. Hey, come on. Stop it. Stop it.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I never mentioned that.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: Dunkley, stop it.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —because it is starting to surface.

Look at the op-eds in the newspaper, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just look at those op-eds and what is being said. They are laying the foundation. It's coming. It's coming. Look at the ever ongoing investigation on our former Premier. All that is for a reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know what it is about.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It started in your Government.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: We know what it is about.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It started in your Government.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And of course, the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin says it is our Government.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, it *started* under your Government.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Started [under] our Government. We know where it started. It was not our Government.

An Hon. Member: Yes, it was.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It was at that place up on the hill. That is where it started.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mm-hmm. Yes, we know where it started.

An Hon. Member: Who was the Government?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is right.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just say this, right, because I know some Honourable Members on that side are not like certain Honourable Members on that side. And I would implore them to encourage their colleague, when they come up here and speak, to let's try to speak something a little bit more positive.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Rather than every week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every week, try to hit that way.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And, look, they are laughing over on that side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know why? Because they know that I will fire. And I will not stand here and let them fire, they are going to get it back. And the only time I fire . . . the only time I fire, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is when there is need for fire. Oh, yes, that is when I fire. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, remember we do not control, we do not control *The Royal Gazette*. We do not control that. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know who controls *The Royal Gazette*.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Who? Who?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: We know who controls it.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Who?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And the Honourable Member Michael Dunkley is saying "who?"

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I do not see any owls around here and that is the only "hoo" I see, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[Laughter]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: But who? You can't even say it.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But it is true. It is true.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: You can't even say it.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They control it—

Some Hon. Members: Who? Who?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And they have controlled it for years and they will continue to control it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Nonsense, man! Nonsense!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Look at the headlines, look at the headlines since we have been in power.

An Hon. Member: Oh, come on, man.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Look at the headlines in *The Royal Gazette* before we got power back. But, see the thing is—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Look, I want to hear the Member speak, please.

[Gavel]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know the beauty part about the life, the place we are in today in Bermuda and in the world is social media.

Once upon a time, *The Royal Gazette* dictated playing the country. And they have some influence today. They still have some influence. But the beauty part is, through social media we can send out one blast, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it goes around this Island like wildfire.

An Hon. Member: Just like Arbitrade.

Who is the next speaker?
Mr. Pearman?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Go around there like wild-fire.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say this, right? I would encourage those Members Opposite, right? And we talk about, look, let's get along, let's be nice to each other and all that stuff. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would encourage the Honourable Member, especially Mr. Dunkley, the Honourable Member Dunkley, because it seems like he is the Lone Ranger over there. It really does. And I just wonder, and it seems—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, now and then, the Lone Ranger had Tonto. Now and then Tonto pipes up.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on that note, I would just like to ask the Honourable Lone Ranger and Tonto, when she pipes up, to let us try—

[Laughter]

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

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —to do things a little bit, a little bit nicer going forward—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: You are allowing him to call names. It is not right.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —so we do not have the banter that—

The Deputy Speaker: I do not know anybody named Tonto.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —they do not like so much.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Come on—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: What is that, Mr. Dunkley? What did you just say to me?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: He called names.

The Deputy Speaker: What did you say to me? “Come on,” who?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Come on—

The Deputy Speaker: Oh, all right.

TALE OF TWO ARTICLES

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

I am going to try to take the tone in the room back two speakers ago, to the Honourable Member Mr. Michael Weeks, who for the second time in a few weeks has given a very powerful speech. I agree with quite a lot of what he had to say. If I may say so, it was only a shame you did not extend the concept of unity to English Bermudians as well, because that is yet another step we have to take. But I leave that to one side and I make it as no criticism.

I also want to speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about language, about what we say and how we say it. I am new here. Next Friday will be my first year in this House, also Honourable Member the Minister of Finance, his first year, next Friday to the day. I had the pleasure of being told by our Honourable Premier this morning that he would *learn me up*.

[Laughter]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Well, let me say this. I am always willing to learn. I do not know it all and I will learn. But when I started a year ago, I thought to myself, *What is it that I want to do? What tone do I want to try and set?* And when I gave my Maiden Speech a few weeks later, the central theme of that is that we actually have more in common than that which divides us. And I fundamentally believe that. And I think we would all do well . . . and I do not want to preach, but we would all do well simply to pause and remind ourselves that from time to time, when we see some bricks being thrown.

Let me give two examples, and I will predict now that the example I give of what was said from that side will be a negative example and the example I give as what was said from this side will be a positive example, because I am still in politics and I am learning myself up. But I will try to be fair, nonetheless.

It is a tale of two articles. The first article is the article by my Honourable and Learned friend, Mr. Michael Scott, in the daily.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Did you say tale of two articles or tale of two hospitals?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Tale of two articles.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, okay.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Tale of two articles. And, I am admirer of Mr. Scott's. We know each other outside of the House, and I believe that we have mutual respect and get along with each other. And I know he is strong

enough to take a bit of criticism because I intend to give him a bit of criticism.

His article said two things that I think we were rather unhelpful. The first was his opening sentence,³ “As the One Bermuda Alliance continues to strive for relevance, we are concerned with their attempts to try to create an issue,” et cetera.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Mr. Scott Pearman: I remind the Honourable and Learned Member—

[Laughter]

Mr. Scott Pearman: —that this Government has been the Government for 16 of the last 20 years.

The problems that Bermuda faces are the problems that the Government of the day must fix. We, the Opposition . . . if you wish, can help you, or, we can oppose you. But the problems, respectfully, are yours—they are not ours. And this concept that everything is the fault of the OBA, and all you can talk about is the OBA, is doing you no favours with Bermudians. They would like solutions from their Government, which is the PLP Government, and has been for the better part of two decades.

The second point I would make from this article (and I now see it is Mr. Speaker in the Chair)—

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

Mr. Scott Pearman: —is what I do take umbrage with (to borrow the word that was said behind me), and that is when people say they have done things when they have not. And I pointed this out a few weeks ago when it was said that the PLP Government had achieved the first budget surplus in 15-odd years, I think since 2003, when clearly no such budget surplus has been *achieved* because we will not know if it is going to be achieved until afterwards, looking back.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Again, respectfully, the Honourable and Learned friend says this, “The Progressive Labour Party,” if you permit me to read, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Mr. Scott Pearman: “The Progressive Labour Party has championed the introduction of a living wage, the creation of less expensive mortgage options and the tackling of the cost of health insurance.”

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Well, championing it, maybe. That means standing up and saying something. But they have not done any of those three things and to suggest to the public that they have is, I am afraid, false. So, do not take credit for something that has not happened, because it is what we say and how we say it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Well, fair enough. You can speak after me.

The other article, and of course, this is my article, but I want to talk about it for a moment, and I will put a positive spin on it. But I wrote an article a week ago, two weeks ago, in which I sought to praise a Member from the other side of the aisle, the Member who spoke two speakers ago. And I praised him because, to my mind, and I am new and I will be learned up, and maybe I am naïve, but to my mind, what he had to say was important. And it is why we, as Parliamentarians, should be here doing things.

Again, respectfully, we have spent the better part of today talking about how to pay for political advisors. That is not why Parliament should be sitting, debating legislation. We should be talking about legislation for a homeless shelter. That is far more important than legislation about political advisors and how they are going to get paid, respectfully. And, equally, in that article I called upon the Honourable Member and, indeed, I called upon all of this House that have the ability to bring pressure to bear.

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION INTO DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Mr. Scott Pearman: We had an investigation into allegations of abuse and neglect at the Department of Child and Family Services. We now learn a report exists into that investigation. We would like to see it made public. It is in the interests of Bermuda that it be made public and I would call upon all parliamentarians from both sides of the aisle, if you can bring pressure to bear for this report to see the light of day and to see truth and reconciliation occur and a light shined upon what went wrong, that will benefit Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 6. Minister Furbert, you have the floor.

EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE—CHAIRMAN’S REMUNERATION

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

Mr. Speaker, you know I have been around for a while, and if anybody understands some of the rules around here, it is you and I.

³ [Royal Gazette](#), 30 May 2019

Most people know that when you are a Junior Minister, you really do not do much.

An Hon. Member: Huh?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, Junior Ministers do not do much. They do not have to attend to the Ministry every day. There is a Junior Minister, and they must stand up, Junior Ministers do not have to attend to a Ministry every day. So, we have got that part right. As Junior Minister, I attended to Cabinet to the Ministry of Finance every day, sometimes starting at six o'clock in the morning and sometimes finishing and eight, nine o'clock at night.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That is what you signed up for.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, I did not. No, I did not.

An Hon. Member: Yes, it is.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, I did not. Junior Ministers do not sign up for that. They do not sign up that.

You cannot name one Junior Minister on your side that goes those hours over a year, a month, a week, or whatever. You cannot name it. I did it because I love to do it. I did not sign up for it.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: You did it because you got paid for it.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I got paid. Junior Ministers get \$11,342.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Plus \$60,000.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: As Junior Ministers, \$11,342, and they really do not have to show up to Cabinet . . . at a Ministry every day.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has a right, and the Minister of Finance has a right under section, I think it is 61 to appoint committees, just like he appointed a tax reform committee, which the Honourable Member Jeanne Atherden was paid \$20,000.

The Minister—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Minister, in his wisdom, felt that he should appoint me as Minister *[sic]* of the Efficiency Committee.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am sorry, as chairman. As chairman; I was not a consultant. I want to get that record straight. I was not a consultant. I was chairman of the committee—for \$60,000. And I was supposed

to find that information. It takes certain skill sets to determine that information, because the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Bob Richards had been for five years, could not find one cent of that and he was paid \$180,000.

Some Hon. Members: Rubbish!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Minister of Finance who was paid \$180,000 for five years did not find one cent of this information.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: So, the Honourable Member Trevor Moniz says they knew all this stuff. But they never did anything, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: If they knew all that, why did they not do anything, Mr. Speaker?

So, we worked diligently over that period of time . . . first of all, everything was for three months and then we renew for another three months, another three months because we kept on finding things. Well, the Premier still wants me to be chairman of that committee.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: How much money did you bring in for the Government?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am sorry. I forgot that number. To be honest with you, it was over \$12 million.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: What's that?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, if I put the right number to it, Mr. Speaker, it was just under \$20 million. It was just under \$20 million. So if the people of this country did not feel like they got a good return for \$60,000 . . . because there were certain skill levels that you needed to find the information.

If the Honourable Members said that they could have fixed . . . I mean, those cheques were sitting in that drawer for over five years! And they said they knew about it, but why didn't they do something about it? I mention in the report that 318 of those stamp duty were there from 2013. Why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Because 2012 is when they came into Government.

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

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Isn't there a motion to debate the report? Is he anticipating that debate by going into the content of the report?

An Hon. Member: Yes. Yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you.

Minister, you started by saying you and I have been around a long time—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: So, you know how to handle yourself on the floor here. And I will just remind you of that.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, I accept that, Mr. Speaker. I agree with that. But the Honourable Member Michael Dunkley attacked me on receiving \$60,000 a year.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And he talked about the Efficiency Committee.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: And he talked about the Efficiency Committee. All I am pointing out, Mr. Speaker . . . and I accept that when we get into the full debate on this report that we will dig into it. All I am saying is that the Honourable Minister of Finance, the former Minister of Finance, did not find one cent of this. And if they did—

An Hon. Member: That is not true.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: If they found one cent, Mr. Speaker, why have we still got the money there?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is the point, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Do not get sidetracked. Continue on.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: But do not open the book.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: All I am saying is that—

The Speaker: Do not open the report.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —that this country received a significant good return [with] me as chairman on this committee, James Jardine who received . . . he was receiving \$2,000 a month—

An Hon. Member: But that is okay.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —as a Senator. But that is okay, I guess.

An Hon. Member: That is okay.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is okay.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: You should announce what everyone got paid.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Oh, everybody should be knocked off.

Mr. Speaker, they are aware that some of their Members, some of the Members served on committees throughout Bermuda as far as on certain boards.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Some of their Members served on boards when they were in Government.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Do you think, Mr. Speaker, they got a cent? Many of their Members served on the government boards.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, they got paid! Yes, they got paid.

An Hon. Member: Check it out.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, they got paid. I do not have to check it out. I do not have to check it out. I do not have to check it out because—

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, they automatically, automatically . . . I do not think any of them sent back and said I do not want it.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Give to charities.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I do not think anybody said that. So this is not unusual. This is why I started out, Mr. Speaker, and said from the very beginning. Members have served on boards and committees for years and received remuneration for it. But they never talked about . . . and, look, I had no problem . . . I do not mind disclosing what was taken, that is why I gave the information. I was not hiding. But it was interesting why they would not talk about the \$12 million, \$12 [million] or \$20 million that we found, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Save that for the debate.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I will save it for the debate.

But it is so interesting that this small little money . . . matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it would probably still be there if this committee had not worked on it. Probably still, Mr. Speaker, because it was there from 2008 why should it still be there after two years after we got in? Or 2013. Why should it be still here? I remember the Honourable Member, every time he spoke about finance, Honourable Member Zane De Silva speaking about it . . . tell them what it was about the stamp duty.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Week after week.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: They did not do anything about it, Mr. Speaker. So, I remember that when I became chairman. I said, *Oops, I remember what Zane said. Let me go check something out.*

So, Mr. Speaker, I am not ashamed. I am not ashamed how much I saved the country either.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: How much did you . . . how much did you—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Sorry, I will repeat it again. Between \$12 [million] and \$20 million.

Now, I could break it down for you, if you want.

The Speaker: No, no.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I just gave approximately \$12 [million].

The Speaker: Save it for the debate.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I could break it down for you if you want.

The Speaker: During the debate.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I do not run from this. I really do not. And I am glad the Minister of

Finance, the former Minister of Finance and the current Minister of Finance, saw the wisdom to at least say, *Wayne, go do what you do best.*

I am a CPA. And what the Honourable Member said earlier about budget surpluses, well, that is exactly what it is. A budget. We do not know what the actual number is going to be at the end of the day. We hope that it will work according to our budget. But the budget, Mr. Speaker, is a budget. So, the budget surplus for the last 15, 20 years, I cannot remember what he said it was, but it is a budget. That is what it is called, and what that one said was actually right.

Now, when we get to the numbers at the end of March 31st and we see what the actuals are, we hope that it will be more! What will they say then, Mr. Speaker? Because I can tell you, this Minister of Finance, he is tough! So, he is keeping to the goal. He knows what he wants to meet. And if he keeps on what he is doing, we will probably be breaking some numbers that you will be surprised at.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, then stop complaining about it every week. Stop it. Acting like little children.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, you talk about it.

The Speaker: Continue, continue to speak to me. Speak to me, Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I have not gone far from that . . . I had a slight tantrum from that Honourable Member, the Leader of the Opposition, a couple of weeks ago. I was not sure what room we were in.

So, Mr. Speaker, if those . . . and the Members on that side are trying to embarrass Wayne Furbert. They have picked the wrong Furbert, because I am not embarrassed of where I am.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Not embarrassed one iota that the Government saw fit and had the wisdom to make this happen.

I heard the Honourable Member chirp a few minutes ago, the Honourable Member from Paget. But, Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the result . . . I hope the Honourable Members on both sides read it, digest it, and if the Minister of Finance or the Premier asks me to continue to do this, guess what? I do not get any more money. I will work as the Minister of Finance getting it done. I hope I find another \$12 million so I can put a report on his desk.

Because as Minister of Finance, I understand . . . sorry as the Minister I understand that. But as Junior Minister, it was a little different. That is the differ-

ence, because Ministers who sit on boards or committees do not get any extras. But if you are a Junior Minister, or you are a Member of Parliament, you do get extra. Because you are sitting there as a Member.

So, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me a few minutes to say a few things.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well—

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am sure—

The Speaker: Members, keep your comments quiet.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —they realise that, as I said, I was Junior Minister of Finance and that is all I will say.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member Richards, Honourable Member from constituency 7. You have the floor.

RISING COST OF LIVING IN BERMUDA

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting being a politician in this community. Obviously we live in a very small community, about the size of a small town anywhere else in the world. And most people know who their elected representatives are when we walk the streets, when we go shopping in the supermarkets, when we socialise out in public. And it is a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing because you are a public servant and people take advantage of you when they see you to talk to you and to speak to you. That is the blessing. The curse is that sometimes when you are out in public you do not want to have those conversations, maybe you are with your significant other or your child and someone wants to have a political conversation. But it is all part and parcel of what we do up here.

An Hon. Member: It is what we signed up for.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Exactly. It is what we signed up for.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we are in this place, I think sometimes we forget, or we kind of get insulated in the political banter back and forth in Parliament. But what I try to do, Mr. Speaker, when I get to my feet is to be a voice for those who speak to me. Some might say be a voice for the voiceless, and I think that is a big responsibility.

And when I walk around the streets of our country today, I hear a lot from people who are fearful, people who are suffering to a degree economically, I hear from people who are not pleased with the direction that the country is headed in. They are not pleased with the discourse of the politicians . . . and I touched on this earlier today, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that the function of parliamentarians is to make the lives of our citizens better, to make Bermuda a better place to live in for this generation and for generations to come. And, Mr. Speaker, there is politics and then there is reality. And when I am sitting here a lot of times I hear politics—who is getting paid for what, who did what, and this that and the other—and I believe that is a bit of a sidetrack.

I am going to speak some reality tonight, Mr. Speaker, because the people that stop me . . . and it always seems to be in the supermarket when I am trying to go in and buy something real fast and leave. But what I am hearing *consistently* over and over again from people of all political persuasions, because they usually tell me, the conversation starts like, *I am PLP you know, but . . .* And the *but* is this: this Government promised to lower the cost of living in Bermuda; however, the reality is the opposite. I do not think there are too many ways you can get around that fact.

Two years into the Government of the Progressive Labour Party, the majority of people that talk to me are no better off than they were from the day of the election. That is what they are telling me. I do not solicit this response. I listen now. When people approach me and they are telling me how they feel, I go quiet. I just listen. Because I do not want to steer people's conversations, so I listen.

Unfortunately, and I know how difficult it is when you are Government to try and make things happen, how difficult it is to encourage inward, forward investment, how difficult it is to create an environment for job creation in the private sector . . . it is hard. It is not easy. And this Government is finding that out. However, it is my observation, and the observation of those in the community that speak to me, that this Government has no other areas of revenue creation to pay for the increased size of the civil service.

All good intentions aside, of FinTech, and what that could have been and what might be.

Therefore, the cold hard truth is that the only revenue left for this Government is to increase the tax burden on everyday citizens.

I was at a public meeting that the Government had when the land tax debate was ongoing. The Finance Minister stood at the front and was asked a question about why do taxes have to be increased at this time when people were already finding it difficult to make ends meet. The Finance Minister said we have a civil service that we have to fund. And when asked, *What are you doing to stimulate the economy?*

He said, *We do not have an America's Cup in the pipeline and we do not have—*

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, point of order, please.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: If the Honourable Member is going to choose to quote me, I would request that he actually quote the words that I said instead of paraphrasing what he thinks I might have said.

The Speaker: Member.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Mr. Speaker, I will yield and allow the Finance Minister to say what he actually said.

An Hon. Member: Why don't you say it?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I am paraphrasing what he said.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Would you like to yield?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: If he wants to say what he said, I will sit down and let him say what he said, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I will say this, I am not as skilled in the rules of this House, but it is not my time to speak. It is his. If he wants to use my words, he should find the words and speak them in quotes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage that Minister, at some point during his political career, to take to his feet and give a speech in this House. It has been almost a year and we have not heard anything from him. I thought Ministers were supposed to give a Maiden Speech. Unless I was absent, I have not heard it.

The Speaker: He has had his Maiden . . . yes, he gave a Maiden Speech.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Okay, I must have been absent, so—

The Speaker: He has given his Maiden Speech.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I stand corrected.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: But, I am not going to get sidetracked—

The Speaker: All right.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: —from the point of why I am on my feet today.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You mean again.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Taxes have increased, and I am going to read out just a few of the taxes—

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, point of order again, please.

Mr. Speaker, earlier we heard the Honourable Member, Mr. Pearman—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I am going to give it in a minute, if you will close your mouth, please.

An Hon. Member: You got a stapler?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair. Just speak to the Chair.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Give your point of order.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: A moment earlier, Mr. Pearman made mention—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Speak here.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: —of the fact of words. My point of order is I think the person is misleading the House.

A moment earlier, Mr. Pearman made a reference to this conversation in his article about talking about surpluses. He did not also point out in the same article that he made a point of Government has increased taxes. There is a projection to increase taxes, as there is a projection to have a surplus this year. So, if the Members are going to talk about what Government is doing, they need to frame it in the context of what it is doing.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: We do not know if we have increased taxes yet because the end of the year has not come around yet.

[Laughter and crosstalk]

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair. Speak to the Chair, Members.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Mr. Speaker, I am just going to let that sit out there and the public can dissect that one for themselves.

The Speaker: Just speak to me, just speak to me.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: But, Mr. Speaker, we have passed legislation in this House—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Exactly.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: —and have increased land tax. That is not speculation. That is not, *Let's wait until next year when we can see the numbers*. That is . . . when people get that land tax bill this month, it is going to be higher. I have already calculated what mine is going to be. It is going to be higher. I can afford to pay it, but there are a lot of people out there, Mr. Speaker, who are going to struggle to pay their land tax and the Finance Minister will hear from them. That is guaranteed.

What other taxes have increased? Stamp duty has increased. Import duty has increased. Payroll tax has increased. Dividend tax has increased. Foreign currency exchange purchase tax has increased. And for those listening out there who do not know what that means, it means that every single thing that is imported into this country costs more. There is an additional tax on it. That is why—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Payroll tax was not increased under this Government.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Continue.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Foreign currency purchase tax has increased, and I was saying that everything that is imported into this country is going up. That is why when you go to the grocery store, every-

thing is more expensive. The sugar tax, it is part of it, but that foreign currency purchase tax is the remainder of it. So, people need to understand that. It is a direct result of this Government's policies.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

This Government gave duty relief on staple items to the grocer, so that is not a direct result of what we have done. We have given a relief. The grocers have not passed that on to the consumers, Mr. Speaker.

It is not—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Continue, Member.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The foreign currency purchase tax is built into everything that is brought into the country. I will continue. Licences for vehicles have increased. I already mentioned the sugar tax. Social insurance has increased. Company registration fees have increased. And the health care costs that the Government promised that they would decrease are going to go up.

And we have heard banter back and forth of the how's and the why's, the Bermudian public do not care. All they know is that it is going to cost more for their health insurance. As a result, not only has the cost of living for the everyday citizen of this country gone up, but the cost of doing business in Bermuda has increased. Now, anybody who knows anything about economics knows that you do not create jobs, you do not encourage economic activity when you increase the cost of doing business. It is simple. This stuff is not difficult.

And then we have the 12 consecutive months of decreasing consumer retail sales volumes—month after month, after month, after month, after month, after month, after month, after month, after month, after month, after month.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member forgot to tell this House that they removed the . . . they allowed taxis to buy their cars directly from Japan which reduced motor vehicles retail sales.

Thank you.

The Speaker: That point of order should address where he is at, but let us move on.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I have made my point, Mr. Speaker.

And the inconvenient truth is that the Government does not want to acknowledge that. They own that, Mr. Speaker. It is a vital economic indicator that this country has used for many, many years. So, what that tells me, and is what I am hearing from the people who stop me [at] MarketPlace, and who stop me when I am walking on the street, is that they do not have confidence in this Government. They do not have confidence in the direction that this country is going in.

I want to hear some good news. I am waiting for some good news, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Now, we have a school, T. N. Tatem School, which has closed.

The Speaker: Members!

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I am going to make a prediction. I am making predictions up in this place because I want it to be recorded into the Hansard.

And once again, I hope I am wrong. But my prediction is that T. N. Tatem School will never reopen. Those students and those teachers have already been assigned to other schools. In September, when the new school year starts, they will go to those respective schools and, after a period of time, the Government will release a statement that says, you know, *We have looked at the numbers, \$3 million does not make any sense to invest in this school. It is old, it is dated, it sits on a marsh, and it is not going to reopen.*

Kind of like what happened with the trash pickup. We do not have enough trucks, not enough manpower. We are going to go from two days a week trash pickup to one day a week trash pickup, and then once we get the equipment and the manpower, we will re-evaluate. And once they re-evaluated, the Minister said we are going to stay at once a week.

And that is the prerogative of the Government. That is their prerogative. They are running the show, Mr. Speaker. It is their show now.

It is your responsibility now.

I have a young friend of mine, a young Bermudian male, who works in the real estate business. We have lunch about once a week. And all he says to me is, *Man, the value of houses in Bermuda is going down. He says, I will be able to buy a house in Tucker's Town soon for \$1 million.* It is a joke.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, you will not.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: It is a joke, but what he is saying is based on reality. Housing values are going down.

And then he is saying, *Why doesn't the Government not do something? Why don't they do something about it?*

I said, *What's your suggestion? What's your suggestion?*

He said, *Give a visa or something so rich people can come down here and buy property. You know, do something.* Because he sees, in the real world—in the real world that people are living in—that the housing values in Bermuda are going down.

And, Mr. Speaker, this Government ran on a slogan at the last election, the Two Bermudas. That is all we heard about was the *Two Bermudas this*, and the *Two Bermudas that*, and the *Two Bermudas the other*.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Well, Mr. Speaker,—

An Hon. Member: About America's Cup. It was not just—

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: —the Two Bermudas, this is the Two Bermudas—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And the airport.

The Speaker: Members!

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: You are going to have the Two Bermudas: the “One Bermuda” is going to be the Bermuda that can afford to pay all of these increased taxes; the “Two Bermudas,” the part of Bermuda that is going to make it through; but then, you got [the second part], the other Bermuda—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is three.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: —that the Government says they represent, which is suffering and their situation is getting worse.

The divide is increasing between the haves and the have-nots. Now, I know when the Progressive Labour Party have their constituency meetings and have the public meetings, they are hearing it from their people. Because that is what happens in politics. Their people are not happy. Their people are not happy. They are telling me they are not happy. They are telling me, *Opposition, hold their feet to the fire.* This is what Progressive Labour Party supporters are telling me.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, they are not.

An Hon. Member: Yes, they are.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Yes, they are.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members!

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Yes, they are.

The Speaker: Members!

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I do not have to sit here and make up stories. I am not a storyteller. I am a megaphone for what is going out there on the streets, because I walk the streets.

So, where do we go from here, Mr. Speaker? The Government had their first march. The teachers came up here and demanded a meeting with the Minister. There is going to be more of that, unfortunately, unless the Premier [and] his Ministers are able to pivot. They are going to have to pivot; and the Backbenchers . . . I know how it is when you are a Backbencher. I have been one of those, too.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You were front and back a couple of times.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: That is right. And I was fine with that, because I am not here for any ego trip. I am not here for a title. I am here because I care about the people in my country.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I like that.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: And whether I am front or back, it does not make a difference to me. It is the same bus.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Exactly.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: It is the same bus.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: So, my thing is this: You Backbenchers, you better hold your Ministers to account.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, they do! Trust me.

[Timer beeps]

An Hon. Member: Time is up.

The Speaker: On that note—

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: —there you go, sir. Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2. Honourable Member Swan—

PLP BACKBENCHERS

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Make no mistake about it. The Backbenchers of the Progressive Labour Party speak up and we have a good, healthy dialogue with our Cabinet colleagues. And I am here to tell you, the speaker who just sat down, that I have some good news, if you are prepared to hear it.

But I want to just remind folks that some of the challenges that our Ministers have to deal with today . . . the previous speaker mentioned trash . . . I am going to mention buses and I am going to mention ferries, which were all on the blocks for privatisation under the previous Government during its four-and-a-half-year tenure.

And when you deliberately underfund, woefully neglect, you cause problems that someone else will inherit. And as a consequence, this Government is having to deal with those very problems.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And the Honourable Member could take to his feet when it is his time and speak. But it is true that the OBA Government were very much on a mission of privatisation of Bermuda industries—

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —and underfunding.

The Speaker: Member, what are you getting up for? Point of order? Clarification? What?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just had to catch my breath.

The Speaker: Point of order?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Yes, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Member, you take your seat while we hear the point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Mr. Speaker, we were not on a path to privatisation. We were reducing costs.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: We were reducing costs—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Something that this Government struggles with. It was not about privatisation. We never talked about privatisation.

The Speaker: Okay. Member, continue.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Well, anyway, Mr. Speaker, I will let the public determine that. As he says, let them pick the bones out of that.

I do want to say that it was over 10 years ago when the narrative of our 2007 election was corruption. I remember it. It was probably around that time when Dr. Brown was called into question on any number of issues, and I certainly remember the start of an investigative period. And I have great empathy when I have to think that some 10 years later my Dr. Reddy is included in that particular debacle, as it has turned out to be now.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that there comes a time when enough is enough.

OFFERING SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE TOURISM

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I planned to speak on the motion to adjourn today because Bermuda is scheduled to have over 500,000 cruise ship visitors this year. And I have always been one who wanted us to have those types of numbers reflected in hotel beds, because, it is no secret, persons in hotel beds spend a great deal more—considerably more, upwards of six times more than a cruise visitor. But in the absence of that, and thankfully with the emergence of Airbnb, we did see the recreation and the rejuvenation of the Dockyard into a major cruise port, which came at great criticism, I might add. I know all too well.

For Bermuda to facilitate over 500,000 visitors, there are a lot of people running around this country very busy right about now because of that. Minibus drivers, taxi drivers . . . I know them; I see them every day.

I rise on this occasion to offer a solution to enhance the product that we have in this country as it relates to our tourism. In my constituency, and in the parish of St. George's alone, I can think of some fortifications. I can think of Gates Fort, I can think of Alexandra Battery, I can think of Martello Tower, I can think of Fort George. I can think of Fort William, which is known to many as Gunpowder Tavern. I can think of the Fort Albert and also the Fort Victoria on the top of what used to be Club Med Hill on the northeast section of that . . . just northeast of Tobacco Bay.

These fortifications, many of them are in disrepair and in need of repair. And I offer, Mr. Speaker, this for my Cabinet colleagues who I have shared

with, that these fortifications could be used as vantage points, stop-off points to alleviate the congestion that occurs in areas such as the town, and other areas. I see it even in Southampton where I ply my trade, where the minibuses, many, are looking for a good vantage point so they can tell our visitors about some of our history.

I will throw in Whale Bay Battery for good measure, for any Member that might be familiar with the Southampton area. I declare my interest: my mother was born only 300 yards from Whale Bay Battery and grew up swimming in those waters on that shore.

I say that because entrepreneurial opportunities are very much a part of our mantra in the Progressive Labour Party. And I would venture to suggest that these fortifications could provide a gift shop opportunity for community-based businesses to sell souvenirs, to pass on our most treasured gift, which is the Bermuda experience and the Bermuda smile and the Bermuda hospitality. Much-needed bathroom facilities around the Island, which our visitors—those 500,000 visitors on those cruise ships—so desperately need when they are traveling around the Island, putting a strain on some establishments that cannot cater to just that, because it has only been since about 10 years since we were around, maybe 350 or so visitors in that realm.

So, as a consequence, Mr. Speaker, we have to look differently at our infrastructure. And, might I suggest that areas such as Martello Tower over at Ferry Reach and Ferry Island Fort Point, could very well be a niche tourism spot for our visitors to enjoy with the help of a few local entrepreneurs and the like. And, the support of restoring these areas would make them less remote, make them safer and allow us to better service our areas.

Gates, Fort Albert and Fort Victoria present a different challenge within the town of St. George's because they are lesser known fortifications. They sit on top of, and fall within, the remit of the new hotel which is being developed down on the shoreline. And while I am saying that, I just want to say that the Honourable Member that spoke before me spoke of diminishing house prices. I am here to tell you that with the clean-up that is already taking place in St. George's on the golf course, of which I am very much pleased to see, property values have gone up. And that only bodes well for our community.

And as we look forward, that presents other economic activities. But you cannot have on the one hand within a community enhancement of those and then [on the other hand] have those other deteriorated infrastructure monuments, historical monuments right on their doorsteps. So, Fort Albert and Fort Victoria may well have to be renegotiated situations which may fall under the hotel, which may not be in a position to be able to embrace them in quite the way that they would like. So, I am throwing out there the oppor-

tunity possibly where that may be something for future consideration. And the appropriate Minister, as we have the Minister responsible for Works, and you have the Minister responsible for Tourism, who work well together, could very well look at that. But I am urging them, in the spirit of our tourism, as one who has spent his entire life in the tourism industry, knowing the challenge and being intertwined with those who are traveling around our Island daily, making it possible for those visitors on those cruise ships, particularly, to have a good time.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I take my seat, it is my plea that we will look at our fortifications with a view to incorporating them more readily through upgrades and providing business opportunities for local entrepreneurs in the community and look at ways to make it happen, particularly in St. George's.

I declare my interest. I am a Member of Parliament for number 2, constituency in St. George's. And if you are going to do it, I would like for you to start out in Ferry Reach and work your way in, just saying.

But it is important. It is important that these fortifications be looked at and used in a modern sense. And make no mistake about the importance of a bathroom to a visitor. These visitors I see going around our Island every day, because I come in contact with them, I have conversations with them, [and they] are not the youngest of persons going around the Island. Thankfully they are here, and they are here in great numbers in 2019. Projections based on cruise visits booked, only hampered if we have a serious hurricane, and I certainly pray and hope that we do not this year or any year in the future. But I am sure we will have some to deal with.

So, Mr. Speaker, I offer that to my Government, and I offer the acceptance of it, universally, as a solution to addressing some of our challenges with infrastructure. But something that I do not wish to see on any backburner, that I would hope it would be done in tandem, because I am very pleased at the progress that I have seen with the restoration, and this would enhance the investment that is already taking place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

No further speaker?

We rise and stand adjourned until next Friday the 7th of June at 10:00 am.

Have a good weekend, Members.

[Gavel]

[At 7:27 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 7 June 2019.]

BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****7 JUNE 2019****10:02 AM***Sitting Number 22 of the 2018/19 Session**[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Mrs. Shernette Wolffe, Clerk]***The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES***[Minutes of 31 May 2019]***The Speaker:** Members, the Minutes of May 31st have been circulated.

Are there any omissions or amendments?

There are none.

The Minutes are confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 31 May 2019 confirmed]***ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING****APOLOGIES****The Speaker:** Announcements this morning: There are Members who have indicated that they will be absent today. We have, on the Order Paper, MP Jeanne Atherden. We also have MP Gordon-Pamplin, MP Dunkley and MP Commissiong.**MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE****The Speaker:** There are none from the Senate.**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR****The Clerk:** Also, there are no messages from the Governor. (I omitted that.)**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE****The Speaker:** You may note that there is a paper or communication on the Order Paper. But that is being carried over for another occasion.**PETITIONS****The Speaker:** There are none.**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS
AND JUNIOR MINISTERS****The Speaker:** There are seven Statements this morning. And the first is in the name of the Premier.

Premier, would you like to put your Statement now?

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you.**The Speaker:** Good morning.**ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
INTO HISTORIC LOSSES OF CITIZENS'
PROPERTY IN BERMUDA****Hon. E. David Burt:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall that, on the 4th of July 2014, this Honourable House approved a motion in these terms: "THAT this Honourable House take note of historic losses in Bermuda of citizens' property through theft of property, dispossession of property and adverse possession claims;"AND BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House calls on His Excellency the Governor to [establish a Commission of Inquiry](#) into all such known claims and to determine, where possible, the viability of any such claims and make recommendations for any victims of wrongful action to receive compensation and justice."

Mr. Speaker, the then-Governor refused to establish the Commission of Inquiry and, moreover, indicated that Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom was not disposed to funding such an exercise in any event.

Mr. Speaker, the community then marched on Government House, and some 2,000 people assembled to protest the then-Governor's decision, demonstrating a consistently expressed public depth of feeling on these historic issues. Earlier this year, the Civil Justice Advocacy Group renewed its call for such a commission to be established.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015, this Honourable House approved the Opposition Bill entitled the Commissions

of Inquiry Amendment Act, which gave the Premier the authority to issue commissions of inquiry. Honourable Members will also recall the first and, so far, only use of that authority by the former Premier, the Honourable Member for constituency number 10. It is not forgotten that this authority was not used to appoint a commission, which was passed by resolution of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, truth can be uncomfortable. Unearthing historic wrongs may be inconvenient for some. It may well be that some of those who were victims and those who committed wrongdoing have since passed on. But, Mr. Speaker, it is never too late for justice. That justice can take many forms. For some it may simply be the opportunity to be heard and have their claims acknowledged, while for others it may confirm the legal standing they have long asserted.

The process of providing justice starts with a step towards truth. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise this Honourable House and the public that I shall establish a five-member Commission of Inquiry to fulfil the mandate of this Honourable House as expressed by the motion passed in 2014.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. E. David Burt: The Commission will likely comprise a judge, counsel experienced in conveyancing, a land title officer (ex officio), two lay members, and a secretary to the commission to provide administrative support.

Mr. Speaker, whilst the terms of reference continue to be the subject of further consideration, I can advise Honourable Members that, at a minimum, they will include inviting the commission to do the following:

1. inquire into the historic losses of citizens' property in Bermuda through theft of property, dispossession of property, adverse possession claims and/or other such unlawful or irregular means by which land was lost in Bermuda;
2. collect and collate any and all evidence and information available relating to the nature and extent of such historic losses of citizens' property;
3. prepare a list of all land to which such historic losses relate;
4. identify any persons, whether individuals or bodies corporate, responsible for such historic losses of citizens' property; and
5. refer, as appropriate, matters to the Director of Public Prosecutions for such further action as may be determined necessary by that office.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to recognise the significant efforts of the Honourable Member from constituency number 17, the

Hon. Walton Brown, who championed this cause whilst in Opposition and has quietly kept attention to it since we assumed the mantle of Government.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the process of identifying those who will sit on the commission has now commenced, and I will ensure that we assemble the best group to address these issues. Additionally, the administrative planning will now start, and my hope is to revert to this Honourable House during this session with further updates on our progress.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Premier, I believe the second Statement this morning is also in your name. Would you like to deliver that now?

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

The Speaker: Continue on.

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

FINTECH BUSINESS UNIT EDUCATION INITIATIVE UPDATE

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, today I will provide this Honourable House with an update on the Government's [FinTech Education and Training Initiative](#).

Mr. Speaker, technology companies are domiciling in jurisdictions that have a high incidence of talent with technical skills. As we continue to execute our strategy to ensure that Bermuda is a domicile for the future of financial services, it is imperative that we ensure that Bermudians have the skills to take advantage of new opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, phase 1 of the FinTech Business Unit's Education and Training Initiative was launched in January 2019 under the direction of Dr. Gina Tucker. I am pleased to inform Honourable Members that the response of the community was excellent, and the training proved to be a success.

Mr. Speaker, a few highlights from phase 1 are as follows:

- over 300 persons registered their interest in taking the training;
- the cost of providing the six-week training opportunities for Bermudians was \$80,000;
- 130 persons completed the local courses including Intro to FinTech, Intro to Blockchain, Basics of Blockchain and Beyond the Basics of Blockchain;
- the instructors were Bermudians, and the entities running the training were the Bermuda Blockchain and Crypto Association and a local company called Gibraltar;

- 80 people participated in the Comparing Blockchain Platforms & Creating Fun Tokens courses hosted by the Bermuda Blockchain and Crypto Association;
- 75 persons participated in the two-day Business Boot Camps, and 25 participated in the one-day Technical Boot Camp hosted by Connectech;
- 15 teachers participated in the Google in the Classroom for P1 through P6 courses; and
- 45 persons participated in the four Compliance Lunch and Learn Sessions, and many are now enrolling in the KixKo compliance courses currently being offered by the PACE Department at the Bermuda College.

Mr. Speaker, phase 2 represents additional opportunities for Bermudians to enhance their skills with the launch of the FinTech school's online programme, which will allow any interested Bermudian to access all of their courses for free until November 17, 2019. Currently, Mr. Speaker, we have 167 Bermudians who have already enrolled to acquire additional skills. During phase 2, local courses will continue, including Introduction to Blockchain and FinTech, and Beyond the Basics of Blockchain.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, a compliance course will be offered by Omega One, the first company to obtain a digital asset business licence in Bermuda. Omega One is keen to contribute to the community and in doing so will offer a six-session course over six weeks for interested persons, commencing next Tuesday, the 11th of June.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is doing everything possible to produce a talent pool of Bermudians who are trained and ready to assume opportunities in technology-related jobs. We will continue this education initiative, as the overwhelming response validates the decision to invest in educating our people. I am happy to report that the participants cover the entirety of Bermuda's cultural diversity, and Bermudians are, obviously, hungry for this training.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Bermudians to visit the FinTech.bm website to learn more about the education and training opportunities that are being offered free of charge. I would also implore Honourable Members to share this information with their constituents so that the people we represent in this Honourable House can take advantage of the investment that this Government is making to develop a workforce in Bermuda which is ready for the technology jobs of the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

The third Statement this morning is in the name of the Deputy Premier.

Deputy, would you like to present yours?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

BILL ENTITLED: THE ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, as the Order Paper indicates, I will today table a Bill in this Honourable House entitled the [Electricity Amendment Act 2019](#).

Mr. Speaker, you will remember that, on the 15th of March 2019, I informed this Honourable House that, on learning that the Ascendant Group Limited announced that it was considering the sale of the company, I issued ministerial directions to the Regulatory Authority [RA], which are imbedded in the purposes of the Electricity Act 2016, namely, to seek the following:

- a) to ensure the adequacy, safety, sustainability and reliability of electricity supply in Bermuda so that Bermuda continues to be well positioned to compete in the international business and global tourism markets;
- b) to encourage electricity conservation and the efficient use of electricity;
- c) to promote the use of clean energy sources and technologies, including alternative energy sources and renewable energy sources;
- d) to provide sectoral participants and end users with non-discriminatory interconnection to transmission and distribution systems. (This prevents any monopoly on the generating subsector and ensures that other market participants are allowed to interconnect to the grid, and it ensures that end users are not denied service without just cause.);
- e) to protect the interests of end users with respect to prices and affordability, and with respect to the adequacy, reliability and quality of electricity services; and
- f) to promote economic efficiency and sustainability in the generation, transmission, distribution and sale of electricity. Economic efficiency in these areas translates to lower costs for customers.

Mr. Speaker, I also assured the general public that we would require any prospective new owners—and, indeed, the current owners—to adhere to the soon-to-be-published Integrated Resource Plan [IRP].

Mr. Speaker, quite coincidentally, we were working on this amendment to the Electricity Act 2016 to assure the proper regulation of the electricity sector when the announcement was made that the Ascendant Group Limited had identified a proposed buyer. I would like to assure Honourable Members and the general public that the sale cannot be finalised until the RA gives consent to a licence transfer. This re-

quirement is outlined in section 30(1) of the Electricity Act, which states, “A licence shall not be transferred or assigned without the prior consent of the Authority.”

Mr. Speaker, I must state up front that I have every confidence that the RA will perform the due diligence required prior to making a decision on whether to approve the transfer of any licence. However, it is also important to note that if the RA approves a licence transfer without adhering to the ministerial directions, currently the only remedy available to the Government is to appeal to the Supreme Court to grant an injunction to require the RA to comply with the directions. However, it would be too late to do so if a transfer had already been approved by the RA.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you would agree that the better remedy is to provide the Minister with an opportunity to review the RA’s intended consent to the transfer of the licence to ensure that the application is in accordance with the ministerial directions. The proper regulation of the electricity sector would be further strengthened by requiring that the RA’s consent shall not be given unless an IRP has been approved and published and that, when making its decision whether or not to consent to the transfer, the RA shall have due regard to the IRP.

Mr. Speaker, the BELCO plant is a strategic asset which is used by all residents in Bermuda. It is critical to our social and economic wellbeing. Therefore, it is a duty of this Government to ensure that any proposed sale will promote “economic efficiency and sustainability” in order to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel, increase the use of renewables and make electricity more affordable for all residents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

The next Statement on the Order Paper this morning is that in the name of Minister Burch.

Minister, would you like to put your Statement?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Good morning.

THE WEST END DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I rise this morning to highlight change—sustainable-growth, change, ongoing cruise ship port enhancements, change, developing an artisan industry, change, growing retail businesses, change and repurposing historical assets to accommodate modern expectations, change.

Mr. Speaker, in an era where it is so easy to publicise negative messages, even if they are untrue, I am compelled to highlight some positive and factual information in the hope that it will become contagious and we can learn to accept change more easily. I

know some will declare that as *Mission Impossible*, but try I must.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the former Royal Naval Dockyard has been transformed and continues to be. The North Basin has become one of Bermuda’s primary destinations for shopping, entertainment, dining and showcasing Bermudian artisans, as well as displaying history and historical buildings. Dockyard is Bermuda’s largest tourism point of entry, which fuels and supports commerce to every point around the Island. Servicing visitor expectations includes facilitating their transportation so that they are able to see our entire Island and support local businesses Island wide. Dockyard has been transformed from that military base of yesteryear into a vibrant destination with distinct characteristics. It is a tourist destination, it is a cruise ship port, and it is home to many Bermudians who wish to live, work and play there.

Mr. Speaker, for those who have been to the West End recently, they will know that there are very few remaining derelict historical buildings which have not been upgraded. In fact, the only remaining area within the North Basin is the Victualling Yard. Over the past 15 years, growth has been steady. Total occupancy then was around 60 per cent, and today it is over 90 per cent. The fact is that, currently, there is 100 per cent occupancy of all wind-tight and water-tight buildings.

Mr. Speaker, for more than a decade the data show revenue increases every year in every business sector, from as little as 3 per cent to increases in excess of 10 per cent annually. On an individual basis, there are numerous successes in the hundreds of percent year over year. April this year alone saw a record month-over-month collective sales increase of an incredible 20 per cent. I also have to make the point that this growth trend started before the addition of a second cruise pier, before the advent of larger cruise ships and certainly before the America’s Cup.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the management and staff of [WEDCO](#), and all business owners and entrepreneurs who have worked together to write such an ongoing success story.

I am confident that this will continue as long as we all are willing to be receptive to change, continue to listen, continue to offer suggestions and, where necessary, make modifications. Sometimes, the required changes are not seen by everyone, nor are they supported by everyone. Typically, those who are in opposition do so because of a propensity for negativity, being afraid of change or because they are already happy with the status quo. I wish to encourage those in a position to make a difference to continue and not to be afraid of change. Continue to push forward, knowing that growth will require change and success is managing the challenges while executing the changes and adjusting them when necessary for an even better outcome.

Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the changes:

- single-lane roads becoming dual lane roads;
- adding an extra lane to bridges;
- widening the main gates to accept two-lane traffic;
- creation of parking lots;
- addition of a playground;
- road modifications for larger vehicles to travel safely;
- a new deep-water cruise port;
- North Lawn stage to host public events;
- free shuttle train;
- no unauthorised vehicular traffic on the north arm;
- staging area for port transportation requirements;
- new parking areas created;
- designated tenant and staff parking areas; and
- pedestrianisation.

Mr. Speaker, the growth of Dockyard is facilitated by ongoing strategic planning and the consistent implementation of major infrastructure projects. These projects have enabled additional growth, but equally important, it strengthens the infrastructure systems.

What pleases me most, in addition to growing infrastructure, is that the corporation continues to develop projects and programmes that look at ways to reduce costs and lead the way in green initiatives. The latest such project of this nature is the implementation of solar-power generation. The project will see solar production of over 500 kilowatts, which reduces BELCO consumption by more than \$25,000 per month.

An Hon. Member: How much?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Just \$25,000.

An Hon. Member: Wow.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: The system is already partially online. Next week, we intend commissioning another large section of production, and the final connection to power the wastewater treatment plant will be online within the next 30 days. Included within the project, WEDCO intends to set up live displays showcasing the system and real-time data of the energy that is being produced.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the changes which have enabled continued growth, and we will continue to see more ongoing changes that will enhance the experience and enable further growth. Some of these are: creation of a fun space within the pedestrianisation area; additional parking areas, some free and some paid; creating new retail and entertainment spaces by relocating existing tenants; and daytime boat berthing, some free and some paid.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent concern expressed by some has been the minor adjustment to the public bus termination point in the Royal Naval Dockyard. This decision was not taken lightly nor without significant forethought. Several factors were considered, including [accommodation for] those who would have difficulty walking that distance. The public, like our visitors, have the option to use the free shuttle service to move around the site. However, I would encourage folks to walk. Dockyard is not an enormous site, exercise is good, and one might even see something previously unnoticed. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I can report that, not unexpectedly, the merchants in both the Clocktower Mall and elsewhere have enjoyed increased sales since this change.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide this report on activities at the Royal Naval Dockyard and will continue to do so as the need arises. I am going to take the liberty of tabling aerial photographs of the solar panel installations and the new King's Wharf Terminal Building, currently under construction.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Statement on the Order Paper this morning is in the name of the Minister of National Security.

Minister Caines.

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Do so.

EXERCISE TRADE WINDS

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to inform this House of the Royal Bermuda Regiment's involvement with [Exercise Trade Winds](#). This exercise is organised by the United States Military, specifically the US Southern Command [SOUTHCOM], which is based in Florida. Trade Winds is a Caribbean-focused training exercise designed to help participants better respond to natural disasters [and] to land and maritime threats.

The Trade Winds event takes place in two phases. Phase 1 is a security-based exercise, and phase 2 is Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Recovery, which is also referred to as HADR. I accompanied the Royal Bermuda Regiment's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel David Curley, and Regimental Sergeant Major Jason Harrell. Together we visited the opening ceremonies at Las Calderas Naval Base in the Dominican Republic. We also visited the opening ceremonies, which included high-level briefs by SOUTHCOM planners, organisers and lead staff.

Mr. Speaker, during the opening ceremony, the Royal Bermuda Regiment stood proudly amongst Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Colombia, Dominica, the Dominican

Republic, France, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and the United States. We were addressed by senior commanders from the Dominican Republic and US SOUTHCOM in an opening address.

After the opening remarks, all troops were on their way to conduct their rehearsals and equipment checks in order to prepare for the final test exercises in the Las Calderas area. Our Bermuda team were guests of SOUTHCOM, and we were given dedicated briefs by SOUTHCOM commanders, planners and exercise lead team members.

Once the briefs were wrapped up, we went out to visit our Royal Bermuda Regiment staff in different locations. Captain Gordon Emmerson and Col-our Sergeant Curtis Grant were using explosive ordnance disposal charges and working with 24 Commando with tactics and operational plans. Major Beasley and Sergeant Matvey received joint task force training in Circuit Military Cooperatives in order to support the test exercise at the end of the training phase. Sergeant Husayn Muhammad worked with other national medics in receiving and teaching training.

Mr. Speaker, we were given a two-day tour of Las Caladras, where we were invited onto a US Coast Guard cutter and a Canadian patrol ship, where we were given full briefings from both ships' captains. We were given a full tour of SOUTHCOM logistics and saw special field kitchens established, capable of feeding 600 troops in under an hour, and saw re-supply of kit and equipment being used in this phase of the exercise.

Follow-up briefings commenced with Trade Winds phase 2, which will be held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, where the Royal Bermuda Regiment will be the largest force participating in Humanitarian Aid Disaster Relief, and security operations being tasked from a Caribbean task force. At the same time, the entire camp was buzzing with troops loading into Black Hawk helicopters for a small flight out into the ocean where they hovered a few metres above and then deployed naval marines and Special Forces units into the water. It was a very impressive sight to see.

I will attend phase 2, which will be held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, along with the National Security Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Mr. Collinwood Anderson. Phase 2 will test the Royal Bermuda Regiment in all aspects of training and operations and will strengthen our portfolio in all respects of HADR, which is crisis management at all levels. There will be a closing ceremony that will end Trade Winds 19, and then Bermuda Regiment troops will fly back to Bermuda to enjoy a few days off before attending the Warwick Camp for training again.

Mr. Speaker, Exercise Trade Winds, phases 1 and 2, is a vital training and testing process for the

Royal Bermuda Regiment, which has SOUTHCOM credentials. The Bermuda Regiment will continue building in order to reinforce and maintain top-level and new-and-improved HADR crisis response to Bermuda, and to the rest of the Caribbean if needed. The work of the Royal Bermuda Regiment is important, and I believe they are receiving adequate training to defend our shores. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Minister, the next Statement is also in your name. Would you like to proceed on that?

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue on.

HURRICANE SEASON

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, the second Statement this morning is to remind this Honourable House that we have just entered hurricane season, which runs from the 1st of June this year until the 30th of November. We have already seen the first tropical storm of the season, subtropical storm Andrea, which was a potential threat to Bermuda during the week of the 21st and the 22nd of May.

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 5th, I chaired a meeting of the Emergency Measures Organisation [EMO] Executive, which met to discuss the Island's preparedness as we enter [hurricane season](#). I am pleased to report that all agencies are prepared; and apart from some fine-tuning, Bermuda EMO agencies stand ready should any hurricane threaten our shores. At this time, I will remind this Honourable House that preparedness activities being undertaken by the 60-plus agencies that form the wider EMO are being coordinated and documented by the Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation [DRRM] Team, which works out of Ministry of National Security Headquarters.

Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda Weather Service reports that the latest hurricane forecast by international agencies has predicted an average season, with 13 named storms, six hurricanes and two major hurricanes.

Mr. Speaker, we are reminded that Hurricanes Fay and Gonzalo hit Bermuda in 2014. Hurricane Joaquin hit Bermuda in 2015, and Hurricane Nicole hit Bermuda in 2016. In 2017 [and 2018], Bermuda was spared any hurricane activity.

Mr. Speaker, it takes only one hurricane to make 2019 an active season for Bermuda, and I urge all residents to be prepared. Now is the time to prepare and repair your house for hurricane season. Now is the time to look at your family plans and update them with any changes to phone numbers, et cetera. Now is the time to take stock of all medical prescriptions that your family and pets require in order to en-

sure that you have at least a two-weeks supply on hand. Now is the time to check your hurricane kit to make sure that you have working flashlights, a portable radio with spare batteries and a stock of non-perishable food to last your family for seven days. Now is the time to look at your neighbours and ask them if they need any help with their preparations.

Mr. Speaker, in April, the Department of Communications released their smartphone application called Tree Frog. This application will alert all users to news and alerts posted by the Bermuda Government and includes any alerts posted by the EMO. We want [the public] to be aware of any information that they urgently need to be aware of, and they can do that through the Tree Frog app. I urge this Honourable House and all of Bermuda's residents to sign up for the Tree Frog app. It is free, and you can receive all of the alerts. And this is available, Mr. Speaker, on both iTunes and on the Google Play Store.

Mr. Speaker, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Team will hold a further Emergency Measures Organisation meeting for all EMO agencies in late August to update the country on the last hurricane season forecast for 2019, which will be published at the beginning of August.

Mr. Speaker, the work of the DRRM Team is important in ensuring that Bermuda is prepared for any large-scale disaster. I will continue to update this Honourable House on the important work of all of the departments and units within the Ministry of National Security. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Minister who has a Statement is the Minister of Transport.

Minister De Silva, would you like to put your Statement?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Good morning to colleagues, Bermudian listeners, and our overseas listeners.

The Speaker: Good morning.

THE NEW BERMUDA CHAMPIONSHIP—A PGA TOUR EVENT

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, this week's announcement that Bermuda will host its first-ever mainstream [PGA Tour event](#), the Bermuda Championship, is a very exciting development for sports tourism in Bermuda.

PGA Tour events are broadcast to international audiences, and this is an excellent opportunity for Port Royal Golf Course to host a top-level sporting event in October this year. The TV coverage, to be aired primetime in North America, will showcase Bermuda's stunning natural beauty and the legendary

hospitality and friendliness of its people to a wide audience of discerning travellers.

The Bermuda Tourism Authority [BTA] has signed a five-year agreement with the PGA Tour as title sponsor of the Bermuda Championship. And please note: This will be a fully sanctioned Tour event, a fully sanctioned Tour event, Mr. Speaker, which distinguishes it from the PGA Grand Slam of Golf. Players entering this championship are playing for points that count towards the \$35 million FedEx Cup purse, which will be held later in the season.

In the Tour calendar, the Bermuda Championship will sit opposite the HSBC World Golf Championship in Shanghai, replacing the Sanderson Farms Championship, which has been upgraded to a stand-alone PGA Tour event. While the very top players, including Tiger Woods, will be in China, Bermuda can expect to host up to 120 of the world's top players, including a diverse group of rising stars in the golf world. Compared with other "alternate" events on the PGA Tour, the Bermuda Championship is a cost-effective and valuable media property because, for the North American audience, the Shanghai event is taking place overnight, while our event will take place in prime viewing time.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is confident that the primary objectives in securing this event for Bermuda will be met. They are to achieve the following:

- a) generate significant increased spending on Island during the fall shoulder season when the event is held;
- b) generate significant media exposure to increase awareness of Bermuda and showcase the Island as a destination for golfing, tourism and business to the lucrative US and wider global audience; and
- c) increase visitor numbers from key feeder markets as a result of hosting the event.

In fact, the PGA Tour television audience is one that aligns very well with Bermuda's target visitor profile.

- 1) PGA Tour audiences travel more times per year outside the US than average, making it more likely that they will consider Bermuda as an international destination.
- 2) PGA Tour audiences are [82] per cent more likely than average to spend over \$6,000 per year on foreign travel, making it more likely that they can afford to travel and spend in Bermuda.
- 3) PGA Tour audiences are 72 per cent more likely than average to influence others regarding where to vacation, making it more likely that they will recommend Bermuda; and
- 4) PGA Tour television audiences grew 27 per cent in 2018. The event is reaching

a diverse, younger audience beyond its traditional base.

The Bermuda Championship schedule will span almost a full week, once practice days and the Pro-Am rounds are taken into account. Also, the PGA Tour will make available positions for leading Bermudian golfers to play in the tournament.

Mr. Speaker, the PGA Tour requires that all sanctioned events have a purpose in the community in which they play. Youth and school engagement activations are examples of programmes that can be planned around the core event. For those who are interested in volunteering for Bermuda Championship, you can go to the website bermudachamp.com. And I will repeat that, Mr. Speaker: Anyone interested in volunteering for this magnificent event, this milestone event for Bermuda, can go to the website bermudachamp.com.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is very excited to share this news, and the Ministry is looking forward to working with the PGA Tour and the team at the Bermuda Tourism Authority to make this event an international success, with the intention that Bermuda becomes an "annual fixture" on the PGA Tour calendar.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I close, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Pat Horgan III, who is in the Gallery today. And he has been coming to Bermuda since 1986, Mr. Speaker. And this has been a dream of his for over 30 years. And I thank Patrick for his steadfastness. And I welcome you to Bermuda, and your team, and look forward to our having a long-lasting relationship that one day, one day may, just like the tournament that we are replacing, include all of the players, Mr. Speaker, include all of the players. And we might even see Tiger Woods get here before I pass by this House, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

That brings us to the close of the Statements for this morning.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: We are now on questions. And the questions this morning relate to the Statements in that there are no written questions. All questions are to be answered this morning.

Ministers, of your Statements this morning, there are five Members who have indicated that they have questions.

The first is to the Premier on your Statement regarding the commission of inquiry. And that question is from the Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question now?

QUESTION 1: ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO HISTORIC LOSSES OF CITIZENS' PROPERTY IN BERMUDA

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And good morning to everyone. Yes.

At the top of the third page, the Premier says that the commission will likely comprise a judge, counsel experienced in conveyance, a land title officer, two lay members and a secretary, in naming out the makeup of this commission. We know that other commissions have been remunerated and paid for their services. Just curious as to whether or not this particular commission also will be a commission that is paid for and has a fund?

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Honourable Opposition Leader that the cost of this commission will not be free. What I can say is that the cost will be managed prudently. And as part of the administrative planning, a budget is being prepared. Technology and the sensible use of existing government resources will play a large part in keeping costs down.

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.
Supplementary or a new question?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I am good.

The Speaker: You are fine?

Thank you, Premier. That is the only question for you on that Statement.

We will now move on to the Statement from the Minister of Works regarding WEDCO. And the Opposition Whip would like to put a question to you.

Honourable Member.

QUESTION 1: THE WEST END DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you and good morning, Minister.

I was just wondering if the Minister might be able to give us any insight into the development, or otherwise, of the eastern-facing shoreline where the dry dock is?

So, right now, ferries are brought up on dry dock in private boats. And I know that at times there had been some concern about the safety of tourists

and residents walking across that dry dock area. And then, also just for beautification purposes, opportunities for maybe some sort of small boardwalk with restaurants and such. And I was just wondering whether that was still on the plate, or otherwise?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, thank you. There are no immediate plans to move that area at this time.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary? No further questions?
We will move on. The next Statement . . .
Minister Caines?
If someone can get Minister Caines, we are going to move on and come back.
Minister De Silva, there is a question for you. The Opposition Leader would like to put a question to you in reference to your Statement on the PGA Tour.
Honourable Member.

QUESTION 1: THE NEW BERMUDA CHAMPIONSHIP—A PGA TOUR EVENT

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

On the second page, the Honourable Minister says that the Bermuda Tourism Authority has signed a five-year agreement. I guess what I was curious about is, do we know what that cost is now for the PGA for this tour, since we will be the title sponsors here in Bermuda? And in addition to that . . . well, I can ask a supplementary. I will let him answer that.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, of course. It is \$3 million a year.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I am sorry? Could you repeat that?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The cost is \$3 million per year.

The Speaker: Supplementary or further question?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes, continue.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Considering that, is the Minister aware . . . or, have any additional funds

been asked of Government to add and to contribute to this tour?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, there have not.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Further question or supplementary? Supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Supplementary, supplementary.

The Speaker: Continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Once all is finalised, would the Honourable Minister be willing to at least table the agreement so that we are aware of all of the details?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Unless there is any sensitive information, I will be happy to do that. And I will be happy to share with the Opposition Leader.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you.
No further questions? No further questions.
The last question this morning would be to Minister Caines.
Minister, it is in reference to your Statement on Trade Winds. And that is from the Honourable Member from constituency 7.
Honourable Member Richards, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: EXERCISE TRADE WINDS

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, would the Honourable Member inform the Honourable House, What was the size in terms of numbers of the contingent that attended ETW in the Dominican Republic?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Yes, yes, the Bermudian contingent (sorry).

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, it was 10 including myself.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or further question?
Supplementary?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Would the Honourable Minister advise whether there will be a similar-sized contingent that will attend phase 2 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, as per the Statement, the second part will be the significant part, where we are taking an entire company down. We expect, Mr. Speaker . . . we are actually chartering a plane, as the Bermuda Regiment does every year to take the soldiers on overseas camps. We believe an entire company . . . I am not sure of the numbers, but we believe it to be about 120 soldiers on the annual camp, as we do every year. We will be going to the second phase of Trade Winds in St. Vincent, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary? None?

Well, Members, that brings us to a close of the Question Period this morning.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: Does any Member wish to—

Ah, Minister. You were quick that time.
I recognise Minister Burch.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Yes, yes. I want to go first, Mr. Speaker, since I only have *three minutes*. I mean, my goodness.

Anyway, let me start, not wasting them, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. That's a good way.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I would like to extend congratulations to Esther Merle Brock Swan Williams, who celebrated her 90th birthday on the 29th of May, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes. Associate the whole House with that. Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I associate the whole House with those congratulations. She is the founder of the Adult Education School 60 years ago, and still teaching and still giving licks on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend congratulations to the Ombudsman for Bermuda, who last week hosted the 10th Biennial CAROA [Caribbean Ombudsman Association] Conference here in Bermuda which was attended by 17 countries from the Caribbean and Central America. Mr. Speaker, I had the distinct pleasure of chairing one of the panels, on Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Ombudsmanship. And I was pleased that there were representatives from seven jurisdictions, led by our own very distinguished Dr. Mark Guishard, who spoke about, in particular, hurricanes in Bermuda, where you will know, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of experience. And oftentimes, when we suffer, our fellow countries to the south suffer hurricane damage, we are some of the first people to call on that experience.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend congratulations to the five young men who participated in the Alpha Beautillion last Sunday at CedarBridge Academy:

- Mr. Antonio Carvelho, Impact Mentoring Academy;
- Jehkio Bean-Lightbourne, Mount Saint Agnes Academy;
- Dimitrius Richardson, the Berkeley Institute;
- Sediq Simons, the Bermuda Institute; and
- Myles Smith, of CedarBridge Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I can say without fear of contradiction that these five outstanding young men really acquitted themselves with distinction last week. I am glad I was not on the panel having to judge them, because it would have been a very difficult task. I am pleased to say, though, Mr. Speaker, that young Dimitrius Richardson, who is the son of my administrative assistant and was a summer student at the Ministry last summer, really gave an outstanding, outstanding performance on every single front.

This young man came to the Ministry last year, and he was an introvert and quiet, and you know, you would not even know that he was in the room. And I just sat in awe. Needless to say, his mama screamed down the entire building. But he really, really gave an outstanding representation of what young men in this country can do, along with the other four.

And I am just encouraged, Mr. Speaker, just as somebody who lives in this village, not in any formal capacity, at the outstanding performance of young men in this country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Now, I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 22.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

I would just like to join with the Honourable and gallant Member in my congratulations, as well, to

the Ombudsman. I too attended the event last week. And it was delightful to see such a gathering of independent members of integrity from the various ombudsmen around the Caribbean. My understanding is that Bermuda was lucky enough to secure that event because our very own Ombudsman, Victoria Pearman, has become the president of that local association. I did have an opportunity to meet and discuss with her the work that she is doing as Ombudsman, and it is an incredibly important post that a democratic society such as ours should be proud of. So, I too add my congratulations to those of the Minister.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I recognise the Premier.
Premier.

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning on a sad note, and I wish to ask this Honourable House to send condolences to the family of the late Beunice Crockwell, long-time—

The Speaker: You should associate the whole House with that one.

Hon. E. David Burt: I will certainly, Mr. Speaker, associate the entire House with these remarks.

Many persons will know that Ms. Crockwell was a long-time receptionist at the Cabinet Office. Her spirit would brighten even that place and any other place where she was. She was someone who was known for loving life, incredibly fun. And we always used to share a joke between each other regarding our ages. She was kind to myself. She was kind to every person who came into the Cabinet Office. She was kind regardless of party or regardless of who you were. It was always her spirit.

She loved life, Mr. Speaker. And I remember the one time she was even so famous as to be around the world in a Soul Train Cruise advertisement, because that is how much she enjoyed having an excellent time. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that condolences be sent from this House to her family and her mother, her children and her grandchildren, all of her friends including her work colleagues, during this very difficult time. She has passed from labour to reward, Mr. Speaker, but rest assured—her time on this earth was spent enjoying life to the fullest.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the remarks from the Honourable Minister for Public Works for the participants of the Alpha Beautillion, and particularly the winner, Mr. Dimitrius Richardson, of the Berkeley Institute. Yes, I will associate the whole House with those remarks, as well, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, with that, I will take my seat.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise very happily today to offer congratulations and thanks to both the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Zane De Silva, and Mr. P. H. Horgan and his team, Mr. Bruno, for realising a dream of mine from the days when I did play the professional tour in Europe. To have an event of that magnitude in Bermuda bodes well for tourism and for the sport which is my trade. So, I want to congratulate them. I do not want to lose sight of the fact that, in this country, we still do not have a National Championship, which was the vehicle for this little country boy to get access to the world. And I am sure, as the time has passed when this country has seen its players play for peanuts, that we can now have the next tier down below have a greater purse in which to compete.

On a sad note, Mr. Speaker, I have some constituents who have passed on to reward. Edward Joseph “Jo Jo” Gibbons of Slip Road. And I associate the Honourable Member from constituency 1, MP Ming, and I am sure MP Foggo, as well.

And also, Ms. Joan Wade, from Wellington Lane, whom my mom went to school with at Alaska Hall not just yesterday. And Ms. Wade was a very dear spirit. And at Christmastime, when I paid her a visit, she was so happy and actually gave some knitted goods to take home to my dear wife. And we always appreciated to find that connection with her and my mom. It was extremely special.

And, Mr. Irvin Hayward, a long-time proprietor of St. George's Esso, former Member of the Corporation of St. George's, and an avid sportsman—golf was very much a part of his life. Snooker and the fitted dinghy racing on May 24th, and the life of St. George's Dinghy and Sports Club down there on Cut Road was very much a part of his life and family.

So, we extend condolences to those three St. Georgians and bereaved families right now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you ever so much.

The Speaker: Thank you.

We recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier.

Honourable Deputy, you have the floor.

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

I would like, of course, to be associated with the congratulatory remarks given to the Ombudsman of Bermuda for the holding of the conference. I did have the honour to give the opening remarks at that

conference. And certainly, holding that regional conference here is a credit to the Island and to the work of the Ombudsman and her office.

I would also like to ask the House to certainly acknowledge and congratulate all of those residents and Bermudians who took time to note that it was World Environment Day this week, and also to those who see it important that the Island does take greater concern for the environment that we live in. Although it is only 22 square miles, plus another 200 square miles of ocean, we have impact around the world that is not of small significance. And we should take time as a community to acknowledge such important days.

And, in keeping with that, I would just like to announce to the House that I have been informed by persons in the Ministry of the Environment that a Cahow chick was fledged last night.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: So, that is something that is quite wonderful for us, as we know we were seeking for many years to rebuild the petrel, the constituency of a very unique bird that is indigenous to Bermuda. So, there will be more official comments on that coming forth from my Ministry. But I thought I would let the House know, as I have just been told, that which I know is great news to all of us.

I would also like to be associated with the condolences that were given for Ms. Crockwell. But I would also like to add to that message that she did have a life prior to her time with us in the Government. And that was as a member of a law firm named Richards Francis and Francis, and she spent many years there working. And I am sure that the Honourable Member, Minister Wayne Furbert, would like to be associated with that, as well, as he would have been a colleague of hers during that time that she would have worked there, prior to her being a part of the government family.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

We now recognise the Deputy Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, you have the floor. Good morning.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer congratulations first to Inspector Na'imah Astwood, who was the first runner-up at the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police. And I associate the Deputy Premier. And I will associate the whole House, if that is okay. Thank you.

Also, Constable Cerepha Bridgeman, who actually is my parish constable in Southampton, who

was awarded the second runner-up Top Caribbean Community Policing Officer.

I would also like to give congratulations to Tracey Armstrong, who organised a tribute to all of the pioneering police females who have broken through the glass ceiling. And in particular, I would like to give congratulations to Jean Vickers, who was Bermuda's first policewoman, who also celebrated her 85th birthday on Wednesday, I believe it is. I associate Cole Simons with that.

And I was not here last Friday, Mr. Speaker, and I do not know if anybody gave congratulations to those young children who ran the Heritage Day Invitation Junior Classic?

The Speaker: I do not think so. But you can go ahead.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: But I would like to give congratulations to all of our runners. I would like to thank Lister Insurance Agency, who has put on this race for the past 21 years now.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I would like to associate Mr. Swan.

And it is always a pleasure to see our young people come out and run. We had a nice awards ceremony at the Bermuda College. So, I would like to thank you for sponsoring this, for allowing our young children to have an opportunity to showcase their talents. And I look forward to working with you on it for another 21 years.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the remarks for Beunice Crockwell. Beunice was a ray of sunshine, and I remember walking into the Cabinet Office every time, and she was just always welcoming and warm and kind.

The Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: And she will be a big miss. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member Smith. Honourable Member Smith, you have the floor.

Mr. Ben Smith: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Firstly, I would like to give congratulations to Bermuda's Football Team for the 1–nil victory in the Friendly last night. I know I saw quite a few of the MPs there.

The Speaker: Do the whole House, do the whole House. Yes.

Mr. Ben Smith: So, I associate the whole House with that.

I would also like to give congratulations. Last weekend was the Bermuda National Swimming Championship. And we had the high point winners in the 12 and under, and 13 and over. So, the female 12 and under winner was Imogen Judd, and the 12 and under male was Giulo Ligori. And in the 13 and over, it was Logan Watson Brown, and for the male, it was Jack Harvey.

I would also like to—
[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Ben Smith: I would also like to send good luck to all of our track athletes who will be participating in the Bermuda National Championships for Track & Field over tonight and tomorrow, and hopefully, everybody will go out and support our youngsters as they continue to strive for success.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Now I recognise the Honourable Member from St. George's, constituency 1.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Good morning, Mr. Speaker and listening audience.

Although I have been associated with the comments for Beunice Crockwell, I just wanted to add my own story to this. Although I have known Ms. Crockwell through her children most of my life, I have had the pleasure of really interacting with her when she worked down in the Cabinet and I was in the Senate. And I have to say that, week in and week out, she always offered words of encouragement. And she would always let me know about any topics or anything that was relevant that she thought we should look into, and things like that. So, her engagement was definitely there with us on a regular basis.

And so, it is extremely difficult to grasp what it is that will become our norm. But we know that, I believe that she lived a fruitful life. She enjoyed life to the best of her ability. And she will be remembered for many, many years to come.

One thing that I must mention, and no one seems to have mentioned it, Mr. Speaker, is that she was an avid St. George's supporter.

The Speaker: Well . . .

Mrs. Renee Ming: And she could be found on Facebook always defending and letting everybody know that she was—she wore—she was blue.

The Speaker: Well . . .

Mrs. Renee Ming: So, I do not know. Maybe the Premier forgot and left that part out.

But I would also like to just say that Jo Jo, who Kim already has given acknowledgement to, will definitely be missed around St. George's, as well. His favourite line to me was, *Are you going canvassing?* So, if he saw me at seven o'clock in the morning on my walk, and he would say, *You're going canvassing?* So, I think that that became a common joke amongst us.

But these are people who help you on a day-to-day to get through and give you things to look forward to.

And I just also want to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, a young lady by the name of Sara Schroter Ross. And she is the youngest member, at the age of 37, to achieve the Chartered Director status. I would like to associate Nelson Cole [Simons] and Leah Scott with that. And I went in and had a read of it and her achievement, and I encourage you to have a read of it.

Also, I looked at it because when I hear and see women doing things, it always makes me have a second look at it. And she is a young woman who is doing things in her field. And one of the things that she said is that she hopes that her attaining this at such a young age, that she is able to encourage—she said men and women. But in this case, I am thinking of women, and letting them know that with hard work and just keeping determination and keeping at it, we as women will rise and will take what is our rightful place. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, on that note.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 11.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

I associate myself with [the condolences for] Ms. Crockwell. What has been left out is that, before everything else, she was a Pond dog, right on Friswells Road. Also, she was what we call a BELCO mom. Her son Garrett is my co-worker at BELCO. So, every day she would say, *Make sure you byes are doing what you are supposed to do, you know. Don't put the Island in darkness.* So, I just want to add that to the equation, and that she was from St. George's. So, we have someone just in case we need a rain dance this year.

Mr. Speaker, let me also speak about Ms. Marion Gumbs Hayward of Dundonald Street, from the St. Paul's family. She, unfortunately, passed during a cruise with her St. Paul's family. And she will be funeralised tomorrow. She was the proud mom of five children. I associate Brother Weeks and anybody at AME with that.

What the Colonel left out, Mr. Speaker, was Dimitrius. He did not say that he was a Berkeleyite. And he did not say he was Gold House. So, we are proud of him, as well, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: I wonder why, Colonel?

Mr. Christopher Famous: I wonder why. Because he said, *Berkeleyites can't count*. Well, he won that, didn't he?

Mr. Speaker, moving on, a Bermuda College culinary student, Mr. Tremayne Bailey, is doing an apprenticeship over in Africa for eight weeks in conjunction with the Ace It Foundation, headed by Mr. Quinton Sherlock. It is important, Mr. Speaker, that our students get to see the wide world, because everybody eats. Not everybody just eats just in France or these fancy European places. We eat all around the world. And it is very important that our students . . . because remember, Mr. Speaker, there are 800 chefs in Bermuda. Eighty per cent of them are non-Bermudian. So, I am glad to see a young black male learning culinary arts.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to give a shout-out to Wolves Sports Club of eastern Devonshire on their prize-giving ceremony tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

We now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 7.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the remarks that my fellow colleague, MP Ben Smith, gave about the game last night. The Premier was in attendance. Minister Foggo was in attendance. MP Smith, obviously, was in attendance. MP Weeks was in attendance. And if I am missing anyone, I give my apologies.

But it was a fantastic atmosphere at the game. It was good to see so many supporters out with their pink jerseys on, which is the colour that the National Team wears. It was an excellent game, as I said. It is interesting, both Bermuda and Guyana, Gold Cup debutants. So, it was an interesting match-up from that perspective.

And I have to give a big, big congratulations to Coach Kyle Lightbourne. Since Kyle has taken over the helm, that team has really grown in leaps and bounds. I could see the professionalism last night in how they played. The style and the quality of Bermudian football has really, really improved. So, that was great to see. Bermudian Nahki Wells was part of the line-up. But the goal was actually scored by Donte Brangman. He scored a fabulous goal in the 37th minute that brought everybody to their feet. So, I just

want to congratulate the team. They have matches coming up. And, yes, we have got to support them. They are going to do great things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 16. Honourable Member Weeks, you have the floor.

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the comments by the Member who just sat down, congratulating the National Team. I just want to remind him and others that that pink and blue that you see now have become our national colours. So, not only will you see the football team in it, but hopefully every team or any team that represents our lovely Island. Yes.

I would also like to be associated, Mr. Speaker, with the condolences for, first of all, Ms. Crockwell down at Cabinet Office. In the 10 years, Mr. Speaker, that I have been an MP, I really got to know Ms. Crockwell. I did not know her before then. But she was very encouraging with her smiles and her advice and encouragement. You know, sometimes, we as Ministers used to go in there, and you are not feeling the best, and she would always remind us we are doing the people's business. And she would say something encouraging for us to carry on.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to be associated with the remarks by the Member from constituency 11 for Ms. Hayward. Ms. Hayward was a close family friend of my family. Last week when she was on the cruise and she succumbed, Mr. Speaker, she was actually with my mom. So, Ms. Hayward was always in and around my family. And it was a shock. It was a shock what happened to her. And on behalf of my family, Mr. Speaker, I want to send out condolences to Ms. Hayward's family and hope that they will find solace in knowing that she is in a better place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 32. Honourable Member.

Mr. Scott Simmons: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and thank you.

I rise in this Honourable House this morning on two very sad notes, Mr. Speaker, and ask that I join colleagues in extending condolences to the family of my family, Mr. James Prescott Robinson. Though Uncle James was not my paternal uncle, he is the uncle of my siblings, Senator Marcus Jones, Rev. Ste-

phen Jones and our sister, Deborah King. He was a humble man, spoke softly to me and will be greatly missed by all who knew him. I am sure the family has appreciated all of the extensions of sympathy, and I rise today to honour and mark his remarkable contribution.

Mr. Speaker, on the second sad note, I join honourable colleagues in extending absolute condolences to the family of Beunice Crockwell, whose passing has deeply affected us all. As you know, Mr. Speaker, Beunice was an absolutely fantastic person. From the moment I stepped into the Cabinet Office for the first time as Press Secretary, I was met by Beunice at the front desk. From the outset, she set me straight, developed a friendship and, with her mischievous wit, big smile and deep laugh, she made life absolutely bearable as the business of government overtook all of our lives.

Mr. Speaker, she was considerate and intolerant of arrogance, and she began every greeting with, *I just got back from a cruise*. She will not appreciate it, but I will give a short story, Mr. Speaker, really quickly. My phone rang one morning in the Cabinet Office, and it was Beunice. She demanded that I come immediately to the front desk. On reaching the back door of the Cabinet Office, one of the most celebrated Corporation of Hamilton city dwellers, "Scientist," standing at the door, the back door, wearing only his smile, facing Beunice, who was standing in the doorway.

[Laughter]

Mr. Scott Simmons: Scientist, having been running around the Cabinet Office stark naked, on facing Beunice in the doorway and looking to her, he said, *My eyes are up here*.

[Laughter]

Mr. Scott Simmons: Beunice blushed and yelled, *Scientist! Get out of here!* Scientist ran off towards Front Street.

Mr. Speaker, Beunice and I laughed without ceasing. She will be greatly remembered, as she is much loved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member Furbert.
You have the floor.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I also would like to be associated with the remarks giving obits to Ms. Beunice Crockwell. More recently, [as I was] her Member of Parliament in constituency 4, she will be a big miss in the Duck's Puddle community. Ms. Crockwell is actually my aunt. She is the stepsister to my mom. And so, greatest condolences to the family, to Nicole, to Garrett, to her mom,

Shirley, and to Kal-Lyn. She will be a huge miss. She constantly used to tell me how proud she was of me and how proud she was of the Progressive Labour Party, as well. So, she will be a big miss, and I just could not not stand to my feet and acknowledge Ms. Beunice Crockwell. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 26.

Honourable Member Tyrrell, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, last week, I was under heavy threat not to bring attention to this young lady. But this week, I am going to weather the storm and hope that I can send congratulations out to Ms. Virginia Butterfield, better known as "Ducky" Butterfield, my mother-in-law, who celebrated 90 years of life, so far. She has had a great life so far. And I hope that she has many more.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other . . .

We recognise the Honourable Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to add my comments and support and condolences to certainly the loss of Ms. Beunice Crockwell. I have many stories as well that I could tell, having been there at Cabinet. And of course, we know that she was a very lively and spirited person. When I got the news, no one said her name. They just said, *Someone down at Cabinet had passed away*. And I said, *Who?* And they said, *You know, the lady with the big smile*. And so characteristic and so well, they were trying to describe because they did not know the name. But what they did know was the character.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And it was signified with a smile, a massive smile. I used to tease her all the time about her slightly bow legs. And her travels, of course, were everything to her. We talked about the ethnic cruises that we had been on. And so, again, I would like to say to the Crockwell family, our deepest condolences.

Now understanding that we have a Member whom she was an aunt of, our deepest condolences go out to you for such a big name, certainly a loss.

And I know that I also want to speak to the Cabinet employees there. This is a second loss for

them. Almost within a year, they have lost another member there. And so, I know that they are really reeling and suffering right now because that team down there is very, very, very close. And so, I want them to know, the family and her fellow employees, that we are all thinking of them at this time.

Also, I would like to speak to, as the Honourable Member from constituency 2 spoke about, Jo Jo. And I must admit, Gibo there, I used him as a clock. Because if I was late, I missed him. But if I was on time, I would see him first thing in the morning on the road, Wellington Slip Road. He lived literally four houses down from myself with us all there, a very close group there. And my condolences go out to the family. I know the family extremely well, and I know that they are trusting in their Lord and Saviour during this time.

Also, one other item for condolences, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Irvin Hayward down in St. George's passed away. And I speak of him because we were part of the same group of owning service stations. And I have been around 15 years doing this, but he certainly probably triples that in the amount of time that he has been around, serving the East End with fuel. And so, another character, another person who was part of the St. George's fabric who has been lost.

On a higher note, I would like to congratulate the National Team. I did not get a chance to see the game last night, Mr. Speaker. So, I want to congratulate them.

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Thank you.

I now recognise the Honourable Member, Minister Simmons.

You have the floor.

Hon. Jamahl S. Simmons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, all.

I rise today to add my voice to the list of people paying tribute to Ms Beunice Crockwell, who was a dear family friend, a good friend to my parents. They were cruising buddies. And one thing I can say about Beunice is that she had a passion and a love of life. And to the extent that most of us who knew her, whether as family or friends, we never believed that she was ill, never believed that there was anything wrong up until the day . . . I mean, she was still posting on Facebook. She was still laughing. She was still doing her thing up until the time when she took her last breath.

And I think that, during my time at the Cabinet Office versus the Premier's Chief of Staff, and then just throughout the years, she was always a calm and reassuring voice. She was always a supportive shoulder to lean on. She was always there for us. And I hope at this time that we are all there for her family

and all who loved her. And we wish them best wishes as they try and deal with this very sad time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

No further speakers on condolences and congratulations?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36.

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

Mr. Speaker, I was jotting a few notes of observances in respect of Ms. Beunice Crockwell. So, sir, in adding my observances of condolences, I of course adopt and associate myself with my colleagues, particularly my colleague, the Member for constituency 32, Mr. Scott Simmons, for his eloquent observance for Ms. Crockwell.

Beunice served in the first PLP Government, Mr. Speaker, led by Dame Jennifer. You were there. Dame Lois was there. Mr. C. Eugene Cox, Honourable Alex Scott, any number. We all know the team. And I am sure that, for those of the Members of that Government who are still with us, I express on their behalf the condolences to the family of Ms. Crockwell. Beunice Crockwell loved, I know, Dame Lois. Dame Lois is dead. Dame Lois Browne-Evans loved Beunice Crockwell. Now Beunice is dead. Love conquers death.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member?

No further Members wish to speak?

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

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Speaker: Deputy Premier.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, again.

The Speaker: Good morning.

FIRST READING

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Walter H. Roban: 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: the Electricity Amendment Act 2019.

OPPOSITION BILLS

The Speaker: There are none.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

The Speaker: There are none.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: Members, it is now 11:20, and we are on the Orders of the Day. And the first and only Order for today is Order No. 5, which is a motion in the name of the Minister of Transport in reference to the Green Paper on the future of transport.

Minister, would you like to move your motion?

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

The Speaker: Yes.

MOTION

2019 GREEN PAPER ON TRANSPORT

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now take under consideration the following motion, notice of which was given on the 17th of May 2019:

WHEREAS the Government undertook in the 2017 Speech from the Throne to conduct a thorough review of transportation and to produce a Green Paper on the future of transport in Bermuda that will provide various options for modernisation, which also takes into account the needs of the differently abled;

AND WHEREAS the Government recognises that technology is modernising transportation globally and that Bermuda must examine those trends when taking into account the future of public and private transportation;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House supports the recommendations and priorities set out in the Green Paper on Transport 2019.

The Speaker: Continue on.

No objections to that?

I am glad it was such a long intro on that one.

No objections to it, Minister. Continue.

[Laughter]

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

Mr. Speaker, today we look forward to debating the findings of the 2019 Transport Green Paper, a Ministry of Tourism and Transport initiative on behalf of the Government of Bermuda from the 2017 Speech from the Throne that was published on the 17th of May.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Tourism and Transport conducted a thorough review of transportation in Bermuda and collected the combined thoughts and comments of 21,567 residents, students and public authorities, as well as business groups and visitors, who took the time to be interviewed or surveyed during the stakeholder consultation period between November 2017 and December 2018.

Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, the 2019 Transport Green Paper highlights the demand for more (1) reliable public bus transportation; (2) reliable taxi service; (3) affordable and reliable motorised wheelchair transport options; (4) safe spaces to walk and cycle, including smoother road surfaces; (5) regulations to provide for training standards for public service vehicle drivers, taxi and minibus; and (6) transportation infrastructure and services provided in an energy efficient and intelligent way.

Mr. Speaker, to get the transportation conversation started, I will focus my comments only on the following areas:

1. the public bus service;
2. student public transportation;
3. accessibility transportation;
4. dark visors on helmets;
5. road traffic;
6. active transport; and
7. balancing air and cruise passenger traffic flows.

Mr. Speaker, the 2018 Public Transport Survey and 2017 Visitor Survey results indicate that the public bus service is used mostly by visitors and school students. However, commuters have a strong ridership as well, and we all agree that these three groups require reliable and punctual bus service. These factors can contribute to a more reliable bus service and a decrease in, if not elimination of, bus cancellations. The first is a change in the public bus schedule to reduce the number of buses needed at peak times and throughout the day. The second is restoration of budget allocation to allow for new bus-

es, new bus purchases. And third, a proper annual maintenance budget.

The Government continues to act on all of these three factors, even though we are still faced with the challenges after introducing the new bus schedule in March and reverting back to the old one six weeks later. With or without a new bus schedule, tracking buses and obtaining real-time information on punctuality is one customer service feature of public transport that Bermuda can and should embrace. It requires the installation of GPS tracking software and equipment on all buses.

At present, only a small percentage of buses have this capability. Part of modernising Bermuda's bus fleet involves bringing this capability to residents' and visitors' smartphones, which Government is committed to doing. Work has already begun with Global Transit for GPS bus tracking in real time. This is taking place alongside the steps to identify available and affordable technology to implement the cashless, digital fare media solution with real-time trip-planning features. Rounding out the customer experience will be the availability of Wi-Fi on all public transport.

Mr. Speaker, future planning of public bus routes and schedules must be based on more than anecdotal evidence. The Department of Public Transportation requires actual ridership information. At present, there are no passenger counts being carried out on public buses either manually or with automatic counters. The Government will seek to outfit the bus fleet with the necessary equipment to enable automatic passenger counts.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the purchase of new buses, the majority of buses manufactured in the world are still diesel driven. Given that fossil fuels are non-renewable, fuel costs are high and diesel emissions contribute to greenhouse gases, public transit authorities are increasingly turning to hybrid diesel-electric, biofuel powered, or battery electric alternatives. For Bermuda, a transition to a full fleet of battery electric buses, which may or may not use solar energy as a power source, requires assessment of the cost not only of the buses, but also the charging infrastructure, equipment and training.

The Government is currently reviewing its options and signed an MOU last year with Rocky Mountain Institute, USA, to investigate the feasibility of and develop a strategy for a transition from current fossil fuel infrastructure to electric bus fleet.

The Ministry will use ridership counts and undertake a route analysis to determine the feasibility and viability of using small vehicles to overcome the first-mile/last-mile challenge, as well as consider the role small vehicles might play in delivery of bus service.

Mr. Speaker, 72 per cent of the middle and senior students surveyed felt that a dedicated school bus would make them feel safer going to and from school. Should capital funds be found to implement a

dedicated school bus service, this would allow commuter bus runs to be used primarily by commuters rather than students. Importantly, bus operators will be able to deliver students closer to their schools rather than to the nearest bus stop.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to public transport by ferry, the Government is committed to rebuilding and/or replenishing the fleet in a phased manner by using fast, size-appropriate and fuel-efficient vessels. This will enable Marine and Ports to gain flexibility in the deployment of the fleet such that it can potentially consider additional stops and/or an extended schedule. The current fleet of high-speed ferries is too expensive to operate with any greater flexibility. As with the buses, ferry timings, current locations, et cetera, can be incorporated into a Passenger Information Act.

Mr. Speaker, on the subject of accessibility, the 11 public service vehicles on the road today are insufficient for the number of disabled persons living in Bermuda. And that number [of 11 vehicles] cannot service visitors to the Island, either. In the first instance, the Government supports the establishment of a national register so that there is certainty about the level and type of disability and the number of persons affected. The Ministry of Tourism and Transport can work with the Ministry of Health to complete this task, recognising that issues of privacy apply. With a more complete understanding of need and the gap in service, the Ministry of Transport will work with the Ministry of Finance regarding more favourable importation conditions for vehicles providing transport to disabled persons.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Government will review options for disabled transportation service for residents that is based in the private sector, but which may require initial funding assistance in the form of a grant. There are existing organisations providing such services that, in the first instance, may require financial assistance to stabilise their organisation and expand their offerings. It is the Government's view that a subsidy could be a practical alternative to correcting the infrastructure, which is 720 bus stops, needed for the public bus service to provide disabled transportation.

Mr. Speaker, the Transport Control Department [TCD] will issue permits to minibus operators seeking to import motorised wheelchair accessible vehicles to the Island. TCD had 20 applications for minibus permits with motorised wheelchair accessibility, and once these vehicles are on the road, this will increase the available lift for wheelchairs from 11 public service vehicles to 31 public service vehicles, as an interim solution.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Transport is committed to working with the Ministry of Health to determine training standards needed for drivers of public service vehicles who provide transport for differently abled persons. In addition, the Ministry of Transport will undertake a review of its terminals,

docks, bus stops, buses and ferries to identify improvements for signage and hailing for the physically, visually and hearing impaired.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to road traffic, the Government takes seriously its responsibility to ensure our roads are safe, well-lit and comfortable for all those to use. And they include walkers, pedal cyclists, motorcyclists, and car and truck drivers. There is no doubt, however, that the motoring public must take responsibility for its own actions, too.

Mr. Speaker, banning dark visors on helmets is something that the Ministry of Tourism and Transport will seriously consider in light of the robberies that have taken place in broad daylight by persons wearing full dark visor helmets. We understand it would take some time to ensure that the right regulations are in place, because there are many models and types of visors that are affixed to helmets. The dealers will need some time to determine an exit strategy for the offending product and ensure that new helmets meet new guidelines.

Also, the Ministry will work with the Ministry of National Security regarding the possible installation of speed cameras as part of an enhanced road safety scheme, and will work with the City of Hamilton and the Ministry of Public Works regarding the installation of traffic light CCTV cameras to better manage and enforce vehicular flows through the traffic lights.

Mr. Speaker, the Government, working in conjunction with the Bermuda Road Safety Council, CADA, Bermuda Police Service and TCD will continue to work to change Bermuda's reckless driving culture through education, enforcement and technology. TCD is reviewing the current traffic handbook and licensing requirements to determine what modernisation is necessary and to take steps to implement changes. And, Mr. Speaker, TCD is reviewing the penalties laid out in the Road Traffic Act 1947 with a view to updating and strengthening them as per the stakeholder recommendations in the Transport Green Paper. In addition, the Bermuda Road Safety Council is currently working with the Ministry of Education to implement the next phase of Operation Caution, which will include road safety education as part of the school curriculum from an early age.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Tourism and Transport will initiate discussions with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Stevedoring Services regarding the possible installation of truck scales at the Hamilton docks, as it will be good to know the weight of cargo traveling on Bermuda's roads to better manage and protect them.

[Noise from electronic device]

The Speaker: Members. Can you sort that out?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Speaker, the Government is also keen to encourage active transport as we

tackle the impact of obesity and diabetes on our population. However, the Public Transportation Survey revealed justifiable concerns regarding our road safety. Respondents indicated overwhelmingly that more sidewalks and better lighting would make walkers feel safer. Indeed, an active transport culture thrives where footpaths and sidewalks provide pedestrian protection, and pedal bikes are separated from motorised vehicular traffic.

The Government recognises that the ability to provide new sidewalks and bicycle lanes is very limited by the existing road widths and the extent of private land ownership. Nonetheless, residents can be urged to walk to the nearest bus or ferry dock. The Bermuda Railway Trail presents an immediate opportunity for residents to become more active by walking and cycling. Government will investigate where sidewalks can be added to enable pedestrian safety. In addition, Mr. Speaker, Government will continue to assist the work of the Friends of the Railway Trail by taking on maintenance and repair of each new connection and the landscaping of the trail as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, you will be aware that there has been a significant increase in the number of cruise ship passenger arrivals between 1999 when 195,000 visited Bermuda, and 2018 when the Island received 484,000 cruise passengers. This represents an increase of 289,339 passengers, or 148 per cent, in the last 20 years. This is significant because the 2012 National Tourism Plan anticipated an increase in cruise passenger arrivals to 428,000 by year 2022. This means that in 2018, a full five years before the goal date, Bermuda hosted approximately 56,000 more passengers than originally targeted in the 2012 plan.

Mr. Speaker, accommodating this growth in cruise passengers, the 2018 cruise ship strategy evolved to include a strong focus on the increasing cruise ship passenger spending and attracting a mixture of small premium cruise ships for Hamilton and the Town of St. George's. It also sought to extend the cruise ship season either side of the April to October period. The Ministry of Tourism and Transport recognises that 2018 was something of a tipping point for the cruise ship activity, especially with six cruise ships in port on the 31st of October 2018. In 2019, the cruise arrivals are estimated to rise to 545,000 passengers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, today compared to 1999, there are 30 fewer public buses in inventory. There are 24 fewer community service vehicles. There are 44 fewer taxis on the road, for an assortment of reasons. There are 73,000 fewer air visitors than in 2018. But 350,000 more cruise ship passengers are expected in 2019. This creates an overwhelming need for additional modern transportation infrastructure.

Bermuda requires more public buses and ferries, reliable taxis and minibuses, tugboats, a pilot boat, and pier enlargements and upgrades to service the needs of the cruise ships and cruise ship passen-

gers, as well as the International Maritime obligations that accompany our shipping industry. Mr. Speaker, there is a need to better balance air and cruise passenger traffic flows throughout Bermuda. As a result, the Ministry of Tourism and Transport, and the BTA [Bermuda Tourism Authority] are developing some recommendations for a new cruise ship strategy through to 2028. These recommendations take into consideration the critical need to upgrade Bermuda's transport infrastructure, and ultimately will be beneficial for everyone—residents, air visitors and cruise ship passengers.

In short, Mr. Speaker, we recognise that the successful and economically beneficial execution of a new cruise ship strategy depends on an equally successful transportation infrastructure strategy that is as identified in the Transport Green Paper.

Mr. Speaker, the Government does not intend on producing a White Paper, as mentioned a couple of times since the publishing of the transport paper itself. The Ministry of Tourism and Transport, on behalf of the Government, has started preparing memorandums for Cabinet's consideration and approval. For example, amendments to the Motor Car Act 1951, the Motor Taxi Regulations 1952, Auxiliary Bicycles Act 1954 and the Road Traffic Act 1947, to address shared rides with taxis, regulations for minibuses, enhanced regulations for electric bicycles, dark visors on helmets, and increased fines for road traffic offences.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may I remind the listening public that they still have until June 17th to submit to the Ministry any inquiries or comments regarding the findings of the 2019 Transport Green Paper, by writing to the following email address:

transportgreenpaper@gov.bm

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Deputy Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

I would like to thank the Minister for bringing forward this Transportation Green Paper. I think we all would agree that transportation does need to be addressed in Bermuda.

Public transportation provides a basic mobility service to people who either do not have transportation, do not have access to transportation or simply choose to ride the buses there because they do not want to be caught up on the congestion of traffic getting to and from work. So, it is important also . . . sorry, the other thing is that it is important for our children to be able to get back and forth to school, and for them to be able to get back and forth to school on time.

So, I would support having a dedicated bus service. I remember, because I grew up in the States,

that we would have a yellow school bus. And it would come through our neighbourhood, and it would pick us up for school. And that was the only transportation that was utilised for us to get to school. So, I think that having a dedicated bus [service] would be very good for the reasons that the Minister has laid out in the Green Paper.

We know that the bus dispute has been an ongoing saga. And while the purported new schedule did not work out and they have had to revert back to the old schedule, we really need to figure out how we can get a viable schedule in place. And while the Government blames the bus issues on lack of hiring by the OBA, [these issues are] not really [due to a lack of] workers.

I mean, in the Government's own paper here, it says that (if you will allow me to quote from it), "Three factors can contribute to a more reliable bus service and a decrease in, if not an elimination of, bus cancellations: first, a change in the public bus schedule to reduce the number of buses needed at peak times and throughout the day; two, restoration of a budget allocation to allow for new bus purchases and, three, a proper annual maintenance budget. The Government continues to act on all three of these factors."

Nowhere does it say that they did not have enough workers to service the buses and, because the OBA did not fill positions, that is why we have issues with the buses.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I thought it was being nice to you.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Ooh. Thank you.

[Laughter]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: While public transportation does not provide a great revenue stream, it provides a service. I think that it is notable that there are currently 23,376 students and seniors who ride the buses. And I am happy to see in the paper that they are looking to reverting back to having schoolchildren being charged to ride the bus during the weekend (I think I have it right), riding free during the week and then paying for buses on the weekends. And so, I think that will increase the amount of revenue. I do not think that seniors should be charged anything, because I am a senior now, so I do not want to pay to ride the bus.

[Laughter]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I am a senior.

So, we have to also look, Mr. Speaker, at what is a sustainable bus schedule? We have been talking about this bus schedule now for 17 years. What does it take to get a proper bus schedule in place? And what will it take to also address the needs

of the bus drivers in terms of health and safety, and all of their concerns that they have been discussing for the past week?

There is talk in the paper about introducing a driver recertification. And I guess that would be analogous to lawyers or accountants getting continuing legal education units. And, you know, I would support a driver recertification. And I think that there is also mentioned in the paper the “Train the Trainer” programme. And I would like to have an update from the Minister on that programme. How long is the programme? How many people have been through that programme? What exactly does the programme consist of? And is there ongoing training once they have completed the “Train the Trainer” programme? And how are they assessed? And then how is it determined who takes the programme? Is it all bus drivers? Is it the entire Department of Public Transportation? How is the determination made?

We have got the Bermuda Tourism Authority working diligently and very successfully in getting people to come to our Island, Mr. Speaker. And so, we need to have a public transportation system that can support our visitors, as well as our existing residents. And we want a modern-day public transportation system. And I do not think that that is too much to ask for.

There are . . . the . . . let me see. Our bus schedule should actually . . . we need to have a ridership survey. And I think that the Minister stated that we would have that. Because we actually need to know which areas are most popular, which buses need to be in areas more frequently, what times they need to be there. I know in my constituency, up at Lighthouse Lane, when they used to have the sight-seeing buses, they used to go through there. But there is not a bus that goes through there. And there are a lot of seniors who live in that area. And they can only catch the bus either on Middle Road or on the South Shore. And that is quite a walk from Lighthouse Lane. So, looking at adding in routes that will assist seniors and other challenged people is a good thing. And I am looking forward to seeing how they are going to do that.

In the transportation paper, the Minister talks about a grey bus schedule. And I would like to know, exactly what the grey bus schedule is. What time are those routes serviced? Which drivers are driving on that schedule? And are they paid extra compensation for driving that schedule? How is that incorporated into the existing schedule? And why do we have a need for a grey schedule? What does it accomplish?

There have been complaints; the paper addresses complaints about bus drivers. I would like to know how those complaints are addressed. Are disciplinary actions taken? Are courses required to be taken by bus drivers, depending on the infractions that they have committed? And how do we train our bus drivers to understand that they are providing a public

service not only in driving the bus, but also interacting with our students, with our residents, and with our tourists?

Mr. Speaker, now I would like to move on to the ferries, which are not under as much stress as the buses are. However, I would like to see more ferry locations, and I think that a ferry (what do you call it?) a terminal, a ferry terminal at the airport would actually be ideal, particularly when we can have tourists who are coming in and have their first experience with Bermuda on a ferry taking them to the hotel or wherever it is that they might be going.

I note that there are . . . some of the ferries can take bikes, and those ferries, I think, are the front-loading ferries?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: And so, they said that they are not looking at procuring another front-loading ferry because there is not enough volume of people. However, I think it is kind of a catch-22. More people would ride the ferry if they could bring their bikes. And so, do you buy the ferry, and then more people use it? Because I think that, you know, I used to be able to catch the ferry. And I liked being able to catch the ferry into town. It actually gives you a wonderful start to the day, and it is calm and peaceful and beautiful. So, you know, if we could get another ferry that would allow people who have bikes, motorised bikes and bicycles, to take them on the ferry, I think that would be a good thing.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also address differently abled people. And I understand from the Transportation Green Paper that there are multiple definitions in different pieces of legislation as to what “differently abled” people means. And I would suggest that we have a comprehensive definition for “differently abled” people. I agree that there are degrees of disability. However, you know, challenges—we can find an encompassing definition that addresses all challenges.

I was looking on the Internet, and looking at, in the US, what are the states that are ranked number one in terms of having wheelchair accessibility? And Seattle, Washington, is ranked number one of the top five most wheelchair accessible cities in the United States. And so, they have made accessibility to disabled persons their priority. And so, they have got wheelchair friendly ferries, wheelchair friendly taxis. They have got wide ramps. And they have made themselves available for people who want to enjoy their state to be able to enjoy it, whether they are walking on two legs, whether they are rolling in a wheelchair or . . . not the motorised ones.—

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: What is the one with the three wheels? The tri-chair, or whatever it is.

In New York City, Mr. Speaker, there is a programme that is called ADAPT. And ADAPT is a community network that is working to empower disabled people. And it is also about teaching the community about the needs of disabled people. And they offer programmes which include education, health, technology and residential. And it is one of those things that they actually provide support to other jurisdictions that maybe the Minister would like to look into in terms of how we can provide greater support services for our disabled people. And ADAPT is the leading human service not-for-profit organisation. And they have been providing cutting-edge programmes and services for people with disabilities for a very long time.

And so, we need to be, as a country, more inclusive of disabled people, not just in terms of transportation, but just generally. You know, I note that the Minister said that we were going to put up more signage at the buses and ferries. Will that signage include Braille? Because signage is good for people who can see, but for those who cannot see, you know, how are they going to be accommodated? I think we need to address that.

I was also very shocked to read in the paper, Mr. Speaker, that a taxi can cost a disabled person up to \$200 for a return trip. And if you have got somebody who is on a limited income having to pay \$200 to get to a doctor's visit or wherever they need to be, that is ridiculous. And so, we need to find a way that is more accommodating. We need to find a way that is more user-friendly and more cost-friendly for our people who are differently abled. You know, it is almost like they are being penalised for being differently abled. And that is not what we want to be displayed as. We should be an embracing community and accommodating the needs of all of our people, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the paper identifies that there were 20 applications for minibus permits for people who wanted to import wheelchair accessible vans to the Island. I would like to know what the status is of those permits. How long ago were the applications submitted? How close are any of those applications to being approved? And although it will not fill the gap completely, I am glad that steps are being taken to accommodate those who are differently abled.

And I notice that there is a proposal to have, I guess, a sort of disability register to look at, to kind of identify who is disabled in the country. And I am not sure that that is the correct way to do things, because the register does not mean that everybody is going to sign up. So, I am sure that there must be some other ways to identify whom we are not reaching in terms of support, whether it is with transportation or other needs. But I am glad that differently abled people is a category that is being considered in this paper.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support any legislation that would disable the use of the dark visor helmets. As you are aware, a lot of the robberies and things that have been taking place in the community have occurred by people who are wearing these helmets and these dark visors. And in order to address this, I think we need to put in place the appropriate legislation. So, I fully support that.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak now about the taxis. And from my understanding, because I have been in contact, in communication with several taxi drivers, my understanding is that since 2016, or even before, they have been looking at trying to implement a central dispatching system. So, up until 2017, I believe, or 2018, there were three dispatching companies in Bermuda. And they were BTA Dispatching, CO OP and Bermuda Island Taxi. And then, my information is that there was a moratorium on dispatching licences granted and that there was actually someone who was associated with one of the three companies that I have just identified, who wanted to get a dispatching licence and was refused because he was told there was a moratorium in place.

However, in May of 2018, HITCH was issued a provisional licence with a full licence being issued in October 2018. So, the question posed to me is, When was that moratorium lifted, and why were not other taxi drivers informed of the lifting of the moratorium so that other people could have had an opportunity to get a dispatching licence?

Now, there was an article in the *Royal Gazette* a couple of weeks back, written by a former, one of the former presidents of one of the taxi dispatching companies. Their concern is that the Motor Car Act, which governs taxis, is not being utilised effectively. And in the Motor Car Act, if you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, section 35B is in relation to "Motors taxis to register with a taxi dispatching service." So, anybody who operates a taxi should be registered with a dispatching service.

But that is not what is happening, Mr. Speaker. A lot of taxis are being utilised by destination management services. They are not going through the dispatching service. And so, what the taxi drivers are thinking is that if there is a central dispatch system, then we can triage where taxis should be so we will not have a glut of taxis in the West End, and St. George's and the central parishes are neglected.

The other thing is that HITCH has a meter on their app that is—you know, you go through it on your phone. And they have been issued a licence. And this is my understanding, and I stand to be corrected by the Premier, whom I know has an interest in HITCH. But under the legislation, anybody who has a dispatching licence has to have a two-way radio set, a mobile data terminal, a global positioning device and an alarm device. And if you do not have those things, then you are in contravention of the Act and you should not be able to have a dispatching licence.

There are people who are operating without a dispatching licence, and the legislation provides for a \$1,400 fine for the day on which the offence is committed and for each day during which the offence continues. And if the offence continues, then the permit can be suspended by the board as for such time as the board deems proper.

Mr. Speaker, all drivers should have a radio, pursuant to the legislation. My understanding is that HITCH does not have a radio, that the drivers were given a phone and that the directors are directed to take their work from the app on the phone. And I do not believe that we have seen legislation come forward in this House to amend the Motor Car Act to allow for apps to be used and to eliminate the use or the requirement for radios.

One of the companies, I think it is BTA, actually employs 12 to 13 people. If we are going to resort to taxis being dispatched by application, what is going to happen to Bermudian jobs? Because if you are using a computer app, then there is really no need for people. So, we need to look at the things that we are doing.

And while we want to be advanced in our technology . . . and I get it. And I did go on the news and say that we should consider using either an Uber- or a Lyft-type service. However, having spoken with taxi drivers and gained a better understanding of the damage that such a service in Bermuda would cause, I am going to backpedal on that and say, well, we need to actually look at the fundamental issues of the taxi industry that we have now. We need to look at the legislation and, where the legislation is being violated, [enforce] the enforcement procedures.

I believe that the Transport Control Department does have a transport enforcement officer who should be out there patrolling and policing people. And where people are violating the Motor Car Act, then whatever consequences are provided by the legislation should be instituted.

Oh I think that we have had a two-edged sword with the road sobriety legislation in that people are no longer going out. And while I believe that the road sobriety legislation is a good thing—people should not be drinking and driving—the challenge is that people are not going out because they are not able to get reliable transportation to get to and from their destination. And so, it would be interesting to see whether any data have been compiled since the time that road sobriety legislation has been implemented and what the revenue impact has been on bars and restaurants in terms of people not going out anymore.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister announced a couple of weeks ago that they were looking at possibly issuing 20 special licences. And I think he does have the ability to issue, I think it is 87 or 88. But he thought that he would start with a sample of 20 for a temporary period and see where that would go. And the concern with that, Mr. Speaker, is that taxi drivers who

have paid \$125,000 to \$150,000 for a taxi licence are afraid that their investment is going to be devalued. And I think I would not be happy if I were a taxi driver and somebody could get a licence for \$2,000, and I paid \$150,000 for mine. You know?

And the truth is, Mr. Speaker, the taxi licences for some people are like deeds. They are used as collateral at the bank to send their children to college. And you cannot send your child to college for a \$2,000 licence. So, I think that we need to assess that.

And I think the other thing is that, currently, I believe that there are . . . and my numbers may be wrong, again. I have been working with some members in the industry. But currently, we have 600 taxi permits which have been issued. And out of those [600], about 50 to 100 vehicles are not on the road. So, what are we doing about those people who have taxi licences who are not on the road? Before we say we are going to issue 20 special permits, let us look at why those 50 or 100 are not on the road. And I think that the Public Service Vehicle Licensing Board should address those taxi drivers. Why are they not on the road? And if they are not going to be on the road and utilising their taxis, then they either need to forfeit their licence or sell their licence.

But before we add anything to what already exists, we need to address the challenges that we are already facing and see if we can find solutions within the existing industry.

My understanding with the announcement was that there were going to be 20 special licences and the cost of those licences was going to be between \$2,000 and \$4,000, the banks are looking at re-evaluating what value the permits really have. And so, we have got to be able to allow people to retain the value of their investment. And we need to look at ways of getting taxis on the road, getting and providing superior service to our people without detriment to the industry, to those who have worked hard to secure their taxis and to those who are working hard to provide service to Bermuda.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was brought to my attention by a taxi driver (as I drop all of my papers on the floor) that, in the Motor [Taxi] Regulations, under Schedule 1, there is a Rate 3—Surcharge. And that surcharge comes into play during public holidays. And the rate surcharge is that for anybody who is getting a taxi between the hours of midnight and 6:00 [am], there is a surcharge of 25 per cent of the total charge otherwise payable under Rate 1. And this has to occur at a public holiday, and the taxi has to carry up to four passengers.

And Schedule 1, Rate 3—Surcharge, section B says, “Where any part of the hiring—1 occurs between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. and the taxi carries 5 to 7 passengers; or 2 occurs on a public holiday and the taxi carries 5 to 7 passengers,” that is

50 per cent of the total charge otherwise payable under Rate 1.

Now, one of the taxi drivers sent me a notice from HITCH that was notifying members that the steps to our holiday rates would be in effect for Good Friday and Easter Sunday, which again, as I stated, represents a 25 per cent increase on fares for up to four passengers, and 50 per cent for five to seven passengers. But my understanding and information is that on top of those 25 [per cent] and 50 per cent surcharges, that HITCH also charges an additional 12 per cent charge, which is higher than what the other taxi drivers are charging. So, Mr. Speaker, that cannot be right or fair for people who are trying to drive a taxi and make a decent living and are unable to do so.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have been provided with some correspondence from the licence dispatch companies with their concerns about the industry. And they have actually laid out all of their concerns. I think that this was provided to the Minister, and I was provided with a copy, as well. And the licence dispatch companies are very concerned about the industry. They are very concerned that a central dispatching system is not going to occur. And they want to know what can be done to address this and many other issues.

And they have got some good solutions here. And so, I do know that the Minister, my understanding is that the Minister was provided with this correspondence about a month ago, and the taxi drivers have not yet had a reply. But they have set out their concerns. They are very legitimate concerns. And they have also provided suggested actions and solutions.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that the people who are actually working in the industry and providing this service, performing the day-to-day job of being taxi drivers, are actually the best people to discuss the areas of concern, and to provide the solutions, because it is what they actually do. So, I am hoping that the Minister will take into account the suggestions and find a way to provide a taxi service that is going to be beneficial for both the taxi drivers and the people of Bermuda, our visitors and our residents.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, under the taxi regulations, taxi drivers have to have a code of dress. Yes, a "Dress and conduct section" [section 12]. And so, one of the things that was raised and brought to my attention was that the regulations may be a bit discriminatory for men. And under section 12(a)(v), it says, "dress shoes, boots or moccasin shoes shall be worn, but not leisure shoes, sneakers or foot coverings likely to cause the driver to lose control of the taxi, such as flip flops, clogs or sandals." And so, there are women taxi drivers who wear sandals, and the men cannot wear sandals. And so, they are disturbed that they are being discriminated against.

In general, as I look at the dress and conduct, there are quite a few rules that actually are not followed. There are not any consequences for not follow-

ing them, but, you know, there is a dress and conduct [regulation] that should adhere to all taxi drivers. And again, it is just something that should be looked at and enforced because it is in keeping with the regulations and the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing is that the taxi drivers would also like to have the ability to accept credit cards. I know that some of them do not. And with the modern traveller these days, Mr. Speaker, I know when I travel, if you are going to New York or Miami or any of those places, they have that little taxi-cab machine [sitting] in the back. And you can pick whether or not you want to pay a tip. And it will print a receipt for you.

And so, I know that there is also a charge associated with having a credit card service. You have got to pay the bank a fee for having those, the machine and the processing. And so, yes, it will cut into sort of the revenue of the taxi drivers. But, you know, in essence, it is the cost of doing business. And it is a cost that if we want to be a competitive jurisdiction or remain a competitive jurisdiction, we may have to incur. But it may be something that, you know, the Government could consider buying the machines and selling them to the taxi drivers at a discounted rate so that they could have them in their taxis.

I think that covers all of the things that I was going to talk about, Mr. Speaker. I think that some other Members of my team are going to address the paper. Generally, I am very glad to see that we have a Green Paper. I am a bit disappointed that it is not going to be a White Paper, because I think a White Paper kind of enshrines what the Green Paper sets out and it also provides a form of accountability. Because you put it in a White Paper, you said you are going to do these things, and, you know, the thing with having a Green Paper is, *Well, we can pick, choose and refuse the things that we are or are not going to do.*

But again, as I said, overall, I think that it is a good step forward. I hope that we can get the transportation issues that we currently have resolved. We have got the PGA coming up, and I am sure that the Minister would like to ensure that there is sufficient and viable transportation for the people who are visiting our Island. We also want to make sure that the bus drivers are working in a safe environment and that when they have to go to [different] places to [use] the restroom, that the restrooms are safe, and that they are clean, that they are hygienic, and that we are all working to better Bermuda and our public transportation and our tourism industry, because they go hand in hand. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2.

Honourable Member Swan, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this Green Paper on Transportation. I thank the Minister for bringing it here. I want to thank Ms. Stacey Evans, who I know has done a great deal of work in the preparation, and the team from the Ministry of Transport who have been involved in this process. I single her out because, on one of the boards that I serve, she actually took some time out to meet specifically with us to share with us what was taking place and to get feedback, and that was greatly appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I will declare my interests. I am a frequent user of the public transportation system, and I carry my card not because I have reached the age, although I am fast approaching; I carry my card as one who would go down to (or my wife, more frequently than I) and buy that three-month package, which makes it far more economical. And dare I say that we have long boasted on having a very good public transportation system in Bermuda? The Island runs east to west, a mile and a half at its widest portion, runs from the east, where the sun rises and decides that it is going to park. That is the way the Island travels. We go with the flow of nature. And the Cup will go that way this year as it is supposed to.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: But I digress there, Mr. Speaker, because I only have 30 minutes on an important topic.

Transportation reflects very much the social makeup of any society. And in university, in addition to playing a lot of golf, I majored in social science, as well, and spent a great deal of time in different communities where transportation is handled in different manners. And for many years, we prided ourselves on our transportation system. Recently, transportation has been something that has come under the proverbial microscope.

And let me point, because it is easy to point fingers. And I just want to single out Mr. Herman Basden, who was in his role for many years as Director of PTB [Public Transportation Board], my next-door neighbour for many years before he took ill. And I just want to say that he often emphasised to me the importance of transportation economics, which he studied at the London University. He was very proud of that and very proud of his time there and the relationship that he had fostered with those who operated under him at PTB. And my association through running a government quango for some eight years before working as a private contractor allowed me to

come in close contact with some others who have been at TCD [Transport Control Department], like Mr. Tyrrell and Mr. Oliver, Stan Oliver, who later went on to be Permanent Secretary and then headed the civil service.

And so, many experiences have allowed me, and interactions with some key people who helped to develop our transportation industry along the way have allowed me to garner a little bit of a perspective as a dear country boy.

But when I look at this report, the numbers that allowed me to appreciate the dynamics that have shifted in Bermuda are that in 1999 Bermuda had 355,000 visitors by air. Now, I dare say that this report does not go into air transportation to the depth that it deals with other aspects of it. And I am sure that the Honourable Whip, my colleague, will speak more succinctly to that. I will say just one point as it delves into the air transportation, is that one of the things that always stood out to me is the compaction, if I can use that word, of air arrivals and departures in Bermuda.

Now, we know we have got a nice, big airport coming. But we do not have greater flights coming to accommodate it, but compaction in that. So, you have compaction in arrivals, and then you are expected to have people there to cater to that in a transportation way. I will leave it there—355,000 arrivals in 1999, and 282[,000] air visitors in 2018, so a decrease. That was a time when Bermuda was more hotel heads-in-beds centred. There was a shift away from that for a number of reasons, no fault being pointed.

I remember seeing the exodus away from hotel properties and our little niche boutique places that now form condominiums. You can go start in the west and work your way down to the east if that suits your fancy. I will start from the east and work my way back up. Thankfully, the St. George's Club is still around. But even that has shifted a little bit to more residential to be able to survive.

But what happened on the other side of the hotel dynamic? In 1999, we had 195,000 visitors coming to Bermuda by sea. And those visitors, I know because in 1999 I could sit on the first tee at St. George's and look down and see the *Bermuda Star*, right there at Ordinance Island. And *Royal Caribbean* line was just below Harbour Radio, two cruise ships at the same time, dual-ship policy one of them may have had, Hamilton and St. George's intertwined. But what was the common denominator? A cruise ship from going back to the *Ocean Monarch* and the days of . . . well, the *Ocean Monarch* and the *Queen of Bermuda* (thank you, Honourable and Learned Member), the *Queen of Bermuda*. A boat would leave on a Saturday from New York and be in Bermuda on a Monday, and leave on a Thursday and be back in New York on a Saturday, and be in Bermuda on a Monday. Another boat would leave Boston on a Sunday, be in Bermuda on a Tuesday, leave Bermuda on a Friday and be

back. And that was their rotation—four days in Bermuda.

I remember my dear friend, whom I used to have lunch with often, my dear friend, Jimmy Williams, who had the Pub on the Square during the glory days of tourism. He said to me when I first came to St. George's to open up that golf course in 1985, he said to me, *My clientele, Kim, is the cruise. I am their home for four days.* And anybody who travels on a cruise ship regularly will say to me that the crew are their source of where the locals would eat. So, the Pub on the Square would be a local haunt, and it would also be the local spot for the cruise ship crew, who are coming to and from Bermuda on a regular basis. And it would be the place where the regulars on the cruise ship were gravitating because they know, those folks know where the best deals are.

Those were the days when the cruise ship people would come out of the cruise ship, and venture around and the like. I remember that because I saw the ship when cruise ships then became, Mr. Speaker, concessioned-out entities. And my own rental golf clubs, I had to come in competition with them because they were then figuring out who was making money on land.

I fast forward in the little bit of time that I have to 2018, where Bermuda now has 484 [*sic*] cruise ship visitors.

An Hon. Member: Thousand.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: [Yes,] 484,000. That is 484 with *three* zeroes. Not even HOTT 107.5 with two T's. That is three zeroes in the back of that 484. That is a lot of zeroes. That is a lot of people to have to manage.

Now, let us cross reference that. Let us cross reference that to the number of taxis that we have in Bermuda. There were 600 taxis in 1999; there were 556 taxis in 2018. Minibuses, there were seven, I believe. (I am looking for it here, but I know I read it already.) Seven in 1999. I remember that. I remember that seven was in St. George's, servicing St. George's Club and the beach, which is now called Blackbeard's and back. Now we have 147 minibuses. Thankfully, we do.

But let us look at that dynamic. If Bermuda has transitioned from having total visitors from 550,000 visitors in 1999 to 771,000 visitors in 2018, and the number of taxis has decreased and the minibuses have increased only [slightly], the question is, Have we kept pace with that shifting social dynamic? It is a social dynamic. And I know social dynamics do not get the attention of a government like financial ones do. That is a fact. I have lived long enough to know that this is a fact of life that I will have to live with. But as a person who wears social issues on their sleeve, I am duty-bound to speak to this social dynamic that is in front of us here right there.

I read in here, and I cannot find the page right now, but I will find it as I shift through, when I come to it, that said that taxis are expensive. Let me tell you something. Taxi drivers, just like any other business person, has all the responsibilities of costs of health insurance, payroll taxes, and all the like. Okay? And except for some reductions that I see posted, 5 per cent, [taxi drivers] pay the same fuel cost that we pay and have an increased burden on them. And that is an important dynamic that we have to take into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, how come that clock keeps ticking away? I mean, time and tide wait for no man, as my grandfather used to say.

The Speaker: Do not waste your time. Keep talking. Keep talking.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I am going. I am going.

Mr. Speaker, the senior population in Bermuda and the group of persons approaching the senior population in Bermuda are the fastest-growing segment of our society. And that presents a different dynamic for Bermuda to consider. In the Green Paper, on page 19, it tells us just that. Age 45 to 64 has grown from 12,000 people (rounding it down) to 20,000. That is a significant increase. Sixty-five and over has grown from 6,700 to almost 11,000. I will round it up a little bit. That is a significant growth that is going to impact a number of things, transportation notwithstanding.

I want to say this, that when you look at the income versus expenditure of public transportation, rightfully so, it is a subsidised area. I do not have any issues with that, historically. But what we do have to grapple with is the here and now. If you tell me that we have in the here and now some 700,000 visitors—771,000, almost 800,000 visitors—to cater to versus 550,000 visitors to cater to in 1999, and you have fewer taxies than you did then, more people, fewer providers, *Houston, we have a problem here.* A serious one!

And in the here and now, we have a nice problem in the fact that we got more visitors to have to address. So, that is a poor country! Every week, you hear people trying to tickle up the Government and find all the faults. The Government has created a nice problem to have to solve!

And let me digress to say that the creation of that problem came with great criticism even from the person who stands here speaking today, because many of us have had a field day on the cruise ship, the big port over in Dockyard. But thankfully, I see it every day when I am out at Port Royal, that wonderful place that is hosting the Bermuda challenge (Thank you very much for that). But I see it in minibuses going by. Last week I spoke about the opportunities with our ports. It did not get any coverage in the paper. That is understandable. I understand that! I do not expect

what I say to be covered by the daily, even if it makes sense!

That is the problem we have in this country when it comes to people who really passionately understand issues, and there is a partisan approach to how they are covered! It is a problem. Because some of us, some of us actually live tourism. The Honourable Member sells gas, so he understands the tourism dynamic and the transportation dynamic.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: If he does not see the receipts coming in, he is going to be looking at numbers.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: No, I am just saying. It is important to look at the social dynamics at play. And we have cultural problems as it comes to transportation. I remember back when in 1979 when I was at Davis, California, for the NCAA Championship, and I remember the University of California, Davis. You talk about progressive thinking. They had pedestrian . . . not pedestrian, they had pedal-bike-only campus for the whole university. But you know out West they are way ahead when it comes to things like being laid back. The world catches up later as a consequence.

In a small society like Bermuda, we have got to look at that. Because the flip side of that that the Minister of Health speaks about is that those of us who are not walking the way we used to or should be now, we need to create a culture by virtue of our challenges that encourages greater use of pedal bikes and the like, a walking community and the like.

Now, let me say this when it comes to the bus problem that we are faced with for an immediate consideration, as we consider this Green Paper. I was most pleased to see some thought being given to the challenges that communities such as St. David's face. Let me say that it is not just St. David's. Ferry Reach and Cut Road experience those same problems. Ord Road and Spanish Point experience those same problems. Pond Hill and, dare I say, Sound View Road experience those same problems.

The day has come when Barnes Corner, the new Barnes Corner needs to be Rockaway Port Royal! Think about it! You have got a bus running up the south, you have got a bus running up there. And you have got a major facility that the Government is going to invest millions to promote to the world. And a cruise terminal that can be a major link, and the public system has not linked up to it yet. We need to do that! And guess where a large percentage of seniors live. Right there in the Honourable Member from constituency . . . who sits in front of this constituency, so I am sure he is in agreement with me, he might even elaborate far more than my time permits.

The Speaker: Looks like you are seeking support.

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: It is a Green Paper, and I have some latitude. The only problem is, Mr. Speaker, with these new rules that I helped introduce, I do not have the time!

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Well, it is now 12:30. I am going to ask the question. Do you intend to finish in the next minute? Or do you want to use the rest of the remaining 10 minutes that you have?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I have got 10 minutes? I will take the whole 10 after lunch.

The Speaker: Well, after lunch is good.

Does one of the Ministers want to rise and break us to lunch?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I ask that we break for lunch.

The Speaker: And return at two o'clock?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And return at . . . yes, sure. Let us do two o'clock.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Okay. Members, we now stand adjourned for lunch until 2:00 pm.

[Gavel]

Proceedings suspended at 12:30 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:00 pm

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

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members. I trust everyone had a refreshing break during their lunch. We are about to resume.

[Gavel]

MOTION

2019 TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER

[Debate thereon continuing]

The Speaker: When we broke for lunch the Honourable Member Swan, from constituency 2, was on his feet with 10 minutes remaining in his speech.

Would you like to use up your 10 minutes or are you considered done?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: [Microphone off]

The Speaker: Trying to get 10 on the clock. Well, mine is started, how is that?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I will continue on the [Transport] Green Paper.

Let me start off, Mr. Speaker, the Green Paper states that taxis are expensive. But it is my contention that the operating costs of a taxi have increased exponentially and outpaced any fare increases that have occurred over the years. And I would ask [for] an undertaking [to] consider the cost of operating a taxi in 2019—all the costs that go along with it—against the fare increases that have come over time so that we can have a fact-based discussion about the situation. The number of taxis has decreased from 1999 to 2019 while the total visitors have increased significantly.

The shift has been, Mr. Speaker, from hotel and guest house visitors, who, I might add, spend considerably more than a cruise visitor . . . not negating the importance and significance of cruise visitors who are here in great numbers these days, but as that dynamic shifted before our very eyes over 20 years, so have the circumstances that service providers for the public. Their dynamics have changed. And so certainly we must undertake to track the passage of visitors and locals.

When we look at transportation, you know, the times and days, the bottlenecks . . . I can give you an example, Mr. Speaker. Since 1999, Dockyard is a major transportation hub, located at the very western extreme of Bermuda. Therein lies hundreds of thousands of visitors who need to be traversed throughout Bermuda. And dare I say that we need, scientifically . . . because in my discussion with transportation engineers . . . I told you, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a great deal of them in my life for the last 20 years, scientific and matter-of-fact evidence is very much a part of the persons who held those particular posts.

In my emergence . . . in fact, the ones that I named . . . I named Mr. Raul Tyrrell, Mr. Stan Oliver and Mr. Herman Basden, three people I spent hours around a great deal through my holding of the government post as a general manager of a quango for some eight years. They always spoke of things from an engineering point of view. They looked at life more scientifically because they . . . I think some of them may have been even tech boys, for the benefit of the Colonel, the Member for Works and Engineering, Mr. Oliver was a Berkeleyite—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And golfers, indeed.

But I want to say that science has a lot to do with it. So if hundreds of thousands of people are in Dockyard, the composition of the Island, the layout of the Island, being configured [like] a fishhook, we need to make sure . . . we need to say, *Well, is it humanly possible to expect all of our people to be there to cater to that 400,000 or so people, or should we be finding ways to transport people to other important significant hubs?*

St. George's would be a natural hub because it is a very important part of Bermuda's tourism equation. From my point of view it is the most important part, it is where it all started, and so we need to make sure those people in Dockyard are in St. George's—soon and often and long!

Hamilton is an important part of that. The water will play a significant portion of making sure that we do not rely on all of the vehicles that can be hampered by an accident on the road to move masses of people.

My uncle . . . I go back to the old-timers that taught me who are over 100 years old. [My uncle] talked about herding cattle, why? We grew up in an agrarian society. We can see how you moved the cattle from up on the top of Cedar Hill, Southampton (for those of you who do not know there is a Cedar Hill, Southampton) and got them down through the local corral to be able to put them in the areas. That is what it is like. If you do not look . . . that is what we need to do.

And so I feel, Mr. Speaker, it is important and I will be prevailing upon the Minister, my colleague, as best I can, knowing that the challenge is on us as we speak and knowing that the cruise ships [operate] differently than they did 20 years ago. Because, as I mentioned, cruise ships try to spend as much time at sea—they are bigger, they [are like] cities—and they are trying to get that dollar out of those persons pockets for their services on board their ship to the detriment of . . . and our goal is to get them on land and get persons spending money. And that is a major challenge.

The Green Paper suggests using private services in light of the transportation challenges. And I would like to know if the Ministry is looking at the possibility of developing community transportation services. I mentioned St. George's, St. David's, Ferry Reach . . . and I would say that we could very much be a pilot service. There are greater numbers of people in those areas than there were in 1999 and the like, and if we can find ways to utilise our community-based areas to provide a fee-to-service during the peak travel periods of those persons . . . the most important times would be going to work and coming home from work.

And let me say this, Mr. Speaker, because I know my time is nearly running out, times have changed. As a commuter, you cannot tell me I can get a 6:15 bus, because I have got to make time out of St.

George's on a Friday, but I cannot have that same option on a Saturday and Sunday, not when you tell me that the hotel is going to be open and they need me, not when you tell me I have got to be at the grocery store where I work . . . and the [number] of people in this country paying \$25 to go to work to make \$15 an hour is . . . you know, that bit of economics, to me, does not make sense. That is something we have to look at for our working-class community.

Mr. Speaker, technology must become commonplace in Bermuda when it comes to transportation. So I hear people talking about, you know, Bermuda is more computer literate than most places around the world. My mother is probably listening to us right now, at her age, with her iPad, to get us online. So persons can certainly have the opportunity to learn how to use their phone to be able to buy their bus passes. And our busses need to be like they are in Japan and other communities, where they . . . where the electronics are directing the traffic to take away from some of the experiences that our bus drivers have to put up with within the community.

Mr. Speaker, transportation speaks to the social conditions of our country, and I am one that is supportive of the fact that transportation of public service is subsidised, but it must be—

The Speaker: You are almost at that point.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —efficient.

The Speaker: You almost at . . . well, there you go.

[Timer beeps]

[Laughter]

The Speaker: There you go.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And I will . . . I have no choice but to stop right there, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you for your contribution.

I now recognise the next Member, and I believe it is the Member from constituency 12.

Opposition Leader, you have your 30 minutes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to everyone after lunch.

I would like to say from the onset that this Green Paper provided us with, actually, some very good reading. It is rather lengthy. I believe it is 190-plus pages.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: However, it is not difficult reading, but it is very informative in the scope that it has taken to get to this House and to the larger Ber-

muda what this Government believes is the direction that we need to go in.

What I will say is this, Mr. Speaker, from the onset, however, that I believe that this Government should show the people of Bermuda a commitment, through a White Paper, that it will do specific things. A Green Paper is perfectly fine. I believe that as they go further with their reviews of things, I believe that there are other institutions still, to this day, that have not been talked to in specific, that are in the industry, that will, of course, reveal many opportunities that I think need to be included.

And so I say this to let the Minister know . . . I know he has said no to a White Paper, but a White Paper, essentially, would give a commitment to Bermuda of specifics that we will go after. And, certainly, we know with transportation it is something that is fluid as we upgrade things. It will continue to be fluid with technology changing all of the time and with many of the variables that are involved with transportation in Bermuda—from the coordinating of the buses to the coordinating of our cruise ships, to the coordinating of WEDCO and the activity that goes on just within that area, the coordination of what happens in the City of Hamilton, when, in fact, a ferry drops off people and how easy it is for them to be able to get onto a bus and to have alternatives, whether it be tourists or Bermudians, to have options to be able to get about on the Island.

And so there is much to be praised about this Green Paper, in fact. Certainly this is not an intent to try and put any shadow on this here, but I do believe that we already are aware, as we have gone through this Green Paper, of many of the things that could already have been done, things that can be done right now. And so I think the public will be looking for a commitment of the things that we can do right now to ensure that we can bring about better service.

Now, at the bottom of page 9 our Honourable Minister mentions . . . the last thing that he says is "Bermuda's modern transport future begins now." It is a very catchy phrase. And I like that, certainly with the inclusion of talking about where we are going to be bringing in technology and the likes. But the future of transportation has been in place for some time now. We have seen the advent of the Twizy, which is in this paper, and the small electric cars. So we have been reinventing ourselves, maybe not at a pace that we would like to, but now that we have a Green Paper in front of us it would behove us to hasten the pace because now we have got solid information in front of us which can lead us to some real conclusions.

And if you walk along the street right now, if you were to ask a taxi driver (just talking about the taxi part of this Transport [Green Paper]), if you were to ask any one of the drivers, which I have done on a regular basis since this Green Paper, the first thing that comes out of their mouths is, *Listen, we've got things that we should be enforcing right now.* And we

know that we have challenges with that there, and maybe manpower. I do not know what all of those challenges are, but certainly with this Green Paper and with more discussions that I hope will happen, it will highlight what those issues are of enforcement and let us get down to enforcing these things.

I do not know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I am tired of coming into town and seeing guys popping wheelies all through town, which is a real safety and health hazard to all of us, whether it be motorists or whether it be pedestrians who are crossing the street or just moving about . . . our tourists who are coming here who are flooding the streets. This is a serious problem.

I do not know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I am tired of seeing people driving through red lights—purposely ignoring the red lights!

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We put them in place for safety reasons and we, as a people—not the tourists, we as a people—are ignoring the fundamental laws of the land. So we have got to go a long way in enforcing that safety for everyone in Bermuda as we start looking at this very, very, very comprehensive report that we have in front of us.

I do believe that there is more to come. And I am hoping that as they sit down and start talking to some of the dispatchers and the likes . . . I heard a former Member say that those discussions still had not been had entirely, so I am sure that there is more to come to light. And I am hoping that as we learn some of these new things and some of these new revelations about transportation, that the Minister will have the opportunity to bring statements to this House to update us as they move along with some of these recommendations that are here.

I would like to highlight, Mr. Speaker, I take note that as I was going through this comprehensive report many of the things that they talk about are already completed, which is great. It was great to be able to see that this was added in here and to be able to also see that there were ongoing things that they are working on. And so I believe that this truly is a work in progress.

And so what we would like to hear as we are moving through this process of progress in transportation is that we will hear more and more about some of the things that are forthcoming. I mean, certainly, when we were Government we understood the challenges that people had with the Twizys. But you can see in the graphs . . . and I am going to go through this particular paper to show where Bermudians are now saying, *Well, hold on a second here. We want to be fossil fuel conscious as well. We would like to buy these things and travel in these things.* And I have heard many times before in the past . . . many people

have said that Bermuda is a perfect test tube for going—

The Speaker: Going green.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —mostly electrical.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I mean, certainly, Mr. Speaker, you—

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —have been in the field and you know it all too well that this is a great opportunity in Bermuda.

I was just looking last night, actually, at these new glass batteries that will go a thousand hours—

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —without being regenerated.

So technology is certainly catching . . . well, not catching up. Technology is certainly pushing us forward and we do need to advantage of many of these new and innovative things that are happening out there in the world. And we have a great opportunity because it is not . . . you know, with 60,000 people on the Island it is small enough that we can make some drastic changes very quickly. And so I would encourage the Minister . . . you know, we sometimes tease him, he has got a lot of energy, to push forward with some of these things, to get going.

But I believe that a commitment must be made to the people of Bermuda. It would have been nice if he would have committed to a White Paper—that is not the case. So we will hold this Ministry to the task of ensuring that many of the things that we see in here are going to be implemented and that they do come up with something that is more targeted to getting things done.

We have seen way too many times that we get all of these papers in front of us and recommendations and we go through them—great recommendations, you know. I must say the civil servants get going and get all of this stuff and get all hyped-up and then it takes two years before we even get to one or two of them . . . bureaucracy sets in place.

And so, if we are going to talk about moving forward I believe that we can. The Government has our participation in this and our support. We believe that we do have major, major issues in Bermuda, going through this report, with transportation. Which leads me to say, I was just listening to the Honourable Member that just sat down from constituency 2 and how he was talking about the cruise ships and the likes. And I just want to say this here that, you know,

cruise ships . . . you know, they . . . the place to make money from cruise ships is not retail for trinkets and things like that. The place to make money from cruise ships is transportation. They want to see stuff. The last thing they want to do is buy something—everything is on the boat! They want to be able to get to see things and so this is a huge economic opportunity.

And what you saw with the increase of cruise ships up in Dockyard was the proliferation of minibuses. And the challenges that the bus service was having, you know, being able to do tours and maintenance and the likes, we recognise that these guys stepped up to the plate and I can tell you, I set off the other day across from Horseshoe Bay . . . I cannot remember the name of that restaurant, what is that restaurant across from Horseshoe Bay?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, I am from St. David's, I cannot remember the name of that place. Right, Gulfstream?

An Hon. Member: Gulfstream.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Gulfstream, and I had a nice meal there. My goodness, the number of minibuses that rolled out of that thing . . . it was incredible! I did not realise we had that many. I mean, to be frank, I felt like it was dozens of them. Huh?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, yes. My brother-in-law works at Rangers, yes. I was sitting there too, making sure it stayed safe. And I mean just these minibuses that were coming out and they were loaded down.

And now, as we go through this paper here, this Green Paper, I realise that we have got even more scope to expand on that. I was talking yesterday to a gentleman who does tours and he does these tours on his own, he just takes two or three people, he is licensed to do it, and he uses his vehicle to go about doing these tours, and this guy cannot keep up. I said, *Well, why don't you go ahead . . . why don't you get like a minivan?* You know what I mean? You get licensed and get all that other stuff done. And he did not want to go that far. He was very comfortable. He was making his money off of just these couple of tours.

And so, you know, Bermudians are true ambassadors of a place that they love and what a great opportunity—economic opportunity—we have. We have to take advantage of that. I mean a whole part of when we were Government and getting cruise ships down into St. George's, it was not all about the trinkets to buy, it was about getting tours. And maybe we

should have been clearer about that there, but it was about getting tours going down in St. George's through our National Heritage Site.

And so, again, I go back to the fact that when the Honourable Minister closes off by saying "Bermuda's modern transport future begins now" I recognise a bit of politicking there, he is trying to take credit for the modernisation of transport . . . future begins with transport now. But it has been going on. Like I said, the Twizys are a hit—the little minicars. Those things are a hit. And half the time, it is tourists. If you see 10 go by, 5 of them have got tourists and the other 5 of them have got Bermudians who rented them out just to jam up and down and to enjoy this new technology. So we need to take advantage of that.

And one of the things that, as I went through this, you know, I learned it from the America's Cup while I was Minister of Public Works, that the coordination of moving people is a real . . . how should I say it? . . . science.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I mean it is a real science. And we are seeing far too often that we are not applying the science to this, and we are hearing all of the issues that are happening up at Dockyard that we know we need relief for and that we hear down at the airport . . . we have got challenges with people just being able to get a taxi out of the airport. And then we have got challenges leaving town. You know, you have had a few drinks, we have got sobriety testing going on, and you cannot get a taxi.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And so we have got to find a way, as we have gone through this paper, of ensuring that we have somehow, not necessarily a central place where all this information is going from, but ensuring that all of the separate entities that are out there, that are involved with transportation, can communicate through the Ministry to allow for us to have somewhat—maybe it is not completely, but somewhat—of a seamless transition that information is being passed back and forth so that we can get to the destination of having a system that moves our Bermudians and moves our tourists throughout the Island without, or with as little, complication as possible.

As I read through the Green Paper I recognised that we had issues and some of the issues about the buses was, you know, they are going too fast and you know we have got trees overgrowing and the likes, that is something that we can do . . . we can do something about that now. We can go to the homeowners now. And I know that some of these things may be in place because, certainly, we were addressing it when we were Government.

But I guess I wanted to hear a little more, and I had not quite heard it yet and hopefully it will come at some point in time, about exactly what we are recommending when it comes to streamlining this whole process to ensure that we are moving people back and forth. I mean, my brother from constituency 2, he has every right to be concerned. I am concerned about St. David's islanders who have, always, throughout our history, been the last ones to get this and the last ones to get that.

I believe in this Honourable House a couple of years ago I got up and spoke to the issue of us [being] the last ones to get paved roads, the last ones to get electricity out there. You know it would be nice if some priority were given—and I know it is a sacrifice—to ensure that people can get back and forth. Pequots like to travel too!

[Laughter and inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: You know, after having that landfill done in 1940, which was the greatest landfill ever done in Bermuda, so that we could have a causeway so that we could connect St. David's to the so-called "mainland" we need to do something. And we know that we have challenges with our bridges there—far too long it has been—and we need to sort out some of these challenges, but I believe, with this, we are on our way.

And the encouragement from me is to say let us move with some swiftness. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to move through some of the pages here because I did want to highlight some things that I . . . some I took exception with, and most of it I most certainly . . . as I said, I really enjoyed this read. I learned a lot actually about our transportation. So it is a bit lengthy, but it was very good.

On page 10 I take note where it talks about . . . and I was a bit confused about this here, it says "the Government is investigating the efficacy of moving to electric buses." I get that. I understand that this makes sense. And "During this time, the intention is to gather ridership information . . ." I am a bit confused about the ridership information. I mean, we have been gathering that information for years, and we haven't? I mean, I need to know from the . . . I am looking at the technical officers over there. We have been gathering this information for a long time. I mean, is that not how we came up with the new schedule . . . because of this ridership information?

So I am still wondering how much information we need in order for us to do something. We have got the information already. That is why we have some buses not going to certain areas, like St. David's, at certain times because we got the ridership information. So, as I listen to this guy on Instagram . . . he says, *I was behoved*. What behoved me was that . . . we have already got the information, so why are we going to collect it now? I hope that is not a significant

stalling tactic, but I do not believe that that is the case, but I would like for the technical officers to certainly take a look at that.

What I will say is, over on page 11, I was quite excited about the fact that, in terms of student transportation, it mentions that . . . and I will read it here, the very first paragraph, that "A significant percentage of Bermuda's middle school and senior school students use the bus regularly and would benefit from having a dedicated school bus service."

I would venture to say even in primary schools as well, but middle school and senior school. You know, we have seen this around the world. If you travel you know there are dedicated buses for students. This, of course, is a completely different approach to how we pick up and drop off our young people, but certainly with the revelations of the past and the bullying and the likes that go on, it would be nice to see that we do have some form of service that is dedicated. So I like that suggestion. I really do think it makes sense.

I will declare my interest that many years ago I realised that our young kids, those who were just starting to go to school from preschool, I started a service called *Little Tykes Service*, and it is still out there today, owned by a friend of mine who I sold it to after a few years. And my goodness, what a brilliant opportunity . . . as in the paper here, it suggests that, you know, a lot of times it is not safe for kids getting off the bus to cross the street. There are no sidewalks and the likes. And it is a real safety hazard . . . a risk for our young people just trying to get to school. And one of the beauties of the transportation that I was providing many years ago called *Little Tykes Service* [was] we picked up the kids where the parents wanted us to pick them up—whether it was from their home or from another centralised area, which was safe—and then dropped them off right to their school . . . [we drove] right into the gate and it was very safe. So it would be nice to see that we encourage that kind of entrepreneurship to this whole approach to . . . our young people and getting them to school.

So I was very, very, very much encouraged by some of these recommendations, as I was looking at the Executive Summary, that were coming out.

Now, also on the very bottom of page 11, it says, "Unfortunately, poor road traffic conditions undermine the efforts of the health sector to encourage" (over on page 12) "active transport." And one of the challenges, certainly with our roads, Mr. Speaker, is that we may be a little late to getting to this now, but there probably was, at one point in time, an opportunity for us to change our main roads so that they were a bit safer. Now that we have much of the private ownership of homes and the likes that are right on the borders of the public roads, it is going to be difficult to be able to put more sidewalks out.

It has proved to be a challenge, especially for Public Works, in making sure that people are trimming

back their hedges, are taking care of even their walls and ensuring that they do not fall over. We have had tragic instances where that has happened, as well on our roads, where private ownership has not taken care of their walls and they have fallen over and we have seen the hardship of loss of human life in instances like this here.

And so Bermuda's roads do provide a real challenge. And I know that while I was in Public Works when they were looking even at crosswalks and lights for crosswalks, there is a science to being able to . . . where do you put the actual bus stop or where do you put the crosswalk so that it is not on a blind corner? And that can get difficult in Bermuda. It certainly can get extremely difficult. And all you are trying to do is put in these crosswalks to slow the traffic up, but at the same time you do not want to affect the traffic flow so much so that it becomes vexatious and people start exercising road rage, which we all see already way too prolific at this time in our history.

And so it will be interesting as they coordinate this Green Paper, and the interested parties coordinate with Public Works on the road works that are needed to be done. I must say that the road works were always . . . [they are] great teams there as they go about the Island ensuring that our roads are as safe as possible.

I also want to give tribute to, on page 12 where it mentions in the Summary about the Railway Trail. And we heard good news last week from the Minister about the Railway Trail down in Flatts there. And certainly, while we were Government, we saw the Friends of the Railway Trail doing great work and investing millions of dollars in the Railway Trail of Bermuda. And so, we want to give them a hearty thank you for the work that they are doing as they work with Public Works and the Government on the whole. It does make a difference. I have been through the trails and I have seen many people on cycles who use the trails to cycle in relative safety, as opposed to having been on the road travelling back and forth.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Sorry?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It was that light? I did not see you . . . ah! I did see you on the Railway Trail last week Saturday. The Minister was out getting some exercise.

So what I wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue through here on some of the things that I highlighted. I also noticed on page 26, as it was talking about bus passenger safety, where it says, "There is also a concern, particularly for children, that DPT buses do not have seatbelts." And that is where I segued earlier, talking about if we had dedicated bus-

es for [school] service, that would go a long way . . . I am still not quite sure about the seatbelts and how they are on buses, but we will leave that up to the Minister. Maybe he can enlighten us on some of the new buses and whether or not that is in actual fact a potential reality that we might see.

I also took note on page 30 that there is an MOU that was commenced on the 14th of November last year with Rocky Mountain Institute "to investigate and develop a strategy to transition from the current fossil fuel infrastructure to electric bus fleet." In addition to that, I guess I wanted to ask the Minister . . . so, we know that we have transportation experts, and I know that we have one up at WEDCO (and I am not sure how much he is being used there), but we do know that in other populous cities and the likes they have these engineers and the likes who look at how we coordinate things. And I was just curious as to who we are liaising with, who we are seeking to create some partnerships with, in helping us look at the complete infrastructure of transportation from the very beginning of the sunrise down at St. David's and St. George's to the beautiful sunsets that happen up in Somerset and Dockyard. Who are we dealing with that is assisting us in putting together what we believe is, as I said already, the Minister said, *the future begins now with transportation?*

It almost made me feel like the *Jetsons*, when I was young watching the *Jetsons*. I saw a recommendation in here where they said we need to spend more time investing and looking at . . . a personal aircraft, personal flight machines that would fly two or three of us. You know, I must admit that, Mr. Speaker, at the time when I was talking to you that I would be out of the House, I was over in Dubai. And they had instituted drones that carried . . . I saw them with my own eyes. They were testing these drones that held six people in them. And they were flying these drones from one building to the next transporting people. I mean, it is pretty phenomenal at where our transportation is going.

And, again, as I have already said, Bermuda has a unique opportunity of being small enough to test many of these things and to be the test pilot, if you will, of many of these innovative ideas. I am not sure about the airspace right now over Bermuda with the airport not too far away, but I marvel at the technology that does exist out there that makes it available for individual flight and does not require a pilot's licence.

Interestingly enough, as I went through this paper, and started looking at things, I was on YouTube. There were many of these vehicles out there . . . they do not even require a pilot's licence. So you can just go on, get instructions for two hours, and you can fly this thing as far as you can go as long as you can get back because, you know, you are going over a lot of water out there right now and you want to make sure you can get back.

So I do take note of that and, also on that page, it says here . . . I talked about the ridership already, and so on the Public Ferry side, on page 31 the overview there says, “95 per cent of the general public who participated in the 2018 ‘public transport survey’ said” (and this is very significant and I want to make sure that those who did not have the opportunity to read all of this [hear this], it says) “95 per cent of the general public who participated in the 2018 ‘public transport survey’ said that the ferry system was reliable.”

I mean we need to commend those guys for the work that they do. That is quite staggering, with those kinds of numbers, that we have got that support for those guys and the work that they are doing. To only have 5 per cent say that it was unreliable is quite phenomenal, actually.

And I do believe that we do have scope and more opportunity, which is why I am asking, Who are we talking to so that we can coordinate the ferry services with the bus services, ensuring that the times match so that we are moving people back and forth? To hear that we are already at a good start with the ferry service, it is quite commendable, actually, and we probably need to incorporate more if we are looking at having fewer buses. Because as we certainly go on down further we find that with the ferry system, that more people would actually use the ferries if there were . . . and I will get to it at some point because there is some kind of trade thing it mentioned. I have got it highlighted; I guess I will find it as I go through. But this trade partnership . . . I will find it as I go through here.

Now, I guess one of the—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What is that?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Is that all I have got, Mr. Speaker? My goodness, so let me go to some of these other highlights here then . . . if I have only got that short period of time.

But I was a bit confused at first as to what was a high speed ferry and a fast ferry. So as I was reading through it—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, I think I got it now.

But what I questioned was, had we not already done the analysis on the high speed ferries? Because we recognised that they were not cost-effective. In purchasing these ferries certainly—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is all right. I am just saying.

So looking at the information, nothing has changed. And that is the challenge, nothing has changed. So we are hoping that with this Green Paper, since . . . since . . . everything is coming, Mr. Speaker, that is why I asked for a White Paper to make sure that we have a commitment, something [written] in stone that says this is exactly what we are going to do. So we will see what happens as we move along.

We will hold the Minister to this here. Again, he has done some great work here with the technical staff. We certainly are supporting all of the recommendations that are here, but I do believe [that with] some of the information that is already available out there we can already start implementing some of these things.

And so I will, with interest, I recognise that I do not have much time left . . . sorry?

The Speaker: You are winding down now—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I am winding down now.

The Speaker: You have less than half a minute.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And certainly I did not even get to the last three-quarters of this report, but this report gives a lot of great information. And I was excited about the fact of being able to read through this here, Mr. Speaker. Much can be done and, again, if we can get some of that *Jetson* feeling back into transportation, it will be an exciting thing for Bermuda.

So I am looking forward to what the technical officers do with this, Minister.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

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

The Speaker: Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Government Whip.
Government Whip.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One thing that we . . . it is a term that we tend to use very often, which is talking about vision and, they usually say, *Hindsight is 20/20*. And you know me, I like to research why we use the phrases we use and whatnot, and I like to try to educate people.

[Laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: And, as I said before, the nurse that I am dating is helping to educate me on anatomy. But the thing is when we talk about vision and we talk about it being 20/20, that means that . . .

20/20 is not necessarily the . . . you having perfect vision. It is more so about the clarity and sharpness of your vision, which is just one aspect—20/20. The number 20/20 means that at 20 feet you can read something or see things with the clarity that a normal person could see from 20 feet, meaning that if you have 20/100 vision that means you can . . . you have to be 20 feet away to be able to see something that the average person could see from 100 feet.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: I do not know. My eyesight is actually correctible to 20/20 with my glasses.

But the thing is that the 20/20 part is just . . . and the clarity and sharpness of vision is just one aspect. There are other things that go into really being able to tell or monitor or gauge your eyesight health or your visual health, such as your peripheral vision, your hand-eye coordination, depth perception, your ability to focus, and your colour vision—stuff like that.

And this is where the Green Paper tends to come in with Transportation, because what I want to touch on is something else that you will be able to see in 20/20 which . . . and I mean when I say 20/20 more specifically, hopefully, it should be July 2020, which is the new L. F. Wade Air Terminal, all right? That is the proposed date that we should be able to open it or it should [be substantially completed], to be technically correct.

Now, one thing that I noticed in this 189-page Green Paper was that it did not spend too much time talking about the air terminal and air arrivals. Now the thing is that air arrivals play a very big role in our transportation infrastructure. Now, one might be asking why it was not covered in more detail. And one reason could be that the civil service is responsible for producing the Green Paper, and under the project agreement with the [L. F. Wade] Air Terminal, air arrivals are no longer necessarily the responsibility of government, but more so the responsibility of Skyport, a private entity.

So what has happened is that over the last two years Skyport has not been able to (how can I say it?) adequately attract significant new air service. Now, with that being the case . . . I am not here to point fingers, I am not here to call names. What is happening now is what I dub the trinity, the BTA (Bermuda Tourism Authority), the BAA (Bermuda Airport Authority), and Skyport are now all working together to ensure that we attract significant new air arrivals to the country.

Now, with that being the case, to give you an understanding or to put things in proper context, if you look at some numbers out there now you would see that last year we had roughly 450,000 arrivals or passengers that flowed through the airport. The Tourism Authority would say that approximately 350,000 of them were visitors. And the new airport or the new

[L. F. Wade] Air Terminal should be able to flow up to 750,000 passengers per year. So now that gives us the ability to roughly, approximately, double the number of passengers that we flow through the airport, which means that we are going to theoretically double the [number] of people coming and going to and from the airport itself.

If you look at the numbers provided in the Green Paper and through the exit reports, they show that taxis are used by 80 per cent of air visitors. So if we have 350,000 air visitors a year and 80 per cent of them use taxis, and with this new air terminal and with the trinity's work on being able to—the BTA, the BAA and Skyport—attract more air arrivals, that means you are going to need more taxis or more ways and means to be able to transport people to and from the airport. But this is something that was not . . . it could have been covered a bit more in more detail, because what happened is, as I go back to the 20/20 vision, a lot of Members focused on the 20/20 vision, meaning the top three—the ferries, the buses, the taxis—but not necessarily things coming out of the airport.

But [an] aspect about the airport that was discussed, and that I believe is worth looking into a bit more, was to provide better communication between the airlines and the taxis (or the ground transportation providers) so that we do not end up, as Members have said before me and the Honourable Member that just took his seat, the Honourable Craig Cannonier, about how we have persons or visitors coming into the airport or arriving at the airport and there not being any taxis to their final destination.

Now, also, another aspect of being able to become a little more efficient, in doing so, is to provide help for some of those taxis by, as mentioned in the Green Paper, allowing hotels to provide their own shuttle service to and from the airport, which then allows and frees up taxis from having to be dedicated or stationed at the airport and can be sort of flowing throughout the country, throughout our transportation infrastructure, and being able to be utilised by persons who are, as the Honourable Member said before me, enjoying themselves, enjoying the nightlife here in Bermuda, having a drink or two at Place's [Place] or Spinning Wheel until about three o'clock in the morning.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Well, yes, Place's closes at 1:00 and then we go, I mean, some Members in here do go to Spinning Wheel.

So therefore . . . but also another thing is allowing the buses to be able to pick up some additional bandwidth by providing luggage racks on the buses so, therefore, we can now motivate persons to start being able to catch the bus that goes right through the airport.

Also, another thing that I found interesting, which was further back in the Green Paper, around pages 135 or 136, was the reinstating of the airport docks. And for those members of the public that are not quite aware, leading up to and during the America's Cup there was a dock that was out there on the Grotto Bay side of the airport which was removed. But in looking at the Green Paper it is suggesting that a possible thing that could be done would be to have the dock reinstated, put back in place, but also to have another dock put down there at Castle Harbour so that, once again, the short run from the airport to Rosewood Tucker's Point could be done using the water as a medium.

But also, another reason to have the docks reinstated could be as a fail-safe, as a backup, as a contingency plan in case we end up having something happen to the causeway due to a natural disaster or an act of God.

So those are things that I really do like that were mentioned in the Green Paper, but also, one thing that we need to sort of look at when I go back into the air arrivals, is to be able to—and this might be an indirect consideration that the Government might want to have—look at really utilising our partnership and our alliance with the United States Customs and Border Protection. Because, as I mentioned in the beginning, talking about air arrivals and increased air arrivals, remember we enjoy the luxury of pre-clearance. So if we are bringing more air arrivals to the country, we want to make sure that they can enjoy that same pre-clearance regardless of the time.

So we do not want all . . . and I am throwing out hypothetical numbers. If we are attracting 10 airlines to Bermuda over the next two or three years we do not want all of them landing at two o'clock in the afternoon. We would like to be able to spread it out and have some come in at 10:00 at night and some could go out at 11:00 at night and start really stretching the operational hours and utilising the most out of that new air terminal that we are developing right now.

But ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I understand and appreciate that you like brief and concise speeches—and that is what I plan on giving right now, because for me I am about to wrap up. But the thing is that—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Huh?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Well, no, I am going through my main points, mainly about the airport, just making sure that people understand the importance and its contribution to the transportation infrastructure because that is a . . . just like the cruise ships bring in large numbers of people, so does the airport over time. And we need to make sure that we are able to

have our transportation infrastructure grow and adapt and be able to accommodate what is proposed to be coming down the pipeline with new air service, new air arrivals, increased air arrivals, increased visitor arrivals that are coming down the pipeline.

And, Mr. Speaker, just so that I do not go out of the Standing Orders, I do declare my interest as the Chairman of the Airport Authority, which is part of, what I call, the trinity—the Bermuda Airport Authority, the Bermuda Tourism Authority, and Skyport. So I am working with the Government, working with the other entities, to ensure that this does come in and does come to fruition.

So, I have declared my interest there, but outside of my sole interest as Chairman of the Airport Authority, the thing is that I believe that we all have an interest in this Green Paper and we . . . and I think the best way to explain it, to illustrate it, is as in one of my previous speeches I spoke on blood pressure. And I would like to sort of say that transportation—not just here in Bermuda, but transportation in any community, transportation in any country—is essentially the life-blood, the circulatory system, of said country.

Looking at the roads and the highways and byways like veins and arteries and having vehicles being the blood itself, but the people are sort of the blood cells or the little red blood cells that are carrying the oxygen and all the nutrients around the body and making sure that this country or community is happy and healthy.

So the thing is that we need to make sure that we are able to maintain the health of our transportation infrastructure. And in order to be able to properly maintain the health of our transportation infrastructure we have to look at what is going into it, what is coming out of it, what it is being asked to do, and what it needs to be able to do. And I think that we [should not do this] too quickly because we have a lot of good data in this Green Paper, we have a lot of good options, we have a lot of good observations. But I just want to make sure that the input and the contribution of air travel, air transportation, and increased air lift are at the forefront of these considerations of the Green Paper as we decide to move forward so that we can, not just achieve, but maintain and sustain a clean bill of transportation health.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, Mr. Whip.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 9. Honourable Member Moniz, you have the floor.

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

First, just a matter of housekeeping, Mr. Speaker. The Member who spoke immediately before me declared his interest. I do not recall the Minister himself declaring his interest.

An Hon. Member: Well, you were not here.

The Speaker: Now—

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: The Minister is chirping over.

The Speaker: Go on.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Did the Minister declare his interest, Mr. Speaker? He is implying that he did.

The Speaker: Yes, we will continue.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: No, no, I want to raise the point. It is an important point, Mr. Speaker. I just want an answer because we need to know that.

The Speaker: To be honest with you, I am going to have to check the note on that one.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I do not believe he did.

And so just . . . it is important, because there are commercial vehicles involved. I believe he has a beneficial interest in Island Construction, which runs a variety of commercial vehicles, including tractor trailers, tipper trucks, et cetera. And also I believe he was selling tyres. One of his companies has an interest in and was selling tyres, including to the government at one point.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Don't forget the other 12 businesses. If you are going to plug me, plug me good.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I am plugging you good. You are plugged.

[Laughter]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: You are plugged. Just as you wish to be, you are plugged. Consider yourself plugged.

And going from there, Mr. Speaker, he will get his turn to speak again so he can have a chance to clear the record.

Now, again, I would like to repeat the point that was made by my Leader on this side, that while this is . . . a discussion paper is good to have, we really need a White Paper in terms of what the Government intends to do out of all of this. So I mean, obviously, what you want to see, from my point of view, is you want to see meaningful analysis. And in many cases, of course, the Government does not have the numbers it needs, so what numbers it has are here. But there are numbers and numbers of situations where they say that they are going to get more real time analysis of, for example, ridership on the buses, et cetera. And so once you have your analysis, you

need to come to a conclusion and make a commitment.

Now, there are a number of commitments made through this paper, and I will run through them as we go. But then once you have those commitments to say we are going to do A, B, or C, for policy you need timelines and you need an approximation of what the dollar figure that will need to be allocated by the Minister of Finance in order to make this happen. And those are the things that are missing. So, that is why you need a White Paper, and I think it is mentioned in this Green Paper that it is normal to have a White Paper come out afterwards.

In fact, in the UK I think Green Papers are often discussion papers, so they are not necessarily published and they go directly to a White Paper. But to just have a Green Paper and then not go to a White Paper is something that is not normal and I do not believe that it is desirable, because we do not know where we are or where we are going.

Now, with respect, I will look at the Government commitments that are made in here. And the first one that comes up is the buses. Now, you know, we have this whole thing with the bus schedule. The Minister at one point in time said that he was reviewing the winter bus schedule and then, as we came into spring, he had a number of press conferences—three, four, five press conferences—saying that this new winter bus schedule was coming into effect. At that time we were coming into the spring, and the difference is that that is when the cruise ships come in so you get all of those tourists starting to come, which the Honourable Member from constituency 2 spoke to. So the whole ball game changes at that point in time. So you are not really looking at the winter bus schedule.

In the [Green] Paper it speaks at page 25, Context, at F, it says “Currently, DPT is working on a new winter bus schedule.” So I get very confused about whether they have a new winter bus schedule or just a new schedule. In any case, we know the schedule did not work, it has now been withdrawn, and I am not quite sure where we are, whether we are just going to sit with the old schedule or whether we are doing more analysis. And if we are doing more analysis, how long is that going to take?

So, at page 29 of the Green Paper it talks about “Government’s Perspective on Public Buses” and item [1.1.7.]2 there they talk about three factors. First the “change in the public bus schedule to reduce the number of buses needed at peak times and throughout the day; two, restoration of a budget allocation to allow for new bus purchases and, three, a proper annual maintenance budget. The Government continues to act on all three of these factors.”

Now, you know, the questions immediately arise: How long are we talking about to get this budget? And how much money are you asking for each of those items? We are already past the budget cycle. We do not have another budget until March or April of

next year. So what are we doing about that? There is no detail in there and, hopefully, the Minister can put some meat on that bone.

I mean one of the things I was concerned about, something that was mentioned by the Opposition spokesman are the so-called grey routes which have been introduced. And the Green Paper talks about grey routes being the school routes. But I believe there are also other grey routes. Originally, grey routes were routes that were not included in the original union agreement negotiated with the union. As routes were added then special concessions were made and, in some cases, the drivers, I believe, were getting overtime rates for driving these grey routes in normal working hours. And I want to know whether that is still going on, or whether that has stopped. And that was one of the big impediments to getting a new schedule because, of course, the bus drivers operate on a seniority basis. The senior guys were picking the routes where they got paid more money and they were not likely to say, *Oh, well, now they are not special bus routes anymore, they are normal bus routes after 20 years.*

So we need to know what is going on with that. And it is not a problem which has arisen quickly, it is a problem that has arisen over the last 20 years.

Again, we are talking about, in item [1.1.7.]3, under "Government's Perspective on Public Buses," the Green Paper says that the "DPT has taken delivery of four new buses, with an additional eight buses on order and due for delivery in 2019." Now, again, I would like to see a dollar figure put on that. We did discuss that during the budget. I think these buses, I think their first cost is close to half a million dollars each and it something or was something like approaching \$400,000, and I do not know if that was a landed cost in Bermuda.

The way we get our buses is a very strange way. We were dealing with people in Belgium. The buses were being made in Germany. They had to be shipped to Portugal to get customised. And when they arrived in Bermuda they were always too wide or there was always a problem with them. And you will recall there was a court case in Belgium and the middleman over there in Belgium disappeared. He went on the lamb, nobody could find him. And the police have an arrest warrant for him. So there was a lot of trouble concerning that.

And I do not know whether that has all changed, whether there are new contracts and new players in this game, but I agree with the statements in the paper that the buses we are getting are too expensive. They are the price of a small house in Bermuda. If you are paying \$400,000 for each bus, you can at least get a nice condo for \$400,000.

So—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Call me afterwards and I will sort you out. I will take a commission, too. I am being questioned about my knowledge of the real estate market, but . . . yes.

They are talking about these buses, so we need a dollar figure and we need to know if we have sorted out the wrinkles of buses arriving here and they are too big and then they have to be fixed at great expense or we just have buses that are too big on the road. And the buses are dangerous. And I have had a lot of complaints from members of the public saying the buses travel too fast, they speed. And, in addition to that, there have been people killed by buses in Bermuda—both tourists and locals. They are dangerous vehicles on our small roads, so we should be examining [the use of] smaller buses, which is looked into in this report. So I am glad to see that.

The suggestion here that we go to electronic tracking with GPS on the buses . . . and I think that was started with a small number of buses under the OBA Government, I believe. So that we have . . . they were talking about having a smartphone app with a schedule and tracking. All of that is a good idea. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating and, again, how long? So, what is the timeline on that? How long is that going to take? How much is it going to cost?

And obviously you want to do it on an incremental basis. It talks here about eliminating printed schedules. Well, you do not want to do that until you are sure you have got a robust app which everyone is happy with. You still do have people who do not have cell phones and you have visitors who may not have their phones on roaming if it is expensive.

But the ideas here are good ideas—cashless, digital fares, and real-time trip planning features, Wi-Fi on public buses. Again, you know, these are wish-list sort of things, which all make sense. But you have got to put a dollar figure on them to know where you are going with it.

So it speaks to the need for more investigation. And, you know, I am a bit disappointed because I thought that was taking place—ridership information. And I guess the buses that presently have GPS are getting ridership information, perhaps, at least times or something. They are talking about automatic passenger counts. Maybe the Minister can speak to that in more detail. Do we really know nothing about passenger counts? Is it all anecdotal evidence, as the Green Paper says? You would think we would have something better than that and, hopefully, there is a timeline for getting something better than that.

Now, with respect to going to greener buses, the idea of renewable fuels or hybrid diesel-electric or battery electric vehicles, in some places they use propane or LNG buses, [they are] saying that Government is currently reviewing all options. And, you know, it can be difficult and time-consuming changing to new systems and it would be good if the Minister would keep the House up to date on those [options] on a

regular basis. There are many things in here that we should be hearing about on a regular basis.

I agree that the fleet in general is too old to try and switch it to electric, which is what it says here. That is a fair point.

Now, it talks about “advocates for smaller buses, minibuses or shuttles—either private ventures, public-private . . . or . . . subsidized by the public purse.” Now, this raises one of my bugbears when you talk about minibuses. I think the paper later on talks about capping minibuses at 180. They talk about getting, I think, 20 more that are for the physically challenged. I think the report says that there are 147 minibuses now. And one of my bugbears is well, what are the service level agreements for each of those 147 minibuses?

Now, it seemed to indicate that once upon a time there was . . . when they first started there was a very rough agreement that they would serve in certain parishes. But now I do not think this applies anymore. And I would like to be corrected, but I think they just do whatever they want to do.

So while you get the Minister complaining about—and in the Green Paper complaining—that taxis are not on the road 16 hours a day, well, how many hours a day do minibuses have to be on the road? And what do they have to do? Who do they have to carry? Where do they have to go? I hear anecdotal stories saying someone has got a number of minibuses and they sit in their backyard until the cruise season starts and then they all go to Dockyard where they can make money shuttling people back and forth from Horseshoe Beach. And as a public service vehicle, I do not think that is really serving the public if they are just providing sort of that minimal level of service.

So while you are reviewing the service level of taxis, I would not let minibuses off the hook. I do not think Bermuda is being properly served by these minibuses.

But I agree with the idea to look at some smaller vehicles because it talks about some of the minibuses being up to 30-seaters and the Government bus being 38, so it is really not much between them. But I am sure one costs several hundred thousand dollars less than the other because our big buses are customised in Europe and they are very expensive.

With regard to the ferries, you know, I take the point that the ferries are extremely expensive and they are probably the least cost-effective mode of public transport that we have. It costs a lot of money and relatively few people, in terms of people who take public transport, are travelling on the ferries. And so we need to somehow rationalise that. Whether there is a way of privatising any of it, I am not sure, but it is something we need a proper study of again with some proper analysis, and for the Minister to come to the House with some concrete proposals.

Here it says, “Government will pursue a ferry service strategy that focuses on the purchase of fast ferries” (and I think that is as opposed to high speed ferries), “as those are less expensive to run and they will provide more flexibility in terms of routes and scheduling.” And that sounds like it is sensible. But I would like to see some analysis of what they cost. There is no statement here saying, well, a high speed ferry costs a million dollars and a low speed ferry costs half a million dollars. I think the figures are actually much higher than that. The figures I remember were up towards \$30 million when I remember the high speed ferries being bought.

And I do note that the only reference there to financing really is in 1.2.3.5 on page 36 where it says, “It is subject to capital project funds becoming available” (for these fast ferries and saying), “Capital costs may be partially offset by selling the current fleet.” But obviously that indicates we are still at a very early stage. That underlines the need for a White Paper, because we need to know, again, what the timeline is. A lot of these things are built-to-order so the process takes years. We need to know what the . . . the idea of what they cost and what the timeframe would be if we were to buy these ferries.

The idea of transport fare media is talking about getting rid of paper tickets and, you know, using smartphone apps and being able to pay by credit card, et cetera. It is a great idea. They say they have an RFI out there now and they are waiting for an RFP. And I congratulate them on that; that is a good idea.

And under the Student Transportation, at page 53, the Government is saying that they are moving to “a dedicated free school bus service” which can take the children straight to the school up to the end of secondary school from the age of 5 to 19. And then I note that “27 per cent said that they take the public bus to school and 40 per cent” (a higher number) “said that they take the public bus home from school.”

So, again, you need a timeframe. Perhaps the Minister can give us a timeframe on this dedicated free school bus service, what that involves, how many buses, et cetera.

There is a section on page 62 on Government’s Perspective on Accessible Transportation. They talk about increasing the number of public service vehicles that are accessible. We on this side fully support that.

The Government says it is going to “review options for disabled transportation service for residents” and saying that they have 20 applications for minibuses which are wheelchair accessible, and we fully support that.

It does say here at page 62 at 2.6.5, “Minibus operators who receive permits for, and licence, wheelchair accessible vehicles will be encouraged to establish a booking or dispatch service for prearranged transport.” But now what that basically is saying is that minibuses need to be more organised for

the physically disabled. But the truth is minibuses just need to be more organised, in my view.

When the Government speaks to private transportation, they talk to poor driving habits, talk to drinking and driving, inattention, red lights and we will all agree with that.

In 3.7.2, I am not sure if that is a misprint. It says, "Recognising that minicars appear to present a safer alternative to motor cycles or auxiliary cycles, the Ministry of Transport will not pursue legislative changes to enable minicars to become a second car . . ." Is that correct? They will *not*? Because it is saying here that it would be a good idea and then it saying *this is a really good idea but we are not going to do it*. Maybe it means—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: —maybe it should read "will now pursue." It says "will not pursue," so that does not make any sense.

It is saying that "the TCD Traffic Officers will carefully monitor the impact of minicars" and I am dubious about that. Again, I suspect that any evidence from traffic officers will be nothing more than anecdotal, they will not be keeping a computerised record or anything like that, and I do not think that this is really sufficient. But we in general agree that minicars are doing a great job and we can probably do [with] more of them. The dark visor saying is as usual.

The complaint about LED headlights is interesting. I mean, you know, the thing about . . . it really talks about LED headlights when they are on high beam. And when we have a lot of Bermudians—particularly older Bermudians—who drive around Bermuda on high beam on a permanent basis, why do they do that? They do that because they have poor vision. And why do they complain? It is the same people who use the high beams who complain about them because the people who use them have poor vision and the people they bother have poor vision.

And you might say, *Well, how do you know that?* Well, I know that because I just got implants in both of my eyes. I can get a free bus ride now, I am 65. I had cataracts and when you have cataracts you have blurred vision. So you may prefer to use high beams to enable you to have better vision at night and when other people use them you have blurred vision so you cannot see a darn thing. And what people need to be encouraged to do is to have their eyes tested for cataracts and get their eyes tested on a regular basis.

Recently I was abroad with someone who got his eyes tested. He was 45 years old and he was badly in need of glasses—prescription eyeglasses—and he had been driving in Bermuda since he was 18 without any glasses at all. And the optician abroad was shocked by that.

Now we come to page 90, which is Government's Perspective on Public Service Vehicles, and this also covers . . . that is, 4.8.2. It says "Government is not prepared to restrict, ban or put a moratorium on the number of commercial vehicles already licensed, including tractor trailers and large construction equipment. The increase of 338 more commercial vehicles is not sufficiently alarming to put any new legislation in place to reduce this category of vehicle."

[Section] 4.8.3 says "Legislating the times when large trucks are allowed on the road is not a practical solution to solving congestion issues. Continuing with strict measures via policy to restrict the hours of large commercial vehicles on the road in the morning and evening will only impede commercial growth and raise prices on goods to residents and visitors."

And that was, you know, what concerned me about the Minister because I know he has an interest in a company which has a number of those vehicles.

There it also talks about minibuses, but I have already addressed those. And it says "Minibus Regulations are under consideration and will be introduced" and I am very happy to hear that. And perhaps the Minister could give a bit more background on that.

With respect to the minicars as opposed to the minibuses, they are talking about the rental pool, and they are saying they will make final decisions "at the end of the 2019 summer season, after further consultation." I am glad to hear that.

But with respect to the minibuses, again, I think there need to be service level agreements.

Typically, the Government says that it is going to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles and I hope the Minister can bring those to the House to encourage people to use those as they, hopefully, become more affordable and have a greater range.

Page 121 refers to Government's Perspective on Road Traffic, and I am sure we all agree with that, better education, better driving habits. It would be nice to have a little bit more meat on the bone there about our timeframe and who is doing this. It says . . . TCD, they are saying, is reviewing the current Traffic Handbook and their licensing requirements. Maybe the Minister can get a detail there on a timeframe and when we are likely to see that.

We do not want things, you know, obviously, in these sorts of areas . . . happy for it to fall between the cracks.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Yes.

Talking about sidewalks, you know, I remember when the PLP were in power before they were going to bring a sidewalk all the way down Harbour Road in Paget. They got somewhere up in Warwick and then quickly stalled. But I think there are lots of places in Bermuda . . . I know there is a map at Public

Works with the strips of land that they already own. Rather than getting new strips of land, I would encourage the Government to look at the strips of land they already own and, just on a regular incremental basis, continue to build sidewalks, which we all agree are positive. And everyone wants to see more people use bicycles and we encourage all of that.

Again, there is some talk there about Government transition on page 145, the Government's transition of the government fleet of vehicles (like at Public Works, et cetera) to electrical hybrids. And it says there is a current investigation regarding the transition of the bus fleet. In general, it would be nice to have a more detailed report on where that is going and sort of a timeframe.

With regard to the taxis—I am looking at page 154—Government's Perspective on Visitor Transportation, as you were talking about an app for buses, it would be conceivable that we would have an app for taxis, you know, either run by Government under government contract, an app that would allow people to call a taxi. And that is also how you can, if you want to monitor taxis, that they are doing more hours on the road, et cetera, and where they are at any given time, it would make sense to have GPS in an app working. And perhaps the Minister could speak to that in a more concrete fashion.

You know, there is talk in the back about Gypsy Cabs at [page] 156, but obviously, you know, they provide a cheap alternative for less well-off people and I would be the last one to tackle that. And a lot of the Gypsy Cab drivers know their customers personally and while it is technically illegal, if you cannot get a taxi and there is not a decent bus schedule, and you have ladies carrying bags of groceries, it is hard to know what their alternative would be.

So we are generally looking for timeframes on all of these things, including, you know, speed cameras, et cetera, et cetera. So we look forward to, as I said, the Minister putting more meat on the bone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 1. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Mrs. Renee Ming: —and listening audience.

First of all, I would like to just commend the preparers of this report, because it definitely delves into all the areas that we probably think about or we have discussed, whether it be with friends, family around the living room, or the dining room tables. So, I was refreshed to read it and then see that some of

those things that you normally would not find in a report to be in there.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we as a country can accept that we have transportation issues. And so I am hopeful that what we see coming out of this report allows us to address our issues head-on and through a meaningful consultative process because that is what has already been started, so I do not believe that we would, as a Government, stray away from that.

The report in itself is very long because I believe it is 192 or 196 pages, and so, for today, I have actually selected some areas which I believe that my people have spoken to me about and would like to hear about. So you and I both know where I hail from, which is the best parish in Bermuda, which is St. George's.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I think we have got a hearing problem over at this end.

An Hon. Member: Me, too, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: It is a hearing problem.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Renee Ming: There is nothing wrong with the [microphones] in here today.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Renee Ming: But, Mr. Speaker, St. George's has challenges in terms of transportation. And I know that in my time of sitting on the Corporation of St. George's we have talked about, you know, and in some capacity tried to address some of our challenges.

Some of the things that we . . . like we have talked about our ferries. We have talked about the buses, the minibus service, the Gypsy Cabs. So these are not unknown issues to us. These are issues that are well known to us. And so having some of them addressed in this document, I believe, gives us some way of how we actually are going to move forward.

My colleagues are smiling probably because I am talking about St. George's, but I do not know why they would be surprised, Mr. Speaker. I do not think anybody in this room should be surprised.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Renee Ming: Anyhow, we are going to continue to deal with transportation today.

And to be truthful, Mr. Speaker, some of the general lift issues that St. George's has have [carried over] into other areas, especially probably into our tourism product. And so when you look at the situation with general transportation issues and you look at our

tourism product you can see that there is a correlation between the challenges we have in transport that are spilling out into the challenges we have in terms of our tourism product.

So Mr. Speaker, it is, for me, and I believe that this report in some way touches on it, but I would hope that there is some priority for the St. George's transportation issues to be addressed. I am pretty sure that the Minister knows I will probably be front and centre making sure—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I know that.

Mrs. Renee Ming: —that those issues stay highlighted. But one of the things . . . I know on page 28 it speaks to East End . . . East End . . . yes, the bus service. And so in the report, I think it primarily addresses St. David's, because it says the East End bus service. I lost my pages a little bit, but I think it primarily speaks to St. David's and the challenges that they have with bus service.

But I also wanted to say that there are other . . . I know, like, for instance, if you know St. George's well, we have an area called Cut Road. And we continue to have transportation issues on the Cut Road side. And so when I say "transportation issues" it is that my constituents that live on Cut Road, they have bus service in the morning—first thing in the morning—the bus is at 8:05 and then they have a bus service in the afternoon which basically brings them home. So throughout the day there really is not anything that takes you down into the Cut Road area. And the bus stop—the main bus stop—if you actually lived down by Gates Fort, and you have to go up out to that bus stop, it is not a short walk, Mr. Speaker.

So I am hopeful that things like this area get addressed within this report as well because I have senior residents that stay down there and they talk about when they have to go get their groceries. And if they do not have transportation, part of the reason they are buying half of their groceries or things that are very light is because they would have to either walk down or hope that they would get a ride, maybe by a Gypsy Cab or something, so that they can take their groceries home. And so that would be something where it may not warrant full bus service and maybe it warrants looking at things that are incremental throughout the day that can be either consumed into the regular bus service or maybe we can look at mini-bus service for that area.

And although it is not outside of my area of our old St. George's, Ferry Reach has that same struggle as well in St. George's. And the residents that . . . can you imagine . . . you know where the main radius is, I know you know that far, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Yes.

Mrs. Renee Ming: But it used to go all the way out to the Martello Tower. That is not a short walk either, and we have people that live all the way out there. So I hope that consideration would be given for those persons who live in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that . . . in this . . . on page 28, under the East End Public Bus Service, Stakeholder Comments & Thoughts, they actually say, "Run a feeder service for this area using smaller public buses; outsource these runs to private mini-bus operators using public transportation fares; and/or sponsor a private minibus service for this area."

So, the fact that the stakeholder comments are sort of in line with what I am saying tells you that the people who use these buses or live in these areas see that it is a bit of a challenge, but we do not see it as something that there is not some sort of a solution that can be given.

Mr. Speaker, I am looking on page 30 because I am going on . . . page 30, section 1.1.7.6 talks about the use of data to determine bus routes. And I think that this is key because as we begin to look forward, the data will be important in determining which buses go where, pretty much. So, as I said to you, these two areas that I mentioned they would not necessarily fall within in a regular bus route, but they would be, I would hope that they would be considered because there is not any data for it. Okay? There is not . . . you know, I cannot say that "X" amount of buses is here, but I do know that the bus that comes out of Cut Road every morning is full, so there is some data in that.

That the anecdotal data or evidence, which is going to be interesting, I do not know how we would figure that out other than someone coming and telling us that something is needed, but hopefully we will find a way to be able to do that. Data is key in this time that we live in because it is the data that is going to tell you or give you some level of solution.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that I want to talk about is ferries, so that is just actually on page 31. And it talks about the use of ferries. And I actually found this information to be interesting because I know in my area we have ferries, we do have lift-off ferries. Do I think it could be improved? My answer would be yes. Would I like to see a commuter ferry for St. George's? My answer would be triple yes. Because I think that this is something that we had at one point and we actually . . . because we do not have it now. And if you used it, then it is something that you would actually miss. I was a person who used the commuter ferry when we had it and I think there should be some consideration around putting that back in place again. Because if I am using the ferry, Mr. Speaker, that is one less car that is coming into Hamilton. And if the boat is going out full that is several cars that are not coming into Hamilton.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Because every time I am in town the first thing I hear people saying is, *Can't find anywhere to park.*

And so as we start to look at whatever the solutions are going to be, I think we need to look at them on a more holistic level of *if we do this it impacts this, if we do this it impacts this*, so that we are not working in silos and saying, *I'm over here and I'm doing this*, but we want to be able to look at what the impacts are on the other areas.

So I do think that the information that was garnered in reference to ferries was interesting. And then the fact that, basically, we were told via this report that people would like to see more ferries. But there is no way we can discount the actual cost of what it takes to run a ferry. And so one of my suggestions would be that would we consider options for a less expensive ferry and maybe a consideration for less expensive fuel options? Because if we . . . and I believe that this is something that we will achieve because the data here tells us that persons would like to see more ferries.

On page 33, Mr. Speaker, the ferry system actually gets a really good rating in terms of reliability. And under the very reliable almost . . . well, about 47.57 per cent of the respondents to the survey said that they think that it is very reliable and 8.31 per cent say "extremely reliable." And so that is information there we can . . . there is obviously some confidence in the ferry system. And so that is something that we can use definitely to ensure that as we move forward, the fact that people feel comfortable using it or they believe that it is reliable, that is something that I believe that we can capitalise on.

And then on the exact same page, Mr. Speaker, Graph 9, where it says, "How do you usually get to work?" And the largest column is "Drive alone." And so is that a number that we can change? Because that is 46.81 per cent of the people saying, *I drive alone*. But if you drive alone in your car maybe you would be okay riding the ferry and maybe that number . . . because there is not a statistical data breakdown of it, but I am pretty sure that some of these people that are here would not mind parking the car and jumping on the ferry—

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Renee Ming: —especially if they believe the ferry to be reliable. And I think "reliable" is the key word in this because you have to believe that it is coming, it is going to be able to allow you to make your commitment, wherever that is, and that you do not have any issues with that.

So maybe my question here is, If we improve what we believe to be our public ferry system, can we possibly change the number that is in Graph 9? And to be honest, I believe that we can, Mr. Speaker.

One of the questions that I have been questioning for years, Mr. Speaker, because it never made sense to me, and for me things just generally have to make sense, because in St. George's we have used ferries. And over the last few years we had the *Millennium* ferry, and then we allowed NCL to bring in their own ferry for their users. And I did not understand it at the time, I mean, I know that we are in a five-year thing and maybe at 2021 when we begin to look at planning for these things, do we actually want to have direct competition for our own ferries? Because when you look at the revenue later on in the report for the actual ferries and what we spend and what we actually make, is there not revenue that is being lost in the fact that we have an additional ferry?

And I remember when I sat in another place, Mr. Speaker, a few years ago and I questioned this, it was the fact that those ferries are directly tied to the cruise ship and they are going to transport their visitors. Would we not benefit financially if they were using the public ferry and actually paying for it? But, of course, there has to be an expectation that the ferry is reliable, it meets the needs, and that we have the lift capability to be able to do that. But that is something that I had questioned at that time.

On page 36 we get the Government's Perspective on Public Ferries and I thought that section 1.2.3.2 was interesting. It says, "The decision to move to a fleet of high speed ferries was made so that Bermuda's ferry service could directly compete with the private car commute. As that fleet ages, a decision must be made whether to continue with this strategy—which involves the further purchase of expensive bow-loading vessels using jet propulsion engines."

So that is going to let me segue into my next thing which is the bow loading. St. George's has gone through a huge exercise—and I thank the Corporation of St. George's for that—in taking the side-loading ferry and they did modification work on Hunter's Wharf and we created bow loading. Now, somebody may say *well, what's the difference?* Well it was a big difference, and definitely in terms of our disabled visitors because side-loading did not allow you to put a wheelchair on the boat. And so for the years of having the *Millennium* that was the case. So our visitors who may have disabilities or use handicap vehicles were unable to board the ferry or use the ferry.

So the fact that we now have the bow loading, I believe that it was completed . . . it was early . . . it was in 2018. But I had actually someone who wrote to me and said, *Thank you for allowing this to happen*, because they were not able to use the ferry before when they visited Bermuda the previous year. And the fact that the bow loading had been completed, they were able to come down to St. George's. Because, you know, to me, if you come to Bermuda and you do not get to go to St. George's, then what was the sense of coming, right?

[Laughter]

Mrs. Renee Ming: Yes. So, I definitely think that, you know, whilst it was an exercise where we spent, I believe it was just . . . it was over a million dollars, but it was an exercise that was worth it and needed at the time.

It is funny, because when you go back . . . when you have these types of reports sometimes you have to expand outside of the report and you need to go back and look at other things. And I went back to . . . my gosh, I am going to get the year wrong, but anyhow, it was 2005 or 2006, I believe, where we were considering bringing in fast ferries. And I feel that at this time, because when you speak to people now we almost act like we cannot live without the ferries, okay? We do, because they have almost become like a necessity in terms of our public transportation and I think that . . . I thank Dr. Brown because he was a former Premier, but he was also the Minister for Transport, for having that sort of a vision. Because I think that if any of us are honest, we would say that the ferries are here to stay. And although we have reached the stage now where maybe some of the ones we had from those years are ageing, we have an opportunity to be able to look for less expensive, cheaper fuel options for our ferries. So I would be pleased for us to be able to give that consideration.

Now, mentioning that we have an ageing fleet, if you look on page 39, Mr. Speaker, and this is actually, it says "Context" and I am keeping it in the context in terms of costs. I am a numbers person. So I am always looking at the cost for something or how that revenue is going. Because I believe if you spend a dollar, you have got to find a way to make a dollar . . . and maybe two, if we could. So the fact that we are . . . our expenditure, though, for ferries . . . so in the ferry revenue and buses, as well . . . so for buses we actually take in—based on this table anyhow—it is saying \$6.4 million. But our expenditure is \$21 million. And for ferries it is \$1.495 million, but the expenditure is \$8.646 [million].

So I think that it would be in our best interest to find a way to work this number to have a greater revenue amount because, if not, if we are making . . . and the overall expenditure is \$30 million a year, but what we are actually taking in is \$7.979 [million], that is less than 10 per cent of what it is we are actually spending.

So, Mr. Speaker, that would be something that would have a wider discussion and, like I said, I just believe we are at a space where we have that time, like we have the opportunity to be able to do that.

One of the things that was mentioned in the report, and I saw it in several sections, was the need to have sufficient signage. And it is funny because I went around and I had a look and it is absolutely correct. I know because I know. Like for St. George's, I

know because I know. But if you go around and you actually look . . . and especially St. George's, we are definitely guilty of it. We could definitely do with better signage with regard to our ferry and bus thing. So I believe that that is actually a very minor thing that we can fix rather quickly.

Another section of the report that I thought was interesting, Mr. Speaker, and it is funny because it spoke to traffic. Oh, my gracious! Have any of you ever spent a lunch time on the square in St. George's? Just come down one day between 12:00 and 2:00. You do not even have to stay until 2:00, you can just come for about 15 minutes. At times it is chaotic, okay? The decision was made quite some time ago to not even have public buses there because if you fill that into the equation of there are two banks right there on the square, you used to have BELCO in the area, so everybody was trying to get into the square area.

We then pedestrianised the square area, so we took away the parking based out in the middle, which probably from a safety standpoint made a lot of sense. But we still have . . . you know, people that want to just drive on, go around the bridge, you have the minibuses, you have bikes, you have cars, and so in there you have a serious mix of . . . you have visitors who want to appreciate the town, and then on the flipside you have residents who want to use the town, because what we have in St. George's, which is our uniqueness, is a living and working town. So all of these things when they come together can be chaotic at times. But we just have to try and make sure that we find ways to make sure because the first thing on my mind would be safety. Because, you know, obviously, we want to make sure that everyone is safe.

So I am hopeful that . . . I read section 6 and it speaks to better legislation and better enforceability. In some cases I believe we already had the legislation before us, it is just a matter of enforcing what we already have to reduce the congestion.

Mr. Speaker, I definitely wanted to make sure I spoke on the section where we talked about Active Transport, which is like moving around and getting around, because those of you who know know that I have a community walk that we do every Saturday. And although we do it in St. George's . . . you are looking at me now, so you are quite welcome to join us at any time tomorrow at 7:00 am. But for those of you that know, we walk all around St. George's. So we touch the Railway Trail, we touch just about anything anywhere. Trust me, we have done it. So when I looked at the section on that I was like, *Ah, okay*. So what do we see when we are out? And I have to admit I walk with a bunch of people who definitely are aware and they like to make sure that they take pictures. And if they see something that they believe to be an issue, they let the area MP know and then, by virtue of that, Colonel Burch knows.

So there are things, I believe, that can be done to improve and encourage people to use those byways because there is a . . . we, especially for St. George's, Mr. Speaker, which is what I am particularly speaking about today, I touch on our history a lot. And I do not really think that we can get away from the fact that this is where it all started and so I truly do believe that it deserves its due. I am not going to say that there is a lot of improvement that can happen there, I definitely would like to make sure that the paths are clear and that we can always walk freely because that, you know, those are some of the concerns that we see that come out of our walk.

So in the Active Transport thing, I do believe that there could be some improvement there in terms of how we actually keep it.

And my last point, Mr. Speaker, was on section 8. And if you live in St. George's, you would know that this is almost like if you hit a beehive, okay? And the particular thing that I am talking about there is the widening or deepening of the Town Cut. So to look at the results that you get from this survey that was taken, especially if you look at Graph 50, it says 24 per cent agree with widening the Town Cut, and we have 15 per cent that strongly agree. But you would have to break these numbers down for me and let me know how many were St. George's people that took this . . . that gave you this data right here because I canvassed, and I know what St. George's people say.

And what is funny is that years ago, I think, you could have a very strong, *Absolutely no*. But as times are changing and evolving, you are beginning to hear some people say, *Yeah, that might not be such a bad idea*. I used to get an earful of this from my Uncle Phoopa during his time because he strongly believed that modification was the way to go. But I used to tell him, *Well, convince the people that stay down on Cut Road that their house is not going to be underwater, all right?* And I know that may sound crazy, but that is what people think. They are like, *If you open up that water and those floodgates come in, my house would be underwater, okay?*

[Inaudible interjections]

Mrs. Renee Ming: So . . . so . . . but I say all of that to say, Mr. Speaker, that you . . . over time . . . and the time that I am noting is that time that I used to sit on the Corporation of St. George's to the time of being a representative here, you are seeing . . . there is a changing mind-set. So maybe, based on this report, it is time to have that wider conversation of if that is something that would be considered.

Or . . . I am going to say the "or" because in the Graph 51, it says, "Do you agree with building a new cruise ship pier in the Murray's Anchorage area of St. George's?" Now, this has strong support as well. And so it does deserve, I believe, a wider conversation and it should fit into our wider plan of what it

is that we actually even see for St. George's. Because if persons are willing to consider the cruise ship pier, maybe that would be the way to go. I am not trying to get my people all up in a tizzy down there.

But I hope that I have been able to convey some parts of this report to you and maybe even offer some solutions. And I know it may be very one-sided to St. George's, Mr. Speaker, but the suggestions that I have made can be used in other areas. But I believe that when I stand up and speak I am always for St. George's, so I have given you that aspect of it. And if Mr. Tyrrell wants to use some up in Warwick where he does not necessarily have any other things to do anyhow, he can use those things.

But I want, like I said, I hope that I have offered support and solutions with regard to the report. I thank the preparers of the report. I thank the Minister for bringing it forward and on that note, Mr. Speaker, I will take my seat.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 8.

Honourable Member Simons, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have been here 20 years.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: And I make it a habit of trying to read the Green Papers that are produced by governments on various national issues. I find them very, very educational, enlightening, and informative. It gives me a true insight of what is going on in other ministries, be they health, transportation, works and engineering, basically it just presents a compendium of ideas, recommendations with . . . of strengths and weaknesses.

I think these Green Papers should be made available to most of our schools so that our students could have access to them because they are very, very informative. And if we are going to talk about Bermuda's infrastructure then I believe this would be a great document to pass onto our young people so that they can understand the transportation system here in Bermuda. And, as I said, make these Green Papers available to all of our schools so that our schools can have a better understanding of health care, transportation, works and engineering, and things like education and other aspects of Government.

So like other Ministry's Green Papers, to me, Mr. Speaker, this Green Paper was very productive. I thought it was thorough, and I want to commend those people who had a hand in its production. I want to commend the Government for bringing it forward, and

I also learned quite a bit from it, Mr. Speaker. The topics that they covered, I think, were quite relevant and appropriate and I think that it is good that we are here debating it today.

My only challenge, Mr. Speaker, and it was mentioned earlier, is the White Paper, because we could have a compendium of ideas, topics, but at the end of the day we want to know what the priorities of Government will be. What instrument do we have to ensure that there is discipline in ensuring that what is mentioned in the White Paper or the issues in the Green Paper will be delivered to this country?

I was watching a television show where the Minister said there was no intention of having a White Paper and I said, *Oh, this is strange. No White Paper?* To me that just basically does not allow discipline to be brought to the government process, Mr. Speaker, in regard to what priorities and what important issues the Government are going to do first during their terms in Government. It just allows, without a White Paper, it allows the Minister in Government to pick and choose from all over the place and there is no rhyme or reason for addressing the issues in a methodical fashion.

So I would have liked to have seen like most governments do, this Government follow tradition and have a White Paper after the Green Paper. And, in fact, I think on page 14 of this Green Paper they said they would probably have a White Paper to follow this Green Paper. But the Minister has made it clear that you are not going to tie him down and that there will be no White Paper following this report.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go through the whole report because a lot has been said already. I am just going to address a few issues. I am not going to be, you know, a long time, I do not think I will use the full half hour.

As was said, the general issue for me is our transportation system here in Bermuda has to be an integrated transportation system whereby the public transportation—the buses, the ferries—are linked and connected under an integrated schedule and, in fact, it will also embrace the [minibuses]. Right now we have strong capacity going from the East End of the Island to the West End of the Island. The buses, the ferries, they are all connected.

But we have challenges out in the periphery from going to North Shore to South Shore. We all know about St. David's, the transportation challenges going from St. David's Island to St. George's. I know in my constituency after 6:00 pm it is difficult to get a bus going down to South Shore Smith's Parish after 6:00 pm, or even 7:00 pm. and the same thing if you live along Harrington Sound Road. If you have a resident who lives in the dense area up in the Minister's constituency, Horseshoe Bay Road, if you have families living there and they want to go shopping down at Heron Bay, you know, there is no public transportation that will go from south to north or south to the Middle Road.

As I said, I think, going from east to west is well-managed and well-defined, but from north to south or south to north across country, I think that more work needs to be done in this space. And I particularly believe that the [minibuses] can be used to supplement what we have today. They could be used with better regulations, better infrastructure, and better support.

Now, I am going to get into the report proper. The issue that basically had the most impact on me was when I read section 6. Section 6 speaks to the Road Traffic. And they gave a history of accidents and deaths in Bermuda and I will read some of it, Mr. Speaker.

The report says, "There were 227 deaths attributed to road traffic collisions between 1997 and 2017, which is an average of 11.3 deaths per year."

Mr. Speaker, to me we have to something about the accidents that we have on our roads in regard to motorcycles and vehicles. I do believe that the minicars could be part of this solution, if we are going to save some of the lives of some of our young people on our roads.

The report indicates that the Government may consider allowing households to have a [minicar], as well as a regular vehicle, on an assessment number. I hope that they do pursue this option, because if it can get our young people off of these cycles, which are basically [death] traps that are taking the lives of our young people and our tourists, then I think one life saved is good enough of a result for me. So I would encourage the Government to consider allowing minicars to be added as a second vehicle to households, purely for the safety.

And the report has provided statistics that basically confirm that there are fewer fatal accidents . . . fewer fatalities in these minicars. The fatalities all, primarily, involve motorcycles. So if we get these young people off of these motorcycles, then I think we can try and save some of their lives. In fact, the report said in 2016 1,685 people had accidents, 189 people were admitted to King Edward Memorial Hospital, and [there were] 15 fatalities. In 2017, there were 1,689 persons attended [to in] the King Edward Emergency Room, or the [Lamb Fogg] Urgent Care Centre in St. David's, as a result of road traffic collisions. These are high numbers, Mr. Speaker, and they are consistent numbers. As I said, in 2016, there were 1,685 people requiring hospital services because of road accidents. And in 2017, there were 1,689.

I think these statistics speak for themselves and that we need to do things differently so that we can get these young people off the roads in regard to these motorcycles and reduce the number of accidents and people who harm themselves on our roads. I truly believe that the minicar is something that we can examine, and they will be safer for everyone. In fact, it is not just the young people who would use it. The seniors! I mean, seniors still ride motorcycles up

into their 80s, 85, 86 years old. At that age their responses are not as positive as they ought to be and I think the minicar would provide some added security and will reduce the risk of them injuring themselves.

I note that the Government has said that they have no intention of lifting the current requirement that assessment numbers only allow one car per household. As I said, I think this needs to be examined so that, yes, you can have one car per household, but you can also allow the household to have a minicar. So I will move on.

The other issue that caught my attention is student safety. The issue there is not just safety. When I was Minister, we had challenging issues in regard to consistently getting our students to and from school, based on the availability of buses. Now, there were many challenges in the bus scheduling, the bus supply, and union issues; I accept that. But at the end of the day, I did not feel that our students' education should suffer because of what was going on in the transportation industry. They had an important role to play. They had to, basically, address their educational needs. And for me, the fact that these issues were going on when they were doing some of their external exams just caused additional anxiety to our young people. So I believe that our schools should have dedicated transportation for our young people so that they can get to school on vehicles that are reliable and safe. And get them to school on time on a regular basis.

Now, these vehicles can, in my estimation, be minivans. Again, more work has to be done in this space. I would encourage the Minister of Transportation to examine the possibility of having a more integrated system when it comes to our schools. I know that in other jurisdictions, in the Caribbean, there are a number of minibuses assigned to each school to ensure that their students get there on time on a regular basis.

So I would invite the Minister to take that under advisement and consideration so that our schools can, basically, function and our students can get there on time.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Point of information, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Beg your pardon, Member.

POINT OF INFORMATION

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, for the edification of the Honourable Member, there is an example of a school bus that leaves St. George's at 7:20, at Cut Road, all the way down at the end by Gates Fort, and goes through and services all the way up to Bermuda Institute.

An Hon. Member: Wow.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: So it encompasses Warwick Academy and all those . . . and goes right up the South Shore, and doesn't go into town. So, Spice Valley . . . it even goes by Purvis. And someone who works up the West End sometimes can jump on.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Member, continue.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you very much. I thank my colleague for his contribution.

As far as student safety is concerned, as we all know, there has been a history of bullying before and after school, and a number of parents have raised their concern about the safety of their children. Again, I believe that if we have an integrated, effective transportation system for our students, then the opportunity for this bullying around the school premises or on the way to school will diminish.

The other issue is that we have a lot of young people meeting in Hamilton and loitering and basically finding themselves in situations that are not that positive from time to time. And so I think if we keep them moving, keep them out of town, keep them on their way to home (where they should be) so that they can get their homework done and other things done around the house, then I think it will help.

The other issue is, as I said earlier, reliability. A number of parents have indicated over the years that the buses are full and so they bypass some of the bus stops where the students are waiting for them to get to school. And as I said earlier, we need to ensure that our children are not compromised because of the challenges faced by the scheduling and the number of buses that we have available for the community.

The other issue is sidewalks, and walking along the road. I ride a bike to work every day and I see a number of children walking to school. Some children are as young as five years old and they are walking by themselves. I just get concerned when I see them walking along the road and there is no sidewalk. In fact, again, when I was the Minister of the Environment, I was coming along North Shore Road and I saw that the sidewalk was all overgrown. I called the people in Parks and said, *I need these sidewalks done immediately because if any child can't walk on a sidewalk, and walks in the road and gets killed or has an accident, then, to me, it would be devastating and it will not be good enough and it would reflect badly on this Government, or any Government.* So, to me, it is crucial that we have these sidewalks cared for.

I have to give the current Minister kudos in that I have been looking at these sidewalks and they are in fairly decent condition. So I give the current Minister kudos for the work that he has done to date.

The other issue is the crossings. I see that most of the schools have guards there to help our

young people cross major roads. Again, I think it is money well spent and they should be recognised for the work that they do. I believe that all schools should have guards for all major crossings if they are close to any school.

[Pause]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. I have spoken about the one car per family. I would like to basically talk about taxis a bit, Mr. Speaker.

The issue of taxis is a very interesting one because taxi drivers are not a harmonious group. Some taxi drivers drive a taxi because that is their profession. Some taxi drivers drive a taxi because they want to get out of the house. Some taxi drivers drive a taxi because they want to make a contribution to tourism. They are retired from their other careers, and so they say, *Okay. Well, this is my contribution. I am doing it. I make a little change here because it is something that I wanted to do to help Bermuda.* So the motivations for driving taxis are different. Therefore, when you try to get the taxi drivers together it becomes challenging because they are all in it for different reasons.

I am not saying that one reason is better than the other; the reasons are different. As a consequence, we have to somehow bring all of them to the same page, and get the same level of commitment to ensure that the industry improves and that everyone buys in on what is the best way to move forward for the industry in regard to legislation and regulations.

One thing the report raised that I found was quite appropriate was the issue of having debit card and credit card [machines] in our taxis. I travel quite a bit, and I noticed that taxis, almost everywhere, have credit card and debit card machines in them. In fact, someone, an executive of a bank, told me that once a millennial who . . . you know, a very successful millennial who is a CEO of a business in New York City, came down and had no cash. He only had his debit card. He got into the taxi, went to Southampton Princess, and the driver said . . . say it was \$60 or \$70.

So the tourist said, *Well, I have no cash. I can't give it to you. I can give you my debit card.*

[The taxi driver said], *Well, we don't have debit card [machine]. We need cash.*

That, to me, is an indication that we have to move ahead with the times. That young man had to call his father to see who on the Island (because it was Sunday evening) he knew who would, basically, provide this man with some cash to pay this taxi driver.

[Crosstalk]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: But anyway, the guest got the cash and paid the taxi driver. So I am saying this, you know, *Come on, taxi drivers. We have to get with it.* I think it is time that we put infrastructure in place

that will allow these drivers to have debit card and credit card [machines] in their taxis.

Uber and other such carriers, I will leave that one alone because I have heard so many positive and negative comments on these Uber-type services that I would let the Government do their own research. I have heard a lot of positive things about Uber and Uber drivers, and I have heard negative things. I think the issues are around vetting the drivers, vetting the suitability of the vehicles, setting the standards for these types of licences (if they are issued), and standards of performance and conduct. So, to me, if we are going to go down this route, we need to make sure that we have adequate and sufficient regulations in place in regard to the drivers, the vehicles, and the code of conduct that is required for having these vehicles. Because I know, I speak to many taxi drivers in London and they will give you an earful if you mention the word "Uber." And it is the same thing in Canada.

And then, you know, I read stories . . . when I was in South Africa, Uber drivers having their passengers' lives threatened. So, again, we have to be very careful, and I ask the Government [that] if they go down this route, [to] do their research. Assess the risks associated with this business and make sure that at the end of the day we come out with a product that is safe, reliable, and improves the services offering of our public vehicles.

Minibuses: As I said, minibuses create jobs and I am a proponent of minibuses if they are well-regulated and if we have a proper plan for them being integrated into our transportation network. As I said, the minibuses can supplement and complement the existing public service vehicles and public service transportation that we have from the East End of the Island to the West End, from the ferries to the buses. And for the harder-to-reach remote areas, they can do circular routes and pick up those people who live in areas where it is difficult to access the public transportation. So I think there is a role for them. Again, they can also be used in the school routes on a more regular basis. Again, another opportunity for the minibus drivers.

As was said in the report, right now, because of the challenges we have with the number of buses that we have in our fleet, and the number of buses on our roads, the minibuses are used to service our guests who arrive by ship. Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe that these minibuses basically can be the saviour for our public transportation system, and it can be an avenue whereby our young people can basically start their business and be entrepreneurial. So I would encourage that we basically set some framework around minibuses and work with the minibus drivers so that they can be integrated into the transportation network with the public vehicles. Because if we have an efficient transportation system, and efficient transportation hubs, then I think it will work well for everyone.

When I talk about the network, the integrated network, I also like to extend it to not only just minibuses, but the Park N Ride services and infrastructure. Again, keeping people out of the city, be it is St. George's or Hamilton, people would be willing to park their cars out on the public docks in Southampton, and Warwick, and Smith's, and Hamilton Parish if there was a proper infrastructure for them to leave their cars and motorcycles and also pick up other public transportation or minibuses on a regular and reliable basis.

I know for a fact—I mean, I have a car and I hardly ever use it. And when I come to town on the weekend, I never ever bring my car to Hamilton on the weekend. I ride my bike, because I can find a parking spot and I can get close to where I want to go. As far as the car is concerned, there is always [the problem of finding] parking and meters, and you know, you drive around and around, and there is congestion. So, I believe that if we have a stronger Park N Ride infrastructure and support system that we can alleviate some of the traffic that is currently plaguing our cities, Hamilton and sometimes St. George's. You heard the Member from [constituency] 1 talk about congestion in the square in St. George's. So, I think this could be a means of helping to fight congestion.

I spoke about the minicars. Yes, I believe in them; there could be opportunities.

Electrical cars [EVs] and hybrids. I embrace the recommendations that are here. The challenge that we have is ensuring that the infrastructure to support these electrical vehicles and hybrid vehicles is in place in this country. In addition, the issue is cost. Hopefully as time passes the cost of the electrical vehicles will be reduced. Because on page 93 of the report it says, "Current pricing of EVs in Bermuda is 1.5 to two times more than that of similarly sized internal combustion engine vehicles."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I bought a car last year because my car died after 20 years, and, as I am tall, I needed a larger car. So, I said, *Let me see what's available*. When I saw the price of a . . . and you know, I am environmentally conscious and, you know, I am for the environment. And when I saw the price of an electric vehicle for a car that would suit my size, and then I saw a car that size, [an internal] combustion vehicle, to me, unfortunately, there was no choice because I was paying almost double for the electric vehicle.

An Hon. Member: In your size.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: In my size, yes.

[Crosstalk]

[Timer beeps]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I'm not finished, am I?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Oh, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: [Microphone off]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, thank you. I had a few other things to [say], but my time is up. I enjoyed making my contribution, and thank you for the opportunity.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 4. Honourable Member Furbert, you have the floor.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First, I want to thank the committee and persons who put together this Transportation Green Paper because I know it was a hefty task and they did such a wonderful job in accumulating all this data and information, so for that we are thankful.

I wanted to touch on four areas in this Green Paper, and those are minibuses, commercial trucks, the East End transport, and of course, accessibility transportation. As I was going through this pretty long paper, it is definitely a step in the right direction when you see the term "differently abled" used multiple times throughout this document. So it is definitely an issue or something I am hoping that our community and our Government is wanting to address, the transportation for the differently abled population. But more to that, I mean, this issue is so very important it brings to mind at one point when we started to hear the outcries from our community in regard to the inconsistency of the bus schedule and routes. I think I remember hearing a little boy, how he made a song about how inconsistent the bus scheduling was. And then also incidents where we saw mechanical issues with buses carrying school children. And so it is a significant concern, and we do [need to] hash out many concerns that are included in this Green Paper.

I want to start with the commercial trucks. There is a small segment on page 11 in regard to commercial trucks and the concerns centred on the truck size and weight as there are now more trucks on the Island and they carry heavy items and they damage our roads and our bridges. But not only that, Mr. Speaker, there are times when some of these commercial vehicles are carrying loads that are much heavier than what they are supposed to be carrying and so there is . . . I do not know if anyone studies these trucks, but they have something on them called . . . help me out . . . load end . . . tare load?

The Speaker: Tare load, yes.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: And so there is actually a capacity in which these trucks are able to carry and a lot of times they are definitely carrying more than their load, and they are not even securing the items that are in their trucks. You see trees all hanging off, and we have actually seen incidents where people have recorded actual accidents that have occurred because things have flown off of these vehicles. So it is my hope that we do address these concerns so that it does not cause a tragedy to someone in our community. We just need to get a little bit stricter with enforcement when it comes to what loads these trucks are actually supposed to be carrying.

I also want to thank . . . I was just reading, or I noticed in one of the explanatory notes, that there were a number of persons who responded to the Transport survey. Actually, 65 per cent of those persons were female, and 35 [per cent] of those persons were male. So I want to thank all the women who took the time to actually respond to this survey. I do not know if they are the majority of the transportation users, but we want to thank the women for taking the time to answer the questions as it related to the Green Paper and Transportation survey.

So I am going to move right along to the accessibility . . . sorry, before I get to accessibility, I do want to address the East End bus service.

One of the questions that I currently get when I am out canvassing is, *How are you going to address the issue with transportation to the St. David's area?* Because this is an area which is not serviced enough, with the frequency, and it is actually one of the areas that becomes least frequently travelled when we are experiencing issues with the mechanics of the buses. And so one of my colleagues has mentioned already in regard to the service of buses to the East End, particularly all the other small areas in which buses cannot get to. It is a significant concern, particularly to the residents of St. David's. So, we hope that when our fleet is better complemented that the . . . whether it is through regular buses or whether it is through mini-buses that this issue is addressed, because I believe there is supposed to be even more development going on in that area, particularly around the Battery area, which will mean there will be an increase in people. So those persons will need access to transportation. So the hope is that we can highly consider proper transportation out to St. David's.

I do want to thank the Paradise transportation company that is currently providing transportation to the St. David's area. I frequent out there quite a bit, so I do get to see them transporting clients in and out of St. David's and even in the St. George's area, so we want to give great thanks to them for being able to provide that service to the residents. I think they have definitely complemented a short fall in regard to transportation to the residents in St. David's. So, I would just like to thank them and congratulate them for

providing that service to our residents in the St. David's area.

[Pause]

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: So now I am just going to go on to accessibility transport, which is something that is very important to me.

The other day I was in a nursing home and I was talking to a former . . . well, retired senior PTB manager. He is now wheelchair bound. When I first saw him he was in sort of a bucket chair, and in this bucket, sort of wheelchair, he is unable to propel himself independently. Then he moved from one facility to another and we were able to get him the proper wheelchair that was suitable for him. And now with his new wheelchair he is able to mobilise and move himself around the facility.

I remember having a conversation with him and I said, *Well, what accessible buses or accessible transport, is this important to you?*

And he said, *Well, you know, today I never thought about it, but yes, it is important.*

So something that was never really thought about is now becoming a more important and relevant issue. Particularly as our disabled population does increase in Bermuda, it is vital and important that we allow mobility within our community. Some of you may see persons . . . because that is not actually in this paper, but we see persons more frequently in our community using power chairs, or using scooters, and they are driving around the roads. Power chairs or scooters are not necessarily intended for road use; they are actually intended for short distances within neighbourhoods or around stores or grocery stores. That is what they are intended to be used for, or on sidewalks, but we are actually seeing the use of these vehicles . . . sorry, not vehicles, these power chairs and scooters on the road. And sometimes you may find yourself behind someone, you know.

But it is a very unfortunate situation because if they had access to proper public transportation then we would have [fewer] power chairs and scooters having to drive around on our roads. So, I do not want us to limit [them] because right now they do not have any other choice. Those ones who are very active and want to maintain an active lifestyle should have some option or some way of being able to get around the community when the options right now are very nil.

I would also just like to speak to having visited some of the other islands and seeing what accessible options there are for persons with disabilities or wheelchair users. And, you know, I have seen . . . you order a taxi, you order a minivan and they come and they roll out their ramp and you can just wheel right up into the truck, and some places even, you know, you have access to a companion if you want to. I have seen this in the other islands, Mr. Speaker. So my hope is that we will see this as an important issue to

be able to address for both our locals and our visitors alike.

There is one particular issue that I would like to bring to mind, and that is within the realm of financial assistance. We know that most of our financial assistance users are our seniors and our persons with disabilities. However, there is an allowance in the Financial Assistance regulations that speaks to transportation, but that is public transportation. So there is an allowance in the Financial Assistance regulations that speaks to public transportation. So if the majority of our users are seniors and persons with disabilities on financial assistance, then they definitely can access public transportation. So what are we going to do about allowing an allowance for other modes of transportation, if the public transportation system is not going to allow them to take advantage of that particular transportation? I think that we need to make changes to that Financial Assistance regulation allowance to be able to allow persons to have access to some mode of transportation.

Also, I wanted to bring up the issue of disabled parking bays and permits, because it is addressed in this Green Paper. There is a social media site called "Parking Badly" and many times you see on this site people posting pictures of vehicles parked in disabled parking spots which are not supposed to be parked there, Mr. Speaker. That even occurs on our House grounds sometimes where we have [owners of] vehicles who are inconsiderate of persons with disabilities, parking in disabled vehicle spots.

This paper has outlined very clearly and made suggestions in regard to how we can actually address this issue. What the public is saying is that we need to deter people from parking in disabled bays by increasing the fine, also establish better enforcement for disabled parking spaces, install cameras and clamping mechanisms to be able to catch offenders who illegally park. This is not something to take lightly, Mr. Speaker. It is a lot of work having to take someone who is in a wheelchair or a power chair and be able to unload them from the vehicle. Actually, you need quite a . . . if it is a back loader, you need quite a bit of space in the back to be able to load someone off safely.

The hope is that with disabled parking bays you can get them as close to the facility or the place in which you are trying to get to, and that is the aim of a disabled parking spot. There are disabled parking spots around our City of Hamilton, and in reading through this paper we do note that there are increasingly more of the disabled spots throughout the City of Hamilton. So we are also grateful that someone had some insight to be able to provide more disabled parking spots throughout the City of Hamilton. I do notice that throughout our community that there are more disabled parking spots, but probably not nearly enough as there should be.

In September of 2017, the Disability Advisory Council had a town hall [meeting] on accessible transportation. I just wanted to share, if I can, Mr. Speaker, some concerns that they actually had. Some questions that they had were: Who can or cannot operate an accessible vehicle? How does one prove the ability to drive? What protocols do physicians follow to determine who can or cannot drive?

They wanted us to note that there were limited choices when it does come to taxi transportation, and it is not economical for users to be able to use taxis that are for disabled users. There is no centralised way to provide info on options for transportation.

Some vehicle owners said they were bringing in vehicles for persons with disabilities, and the taxes are waived on [such] vehicles, but then they actually never use the vehicles as intended. And that is very important. I believe it highlights in this paper that if minibuses are going to be allowed or given permission to [be brought] in as accessible vehicles that they are somehow labelled so that people know that this is the intention of this minibus, to be able to provide assistance for persons with disabilities.

Somebody just showed me a picture of a vehicle in a disabled spot that is not supposed to be there. It is a police vehicle.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: So we seriously, seriously, seriously need to respect this, because we do not know what our condition is going to be like one day, and we ourselves might need to have access to a disabled parking spot.

But I will continue with what some of the community had expressed in the town hall meeting held in September 2017. Some solutions that they wanted to provide or to share were to hold people who obtained the PC licences and accessible vehicle permits accountable, hold them accountable and provide more standardised identical takes of accessible vehicles. I do see that some vehicles out there have the symbol of a wheelchair, but not all of them are standardised. So we should standardise them so we know who is to have permission to carry those persons with disabilities.

To enforce parking spaces, support the City of Hamilton with the proposed legislation, provide subsidy programmes, centralise our resources so that it is easy to determine what is available for persons with disabilities, keep an up-to-date record of the number of accessible vehicles on the roads so that Transport Control Department can determine what we need. We need to be able to equip persons with disabilities driver's assessments. There are occupational therapists who are available to assist with this, where they can actually assess someone who may find themselves with a disability, whether it be through a stroke or some other neurological condition. Because some-

times we think that persons with disabilities, once they acquire a disability, they will have no function in our community thereafter. But we are able to rehabilitate people so that they are able to drive thereafter, and there are all sorts of accommodations and modifications that can be done to a vehicle to be able to allow persons with disabilities the ability to drive again.

The other thing that was important was to provide training programmes for those persons who do drive accessible vehicles and making sure that they are trained with mental health first aid. I know that mental health is an important topic particularly with clients . . . sorry, users using the bus and the drivers not knowing how to manage. There are resources that are out there. There is the Mental Health First Aid programme, which is down through the Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute. There is Action on Alzheimer's & Dementia. There is the Ageing and Disability Services and there is also the Bermuda Society for the Blind. Those are just a few to name. There are many more organisations that can perhaps help those persons who have accessible vehicles and are driving our public members.

Some years ago there was a paratransit report that was done for Bermuda, a very expensive one, and hefty . . . and I do not know how we can fulfil that demand right now. But there is information out there in regard to a paratransit system that is probably the best option for us for our disabled population in Bermuda.

But there definitely needs to be a needs assessment. I [read] in the report in regard to a registry so that we can collect data to find more closely what that need is when it comes to transportation with persons with disabilities. Because it was interesting, by reading this report, that we did not get too many persons with disabilities actually participating in the actual surveys. So that needs assessment, or that national registry, is very vital in being able to collect such data.

So there is a question that we have to pose and that is: Is transportation for special needs a right or a privilege? And just like any person is afforded the opportunity to be able to ride public transportation, then that right should be able and be extended to persons with disabilities. There are people who are captive in their own homes because they are unable to get about because there is no mechanism for transportation for them in the public. This also affects our students.

[In] reading this report it is noted that the majority of public transportation users are our students and our visitors. There are students in our communities who have disabilities who do not have access to public transportation. The Ministry of Education does provide a bus system for some students to get to schools and day programmes, but we are also having issues with those by not taking into consideration proper maintenance programmes or taking into consideration budgeting for maintaining the fleet or buying

a new fleet for our students so that they can also have the right to transportation so that they can get to school.

So some of their concerns, again, which I reiterated, students with special needs, they have community-based instructions as part of their curriculum and they would like to be able to get out to those programmes. There also needs to be proper training in regard to the use of accessible vehicles. I have seen times where wheelchairs have been in some of the minibuses and they are not secured properly. And I have seen accidents where the driver will go around the corner, and because there is no proper securement system in place, I have seen chairs actually tip over. I have seen guests, visitors, who visit Bermuda who have scooters and they go into these vehicles and they actually tip over . . . and end up having to go to our hospital.

So there needs to be proper securement systems, particularly for wheelchairs, so that they are not able to move or shift when there is a sudden stop or where we are having to turn a sharp corner. We have many sharp corners in Bermuda, and so securement and training of that is very important for transportation.

And I would also just like to skip to minibuses as well, because someone had mentioned before (I believe the Opposition Leader) in regard to transportation services that give children rides to school, or afterschool pickup as well. Right now it is not mandated that children wear seatbelts in the minivans. And, I mean, I have seen just driving on the road, observing some of the children in the minivans. They are standing up and they are having a good old time. And should something happen where they have to stop short, children are going to go flying.

And so it is very important that even if there is no securement or seatbelt policy as it relates to seatbelts in minivans, that there should be because we want to be able to protect our children when they are riding in minivans, or at least the driver should make sure that they are seated at all times, and that should be important to them to maintain their safety.

I just want to add, Mr. Speaker, in regard to accessibility because there are some recommendations I am hoping that we can definitely push for. And that is, I hope that our Government can definitely push for greater fines for persons who are parking in disabled parking bays, Mr. Speaker. It is very important. And also encourage minibus operators who receive permits and licences for wheelchair accessible vehicles that they will be encouraged to establish a booking or dispatch service for prearranged transport. We are hoping that this can come into play.

[We are] also hoping that proper training and standards needed for drivers of public service vehicles are provided, that they are able to have sensitivity training or even know how to help persons using accessible vehicles so that they are driven around safe-

ly, and that we can address this provision in the Financial Assistance regulations.

There is one thing I would also like to mention and that is there is a bus route to Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute (MAWI) . . . but it only has two runs. There is one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and then it stops. We have a hospital, King Edward VII Memorial Hospital [KEMH], where we have constant transportation and frequency of buses going directly . . . I mean, you walk a couple of steps and you are right there and the hospital is there. Right? And so it is unfair that we do place more significance on transportation to our local hospital, King Edward, which provides physical care, but there is less of a significance to have access to public transportation to our Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute. And so it is my hope that we can provide some sort service as well where there are more frequent visits or opportunities for transportation, whether it is through a minibus service, whether it is through public transportation bus service, that these same persons who have to use the services of the Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute, also have the opportunity to be able to get to Mid-Atlantic Wellness Institute whatever the time of the day they need to.

So, I just want to add that I am hopeful and grateful that this paper is complete. It is a lot of information. I think that if anyone has the time to delve through it and read through it, it is definitely a lot of information and a lot of good things can come out of this. It is just my hope that we continue to highlight the importance of fixing our transportation industry which provides mobility for all of our public persons and users of the public transportation system, and also that we use this as an opportunity to address accessible transportation in our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member Smith from constituency 31. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Mr. Ben Smith: First, I would like to thank everybody who was involved with putting together this report. It was extensive. Obviously, a lot of work went into getting the information that we have been provided. The thing that is interesting about transport is that most of the time people do not think about it until it is something that is not working, until it is something that is frustrating us.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Ben Smith: The situation is . . . you know, recently we heard about the buses a lot because that has been something that has been causing frustration, and it has been a difficult thing for everybody to try to come up with a solution that was going to work. As we know, with different kinds of vehicles and the different pieces that have been discussed about how we solve that problem, it is just interesting that when you have the opportunity to look through a document like this that shows all the potential solutions to a lot of the problems, these problems really get discussed by all of us at some point, depending on what the frustration is for us.

So I am just going to take this opportunity to go through a couple of the specific things that I know I myself have gone through over the last couple of years, and piggyback on some of the things that we have already heard today, specifically, starting with the buses.

You know, if you drive a car, most of the time you are not really thinking about the bus. And I am one of those people. But when my car is in the shop, I have to take a bus. And, to be honest with you, on the bus from Southampton into Hamilton, I actually thought it was a really good experience. The bus was on time. It was a smooth ride. So, for me, the experience was really good. So going forward, I have my car, the next day and I do not think about the bus.

But then recently I had some people come in to visit. And they travel quite a bit around the world and they are used to using buses. So, for them, it was not a big deal to try to do tours all around the Island using the bus service. The problem was that their experience was not the experience that I had. They were seeing long delays, not getting the bus to pick them up because, at the time, I believe, we were going through some real struggles with the scheduling, and what it meant was that sometimes we would have to send somebody to go and pick them up and take them to their destination. Well, it is an interesting conversation when you are dealing with a visitor and they are saying, *You know, this seems like a basic thing for us to get public transportation, and here we are having to struggle.* And then explain that to a visitor.

So, with that first-hand knowledge, when you hear the struggle of people trying to get from point A to point B, and using the bus service, I think that any solutions that we can put together that will alleviate some of these problems, and kind of put us in a situation where we are more environmentally friendly, where we are also looking for a system that is going to be reliable . . . I believe it was MP Swan that spoke earlier about some of the early runs.

Specifically, you have people who do shift work who do not have access to that bus that would get them there on time to go to an early job, or sometimes late at night. When you are in other jurisdictions, you can actually get on a bus at any time during the day. So, if you are an elderly person who needs to go

to an appointment or, you know, we have people who are working late into the night and now the only option for them is to get a taxi, where we all know that the difference between a taxi fare and a bus fare is quite significant. If you are somebody who is used to riding a bus, potentially, some of those kind of outside-the-norm schedules could be important to the workers and to some people where that is their mode of transportation from one end of the Island to the other.

Moving on to the taxi industry, as I just started to kind of touch on it, I guess I will start with the sobriety checkpoints. I guess starting with the point that really we are trying everything we can to stop people from drinking and driving. This is a great initiative, but the side of it that is important is, how are we going to make sure that people have a way to get home safely if they go out?

The difficulty is that we have a system that we already know is stretched. So, if you are going to go out to dinner and you make an appointment because, you know, that is how you do it. If you have a reservation at 7:30 and you are going to say, okay, you are going to call a taxi. I want the taxi to pick me up at seven o'clock, there is going to be four of us, and we are trying to go to this place. And then the taxi does not arrive, and you are calling again and again. And now it is 7:30 and now you are arriving to your destination late. Your whole evening has changed because of a situation which is completely out of your control. But there are two things that happen. Either people then say, *Well, maybe I am just going to drive my car*, which is the opposite of what we are trying to do. Or, they are actually going to say, *Well, I am not going to go out because I do not want to deal with the frustration, so I am going to have people over to my house*. Right?

Now, that's fine. But what impact is that having on our hospitality industry? Right? We have a lot of Bermudians who are working in that industry, and it is actually an important part of our workforce. So, if people are making a decision to not go out because they do not have reliable transportation to get them home safely, what impact is that having on restaurants and bars? And maybe it is an interesting piece just to know what that number is, if there has been an impact.

And specifically, on the taxi side of that, recently we went out and . . . exactly what I was referring to. Right? So you make the appointment, you go for dinner, and we had that problem in the beginning, where the taxi did not come at the right time. And then at the end of the evening when you are trying to get home, because there are not a lot of taxis out and about, so what is happening now is that there is a 45 minute [to] an hour delay at the end of the evening when everybody in the restaurant is cleaning up and trying to go home because you do not have a vehicle. The vehicle that you are expecting you cannot have access to. Obviously, that is a challenge that before,

when people did not think about it and just got in their vehicle, was not an issue that we are dealing with at the level that we are presently.

So in the conversation, with the taxi driver who actually picked us up on the way there, his comment to me was that this run that he was doing . . . he stepped in for another taxi driver. He picked us up and he dropped us to the restaurant. But during that time we had a really good conversation with him about kind of how business was going and what he was seeing in the taxi industry. And what he said was that this run that he was doing was just so that he could pay for gas, because he actually was not going to be driving that day.

Well, that is a difficult thing. Right? Because if they are supposed to be on the road for 16 hours a day, and you have a taxi driver that is pretty much telling you that [his] taxi is not going to be on the road, when you look at that number of . . . I think it is 590 taxis, is that a real number? Are all of those taxis actually being utilised at the level that they are supposed to be. So, if they are not, what you are really looking at is a much smaller number. So, now not only do you have to go out and get more taxis because we probably do not have a sufficient fleet totally, but we have to figure out how we get the taxis that are supposed to be on the roads, actually on the road.

So that is a two-part issue which, obviously, is a difficult one to deal with because you have to have some kind of system which lets you know whether these taxis are on the road. And then you have to have everybody buy in to the fact that they have to be part of that system, which is never going to be an easy subject to deal with. But, obviously, having a Green Paper that starts to discuss the fact that we need all of these options and how we are going to fix it is an important one.

Still talking on taxis, but I guess it is just transportation in a kind of overall range, both the Members from constituency 1 and 2 were talking specifically about St. George's, but I recently was in Dockyard at Bone Fish. So we are out to dinner and we are all having a good time, and it is at the end of the service time. And what happened was, there is actually a group of visitors sitting at a different table. They have called a taxi; no taxi is going to come to Dockyard at that time. There is no bus service for them. So now you actually have a group of visitors that are there, and they are stuck at one end of the Island. So what ended up happening was, after a long discussion, we took them. We drove them into town.

But in the conversation we realised that what has happened a lot of times, is that people who are working in these restaurants are actually giving these people a ride because there is no other option for them. Well, the difficulty is, does this stop people from actually going to Dockyard? And . . . you know, I mean, there are great facilities at both ends of our Island, but if we are not giving people an opportunity

to have transportation to these parts of the Island it makes it very difficult for us to support them.

There has been a bit conversation today about the addition of the Twizy, the minicars. I believe the Minister actually spoke to it on *Let's Talk*, and he spoke specifically about . . . you know, I think a lot of people are supportive of it, but there is also the frustration of you drive into town and there is a little car in a big bay, right? So there is some kind of information and some talking about what that is going to look like if you continue to increase that number.

But on the flip side of that is the safety issue. So, I know everybody here has seen a tourist on a bike who was probably given a very short kind of demo on how to ride a bike, riding around Bermuda, and you are saying to yourself, *There is no possible way this person should be on a bike*. Like, it is a danger to them; it is a danger to anybody else who is around them. And, really, what kind of experience is [it] when that person [falls] off the bike and they get the famous road rash of Bermuda? That is what they are taking back with them.

The Twizy option moves away from that. It gives them . . . because most of the time they are going to come here . . . they have driven a car. But they might not even have ridden a pedal bike for a long time. And now they are on this bike on narrow roads, not fully understanding kind of how we use our vehicles, and it puts them in a difficult spot.

Well, when you think of that concept you move it toward what we see with our young people. So, Project Ride has done a really good job of trying to prepare our young people to be on the bikes and how they can be as safe as possible and all the rest of it. But there have to be parents who are thinking to themselves, *Wouldn't it be better for me to put my child in one of these vehicles rather than have them on a bike?* Because the danger of it . . . and everybody here probably has some kind of mark on them from when they were 16, 17 years old and they came off their bike at some point.

But it is one thing if it is just a little road rash; it is another thing when you have broken something or you have injured yourself significantly worse, or obviously, the road fatalities that we are having on our roads on an ongoing basis. If we can do anything to prevent that it is important that this is what we are looking to do.

On our roads, specifically when it comes to just how people are treating our roads, I think it is important for all of us, at any opportunity we can, to just talk to young people about how they are acting on our roads. The Opposition Leader spoke to something that I personally have seen several times. Just people riding around, popping a wheelie on a public road, riding along, and it is as if they are just playing a game while there is regular traffic around them. It is a very dangerous thing to do. But they do not seem to un-

derstand that they are on a public road and it should not happen.

But it is part of a bigger issue, because you see people doing things on the road that they know they should not be doing. So, you are on your cell phone and you are driving with one hand while you are talking on the cell phone and paying attention to what is on the phone call instead of the road.

You see people riding around on a bike with their helmet undone and their cell phone shoved up inside of the helmet. The second that the cell phone shifts, they are going to grab the cell phone. It is automatic. And then they are going to come off the bike and they are going to wonder what happened.

But this is just the behaviour that has become the norm. When you see a yellow light, you run it. The person behind you actually sees a red light. Well, they are going to follow you. That is the behaviour that has become the norm instead of the exception, and the more that it is the norm, the more we have all of the accidents. And then we wonder why the fatalities are so high, and we wonder why we have more people ending up in the hospital with injuries. All of those things are adding to our health cost.

So, if we can come up with ways of trying to educate people, and trying to figure out a way to make things safer, then I think having the cams on the road that are going to test for speeding and potentially send somebody a ticket in the mail because they were running a red light or [not] having due care. I think anything we can do to try and curb that behaviour, I think we should be doing.

I guess, overall, I would say that the ideas coming from the report are important. I think you have heard from several of our Members, and I am going to echo it, the hard part is, as you have heard different people speak today, everybody has their thing that they think is important. Right? And different speakers have really honed in on what they think is important from out of this huge document. Well, I think it is important that we actually have a plan that leads to that, and information that would tell us, *Well, this is what we think the priorities are. This is what we are going to focus on first. Then, from that point, once those are achieved, potentially we are going to move on to these.*

On one hand, with our tourism product, it is going to be important that we are going to do things that are going to affect them. On the flipside of that, the safety of our citizens is also going to be a priority. So, if we can potentially have a second thought of moving from Green Paper to White Paper, so that we have an idea of what the plan is, and that we can hold everybody accountable to that plan, then I think that this is a good idea and I do not see a reason why we would not want to move in that direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to give a few remarks and with that I will take my seat.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 22. Honourable Member Pearman, you have the floor.

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

I think this debate has probably gone on longer than most people anticipated it would, but there is a considerable amount of material in the Green Paper, so with transport as our theme, let me just give a very quick whistle-stop tour of 10 specific points. And I believe I am the last speaker on our side, so we can move along after this. But first and foremost, I also thank those involved in preparing this. This is a pretty hefty document with a lot of ideas, and I commend those involved, including the Minister.

Second, I am delighted to see that this report considers the role of differently able persons. They are an element of our society who are often unheralded and perhaps do not get the due regard that they deserve, so I commend the report in that respect as well and I echo the comments made by the Honourable Member from St. George's who spoke two speakers before me.

Third, I do note that this Green Paper envisages ditching high-speed ferries and replacing them with fast ferries. For those who are looking at the report, page 36 of the report speaks to that. My understanding, and it is really just anecdotal from speaking to people who are involved in the ferries and Marine and Ports, is that this is probably a good thing. And the high-speed ferries were not very well suited to Bermuda's waters and would encounter difficulties. I do not quite know what the difference is between a high-speed ferry and a fast ferry, but no doubt we will learn if this ditching of the high-speed ferries is progressed.

I also just would pause quickly and echo the sentiments of the Shadow Minister who spoke first for us in the debate, Ms. Leah Scott, who suggested the possibility of a ferry terminal at the airport. I do not know how feasible that is. I do not know how much that would cost. But it would be a lovely and charming way for people who are first setting foot on our islands to get on board a boat to have the opportunity to go to their hotel accommodation or elsewhere.

Fourth, and this has been a sad theme from almost every speaker in this debate, and that is our collective poor driving habits. We all know [this], and yet nothing is done. I can think of only two things. One is that as a society as a whole, we need to start thinking differently. We need to start approaching life differently. It is not a race. I mean, the number of times that you are overtaken by someone, only then to be parked behind them at the next red light, it is just stupid, and people are dying. We need to think differently and encourage others to think differently.

I know that the Honourable Member, Mr. Cole Simons, spoke about how minicars may be a safety

option as well. And so I do hope . . . it wasn't quite clear from the report whether the word "not" or the word "now" was the correct word there, but if it is "not," I would invite the Minister and those involved to have a little bit of a rethink because there is a safety element here. It is not just a matter of providing . . . (I think someone referred to Twizys earlier) to our tourists, but it is also the possibility that people who are not safe or steady or accomplished or routinely accustomed to being on a bike, can travel around our Island, whether they are residents or whether they are foreigners, with a higher degree of safety. So, I think that is worth thinking about.

Fifth, as to the dark helmets, at page 72 of the report, the Government says this . . . and this is a Green Paper, I accept it is just proposals and suggestions. But it says, "the Ministry of Transport" . . . I am quoting, with your leave, Mr. Speaker, paragraph 3.7.6.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Scott Pearman: "[The] Ministry of Transport will seriously consider in light of the robberies that have taken place in broad daylight by persons wearing dark visor helmets." Well, respectfully, and I mean this criticism constructively, I think we are beyond the "seriously considering" stage. Why don't you just do something about it?

Six of ten, there is some delightful comments and support of the Railway Trail, the Tracks, as most Bermudians like to refer to them, at page 125 and 127. Again, with your leave, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Continue.

Mr. Scott Pearman: —I was quite shocked to see at page 125 of this report the fact that in a survey, and I do not know how many people participated in this survey, but some 22.59 per cent—I will repeat that, 22.59 per cent—so 23 per cent of people surveyed do not use the Railway Trail. Well, if any of them are listening, let me commend the Railway Trail, the Tracks, to them. It is probably one of the nicest opportunities to get out and see Bermuda and to get some exercise and be healthy in doing the same.

Seventh is on electric vehicles. This is an amazing opportunity for our Island. We are in the luxurious position of having a small landmass, having a relatively small population. We could, if we had the vision and the determination, be a shining beacon to the rest of the world by having electric cars, and actually, just having electric cars. And somewhere, I am sure, there is an electric car company that would love the opportunity to have Bermuda as its testing ground, or as its showcase. And so to the extent that that can happen, I would encourage it. Not just for environmental reasons, but also as an opportunity for Bermuda to be a brand in that way on the world stage. That is

dealt with at page 90 of the report, should anyone wish to look.

Eight of ten, and that is taxis. That is also dealt with at page 90, and with your leave, Mr. Speaker, paragraph 4.8.4, "Government recognizes the issue surrounding the lack of taxis at certain times of day . . ." And again, it is constructive criticism. Well, it is fine to recognise an issue, but we really need to know what is going to be done about it.

Nine of ten, is the Minister's comments on the MOU, the Memorandum of Understanding, with Rocky Mountain, the electrical fleet. That is a great idea; a great opportunity for Bermuda and hopefully we will hear more about it from the Minister when he closes. Because we have not really heard much about it since the original announcement. It would be wonderful to see Bermuda take that road.

Tenth, and finally, and this too is criticism, but I hope it is constructive criticism, and that is the fact that at page 14 of the report, it explains why this is a Green Paper, what a Green Paper is. Again, with your leave, Mr. Speaker, I quote, it is "To offer options and to pose questions . . . It is not a statement of Government policy . . ."

Many of the people who spoke earlier this afternoon have invited the Minister to rethink his opposition to providing a White Paper. And, respectfully, I think that is a good idea for two reasons. One it is that we actually know where the Government is going to go. It is not just a menu of opportunities; we know the route they are taking. But secondly, as a matter of good governance, it is sensible to have a White Paper so Bermudians know where we are going. So, with those 10 whistle-stops along the way on the transportation tour, I believe I am the last speaker for this side, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Member behind you. The Member from constituency 11. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues, and good afternoon to the people of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to start with a quote from a song [by] Jacob Miller. "Jolly Joseph" the people's transportation. The song was about—

The Speaker: I thought you were going to sing for us.

Mr. Christopher Famous: No, no, no, no, no. I will sing on Cup Match.

The Speaker: Well, you will be singing a sad song, but that's all right.

Mr. Christopher Famous: The song was about the minibuses in Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, I am going to take

a slightly different tact than everybody. I am going to start by recognising some legendary bus operators. Mr. Albert Cann, I think you may know him.

The Speaker: Somerset fellow, yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Bernard Woods, I think you may know him.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Sorry, the late Albert Cann, the late Bernard Wood.

Ms. Lydia Matthews, the first woman bus driver. Ms. Grace, another woman bus driver. And my uncle, and Mr. Neville Tyrrell's dad, the legendary Boo Brown. The great Boo Brown.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, Lillian Outerbridge. Actually, her mom was a bus driver. Lydia Matthews, that's her mom.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: You gentlemen can direct your conversation this way.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Speaker, it is very . . . maybe people do not understand, maybe they do not know this, but Bermuda is one of the few Caribbean islands that has public transportation. If you go to most Caribbean islands, there is no such thing as public transportation.

The Speaker: You jump in those little vans.

An Hon. Member: That's right.

Mr. Christopher Famous: You get it in Barbados. You get it in . . . somewhat, in Jamaica in Kingston. But outside of those islands, you are on your own. You have got to pay for private transportation. Now, there are going to be those who say, *Well, that takes a strain off of the government's budget.* But what it also does is has an impact on people's pocket. Because as we know, when you pay for private transportation, it is much higher.

So, the first question we have to ask ourselves is, Do we want to keep providing transportation for our people? The word I want to use, "affordable" transportation. The answer is yes. Then there come the critics in the budget who say, *What about the costs? We heard earlier the figures, what we are taking in, what we are paying out.* It looks kind of daunting. But let's go by the fact that we are going to continue.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that the government of the British Virgin Islands have studied our public transportation system so much that they want to come here and look at what we are doing right, what we are doing wrong, and they want to modify that for their own country which has no public transportation. People down there, after certain hours of the night, have zero chance of getting home. They have to walk. Or they have to pay almost extortion-type [fees] for taxi drivers.

So I want people to bear in mind that Bermuda is one of the few islands that has public transportation and it does come with a cost. Mr. Speaker, we heard about tourism numbers, so I am not going to go over that. But the fact is, in order to move our tourists around this Island, we need public transportation that is heavily subsidised. In order to move our people in and out of small areas like Spanish Point [and] Prospect, we need transportation. But do we need big buses? Do we need a half a million-dollar bus to do that, to carry 10, 15 people? No. So, I support the fact that we are possibility looking at public minibuses. Because that would service the areas like the St. David's, the Ferry Reaches, the Pond Hills, the Prospects, the Spanish Points, the Knpton Hills, all of those things. So these are the things that we have to be innovative with. One size does not fit all. Size does matter.

In all of this, Mr. Speaker, I hear people talk, but we have to understand. These buses do not drive themselves, at least not yet. And they sure do not fix themselves. So in all of this, we need to have skilled professionals, Mr. Speaker—skilled professionals who drive these buses and, more importantly, skilled professionals who service these buses. As we know, about 5, 10 years ago we had a problem, and even now, with these buses breaking down. So what did this Government have to do? We had to hire 10, 14 mechanics to keep our fleet up and running, or attempt to keep it up and running. We still do not have enough.

Mr. Speaker, let me move on. The ferry system, 10, 12 years ago, when Dr. Brown wanted to introduce it, we had all these people complaining. *We don't need no fast ferries. We don't need this. This is just spending money we don't need [to].*

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, yes, you remember it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I have never lived up west, never ever. But one night—

The Speaker: You lost out.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: It was your loss.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Definitely your loss.

Mr. Christopher Famous: One night a long time ago, I happened to sleep up there.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: We aren't going to ask the circumstances. You don't have to let the circumstances out.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, the car broke down. I ran out of gas.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, this is before the 24 hour gas station times.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: So, this was somewhere in Southampton, Mr. Speaker. Not quite God's country, but on its way.

So anyway, I come off the hill, Scenic Heights Pass and I am like, *Wow! All these cars. Must be an accident.* And I said, *Okay, well, I am going to ease up by Burnt House Hill.* I get by Burnt House Hill and there are just as many cars. I am deciding, do I go Middle Road [or] do I go Burnt House Hill, Middle Road? There is the same [number] of cars. So, I said, *Wow! Something must be happening in Crow Lane why cars are backed up.* I finally got to work, late. And I tell my boss, *Yes, man, there must be some accident along the way coming from west.*

So, I don't know, a couple of nights later, the same thing happened, and I am saying, *It can't be another accident.*

The Speaker: You ran out of gas two nights in a row up there? Well, well. All right.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Hey, that's what happens. The gas station was closed. What can I say?

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: So anyway, Mr. Speaker, what happened was that was when I realised this is what people from the west have to deal with every day going to and from Hamilton. And I am saying, *I could never live up west because I can't deal with this. I would have road rage every moment.*

The Speaker: It's scenic. You can enjoy the scenery coming in, you know.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Beg pardon, sir?

The Speaker: It is very scenic. You just enjoy the scenery coming down.

Mr. Christopher Famous: And I notice when you drive east, you got to wear glasses and when you drive west, you got to wear glasses. So, I don't know.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: So, what's my point, Mr. Speaker? That was the year 1995. And when they had the fast ferries put in place, I haven't tested it out, but I think the traffic load has gone down. My point, Mr. Speaker, is that whether we have fast ferries, high-speed ferries, slow-speed ferries, we need to have ferries. It is a must, so I support that.

But, again, in the midst of this, these ferries need to be maintained. We need to have adequate staff. We need to have adequate access to parts. Let's not forget the human part in this equation because these ferries do not drive themselves.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: They will not service themselves. Let me move on, Mr. Speaker.

Taxis. Mr. Speaker, I live in Friswell's Hill, five minutes from town. Five minutes. If I call a taxi right now, I would probably be waiting an hour before a taxi comes. That's ridiculous . . . ridiculous. There is no excuse. Taxis say, *Well, I don't know. I don't want to come to Friswell's Hill. People may rob me. Oh, the roads are too small for my H1 taxi.* All sorts of excuses why we cannot get a taxi. If I was sick and I needed to get to the hospital, and I called a taxi, I would probably be dead, or I would have to call an ambulance, and then we run up health insurance bills. My point, Mr. Speaker, is that I sympathise with taxi drivers because they have to work hard.

The Speaker: As long as you do not have to call Augustus, you are all right.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Well, if he comes there and I am alive then he might just keep driving. You know?

I sympathise with the taxi drivers; they have to work hard. But I do not sympathise with them parked up somewhere while Bermudians are calling looking for cabs, and you are telling me [there are] 550 on the road, and somebody on Friswell's Hill cannot get a cab? No.

Do I think we should go to Uber? No. Contrary to what the Deputy Opposition Leader says—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: You backstroke?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Okay. All right. I will check that later on.

But anyway, the Uber model cannot work in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker. The Uber model only serves Uber. Uber drivers get robbed. Taxi drivers get robbed. So what is the solution, Mr. Speaker? We heard a proposal earlier this last week for 20 actual permits with a possibility of actual 88. The taxi drivers got upset. Rightfully. Then we heard the price. On average, \$5,000. Now, if I pay \$5,000, but you paid \$100,000, you have a right to be upset. Let's be real. Because I am devaluing the value of your permit. But if your \$100,000 permit means that I am sitting myself up at Friswell's Hill waiting, I do not care how much it costs you. I really don't!

So, rightfully, Bermudians are upset when they call a taxi and they have to wait 20 or 30 minutes. Rightfully they are upset when at three o'clock, when some people have come out of places—I did not say "Place's Place, certain places—and they cannot get a taxi. Rightfully, the restaurant owners and bar owners are upset when people stop coming out because they cannot catch a taxi. So what is the solution?

The Transportation Minister, the Honourable Zane De Silva, I do not know if he convened it or he was summoned, but 400 taxi drivers met with him up at Warwick Workmans [Club] the other day.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: And he was there like in the lion's den, I would say. But he stood his ground, and he said to them, *Shout. Carry on. I'm used to this from Alaska Hall.*

But my point, Mr. Speaker, was this here. He laid down the law to them.

[He said] *Listen, I am going to give you guys time to get your act together, whether it is one group, two groups, three groups, four groups—it doesn't matter. You all have to get your act together because the people are being neglected. And if the people are being neglected, the tourists are being neglected, we have to do something. We cannot grow tourism; we cannot grow the economy if people can't get around.*

If people come here, put our pictures on Instagram, Facebook and whatever, and say 'Oh, we waited in long lines. We can't even move.' This, that and the other. That can't work! If our people in this country are upset, something is wrong. We have to do something about that.

Mr. Speaker, one night I was in St. George's. I am talking a little bit about St. George's.

The Speaker: Run out of gas again?

Mr. Christopher Famous: No, no, no, no, no. Different.

The Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I was patronising a St. George's establishment.

I got a ride down and I said, *Okay. I will catch a taxi back. I will catch the bus back.* Eleven o'clock comes and I am standing by the bus stop, no bus; 11:15, no bus; 11:45, no bus; twelve o'clock, no bus. So for one hour I stood in the bus stop. I ended up calling the taxi service. The taxi was like, *Well, I don't know. You are all the way in St. George's.* So, from the outset, they gave me no hope. I sat there until one o'clock in the morning.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: I don't even want to comment on that one.

I sat there until one o'clock in the morning waiting for a taxi. In total time, two hours, whether it was a bus or a taxi. No transportation.

The taxi guy came and said, *Yeah, man, you are lucky, man. I was at Crawl Hill so I picked up this ride.* How am I supposed to feel lucky? So I was lucky I was not abandoned? That is how the transportation system collectively makes Bermudians feel, that, after certain hours, you are lucky if you get a ride.

What if I was a young lady? Would I feel safe? I do not know. So, these are things that this Green Paper, and common sense prevailing, needs to address. Because there is no way you are going to tell me there is 400 taxis, 550 taxis, and somebody is supposed to be waiting an hour for a taxi. Whether you are five minutes from town or you are in St. George's, where are all these taxis? They are not on Front Street, they are not at Friswell's Hill, they are not in St. George's, where are they at? They are all parked?

Mr. Speaker, let me move on. I spoke about what is in the report. I am going to speak briefly about what is not in the report that should find itself in a report soon. I looked through the report and I saw nothing about the possibility of bringing in second-hand cars from Japan. Think about it, Mr. Speaker. We have a responsibility as a Government to bring down the cost of living for people. As Honourable Cole Simons says, he went to price a car, a vehicle, because his family is worried. And it was about \$50,000—\$50,000—that money could put somebody through university for two years, possibly. You could go online and you could find that same model vehicle, maybe

one or two years earlier, for \$5,000—landed in Bermuda, \$5,000—one-tenth of the cost. One-tenth!

Now, who is this going to hurt? Who is this going to help? Let's start with who it is going to help. The single mother who needs transportation to take her children around—\$5,000 for a vehicle, a reliable vehicle. The senior who is retired. [He] cannot afford \$50,000, cannot afford \$30,000. A \$5,000 vehicle could help him. Who else is it going to help? It is an industry that we could create for young entrepreneurs, who bring in second-hand vehicles, for a fraction of the cost, and are able to sell these to Bermudians. We have to think about that. We have to be outside the box. Over 10 years ago we thought outside of the box when it came to fast ferries, and look at what it has done. We have to think about that.

Now, there are going to be those who say, *Oh, but that is going to hurt the pockets of . . . who?* Who is it going to hurt the pockets of? Those who already have. Right? There are going to be those who say, *Oh, what about the import duty?* Sometimes we have to make a little sacrifice as a country to help those in need. That is not in the report. And that is something that we need to talk about.

What else am I going to talk about, Mr. Speaker? I got a video; maybe a lot of people got a video. There is a car going the wrong way at Paget stoplights. Who was in the car? Tourists. Little, small, mini rental car. I see provision in there for expanding the possibility of rental cars, those small rental cars. So my question is, Why aren't we talking about regular rental cars? In every island in the Caribbean you can rent a regular car, but not in Bermuda. Why not? Cannot use the excuse, *Oh, the tourist wouldn't know which way they are going.* They do not know which way they are going on a bike anyway. Right? We do not want tourist going back in a body bag or all bandaged all up. So why aren't we talking about regular rental cars?

Again, we have a responsibility as a Government to help young entrepreneurs start a business. They could bring in a second-hand car and use that as a rental. It might cost you over \$50,000 or \$100,000, properly insured, to start a rental car business of 10 cars. Or are we just going to let those who already have keep having more? Are we going to keep letting our tourists get these road rashes? No, we [are not]. We have to change that.

Another thing that I did not see addressed in the report was abandoned vehicles, Mr. Speaker. Abandoned vehicles fall under the Ministry of Transportation. This year and last year I had to take pictures of approximately 10 vehicles—abandoned cars, bikes—abandoned all around Devonshire, Back o' Town. These cars have just been sitting there for years in some cases. You go there, the car is ticketed, how can you ticket an abandoned car? The people ain't coming back to pay the ticket!

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: They abandoned it; it has been there for years!

Now, some may say, *There is a process.* Right. But there is also a thing called “a chassis number.” There is also a thing called “registration.” You look up a chassis number, or the engine block number, you know who that car belongs to. So if they cannot produce a bill of sale to say, *Hey, I sold that there to Cole Simons last year,* it is still your car. We need legislation that is going to fine these people because it is pollution.

Just this morning I stopped down at Parsons Road, where we took away about four abandoned cars that had been there for a year, and now there is an abandoned taxi. Then we wonder why there are no taxis on the road. One of them is down at Parsons Road abandoned. I am glad that the authorities from Transport are here now. There is a blue Toyota taxi down on Parsons Road. Please go and mark it and fine him. These are things we have to talk about.

In order to get around this Island, we need to have properly paved roads. So I thank the workers in the Ministry of Works and Engineering who are doing their best to pave the roads. I also thank the workers at Works and Engineering and the Parks Department who are keeping the roads trimmed. Because if your roads are not trimmed, somebody has got to go out wide, and somebody might be going out wide the other way, and you know what is going to happen. Two cars in the middle of the road, two vehicles in the middle in the road—we are going to get carnage.

Mr. Speaker, let me go back to something. Again, this Government has a responsibility to create employment, to create opportunities for employment. Every one of these vehicles, whether it be a bus, a ferry, a taxi, minibus, or rental car, they all require a mechanic to fix it. If those mechanics do not fix those cars, within a year they will not be able to be driven. That is a fact. If you look in the Digest of Statistics, half of the mechanics in this country are not from this country. If you go to any high school and you ask, *How many of you want to be mechanics?* Very few are going to put up their hands. Yet, five years later they will be complaining that they do not have a job. We have to be real with our people.

The Speaker: Teach them the trades.

Mr. Christopher Famous: We have to be real. We need our Bermudians to be motor mechanics. A motor mechanic can make upwards of \$100,000, if not more. If you are a marine mechanic, you are rich!

So I am thanking those who put this together, but let's not forget there are things that supplement our transportation situation here. Let me reiterate, Mr. Speaker. We are one of the few Caribbean islands that have public transportation. We will continue to be

one of those islands. Other islands are looking at us for examples, and we have to use that and instil pride in our people in our public transportation system. There are going to be those who, *Oh, the buses smell like this . . . Oh, the buses are dirty.* But they still catch the bus, right? Ask them, *Do you want to pay \$5.00 for the bus or do you want to pay \$30 for a taxi?* They will catch the bus, right?

So I say this, Mr. Speaker: I am not going to be like the Opposition and say we need a White Paper, because I have faith in my Government that Green Paper, White Paper . . . no paper—that recommendations are going to be taken and action is going to be taken that these things will be done. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I know that there is some level of discontent by our bus operators, but I want to thank them for their service. They have a right to stand up for what they need, not necessarily what they want, but what they need.

And there is another thing that needs to be considered, Mr. Speaker. We have parents that say, *I am willing to pay money for my child to go to school on the bus.* It might be a dollar. It might be fifty cents. But they are willing to pay. So, in closing, Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Department of Transportation, thank you to those who wrote this, thank you to those who provide public transportation—the bus drivers, the ferry drivers, [and] the mechanics who service them. Thank you to the taxis and thank you to Jacob Miller. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other . . . oh, Deputy Speaker. You have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, a letter was written to the editor some years ago and it was signed by a taxi driver. That taxi driver said that if 70 per cent of the taxi drivers, taxis, were on the road 10 hours a day, we would not have a problem.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I tend to believe that that statement is still correct. It may be out a few points, but I think it is correct.

Mr. Speaker, at one time we had 600 taxis, now we got 44 less. I am not sure why that is. But, Mr. Speaker, I think we have some good investors driving taxi. And then I think for some reasons a lot of them do not drive at night-time, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to have strict legislation in place to protect our taxi drivers, particularly from the unsocial behaviours that some have encountered over the years. I think it is what has led many of them to not drive certain hours in the night or during the day—not the day, but particularly in the night-time. And some do not

drive in certain areas because of this here. So I think that we have to protect them with very strict, mandatory sentences. That if you harm or attempt to harm a taxi driver in his duties as a person trying to make a living, and particularly if they have a family—

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: —then you need to face the stiff arm of the law, the very strict arm of the law.

Mr. Speaker, also, many years ago when you had [William] “Cheese” Ray and Malcolm Terceira own taxis, they owned a lot of taxis, and those taxis were on the road at least 16 hours a day. But they controlled them in a way that we do not do today. They had locks on the gas tank tops. So you had to go to their gas station to fill up.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That is what they did.

So, those taxis, they operated at a time when we had 10,000 hotel beds. We had many tourists here and so that is how . . . and we did not have the problem that we have today. Now we have 5,000 hotel beds, still the same number of taxis (minus the 44) and we have got problems. In addition to that, we have the minicabs.

So I think what we have to do, we have to protect our drivers with legislation so when they are out there, they know that if anyone is trying to rob them, or whatever, that they are well protected under the law with mandatory sentences and mandatory fines. So I think that is something that taxi drivers should never ever face, or anyone, when they are out there trying to make a living and feed their families, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that in one of the reports it says that they want to increase the taxi rates by allowing Rate 3 to start at 10:00 [pm] instead of midnight. I do not know if that is the way we should go when we compare our taxi rates to other parts of the world. You know, right now we pay \$2.75 per mile. Even places like the Bahamas, they charge \$1.60 a mile. That is one of our competitors in the tourism industry. But ours, when I look at the report they have here, ours is the most expensive. And so I think we have to be very careful on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I sympathise with the Minister for Tourism when he says they give 20 extra permits. I understand that. Mr. Speaker, I think it was about two Saturdays ago we had a cruise ship in, and this was after 1:00. I got a (what do you call it?) WhatsApp picture. Tourists were waiting for transportation. There were no buses. No minibus. No taxis. On a Saturday. Mind you, many of the taxi drivers are Christian. Some go to church on Saturdays and some go Sundays. But we should not suffer because, as in the past, as I said

earlier, the Terceira and the Cheese Ray taxis, they were on the road seven days a week. But we have to find a way to make it comfortable for taxi owners to let someone drive their car, because, at present, if they drive and they mess up, they are on that particular taxi's insurance. Maybe we need to think about having an insurance for drivers, other than the owner, so that whoever the driver is, and if they have an accident, that that driver's insurance would be responsible.

So we can sit here and say, *Taxis should be on the road 16 hours, 12 hours*. But I think if a lot of us faced the situations that they have, we might think and say things different, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to dress code, I do not think that the dress code is strictly adhered to. We need to have people who are driving taxis adhere to the dress code. And I am not sure if we have a dress code for minibus drivers, and if we don't, we need to put one in, because we cannot expect taxi drivers to have a dress code and minibus [drivers] do not. The bus operators, they have a dress code. The uniforms are provided as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Mr. Speaker. So we definitely have got to do some things to help our taxi drivers to do better and also feel comfortable that if they rent their taxi out to a driver, that they are covered, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the . . . and again, right now I know the law does not say this, it says the taxi should be on the road 16 hours. I really think that is even long even if you have another driver because that is a lot of wear and tear on that taxi. But I do not think taxis have to be on the road 16 hours. I think, like the taxi driver wrote some years ago, that if 70 per cent of them operated for 10 hours a day, we would be okay, Mr. Speaker.

Now, even though we have 5,000 hotel beds as opposed to 10,000 years ago, we have more tourists in the cruise ship tours. So we have to accommodate them. And we have done that because we have got these minibuses, we have got quite a few minibuses on the road. There are 147 minibuses on the road as compared to 1999 when there were seven. And let me say that the minibuses that we had on the road in [1999], they were from ASB. That little, probably, eight-seater; they were small ones. And they had maybe one or two bigger buses. They carried maybe about 30 passengers. So, with all the minibuses that we have on the road, taxis, the 556 taxis, we should be able to provide adequate transportation to those who need it. So I will be with the Minister with everything he does to try to improve that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's go on to the bus operators. I can tell you, we have got some good bus operators in this country. When you look at our safety records, our safety records are probably amongst the best in the world. I say that because if you look . . . well, we know the size of our roads. They are very narrow. So you got to be on the ball when you are driving those buses. You know, you are manoeuvring

the whole time . . . unlike if you are on a big highway, you can relax a little bit. But in Bermuda, at least 90 per cent of the time of your route on the road from Somerset to Hamilton, or vice versa, you got to be on the ball. You have got to be all hands on deck because of the size of the roads. And [consider] the number of other vehicles that we have on the road, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we got . . . what? 48,000 vehicles on the road. That is a lot, almost 49,000. And, Mr. Speaker, we have not had any new roads in over 30 years. I think the last addition to our roads was Palmetto Road, parts of Palmetto Road. And that was probably over 30 years ago. And we do not have any land for any more roads. So, we are not going to get any more roads. So we have to . . . you know, we got to be careful.

Now, a lot of our roads that are constructed today are taking a beating. They are falling in because of the heavy vehicles. When those roads were constructed years ago, they were not designed to carry the heavy vehicles that we have today. That was proven just out by . . . is it Marsh Folly? Just before you get to where the pond used to be. Well, the road caved in a couple of years ago, maybe five, six, seven years ago. And when it was dug out to repair it, there was no rod in there. No rod whatsoever. So you got a lot of these roads that we have today that weren't constructed . . . I guess in those days they did not think that we would have the heavy vehicles that we have today. I just hope the Bailey Bridge and the rest of them will hold up until we are able to fix [them].

And then again, when they even used the asphalt on the roads, you know, that . . . when you have that heavy equipment, the thickness [of] the asphalt, all that has to be taken into consideration. So it is a lot of expense, when you have these heavy vehicles, to the taxpayer. So, it is a challenge here, Mr. Speaker.

Now, just like the taxi driver, I think our bus operators need the protection . . . because there have been some incidents where you have folks come on the bus with weapons. And, just like taxi drivers, we have female drivers also. It just makes it worse. And some of these folks are rude. So I think the legislation that I would certainly discuss with my colleagues that needs to be put in is, again, mandatory strict imprisonment when you mess with somebody when they are trying to earn a living for their family.

And, Mr. Speaker, our bus system is very, very expensive. It is, in my opinion, too expensive, too costly, for us. We are trying to run a Rolls-Royce schedule on a Toyota budget, Mr. Speaker. I think presently if we want to run by the schedule that we have in place, we need about, I guess, between 85 and 90 buses. Well, I think that is too much for Bermuda. I think we need to have a schedule, one for what I call off-season, when we do not have the cruise ships, and I think that [we need] anywhere from 60 to

65 buses [on that] schedule. And then when [the tourists] are here, probably 70 to 78 buses on the road.

But I am not suggesting that we need to take and get another schedule. What I think needs to happen is you cut and paste. Because right now you have buses leaving town during rush hour, with not even 10 passengers on board. We should be able to fix that. And then I am seeing, I think within an hour and a half, five buses leaving St. George's going to St. David's [with] not many people on those buses. To me, that does not make much sense. So, I think we need to do some cutting and pasting and get the system right. We do not need to go and pay a whole lot of money for another new schedule, just cut and . . . they would know what to pull out and what to keep in, Mr. Speaker.

And then there is a lot of discussion about bus fares, we gave bus . . . yes, our Government, and proudly we did, gave free bus routes to students, and all my friends who are over 65. Well, I certainly think we should leave what we did for our friends over 65. And I think there should be some modifications [for] students. I think students should be free up until 4:30. And if after 4:30 they pay half price, half price of an adult schedule, of adult fare, because a lot of students come into town, and they are on the bus. That bus is taking our folks back home. And they cannot get a seat. They are free.

Now, Ms. Smith has laboured all day. And she cannot get a seat. They are not like when you came up, Mr. Speaker, many years ago, that if a lady got on the bus, we got up. And I would encourage even today, as our parents, to teach our children, when a lady or an elderly person gets on the bus, you get up and give them a seat. In my country, the UK—

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I think it is the first five seats.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, my place in the back there.

But the first five seats on both sides of the bus are reserved for seniors, pregnant women and the physically challenged. And it is not a problem. You get on the bus, everybody, they leave it. And if they have to get up, then they give a seat. That is what we used to be like years ago when you were coming on, Mr. Speaker. You are much older than me; you know that.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: So, we have to get back to that. Because even though I am happy to say I had that word with the former Minister and the present Minister about marking our seats, the first three

to five seats on each side of the bus for seniors, pregnant women and the physically challenged. And it is done. He showed me the picture this morning. They were not on every bus, because sometimes I ride the bus, and they are not on every bus. And I am hoping that it is on every bus now.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes. I have seen it. So, it should be put on every bus. But we have got to get back to that culture where we respect our elders.

But our children only do what we tell them to do or what they see us doing. I remember one time I was in Barbados, Honourable Member Kim Swan and I. We were at a CPA meeting [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association], and we went downtown, and we caught the bus back to the hotel. We went to the terminal, caught the bus. The bus was full. And, you know, good Christian boys like we were, are, when ladies got on, we got up and gave them a seat. People were looking at us like we were crazy. I said, *Well, Kim, I guess I'll have to be crazy, because I'm going to give this lady a seat. That is what we do. That is how I was brought up.*

Even today at my young age, I get up if I am on the bus and a lady gets on, I give her a seat. That is what you are supposed to do.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: That is what you are supposed to do; regardless of if that lady is 30 years old or 65 years old. That is what we did. We got up. In school, we got up for the girls who caught the school bus! That is what we did during high school. Young boys got up for the girls, the young ladies. And, you know, I am proud to have done that. That is how I was taught. And I think we have got to start teaching our children.

But back to the fares, Mr. Speaker. I think we have got to look at the fare system for students. I think students, all students, should be free Monday to Friday. After 4:30, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays and summer holidays, they should be paying half price of an adult fare. Because, you know, Mr. Speaker, the cost, the cost to run these buses is very, very expensive. It has gotten better from the 1999 pricing. But it is nowhere near what it should be today, because back in 1999 the cost was 40 per cent. And that is the revenue and cost ratio. But today, 2017/18, it is 26 per cent. But that is still high, Mr. Speaker, because we are footing the bill of about \$30 million. Yes. In fact, the revenue for buses was \$6.4 million. The expenditure was \$21.7 million—much too high, 29, almost 30 per cent! And the ferries were 78 per cent.

But, Mr. Speaker, I read about what it cost to run the ferries. We have got to look at cheaper ferries, and that is what we are doing, because in order to

alleviate the congestion on our roads, we only have one choice—the water. So, we have to look at that and make sure that we have the facilities and where the ferries can park and pick up if you want to stop the congestion.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me go back to our token. Right now, I think we have got it wrong. Mr. Speaker, we have got it wrong, because if an adult orders a token for [the] 14-zone, it would cost you \$5, cash, or \$4.50 in a token. But that is not so bad. But if you purchase a booklet of tickets, of 15, your fare one way is like \$2.50. It is cheap. It is a giveaway.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Yes, it is a giveaway, very cheap. We cannot afford to . . . and I am not trying to put expense on everybody, because we are putting expense on the taxpayer right now, right? But we have to fix that, that part of it. We have got to make that . . . because if a token—it is cheaper to get a token than to pay cash. And that is fine. We have got to bring the . . . If you buy a booklet of 15, we have got to make it a little, just a little higher than it is. Because we are giving it away, and we cannot even cover our expenses on that.

And then in one comment and thoughts in this here, they said about introducing two fares, one for the tourist and one for Bermudians. I could never be in agreement with that, Mr. Speaker. I do not like it. I know that in some parts of the world, I am told that it is a price for tourists and it is a price for the locals. And I have never heard of that in Bermuda, and I hope it never happens. It is one price for all in Bermuda. If it is two prices in Bermuda, then it is news to me. But I think we just need one price, one price for all. Because why would we charge a tourist more than a local? What are you expecting, for a tourist to pay for everything? We have got to pay for something, too. So, I do not agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

(One second, Mr. Speaker.) And then, I think with what they have done with the tourist . . . no, not tourist, but the sightseeing buses, they gave that to the minibuses. That is \$1 million in revenue that we do not take in anymore, Mr. Speaker. So, I think we have to . . . I do not know if they can go back and do that. But we have got to look at that.

And then, there is a concern. I know it is a concern, and it is this report, about lights on cars, LED lights. Some, particularly seniors, have a problem with those lights at night-time. I see in the report you can buy what they call *night glasses* that will cut down that glare. I know it would be very difficult to—I do not know. I am saying it would be, but I really do not know. Let me take that back. If we can get the proper lights or what we call the proper lights on our cars, with these small roads, narrow roads, we can never be compared to those big countries, and that is what

they use out there. So far, they are not very good for us here in Bermuda.

And then, I see in the report about some of the cyclists riding the Hellman with the headphone on and talking on the phone—not very good. Not very good at all. You cannot be at your best—you are riding that bike with all the traffic that we have and talking on the phone—and still maintain safety. That is not the way it should go.

Mr. Speaker, one thing I am glad about, and it happened under the previous Government, the introduction of minicars for our tourists. I like that. I get a little nervous sometimes when I see tourists, particularly older tourists, riding bikes. But with the cars, to me they seem safer for them. And with that, you know, I certainly applaud that. I like that, and to me I would not let many tourists over a certain age right the bike. I would put a rule to that. And they can do the car. But I would not want them to have the bike. You know, they should have the minicar. They look very comfortable in there. So, I think that is the way we should go with that, Mr. Speaker.

Before I sit, Mr. Speaker, let me check one other thing before I sit. I think I have got everything that I intended to say today, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

Does any other Member?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 26.

Honourable Member Tyrrell.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: How are you this evening?

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: I will try not to delay things too much.

The Speaker: Well, I would like to hold you to that.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: But I certainly feel compelled to support the Minister in this Green Paper. I think it is a well-done document, and I certainly give kudos to whoever else assisted, the technical officers and everyone else.

Mr. Speaker, let me start off. I have a few points. I will say that most of the points I would like to have covered have been covered. And I will only mention them for the sake of my constituents who mentioned them to me. So, those ones I will mention. But let me start with a quote. And it might have to start with a bit of thought for some of us. "You can't understand a city without using its public transportation." That is where I will start, Mr. Speaker. It will sink in eventually.

Mr. Speaker, transport is really one of the many drivers of the Bermuda economy, and that is no

pun intended. It is one of the drivers of our economy because it gets people from A to B. And if they do not get from A to B and back again, then, you know, they are not able to work. They are not able to come into town and that sort of thing. And that is whether it is public or private transportation. And I certainly feel that there should be a smooth connection between the two. And I think the Green Paper is speaking to it, with neither side having a disadvantage. They should be able to co-exist. And I think that is what I get from reading as much as I have done of this Green Paper. And I certainly applaud, as I said, those persons for doing this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it has been far too long a love/hate relationship between the stakeholders when it comes to transportation, whether it be the users, the operators, owners, we as Government. You know, we have all taken a stake, and that is both governments. So, it has not just been this Government presently. And there have been several attempts to try and sort out our transportation woes, if I can call them that. In fact, I can remember sometime, I think it was 2005 when the then Minister of—no, 2012 that time when the then Minister of Transport had asked me to head a committee to look into some of the taxi woes at that time. So, you know, everyone has had an attempt at doing that.

Which leads me to say that there is really nothing new under the sun. You know, it has all happened before. And throughout every consultation process, and even this one included, there seem to have been three areas of main concern. And they seem to have been, again, highlighted in this Green Paper. The three main ones are *safety*. Everyone wants to know that, you know, they are safe on the roads. They want *reliability*, because, as I said, people want to get from A to B, and they need to know that they want to get there on time and back safely, as well. And of course, there is always the desire for *frictionless transport experiences*, which again the report speaks to.

I certainly would like to know that we have a reliable bus service. I know right now we are having some challenges with the schedules. We seem to have come to the end of the mechanical problems, or at least arriving to the end of those problems. And I would hope that we can sort out that scheduling problem very soon.

The taxi service, we seem to have always had this issue. One of the things is that taxi owners consider themselves independent businessmen, of course. And they feel that they should run their business the way they [want to]. But they need regulation, and they need, obviously, to adhere to the regulations that . . . and for that, I think we need traffic enforcement. It needs to be stepped up.

Certainly, in terms of bad driving, I mean, Mr. Speaker, some of the driving on our roads today is just frightening. I can certainly say that on a daily ba-

sis, I have the pleasure of taking my grandson to school every morning. And he and I, that is our bonding time. And when I drop him off, I leave up west, and I take him down to Devonshire. But the woes start when I come back. Because I am going down with the main flow of traffic, as most of the traffic is going from west into town. But when I am coming back, I am coming back almost on a road that is clear.

But the danger is that third lane. Mr. Speaker, it is really becoming frightening coming back, because there are a few turns in the road. And I come around a bend, and I see a cyclist in the middle of my lane. And I am saying, *You know, come on now*. And obviously, he is expecting me, I guess, to go over. But somebody . . . you know, he is coming at a speed where he has put himself in danger. I say he or [she]. And sometimes it is not just the young. It ranges. The ages range all over.

We also certainly need to modernise our transportation system. It has been mentioned that we have something like 48,000 vehicles on the road. And we need to adhere to some of the road rules. And it is not like when I certainly learned how to drive, or I was taught when I went to the [Bermuda] Tech under an English learning/driving something. And it told me about all the rules of the road and that sort of thing, which is fairly similar to something else I am going to talk about, Project Ride, as I get in further on the points.

In my study in looking through this report, I just happened to say, *I wonder how many dispatch systems are in Bermuda?* And I looked in the phone book, and I saw at least five different dispatch companies. I am saying like if we have, or we think we have like 550, short of 600 anyway, taxis on the road, or supposed to be on the road, having five dispatch companies to me seems to be like an overkill maybe. And something centralised needs to be done. In an island 21 square miles, I am sure that we can do something.

I certainly like the idea of trying to get the taxi drivers to accept credit cards, because I certainly have had persons, whether they be tourists or even locals, using the taxis and have no cash. But they have cards. And someone mentioned a really serious situation where the person did not have any cash at all. And the taxi driver seems to have gotten a bit upset about it. But I believe that it is now the time that our taxi drivers look at having the credit card system in there.

Mr. Speaker, if I could refer to page 59 of the report, which talks about wheelchair access vehicles. I like the term “differently abled persons.” I do believe that we have not serviced that population well enough. My colleague, MP Furbert, went into great detail telling us about the needs of that population. I really think that this is something that we need to look at. They need to get about just as much [consideration] as we able-bodied persons, if I could use that term.

Now, I am going to go onto one of my pet peeves, on page 119, which talks about Project Ride. Now, I mentioned that when I—it has been some time ago. When I learned how to drive even, as I said, I was put in a training which is similar to what the police training, driving instructions, give. And as I said, we had that ability up at Bermuda Tech. The problem with, I think, our school students taking Project Ride—it is good because they are all passing and that sort of thing. But, Mr. Speaker, you watch them on the road. Coming down between eight and nine in the morning, when I am coming back up South Shore Road, and I see the ties, so I know which schools we are talking about. They are like a crazy bunch. You know, I hate to use that term, but I do not think they are applying the Project Ride principles on the road.

And I appeal to parents to instil in their children that if they are on the road, they have a responsibility. Those machines that they ride, they may not be that quick. But if they hit a 3,000-pound vehicle coming at them, you know who is going to win that one, simply.

Another one of my issues, Mr. Speaker, is those dark visors that the riders use. Now, there is always good and bad for everything. I mean, for those who need the glare cut, the dark visors are, obviously, the thing for them. But I believe some of these riders who wear those dark visors believe they must have some protection built in that stops them from getting hurt on their bikes, because they are some of the crazier ones. And you can tell by the way they are coming at you that they are looking right at you. You can tell. You probably cannot see their eyes, but you can tell by the shape of the head that they are looking at you as if, *You had better move*. And I cannot—I just cannot understand how this is really happening. So, I do not know the solution to the wearing of dark visors. But I certainly feel that this is another one of our problems on the road that needs to be curbed.

As I said, our driving habits have just like gone out the window. I mean, you take, for instance . . . first of all, no one drives at 20 miles an hour now. I know it. I do not. Because the cars in front of me are moving, at least, and I am talking kilometres now, 40–45. The car behind me is right up on my bumper. So, you know, somehow or the other you have to measure your distance between the cars. And the normal speed right now, obviously, seems to be somewhere between 45 [kph] to 50 [kph]!

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: So, you know, and my honourable colleague says, *It's because the police don't stop*. So, therefore, they are getting leeway. Next it is going to be 60. Pretty soon, it is going to be 60 [kph]. That is going to be the norm of driving on the road, which is going to make it even more congested with 48,000 vehicles on the road. So, I certainly think that

penalties need to be looked at. If TCD are going to do a review of the driving rules, I certainly think that they need to look at the penalties, as well.

My next point that I want to talk about concerns the Railway Trail. On page 126, there was a question asked about the use of the Railway Trail. And it did not seem as if it was such a high percentage of people who actually use it. And I am a little surprised, because I am a proponent of using the Railway Trail for exercise, in terms of walking, pedal biking from . . . because I think Warwick has one of the best structured railway areas in our area. And I use it a lot because I come off the hill from my house, and I either go west or east. I see my colleagues laughing. Yes, I do go out on my bike occasionally, pedal bike, that is.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Yes. All right. I will take your point.

And I certainly take the point where the Minister in his brief said that the Government “will continue to assist with the work of the Friends of the Railway Trail by taking on the maintenance and repair of each new connection and . . . the landscaping of the Trail as a whole.” I certainly commend them in that, because I certainly again am making an appeal for a portion of the Railway Trail in my area, which is Warwick, that probably needs some attention at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have maybe two more points that I wanted to bring up. I do believe that this document is work in progress. So, a lot of the things that my colleague, Honourable Famous, mentioned that are not in the report, I am sure are things that they can now have another look at, or have a look at. So, I certainly feel that there is much to do about this. And it is a work in progress.

Mr. Speaker, there is a point that talked about public ferries, on page 31. And I am not being pedantic about it, so I want to actually read it, if you do not mind, page 31, the Public Ferry, yes. That is also, “How frequently do you use the [public] Ferry?” There were like 20 per cent of people who said that they never use the public ferry. Well, again, I would like to encourage some of my people to go out. It is probably one of the best stress relievers that I know of right now in terms of just getting on the water. I will drive my car into Hamilton, find a spot, of course, a parking spot, and take the ferry and just go to Dockyard. Take my grandson with me and just have a good time. And you are seeing some of the best areas, points of interest, in Bermuda. And it is a very relaxing opportunity. So, I would certainly encourage persons to use it.

But there was also another point that came to my attention, where the report talks about putting handrails near public ferries. Well, that I definitely applaud. But I am going to say that I have been asking for a handrail near one of the bus stops in my area.

And I would hope that maybe that could be looked at, as well. And that fact is on page 36. So, I will actually go right to it, as I have the number here. It is “1.2.3.4. The Ministry of Transport is supportive of installing handrails at ferry stops and erecting more signage where possible and necessary.”

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that there are some of the bus stops near that need handrails, as well, because I certainly had a concern from one of my constituents, who gets off the bus on South Shore Road. They are going down to Warwick Lane. And there are steps there. But she is like 80-something, and she would feel a lot more comfortable if there was a rail. I am making an appeal, Mr. Speaker. I have probably gone through the proper channels, yes. But I am also making the appeal here.

Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that Project Action, which offers some free transportation for seniors, which is used for Bermudians traveling to and from their dialysis appointments, is something that, you know, we want to support, as well. And I understand they are celebrating 20 years of being in that sort of business.

Mr. Speaker, I think those are the points that I really wanted to bring to our attention. As I said, those are the ones that were put to me by my constituents. And I felt that I was obliged to bring them. But let me end with another quote that I found as I was doing my research. And it says, “Bicycles are the most efficient vehicles on the planet, 50 times more efficient than cars and twice as efficient as walking.”

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, it has been 72 years since the introduction of automated transportation in our fair Island. It mirrors with the same period of years that is now being celebrated and was particularly celebrated yesterday, June the 6th, with the commemoration of the Normandy landings. Interestingly, though, the connection between the Second World War and transportation on our Island does have some links. It was after the world war that the introduction of automated cars was introduced into our little Island after the abandonment of the 1931 to 1941 experiment with railway travel in our Island.

And I just looked at the googled history on the history of the Railway Trail. And it was described as the costliest transportation experiment ever in our history, possibly in other transportation histories, of around \$40 million, based on 2008 prices, \$40 million to build a 21-mile single-gauge line between Somerset and St. George's to carry freight and passengers.

But today, 72 years later, we are examining what has grown into a rather large change from the few cars that began to be regulated by the 1947 Road Traffic and Motor Car Acts of the day, the few cars that were being introduced into the Island in that era. And an examination, just a short examination of the legislative references in the report by the Honourable Transport and Tourism Minister documents that the Road Traffic legislation and the Motor Car legislation all begin in 1947.

And you can just imagine that, at that time, with the number of cars that first became registered in our country, things went along rather genteelly. There were not many cars. There were not many policemen chasing speeding drivers. There were not many traffic offenders appearing in the courts for driving in excess of the speed limit, or driving whilst under the influence of alcohol, or driving without a licence or insurance. But typically, as our history progressed, as in all matters, we start seeing the need to better regulate the uptick and usage of cars and motorbikes and auxiliary cycles and motorcycles. And the legislation reflects just these kinds of developments.

Mr. Speaker, the taxi industry has a history of the very noble taxi. It has been used to educate families, support families, educate children, build homes. It has a noble history, Mr. Speaker, of being a business, a business that was incorporated by many, many of our men and women of the 1940s, the 1950s. And as the industry, the tourism industry became more pronounced, the taxi integrated into that industry. And then there was the ordinary Bermuda hack who used his or her taxi to transport and respond to the local demands for moving and transporting our residents.

And its noble history of building families—Radnor Road was built on the back of the taxi, the noble taxi, and many other parts of our country. And kids returning home from school would drive mom's or dad's taxi to fund the remainder of their school year. The taxi, as I say, has . . . and it is the reason, I believe, that it becomes such a passionate, emotive discussion when it comes to making changes to it, as we seek and as we inevitably must do. It becomes a challenge to do it because of this deep and abiding history that the taxi has had.

Contrastingly, too, the motor car industry has an equally noble history. The taxi industry, on the one hand, had a huge placement in the black community as a black business asset. Certainly, the motor car industry, Bermuda Motors, largely the Gibbons family, after 1947 have seen that this history has grown into an industry which has been extremely beneficial and profitable as an industry, a burgeoning industry, to supply private vehicles and trucks and motorbikes to a modern Bermuda.

So, both histories of the taxi and the motor car have been important in our country. And they both have had a role in organising wealth and wealth being built around these two industries.

There was a time when the taxi was capable, as I was indicating, of supporting the family. But the question to ask today is whether the millennial, new taxi operator can do it. The answer, I think, is an emphatic no. And the answer, this answer I give really finds many of its, much of its evidence in some of the things we have been discussing, Mr. Speaker, about the cost of living in our country. So, once upon a time, the taxi was able to cause men and heads of families to start their homes, start a family, support a family, pay for the education for their children.

Today I do note that, because the cost of everything, the cost of living has gone up, it is becoming a greater challenge. And whilst I have noted that Minister De Silva has itemised in the analysis of his report the cost of the permits and the cost of operations we have heard discussed here today, today the challenge of financing the \$100,000 permit at the bank is a little more challenging than it was in the opening gambit, the opening bat of this taxi industry. And so, I would commend for the consideration of the House, as we examine this Green Paper, and certainly for the Minister and his team, that this be a factor that we list and take into account how we may assist with this whole question of how banks, for example, rate lending for borrowing for the taxi permit.

Now, you know, really, the banks do the usual risk assessment for this \$100,000. And they make sure that the debt-to-income ratios are all working. But I have encountered the banks' concern about bringing into the mix whether the taxi will earn throughout the shoulder season what is meant to be an un-risked income from that vehicle during the shoulder seasons, versus its being perfectly agreeable to the lenders, the bankers, during the high season. But it is a challenge which I invite the Minister to put into the mix in consideration, how some members and operators of taxis face these challenges and whether there can be some consideration given as to assist the taxi operators managing the whole question of funding a taxi permit in a modern Bermuda.

Well, I am glad to see that the Minister is ready to make a wind-up of this important debate on transportation. And, Mr. Speaker, with that I take my seat.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member, for your contribution.

And, Minister, I believe you are the last speaker at this point. Would you like to do your wrap-up at this point?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, I would, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank all Members for participating. Transportation in the country is going to be very, very important, going forward. As you will know, we have increased our cruise ship visitors over the past several years, with yet an-

other increase expected for this year. We continuously work hard with regard to the airlines and the air lift to the country. And we have a team that is working on that, I would say almost *daily*, Mr. Speaker. It is a challenge with regard to airlines coming to Bermuda. It is not the profitable route unless your airline is named BA, or Delta coming out of Atlanta. But it is a challenge.

The Speaker: You do not want to do anything to help with the cost.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And as we continue to try to increase our visitors to the Island, whether it be through cruise or air, the transportation issue will continue to be just that, a challenge. I think the steps spoke to it very well where we were in 1999 in terms of the tourists we had and in terms of the available transportation that we had. So, I think that spoke volumes as to where we are.

But there have been some good suggestions today by all Members. And I appreciate their contributions and feedback. There are a few other people I would like to thank, Mr. Speaker, none other than the Deputy Premier, Mr. Walter Roban, because this project started under his watch. And I am happy to say that it gives me great pleasure in being the one to bring the final version here to this House.

But there are also some other people, Mr. Speaker, that I think, whilst I am in the thank-you mode, I would like to thank all of my colleagues who sit on this side of the House for their contributions over the past six months.

And in the House today, we have Ms. Stacey Evans, from the Ministry of Tourism and Transport, who did, I must say, most of the heavy lifting. She did a lot of the research, a lot of the writing, a lot of the interviews, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So, I would like to thank Ms. Evans for her hard work and her stick-to-it-ness, because it was not an easy task.

I think the Permanent Secretary told me, when I was talking to her one day, I think she said that this is the 14th version, something like that. So, that is how many versions they actually went through. And I would certainly like to thank my Permanent Secretary, Ms. Aideen Ratteray Pryse, for all of the work that she has done.

Mr. Gilbert Rowling, from the Policy Unit, collated all of the survey results. And there were many, as you know, almost 20,000. Honey Adams, of course, from the Department of Communications, who assisted with those surveys. Julie Marshall, Department of Planning, she assisted. Creative Service, for the final product, which was not an easy task, either, Mr. Speaker. And last, but not least, Theresa Ince, my secretary, for doing a lot of the reviewing and proof-reading and formatting. And it certainly was no easy task, Mr. Speaker. So, I do thank them all for what

they accomplished; and [they] accomplished a major feat indeed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, and for those who asked for and requested, I will declare my interest. As you know, I do have a container hauling company. I have a trucking company. I have a tire business. I am just trying to think if I need to cover anything else whilst I am making a declaration.

An Hon. Member: Do you have any bicycles?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, I do not have any bicycles.

An Hon. Member: You are a Liverpool supporter.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I am a Liverpool supporter, Mr. Speaker. I say it just in case.

The Speaker: Too bad. Too bad.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So, but of course, Mr. Speaker, let us put that to bed.

But I must say that it is interesting because, who was it who said that if you do not have a conflict in Bermuda, then—

An Hon. Member: You are in conflict.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —you are in conflict?

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But a couple of things, you know, I would like to touch on, Mr. Speaker. And there were several questions. And I will try to cover as many as I can. But there was a question from MP Scott Pearman with regard to dark visors and what we plan on doing with that. And I think he had some questions about the importers. But we will talk to the importers.

You know, it is not like we are going to ban them overnight. We know that people are in business. We will deal with that. It is no different than if we decided in this House that we are going to eliminate all fossil fuel vehicles by 2030 or 2025. If we decided we are going to make this Island entirely electric, we are not going to do it overnight. So, we will have consultation. We will think about it. We will talk to the people in the industry. And if I have to lay down a marker, that is one that I will lay down. That is something that we are going to consider in the future, in the near future, setting a timeline where we are going to set an example, hopefully, for the world. So, that was that, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member Trevor Moniz had a few questions. He wanted to know the cost of high speed versus fast ferry. High speed ferries are \$11

million; fast ferries are \$7 million. And, of course, they burn less fuel. So, we will be looking at that very seriously in the near future, as we are now.

There is a question: What are we doing about the time frame for student bus service, and how many buses will be needed? It has been estimated that we need approximately 20 buses to accomplish that feat. Of course, the challenge we have right now is with buses in general. But, hopefully, in the near future, we will have an announcement on that, too.

I think the Honourable Member Trevor Moniz also asked about organising minibuses. Well, we are in the process right now of drafting instructions for minibus regulations, and we anticipate that this will be laid in this House before the year is over, Mr. Speaker.

And there was some talk about the bus schedule. And again, Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is any secret—the bus schedules have been a challenge. You know, there is no way that you are going to get 20 people in a four-seater taxi, are you? You are not going to have that happen. It is not going to happen. So, that is the challenge we face. You cannot get a square peg in a round hole unless you trim the edges. So, I think that is well documented. It is certainly my intention to resolve the issue with regard to the bus challenge that we have. I have said it before, and I will say it again tonight: If I have my way, it will be sorted and sorted as quickly as we can. But I am working on that, and I hope to have some news soon.

The grey schedule, there were, I think, a couple of questions on the grey schedule. And the grey schedule is used . . . maybe it was about the overtime, I think, maybe, someone wanted to know what we are spending on that. But the grey schedule is part of the overall service. The overtime is paid as needed. So, as we work it, the overtime is paid.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Point of—

The Speaker: Point of order?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Sure.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: —clarification?

The Speaker: Clarification? Okay.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes. I wanted to know why we have a grey schedule, the number of bus drivers who drive it, when the schedule actually occurs, and do they get compensated for driving it?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you. Thank you, Opposition Deputy Leader.

Why do we need it? Because sometimes, we just have to juggle the schedule. And overtime is required. And the 1998, the old schedule, is insufficient to meet the 2019 requirements. So, without the grey schedule, it is going to be a challenge. They call it the grey schedule, and I think it is more for explanation purposes. It is like the night train or the night run that we were talking about. And of course, I was happy to announce that finally, after I don't know, umpteen years, we finally got night train times resolved. And we agreed on a time. So, that is just one of those things.

Someone asked, how much is a new bus? It is between \$360[,000] and \$370[,000].

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes. It is actually on page 23 of the Green Paper. But I think Mr. Moniz, the Honourable Member, asked that question. I think it is on page 23, and [the approximate cost is] \$369,000.

And the other question MP Moniz asked was, Are the buses with GPS, are we not getting any wider info? Well, GPS is just to tell you where the buses are. They are not going to tell you how many people are riding. Not yet. But technology is coming, and you will hear me talk a lot about technology and the buses and transportation and ferries and all the transportation in the country, going forward, because that is the way the world is going. That is the way the world is going.

How many hours do minibuses have to be on the road? There are no prescribed hours at this present time, at this present time. Now, Mr. Speaker, there were several Members opposite who asked the same question, or made a statement, *Why are we not having a White Paper? They are disappointed we are not having a White Paper.* And almost everyone, to a person, when they said they were disappointed we are not having a White Paper, also said, *We need to get on with things right away.* They are almost . . . you know, it is . . .

So, the challenge is, Mr. Speaker, I could tell you. I made that decision. And the reason I made that decision is I know how long it took to put together a Green Paper, right? And I know how much work went into it for my people. And like hell if I was going to sit here and spend months and months and months with us producing a White Paper. No way, Mr. Speaker! It is not happening. Look. We have the Green Paper. We have had a full debate today. And I can assure you I will keep Members updated as to what we are doing with transport in the country as we do it. Okay?

We want to get moving. We want to get things done. We want to get people transportation when they want it. Our visitors—I spent three hours up at Dockyard on Wednesday, three hours. And I am going to spend more and more time up there. I spent three and a half hours meeting with all the taxi drivers last week.

Yes, all of us in a room together. And I will tell you, what a meeting it was, Mr. Speaker! But that is the type of thing I am going to do. In order to understand it, we have to do it. We have to live it. And if I have to get on buses and ride from Somerset to St. George's, I am going to do it.

I spent a couple of hours in St. George's yesterday looking at that depot down there. I do not blame the operators. How many of us want to go sit in a porta-potty at this time of year?

An Hon. Member: Or any time?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Or any, but in particular this time of year? And sit down in a porta-potty for 20 minutes in this blazing sun.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: After sitting on a bus for three or four hours?

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, Mr. Speaker, you know what else I found down in the East End yesterday? That is why it is good for Ministers to get around.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I went down in this building that was—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes. But I did not catch a bus.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But I went down, Mr. Speaker. The building had been condemned. It had a letter on the door, dated July 2014! Now, I am just saying 2014, July, was three years before we got elected. I am just saying. That building has had a letter on it. I have a picture right here on my phone, if you let me bring it up to show Members. July 2014, the building was condemned, almost three years to the day when we took office. So, I ask the Opposition, why was that situation not fixed then? You had three years. I am not going to say five; I am going to say three.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, so because we have been there two years? Well, I tell you what, Mr. MP Cole Simons, who made that comment. I have been in this seat six months, and it is going to be fixed in the

next week. In fact, it is fixed today. In fact, if you have not heard, the work to rule is finished. The work to rule is finished. It is over.

An Hon. Member: All right! All right!

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The work to rule is over.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me say this, right? I am going to end on this note, Mr. Speaker. And I heard Members opposite asking for that White Paper, almost to a person. And every one of them said that they wanted some work done. *Let us get on with it!* Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to give them one out of two, and it is not going to be a White Paper. We are going to get on, and we are going to get the work done. Trust me; the work is going to get done.

And before the PLP came into power, Mr. Speaker, buses did not have air conditioners, you know. And you remember the old saying when the Opposition, when we brought in those first fast ferries. I think somebody opposite coined the phrase, *It is a figment of your imagination if you think Bermudians are going to use ferries in this country.* But the last I heard—well, you probably have not been around long enough. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, you were around. And I remember that phrase very clearly. *It is a figment of your imagination.* The Transport Minister, Ewart Brown at the time, our Premier, that is what he was told.

An Hon. Member: Ferry fantasy.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: *Ferry fantasy* is correct.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have made inroads with regard to transportation in the country. And I think that, if you look back over time, I think the improvements that we have made in both buses and transportation, and our taxis and our minibuses, because these taxis have improved. They have gotten larger. We have gone from horses to wagons, you know, taxis and minibuses. And people are asking for permits for bigger minibuses. So, we have made inroads, Mr. Speaker.

But I would just like to finish on this note, I thank all Members for their contributions, and I look forward to us completing a lot of the things that are in the paper. We will get them done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

That brings us to a close of the items that are on the Order Paper for today.

Deputy Premier.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, yes, yes. You have to resolve that. I forgot, for your motion, for that particular motion, yes.

[Pause]

The Clerk: Okay. It has been asked in the resolve that this Honourable House supports the recommendations and priorities set out in the Green Paper on Transportation 2019.

All those in favour?

All those against?

AYES.

The Speaker: It sounds like it passed.

The Clerk: It has been resolved. The motion stands.

[Motion carried: The House supports the recommendations and priorities set out in the Green Paper on Transportation 2019.]

The Speaker: Yes.

Deputy [Premier].

ADJOURNMENT

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

I do move that the House do adjourn until June 21st, Friday, at 10:00 am.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

Does anyone wish to speak to that?

We recognise the Minister of Education.
Minister.

T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to the listening public.

Mr. Speaker, last week I announced in this House something that I did not take very lightly. It was the closing of one of our middle schools for the upcoming school term.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to start by asking your indulgence as I quote, first from my Statement and then from the Hansard.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: And I am quoting from my Statement, Mr. Speaker, wherein I said, "In regard to the future of T. N. Tatem, this decision to close is, at the moment, applicable to the upcoming school year only. As we move forward with our plans to reform education and phase out middle schools, the outcome of those discussions will frame the decision-making process on the future of T. N. Tatem."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now quote from the Hansard from last week, Friday.

The Speaker: Continue.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: And I quote . . . And this was in response to a question from Member Susan Jackson. And I said, "Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate and try and say it much more clearly. We will not invest any money in the school until we know what we are doing with the building. And until we get to that point, then we will have the conversations of what will be done, what will be invested in the building, what remediation, what rebuilding, what renovations. We will have that total conversation once we have reached that point of what we are going to do with the building as it relates to the entire school system."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I bring that up because no more than 30 minutes after I made that speech in this House, the Opposition Leader spoke to ZBM. And unfortunately, I was unable to speak to ZBM because I was dealing with the situation at the BUT [Bermuda Union of Teachers], which took me until 9:30 that evening to deal with. But, Mr. Speaker, you can imagine my surprise when I listened to the ZBM news that night, and I heard the Opposition Leader say, and I quote, "Wouldn't it be best to plan forward the things that this school is deemed necessary to close it down, rather than put \$3 million into a school for remediation work, fixing it up, when after the fact we end up closing it down? Is that, will that money be well spent? I do not think we got an answer to that."

Mr. Speaker, I thought the answer was quite clear. But, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that some Members opposite just do not listen when we read these Statements. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that—

The Speaker: They may have misinterpreted it.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Misinterpreted it.

The Speaker: That is a better way of putting it.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, it is clear from this erroneous statement that Mr. Cannonier made . . . I went up to the station on Monday and cleared it up. And they produced it, and they put it on the news, and they put it out there and said, *The Minister disputes that*. And I passed him the Statement, and they saw that.

And if they had listened to any of my previous statements to the press, anyone would have known that there is no intention to carry out any repairs to T. N. Tatem until we know exactly what we are doing with our realignment of the school system. And that was quite clear.

But, Mr. Speaker, I understand. When people leave here, they get in front of the camera, and they kind of just kind of try and remember what they are

doing, and they just say things. And they say things, grandstanding, politicking, whatever. But, Mr. Speaker, I would never normally even touch this, because I am used to their selective hearing. I am used to their politicking. And I know that it does nothing to further what we need to do to get our education system moving on.

The Speaker: Well, just speak to the Chair.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: But, Mr. Speaker, why I rise to my feet today is because I was shocked to see that the Shadow Minister of Education, after that being cleared up on Monday, put out an opinion piece, entitled “State of Uncertainty in Education.” Now, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the absolute disconnect this article had with the actual issues of the day and what is going on in education, and I am sure his handlers had read the various comments on his article in *Bernews* and on social media, and taking into account what the people are saying about what he actually did say, there is no need for me to go into that part of it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote the part of his op-ed that got to me. Mr. Speaker, I quote from the Shadow Minister’s op-ed. And he said, “¹The other crucial issue which the people of Bermuda must pay careful attention to is the future of T.N. Tatem Middle School.

“The Minister confirmed the school will not be reopened for the 2019/20 school year. He also confirmed that \$3m will be invested to refurbish in the school.” I do not understand how he got that. But I continue. And he says, “What is the Government’s plan for the school and how does this fit into the bigger scheme of the reorganization of Bermuda’s schools with the elimination of Middle Schools and introduction of signature schools?

“How will the restructure impact the intake of students at other schools in 2019/20?” He went on further to say, “What will happen to the current teachers and staff members in the school? They must be involved in this process.

“As I indicated once before, there needs to be more synergy and better communications with all stakeholders so that there is a higher level of trust.”

Mr. Speaker, the Shadow Minister has a habit of finishing these ghost-written op-eds by saying, *We need to take politics out of education*. And I agree with him. I absolutely agree with him. But, Mr. Speaker, it is now time for the Shadow Minister to follow his own advice. As if he was asleep when I read my Statement, Mr. Speaker, I will refer to it again, where I said—

The Speaker: Well, we heard it just now. We heard it.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: —where I said, “This decision is critical and was not made lightly, as a safe and healthy learning and teaching environment is paramount for our students and staff at T. N. Tatem Middle School. We are invested in ensuring that this remains at the forefront of all decisions made in regard to our schools . . . To date I have met with the T. N. Tatem PTSA Executive, the T. N. Tatem School Principal, the T. N. Tatem Health and Safety Chairperson, T. N. Tatem staff, and the parents of current T. N. Tatem students . . .”

Does that sound like no one has been contacted, Mr. Speaker? Does that sound like no one has been contacted, Mr. Shadow Minister?

I also went on to say, “I have also corresponded with the parents of current P6 students who have applied to attend T. N. Tatem . . . It was critical to meet with school staff and the parents of T. N. Tatem students, to listen and obtain feedback as we discuss next steps . . . My goal is to maintain a transparent and collaborative approach with all stakeholders in the best interest of our children and staff.”

So, the question befalls us, Why write such an article, which is in direct contrast to everything that was said in this Honourable House?

Mr. Speaker, most of the comments under this article alluded to the fact . . . and I wondered why the Shadow Minister was doing a statement like this. What was he doing while I was reading the Statement? You know, this is the danger of just signing your name to ghost-written articles done by political consultants, Mr. Speaker. Because you will get called out every single time that happens.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a very sensitive place when it comes to education. There is a fear of what the future holds, because when the data are looked at objectively, the only path for us is to have a long, serious look at how we are going to restructure our system to ensure optimum outcomes for our students.

This means change, Mr. Speaker. And this means change to some who are very used to the status quo. This breeds fear, and that is understandable. And I understand that, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, change will come. Change will come to our system, and change will come after proper consultation. Fearmongering, using [nonfactual], incorrect and nonsensical trash attacks, like what happened in the newspaper this week, has no purpose but to score political points. To the same article that said, *We need to remove politics from education*, Mr. Speaker.

As a former Minister of Education, MP Simons should be much more aware of how the Department of Education works and how it administers education to the system in Bermuda. The Shadow Minister needs to stop using politics to score points and follow his own advice: Remove politics from education. Members opposite need to finally grasp that they have been weighed, they have been measured and they

¹ [Bernews](#), 4 June 2019

have been found wanting by the electorate, and they showed them that in July 2017.

An Hon. Member: Ooh. Put a mark on you. Ooh.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, we will not—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members! Members!

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: I will not be deterred by the drivel I hear from the Opposition Leader.

The Speaker: Members!

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: An Opposition Leader who stood up in front of Bermuda and said, *I will tell you about Jetgate*, and we are still waiting. And we are still waiting for that, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Oh, wow.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: The comments on *Bernews* and the comments on Facebook—

[Gavel]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: —to the Shadow Minister's article are telling. And I challenge him to go and read those articles, because the people see through the drivel, and they see that what is coming from that side has no place in what we are trying to do, Mr. Speaker.

To help Members opposite, I offer this, Mr. Speaker. I will reach across the aisle and invite any single one of them to come and visit me in my office. I will show them what goes on in Education. I will have them sit down, and I will have them see how it works and how they failed with their five Education Ministers in five years.

So, Mr. Speaker, hopefully, if they come and they find out, they can relay this to their ghost writers so we can have accurate articles depicting what is happening in education. They can actually begin to start helping us get to where we need to be in education instead of impeding progress, Mr. Speaker. Because that is all they are doing is impeding progress.

Mr. Speaker, we need all hands on deck in order for education to be where it needs to be. Education is too important for either party to fail Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, for either party to fail Bermuda. I am willing to work with anyone on that side who wants to work, Mr. Speaker. But if they will come with anything less than wanting to better education for Bermudians, they can continue to sit over on that side, snipe as they wish, and get the type of reaction that this article got in the newspaper when it was just branded as

rubbish by pretty much everyone who read it, because they know.

And I have lost count of the number of teachers who commented on that article and told that Shadow Minister, *Please, sit down*. So, Mr. Speaker, if you cannot, if [Members] opposite cannot manage to see that what we need to do is work together to move forward with education, if all they want to provide is less than that, I implore them to be quiet and get out of the way of our progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 8.

Would you like to take the floor?

An Hon. Member: Ah!

Another Hon. Member: Oh!

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

T. N. TATEM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I sat here quietly, intently. Obviously, I have gotten under the skin of the Minister. Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: Members!

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: As the President of the BUT has said, *The Minister is long on words and short on actions*. And that is why we have the challenges that we have today, Mr. Speaker. He talked about, Mr. Speaker, consultation with the parents, consultation with the students. My article was about the teachers. And the teachers feel that they have not been heard, they have not been listened to. Yes, you can have meeting with the teachers. But are you listening?

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order! Point of clarification, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait! One second, one second, one second. One at a time.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker. He is misleading the House.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first Minister out of all of the OBA Ministers, who has met with the teachers on three separate occasions—the first Minister. And if he can point-of-order me and tell that he met with the entire body, I invite him to do so.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Okay. Okay.
Continue. Continue. Continue.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, during my tenure, I did not have the problems that he currently has, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

[Gavel]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order, Mr. Speaker! Point of order! Point of order!

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait! Take your time! Take your time!

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order!

The Speaker: Take your time. Take your time. Take your time. What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: The Member is misleading the House. Because if he was truthful, he would stand up and tell Bermuda that when he was voted out of office, the entire body was on work to rule.

An Hon. Member: Oh! Oh, my word!

The Speaker: Rise up, [Shadow] Minister.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, I stand by my comments.

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: He is talking about work to rule. Ask him about his principals. They are *still* on work to rule. And you had the strike last week.

An Hon. Member: Cleaning up your mess.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Cleaning up my mess?

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair. Speak to the Chair.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, again, same story—talk, talk, talk. And the principals are where they are on work to rule because, again, as I said before, I stand by my article. They have not been heard.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order, Mr. Speaker! Point of order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Well, well—

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: He has been up here speaking!

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

An Hon. Member: Calm down.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: The Member is misleading intentionally, because I have pointed out where he has said there has been no consultation on T. N. Tatem, and I have pointed out where I said there has been consultation. So, he needs to withdraw that comment.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair.
Members! Members!

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, does consultation mean, *I am here. This is what you are going to do. I have heard you, but this is what we are going to do?* A good example is that of the middle schools—

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order! Point of order, point of order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order!

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: A good example of that is middle schools.

The Speaker: Let him just go on a little bit. Let him go on a little bit more.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: He is misleading the House!

The Speaker: Let him just go on a little further.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: He is incorrect and misleading the House!

The Speaker: Have a seat. Have a seat. Have a seat. Continue on a little bit more. I am trying to follow where you are going. Go ahead.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, I wish that Minister would calm down.

The Speaker: Just talk to the Chair. Just talk to the Chair.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Talk to the Chair.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Talk to the Chair.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

[Gavel]

[Pause]

The Speaker: You do have the floor if you want to continue. Talk to the Chair. If not, we can pass on to somebody else.

An Hon. Member: I think he has lost his concentration.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I did lose my concentration that second.

An Hon. Member: It is easy to do when you are making it up.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Come back.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, a number of teachers and principals have said to me, *Listen. I want to do a world-class job in the delivery of the services that we provide to our young people. I have values, ideas and contributions that will increase the value of what I can do to the system.* And they feel that they are not heard.

Mr. Speaker, I said to one . . . one principal came to me—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members!

[Gavel]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, one principal came to me and said, *All the Minister needs to do is meet with their principals on a quarterly basis or semi-annual basis. And they, the Ministry and the Minister, will get a lot of their answers to the challenges that they face today.* Because the principals are the lynchpins between the Ministry and the teachers, the teachers and the parents. They have experience. Most of the principals have 30 or 40 years of experience in education, leadership and development of policies within their schools. And they have indicated to me on many occasions that they are undervalued, under-appreciated and under-respected. And that is why they are having the problems they are having today.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the Minister's sensitivities. Mr. Speaker, I also understand that the job that he has is very difficult. But at the end of the day, we have to be truly honest and bring—

An Hon. Member: Be honest!

The Speaker: Members!

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: —the stakeholders along. Bring the teachers along.

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Bring the principals along. And listen to them! And not just promote and rush through your agenda.

The issue of the middle schools and the signature schools . . . people have said, *This is a major shift in education in this country. And to have anecdotal reasons as to why it is shifting and getting rid of middle schools was not good enough.* You heard it from the President of Bermuda College. You heard it from foreign educational professionals. Mr. Speaker, you have reputable people saying, *Okay. Well, you're going to make this decision. Make the decision based on analytical data.* Because this is shifting education in Bermuda.

But yet, to date, we do not have it. The Minister said he has been consulting with the community on the shift to signature schools. But at the end of the day, he has not told us why the middle schools are not working. He has not told us why—

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Member.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: —the principals are not doing a great job in leading the middle schools. He has not

said what deficiencies in performance the middle schools currently have, Mr. Speaker. No! He has just said, *We're getting rid of middle schools, and we're going to signature schools because . . .* I presume he means that the middle schools are not working effectively. But if that is the case, what resources has he given to ensure and remedy the situation in the middle schools which he feels that they are deficient? None, Mr. Speaker. None!

And so, these are the issues that bother professionals within the industry, that bother the teachers. They are saying that they are making all of these changes. They do not understand why they are making them.

Now, I have to agree. I totally support the new strategic plan because it is a plan that was driven and developed by the community, by the stakeholders. And it is incumbent upon all of us, including myself, to ensure that this plan is delivered and that the teachers, who also form a significant part of the plan, that there are strategies to help them to be the best that they can be. That section of the report needs to be given priority to ensure that our teachers feel good about themselves, they feel that they can make a valued contribution, that they can better perform their functions in helping our children to be the best that they can be.

To me, that should be a priority. And if it were a priority, we would not have what we have today. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker. I was horrified when the Bermuda Union of Teachers said to us, to the public, that they took a vote of no confidence and that they indicated that the Commissioner and the PS were not up to scratch in regard to the vote of no confidence. I have also been told what they wanted to do the Minister. But they were influenced not to do the Minister. And so, they went with the—

An Hon. Member: That is because they did you while you were there.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Member!

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: They went and did a vote and said, *Okay. We cannot get the Minister now. So, we will go with the Commissioner of Education and the PS.*

So, again, somebody may have exerted pressure on them, Mr. Speaker. But at the end of the day, there was unrest because of the leadership, direction and decisions that were made in a bellicose fashion in the management of education in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Now, the Minister can be sensitive to the issues all he wants. His job now is to stop making a whole pile of noise, and deliver the Education Plan

2021 and ensure that he does so in a respectful manner and show leadership that is required in education.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2. Honourable Member Swan has the floor.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, just be respectful of your comments going across this floor, please.

PGA TOUR EVENT IN BERMUDA

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker, for the last few months, particularly in sittings, I have listened to the Opposition, and I have listened to people out in the community walk up and say, you know, *What are you doing? When are you going to get any inward investment in this country?* I have heard it. I have heard them alluding to it.

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

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: The news this week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Bermuda will host a \$3 million PGA Tour event is more than proof certain that this Government is fishing where the fish are. I would venture to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is an opportunity for this country to reach out and connect globally where the money is. In my trade that I am blessed by God to have come into, I have travelled the four corners of this earth. I have met some of the wealthiest people in the world. I want to today pay homage to a man, Mr. Jack Moseley, the President of USF&G. He died in 2003. But in 1983, he met this country boy down in Castle Harbour because he went to Auburn, I went to Troy, and he invited me to play in the USF&G New Orleans Open as his guest.

And he said to me, he says, *You can play whenever you want in the New Orleans Open. I used to open my tournament up to Charlie Sifford before you.* I say that because USF&G went out of business in 1998 and was bought by Travelers Insurance. I look on the PGA Tour, and I see companies like Chubb, who have a presence in Bermuda, who used to be ACE. I see companies throughout the PGA Tour like HSBC, who have a presence in Bermuda.

But if you looked at the top 50 reinsurance companies in the world, they are not just in America. They are all around the globe. I would venture to say that the opportunity that golf presents to this country is one, is a model that helped build Bermuda's tourism from the get-go, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You understand it probably better than I because you grew up and you are a Tucker's Town man. His family . . . Tucker's Town is where his family comes from. He knows. He grew up caddying just like I did. I could not go down to Tucker's Town and caddy. I tried once. I said, *I will stay Belmont where I'm going to get a rip*. They looked at me and said, *Boy, you ain't going to rip here unless we're desperate*.

Well, I am saying that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to say that the origins of Bermuda, when Castle Harbour and Mid Ocean were built by Charles Blair McDonald and Seth Raynor and banks, the understudies, the owners and principals of Castle Harbour, who sponsored me on the European tour, owned Pan Am! There was no reason why . . . it was no secret why Pan Am used to have that flight that left at eight o'clock in the morning, because they had people living here who wanted to stay here on the weekend and be back at work. And they could do so conveniently, from Bermuda. That is the type of money that does not only exist in America. It exists all around the world, in Africa, in Asia, in South America, in North America to a lesser degree than it once did. And we need to tap into it. They play golf!

Now, I am saying this. This PLP Government, led by the Honourable David Burt, and this particular Tourism Minister, the Honourable Zane De Silva, have brought a tournament here for five years that taps into golf in a real way. Bermuda was a pioneer in televised golf. I am talking about things that I have written about and spoken about for many years. The Shell's Wonderful World of Golf at Tucker's Town back in the 1950s, late 1950s, when Mason Rudolph played Sam Snead. That is right. Sam Snead on the front line had three pars, three bogies, and three birdies for an even par, front nine, at Mid Ocean Club.

When Tony Lema came to Bermuda with Bermuda relatives nonetheless, you talk about the Portuguese connection. No, people do not know that! He won the British Open, Tony Lema. The type of people whom I looked at when Archie Compston was the pro at Mid Ocean. But who were the people whom we golf pros, lowly golf pros, country-boy golf pros some of us, interacted with? The wealthiest in the world. Archie used to teach King Edward, educated the Crown. Many stories about that. I know, but I am sworn to secrecy until the person who told me dies. She told me, *You'd better not tell those stories until I'm gone*.

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Oh, yes! Yes. Money—you have to fish where the money is.

And why am I making this speech today? My cousin, the late Reginald Burrows, made a similar cry in the early 2000s. Money in Bermuda? Get on board! Get on board with this event. Because it is an opportunity for you, for us, for your goal!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I've heard this before.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, you have heard it before. And let me tell you this, Mr. Opposition Leader, who is interpolating under his breath, the opportunity is for all of us. And let me say this. The black people in this community do not enjoy the spoils of this community. We do not enjoy it. But I can tell you what. If done right, which I feel very confident it will be, it will not be the way in which it happened under your watch.

An Hon. Member: Ah! Ah!

An Hon. Member: Come on. Come on. Come on!

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: That is why. And in my trade, oh, my, my. You know? I am not afraid to tell people what time it is in my trade!

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: You want me to tell you why? Because I rode on the backs of people like Herman "Santucci" Bascome, Earl Anderson and the likes, to get where I am.

An Hon. Member: Ooh!

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And I am here to tell you, the money that can come to this shore will benefit the ones on the opposite side who would cry *Wolf!* against it before it is likely to benefit those of us on the PLP side. And it is business!

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Nobody is crying *Wolf!* We support this! We support this! We support it.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: No, no. Mr. Deputy Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: Hey, hey, hey. Hey. Let us—

[Gavel]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I know of which I speak!

The Deputy Speaker: We are going to have some order here, you know. Yes. Let us have some order.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know of which I speak. I just happened to be around a little bit. And I am saying, when you look at some of the countries, I would invite anybody, google some of the top 50 reinsurance companies in the world. And there are some opportunities for them to partner with this initiative that the Government has put on the table and for the country to be recognised globally as the PGA Tour traverses around the globe.

And I am saying that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this is an example of a Government committed to making all of Bermuda's economic fortunes better. You know, I say that because I know what it is to be a professional naysayer. I know it! I practiced it.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I do not mind confessing. I have nothing to . . . not today. I know what it was to tell you, that refer to fine argument against the fast ferries that people that benefited the country or to criticise the dock up at Dockyard that now provides the basis for the 500,000 tourists. I know that . . . I know that argument. And I know how the undercurrents of behind the scenes, and I know how the power of money operates because I was trained by them, with them. And I have travelled the wealthiest of clubs throughout the world with them.

And I know this much. When I sat in Opposition to the PLP at one time, Bermuda enjoyed its greatest economic buoyancy between 2000 right up until the Great Recession. And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The narrative during the recession that left the PLP holding the bag for a global recession, if properly analysed, was probably one of the greatest political tricks played on an organisation.

Want me tell you why? Because many in Bermuda felt that the PLP . . . we are the ones that caused the recession that impacted Bermuda. And it was not so! It was not so. But—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: It wasn't so!

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Richards!

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: You know, Mr. Richards is in financial services. He will know that in 2007 and 2008 when ACE, who now are Chubb, were in difficulty, he will know that when Mr. McGavick came to Bermuda, his stock was down to two dollars. That was not caused by anything the PLP did. They will know that Madoff caused a lot of . . . They all know that my friend in Mississippi, who is a lawyer, who said to me,

Look, Swanny. My job is to go after some of these predatory lenders around the United States, you know what I mean? But you have got laws down here that protect people. You have got people making decisions. And in my country, they would have been held to account! You would have had people who are now in decision and policy boards who were part of boardrooms that made decisions that caused the whole world trouble. That is the truth!

I am here to say that the people who are out there concerned about inward investment . . . let me tell you that there is an opportunity, and it starts now, because it was announced this week. And let me say this, because I always want to give Jack his jacket. The Port Royal experience goes into its 50th year in October. To God be the glory! And let me tell you this. As a young boy, I remember when Uncle John Swan caddied for Jack Nicklaus in the 1970s. I remember the year I won my first Bermuda Open. And that year a young Australian guy came here without anyone knowing who he was, in 1978, to play for the same people who sent me away. Tour golf, John Mason, brought Greg Norman to Bermuda. Look where he went on. Right? I remember those days.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And I am here to say that the opportunity has presented itself today under a PLP Government. So, in closing, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, I am here to say this. I am here to say to the Munich Re, who is listed as the number-one ranked insurance company in the world; Swiss Re, number two; Berkshire Hathaway, number three; Hannover Rück, number four; SCOR S.E., number five; Lloyd's and Reinsurance Group of America, [numbers six] and seven; China Reinsurance, my Chinese cousins, number eight; Great West Lifeco, [number nine]; Korean Reinsurance Company, number 10, the opportunities are here in Bermuda because these countries are also connected to their base through golf.

And let me say this. The impact that Bermuda has in the reinsurance world on devastated communities over the years has been a story we have not correctly, properly told. My friends down in the wiregrass area down there in Mississippi and Louisiana and Florida and Alabama, down there, who have been devastated by hurricanes, they need to know that when those policies were written, they were coming out of this little country here punching above its weight. Even when a PLP Government has been in power for 14 years! They need to know that.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And they need to have some connection to know that, hey, if I can be here and support my event somewhere else, there is no reason why I cannot encourage somebody to support

Bermuda in real ways. Because there are many other types of events that we can have that would be of mutual benefit. I have been around long enough, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. I have been around long enough and been around enough wealthy people to know that the decision to do something like that is not done in a meeting room. Relationships are not made looking at a person across a business boardroom table.

Relationships are made . . . You know, when you play golf, you can find out the character of a person. President Trump has a little bit of trouble because, you know, the government community knows that he can count sometimes when he plays golf. And I just want to say that, globally, through my trade that I thank God for . . . Because I grew up as a boy and wanted to play football for Chelsea. And he took me to the City of Chelsea where the PGA Headquarters were, in Kensington, then moved to Wentworth in 1981. That is the way the Lord works.

I am here to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is economic opportunity of significant magnitude connected with this PGA event. More than the 120, 60 get paid, make the cut, can realise in the \$3 million. The relationships that this PLP Government needs to make will be there when you sit and you meet someone, and you go and talk. I have seen it done. As I mentioned Mr. Jack Moseley, the late Jack Moseley, the President and CEO who lived in Baltimore, who died in Dothan, Alabama hospital, where I lived. We had a connection because we had an Alabama connection and we both loved golf. Those are the types of things, relationships, that this event, for over five years, will provide this country with in spite of those who would like to trip us up.

And the reason why I mention “trip up” is because I have seen it at play with FinTech. Yes! Because the Government, young minds, young people in leadership who understand the role of FinTech far better than many others, were bold enough to move in that space and put legislation. And companies here and other jurisdictions are moving heaven and earth to understand some of the things that were understood by persons in the Cabinet of the Progressive Labour Party. A young man, a young Minister who worked in telecommunications—I am speaking about Mr. Caines. A young Premier who I know understands this space.

But they would put the doubt out there, because our people’s minds have not grown. They do not have the capacity yet to understand that our place in the world is bigger than being subservient to a system that has made us play second fiddle. And I am here to tell you, in my trade, where shakers and movers move, where money flows, I give credit to the Minister. I give credit to the Minister. And I feel there is opportunity.

And I am calling on the businesspeople who may hear my voice or may hear somebody talking about it. If you are not sure what I said, get the paper,

listen to it. I am speaking to *you!* Do not listen to the naysayers who do not care to make Bermuda work for all.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. You know, I hear someone interpolating, *Why am I not in charge of the Government?*

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: No, no. I am not going to take . . . Because that is the type of divide-and-conquer rhetoric that I was speaking about when I got on my feet!

[Desk thumping]

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I do not have to stay in my lane. I am a man who showed up at the place unbeknownst to anybody, and they did not realise I was black! And I know how to walk in a space.

[Timer beeps]

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

Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Christopher Famous.

Mr. Famous, you have the floor.

DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR BERMUDA

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, let me start by saying today is June the 7th. No more Theresa May.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: She is no longer the leader of her party because she did not listen. Because she thought she could keep telling people, *No, let’s change course.* And they did not want to hear it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to start with a quote: “Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer.” Let me repeat: “Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future.” President John F. Kennedy.

Let me put it in a Bermuda context. Let us not seek the PLP answer. Let us not seek the OBA answer. Let us seek the right answer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we come up here every week, or for every week that we come up here we have a motion to adjourn. And, you know, we have a fair bit of jousting and fun, to some extent. But really, the people out there, they do not care who is saying what. They want things fixed. Last week, the Honourable Sylvan Richards says, *As I was walking through the supermarket, people came to me and said, I'm PLP, but . . . I'm PLP, but . . .* But the reality is that whether that is true or not, who knows? But the reality is that our PLP people, our OBA people, our I-don't-vote-for-nobody people are upset.

Two weeks in a row, we had people—our people (I will proudly say “our people”)—march on us. Well, they marched on us; but they did not surround the place. Let us get it straight now. They are upset. Are they wrongly upset? Are they rightly upset? Do they have valid concerns? It is not for us to say yes or no. They have concerns. Our people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, allow me to read something from Facebook.

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

Mr. Christopher Famous: This is what somebody [posted] two days ago. “I personally have never seen a politician in a grocery store. I guess their housekeepers do the shopping. So, I will march on them.”

This person used their name. The next person said, “I have said for years that the grocery stores should be investigated for pricing. But it always seems it has always been on deaf ears because, in my opinion, the majority owners of the large chains are paying politicians to look the other way.” This person alleges that they are paying politicians.

Now, they did not say PLP politicians. They did not say OBA politicians. They said politicians. I am going to revert to something Honourable Member Sylvan Richards said last week. *Certain things that happen make all politicians look bad.* I will not get into that right now, but what I will say is when prices keep rising, they just blame everybody. They think we are just supposed to go to MarketPlace or wherever and say, *Hey! You have to lower your price.* It does not work that way.

But let me speak about what is and what we are doing, because at times the message gets lost that the PLP is actually working for the people. So, let me just speak on a few points. Let me start off with the Price Control Commission, headed up by Senator Anthony Richardson. For two hours, two weeks ago, he sat [during the] Orders of the Day with the Honourable Kim Swan and explained the work of the Price Control Commission. He explained it is not a simple thing to go in there and just tell grocery stores they have to lower their prices. However, things are being put in place to mitigate it.

So, I would say to the people of Bermuda, we understand your frustration. The same two dollars you

have got to spend for a Mars bar is the same two dollars we have got to spend. The same \$12 they are charging you for a watermelon, a quarter of a watermelon, is the same they are charging us. We do not get any discounts from any grocery stores.

Let me move on, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. The passion we heard earlier about St. George's, coming from Honourable Renee Ming, is all about improving St. George's, the infrastructure of St. George's, the tourism flow to St. George's, the life of St. Georgians. She is not sitting up there, *I'm doing it the PLP way.* [She says,] *I'm doing it for St. George's.*

Now, there is a gentleman, the Honourable . . . what did they used to call him, “Kip Rock”? Oh, sorry, Kenny Bascome. He and I do not see eye to eye politically. But he is just as passionate about St. George's. He may have his ways of how he deals with it. It is not the PLP way; it is not the OBA way. It is what is best for St. George's.

Speaking of best, we were handed a deal for an airport that I do not know how it got signed; I really do not. But I will not get into that. But we have the Honourable Lawrence Scott as Chairman of Bermuda Airport Authority doing his best to mitigate some of the issues. I will not get into the details. That is for him to talk about. But next year, when that airport is open, L. F. Wade International, there will be things that have been done behind the scenes to make it better for Bermudians, for the taxpayer, for our budget. That is what we are doing. We are not doing it because it is the PLP way or the OBA way. We are doing what is best for Bermuda.

There are people who . . . Let me declare my interest. I work at BELCO. I have shares in BELCO, not as much as I would, but I work there. And I work amongst 300 people who have invested their lives into BELCO. But we know that people are crying for alternative energy. We know that people are expecting to see solar farms go around this Island. It is not a reality, but that is what they are expecting. But we have the Honourable Walter Roban in charge of that, in conjunction with the Regulatory Authority, that are insisting, as he said earlier, the potential new owners have to meet the IRP [Integrated Resource Plan]. And even if the Regulatory Authority does not do what they are supposed to do, in his opinion, the Government will take action. Not because we want to take over BELCO, but we want to make sure that alternative energy comes into place. That is what we are doing, not because we are PLP, but doing what is best for Bermuda.

Let me move on, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. We heard the Premier talk earlier about FinTech. FinTech is a reality. The Cayman Islands are investing in FinTech. Barbados are investing in FinTech. The British Virgin Islands [BVI] are investing in FinTech. So, for those who think we should not do it, let me not get into that, but the point is that not only are we investing in FinTech, but we are investing in Bermudians learn-

ing about FinTech. They may be black, they may be white, they may be St. George's, they may be Somerset, but they are Bermudians. We have to invest in human capital. That is what we are doing for Bermuda.

Let me touch on something my honourable cousin, Wayne Caines, . . . immigration. As the Honourable John Barritt says, it is the *third rail*. As my folks on this side know, messing around with immigration the wrong way. You will find yourself surrounded in this House. We have a situation called "mixed status." These are people with different reasons for why they are here. But they are not going anywhere. We do not want them going anywhere. Honourable Renee Ming, Honourable Leah Scott, Honourable Ben Smith and myself have sat down in rooms for the last year and a half trying to work this out. Not the PLP way, not the OBA way, the right way. We have to strike balance not only for born Bermudians, but for those who find themselves in this mixed status category.

Shortly, you will hear announcements about that. That much I can tell you. But it is not about partisanship. It is not about Ben and I bickering over, *No, we're going to do it this way! No, we're going to let it . . . No.* We have to do what is right.

Let me move on to education, a third rail. We saw how passionate the Minister and Shadow Minister were a few minutes ago. Who is right? Who is wrong? I am not going to get into that right now. But the reality is, if we do not get education right, we are going to find ourselves in some problems, bigger problems. Right? We talk about why middle schools might have to get eliminated? Let us do the numbers. People are not sending . . . Fewer and fewer people are sending out their children to middle school. That is part of the reality that we have to have a hard conversation about.

There is no one . . . I say no one (I put my neck on the chopping block) on the Front Bench, there is no one in the Robin Hood Corner, and I know there is no one over here who is as passionate about education as Honourable Diallo Rabain. Is everything going right? No. Are teachers upset? Yes. Are principals on work to rule? Yes. But who else is going to dedicate their life the way this man is?

It is not a matter of nobody else wants the job. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I may want the job. But I know I cannot do the job. He may want the job, but he knows he cannot do it. The reality is if you take a list of Education Ministers since 1995, UBP, PLP, OBA, PLP again, most Education Ministers have not even lasted a year. The longest one was two years and a little bit. Why is that? What is the one common denominator why 25 Education Ministers have quit? What is the one common denominator? It cannot be that they do not care. Some people were there for two months and left. Some people's Education Minister left, went back . . . It is no consistency.

Am I saying that the PLP has all the answers? No. Am I saying the OBA has all the answers? No. But what I am saying is, when you have someone who dedicates every waking moment to bettering education, not just for now, but for the long term, who are we to say, *Make him resign! Take his job?* That is the divide-and-conquer that we are not going to fall for. No one is going to fall for that.

So, I am saying to the OBA, listen. We could go to war on any given date. We could be up here arguing every given week. That is not solving the problems that our people are facing. Some of your people are rich; some of my people are poor. But they are all Bermudians. I am not saying, come up here and sing *Kumbaya*. But as the Education Minister said earlier, he will work with anyone who is willing to really work. It is easy to write op-eds or have op-eds written. Is it easy to actually work with somebody? That is the question we have to ask. It is easy to say, *Oh, let's do away with the Ministry and just get an Educational Authority.* Is that going to solve the problem?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to close up here. I spent my entire life hating the UBP—not disliking them, *hating* them for what they did to Bermudians. That transferred to the OBA. But in getting to know some of these OBA persons . . .

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in getting to know some of these OBA persons, I realise they are just as passionate about Bermuda's success as anybody on this side. They might have a different way of how they think we should get there. As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, within our own circle we have different ways of how we think we should get there. But the reality is that the people listening do not care about bickering up here. They really do not. I mean, you are going to have people on the far left and far right who will say, *Yeah, man! Sylvan got you good, brah!*

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: I am gassing you up. Right?

But at the end of the day, did that cause the price of rice to go down? No, it did not. Did that cause more affordable houses? No, it did not. Did it cause our children to score better on IGCSEs? No, it did not. So, in our deliberations, that is, the Green Paper on Transport, in the motion to adjourn, the people want to hear solutions. They do not want to hear, *Oh, she got paid for being on this commission. . . . Oh, no, I did not.* They do not care! That is the fact. They do not care. As a matter of fact, it gets them angrier.

So, in closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we understand the frustration of the people. We understand the frustrations because we have lived those frustra-

tions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last five years prior to 2017, there were, according to MP Ming, 27 demonstrations. Right now, we have had two. Are we going to reach 27 under this PLP? I do not know. But what I do know is that whatever we do, we are doing it for the best of Bermuda. We have to do a better job at explaining that to Bermudians. We have to do a better job of sharing, and not just here and today, but where we are going to be under this plan tomorrow.

Because I could guarantee you when the next election comes and the results have poured out, it is still going to be the PLP. There might be fewer of us or more of us. It will still be the PLP. But the problems are still going to be there. Theresa May is gone. We do not know who is coming. And I could guarantee you if the other party gets in, it is going to cause us more problems. So, I am asking my colleagues on the OBA side, every now and then they come to me and say, *Hey, you should think about this and think about that*. And I am going to think, *Are they trying to bait me up?*

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Are they trying to bait me up? Then I go and do some research, and I say, *Okay. This has a little bit of validity to it*. You see? So, we cannot be dismissive of each other all the time.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I want to thank those officers who came here today. They came and showed discipline. They came and showed solidarity. That is what we need to do as politicians.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

We recognise the Honourable Member.

Mr. Richards, you have the floor.

PGA TOUR EVENT IN BERMUDA

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I get into the crux of what I want to talk about, I just want to reflect on what the MP from constituency 2, Mr. Kim Swan, said earlier. And, you know, Mr. Swan is a very passionate man. I admire his passion. There is nothing wrong with being passionate. But I just want to make it clear, and I do not think I am speaking out of turn. The Opposition Leader just slipped out for a quick second; he will be back. But the PGA event that was announced this week, this side supports it 100 per cent. And we will continue to support it. Why would we not?

See, the difference between the PLP and the OBA is that we brought a massive sporting event to Bermuda called the America's Cup.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Forgot it already?

An Hon. Member: Yes, he did.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I almost said World Cup. I almost said World Cup; I have got football on my brain right now, Mr. Liverpool.

We brought the biggest sporting event Bermuda has ever seen to Bermuda. And leading up to that event, during that event and after that event, the PLP, which was Opposition at that time, gave us grief about that event—gave us grief about that event and turned it into a political football.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: And price . . . what is all the talk about, *Let's hold hands and support each other*. See, it has gone out the window already. It has gone out the window already.

The Deputy Speaker: Speak to me.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Mr. Deputy Speaker.

After that event, PricewaterhouseCoopers put out an economic impact report on how that event benefitted Bermuda from an economic perspective. And this ties in with what I am going to speak about. So, there is just a theme here. And I would hope that this PGA event will have an economic impact assessment done by PricewaterhouseCoopers also, laying out the numbers, the benefit to Bermudians of this new event.

So, to be clear to everybody in this place, outside this place or who may read it online, the OBA supports this event! And we hope that it is successful. See, we do not play this partisan, create-faux-outrage about a political event.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: So, I am reaching out across the aisle to the Minister for Sport to say in clear, and certain terms that we will support . . . I do not know why this is creating such an effect from the opposite side. I do not understand it. I am being honest. I am being honest! You are not going to sit here and tell me I am not being honest. I am calling it like it is, like I always do.

ENDEAVOUR COMMUNITY SAILING IMPACT PROGRAMME

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: So, with that being said, with that being said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am now going to pivot to talk about one of the legacy programmes from the America's Cup that I feel does not get enough attention.

You see, in the lead-up to the America's Cup, I was the Minister for Sport. We were all taken up to Dockyard, and we were shown the renovations on

those historic buildings and the new structures that were being built and the jobs that were being created. And Bermudians were up there happy and enthusiastic. I saw some people who I know had not had jobs in years, and they were up there working. And it made me feel good as a Bermudian. I said, *Yes, this is going to put us on the map in a whole different way.*

And when I spoke to the members of those teams—Oracle, SoftBank Japan, Artemis—the most impressive thing that impacted me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was when they started talking about the Endeavour Programme. They said, *This programme will carry on past the five weeks of the America's Cup. This programme will re-introduce to our young people, our students, the importance of sailing.* Students who probably spend most of their time indoors playing videogames, not moving, sitting on the couch, eating snack foods that are going to make them obese before their time and cause illnesses before their time. And when I heard about this programme, I was excited. I did not know anything about it. They explained, said, *Look. This will carry on after the America's Cup is finished.*

So, here we are, four years later. And PricewaterhouseCoopers recently released the Endeavour [Community Sailing] Impact Report [2017/18]. Now, what this report did was examine, over the last five years, what impact the Endeavour Programme, which would not have been here if there was no America's Cup, what it has done for our young people—our black young people, our white young people, our Portuguese young people. So, I am going to speak about the Endeavour Programme, which is intermingled with the America's Cup. You would never have seen this programme without the America's Cup.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Endeavour Programme was established in 2015. And there are two parts of this programme, the Endeavour Middle School Programme and the Endeavour After School Programme. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since 2015, there have been 2,756 young people who have engaged in this free programme. Let me say that again. It is free to the students. The Endeavour Programme ensures that our young people from across all backgrounds have an equal opportunity to learn to sail while—this is the important part—learning about science, technology, engineering, arts and math, STEAM.

We have heard about this enhanced learning in other arenas. But the America's Cup joins up physical activity with learning about the sciences and math. You cannot go wrong with that type of combination.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with your permission, I would like to quote—

The Deputy Speaker: Continue.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: —a Ms. Leatrice Oatley, who is the Chairperson for Endeavour Community Sailing.

And I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker: “Endeavour’s programmes leverage sailing as an effective tool for teaching Science, Engineering, Arts and Math, or STEAM education that enriches the learning experience and develops critical thinking skills amongst young learners. Endeavour’s interactive curriculum engages youth in hands-on activities that are complimented [*sic*] by on-water sessions applying what students are learning in the classroom to create a fun, unique way of learning.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another beautiful part about this Endeavour Programme—a legacy programme from the America's Cup—is that inclusivity is a key element of this programme, as students from all backgrounds participate in Endeavour school-based programmes. This provides an equal opportunity for students to be exposed to our water whilst instilling an application for learning.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to speak briefly about the two programmes because there is a distinction between the two. The Endeavour Middle School Programme immerses students from the public, private and home schools in a five-day learning experience during their first year of middle school. Once again, the programme introduces STEAM through sailing, learning models based on the Cambridge Curriculum learning objectives that are implemented in Bermuda’s public schools. Students connect what they learn on the water with what they learn in the classroom, strengthening their understanding of real-life applications of math and science concepts. So, that is the Endeavour Middle School Programme.

The second programme is the Endeavour After School Programme, which is offered to P5 and P6 students at 13 government primary schools across the Island in the fall and spring school times. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this programme is offered on conjunction with the Department of Youth, Sports and Recreation. Students eight to ten years old participate in an eight-week programme to learn about water safety, sailing fundamentals and weather patterns. And for the listening public, a bit of information, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The registration for the fall 2019 after-school programme will be available at the beginning of the school year at September via the schools participating.

Now, the PricewaterhouseCoopers report surveyed the students who participated in these programmes. The survey results indicate that 88 per cent of students agree that they benefited a great deal from their participation in the Endeavour Middle School Programme.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Yes, I will go back. There were 2,756 young people—2,756—since 2015.

So, 88 per cent of the students agreed they benefited a great deal. And 82 per cent of students stated that they feel more confident as a result of their participation in the programme.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I saw a commercial on TV. It has been a while; I have not seen it lately. But it was about, I think it was a young Bermudian girl who joined the Endeavour Programme. And the instructor was saying that when she first got in the boat, she was nervous. She did not have confidence. She was struggling to sail and to use the water. And over time, the instructor said you could see this young lady grow in confidence. And she embraced sailing. Now she loves sailing. That is something! And like I say, I cannot over-emphasise the fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bermuda is a sailing nation.

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: That is how we made our name with the Bermuda Sloop and the Bermuda Rig. But over time, due to changes in technology and whatnot, our young people got away from that. Now, a certain segment of our community stayed involved. And we know what those predominantly of that segment look like.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: So, this programme . . . I do not have to say it. You said it.

So, this programme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has levelled the playing field. It has levelled the playing field in terms of our students getting involved in sailing. That is what I am talking about.

We have young black Bermudian males. A gentleman named Mustafa, because of the America's Cup, raced in the America's Cup on those foil catamarans. And the last I heard and read, he was being offered a place on a top sailing team. I saw this young man at the gym training with the other Bermudian crew—all young people in a gym. I was amazed at the workout, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were doing incredible stuff. I wish I could do that. You know, my back . . . But these guys were in top physical shape.

And I can guarantee that, from those 2,756 young people who were introduced to sailing through the Endeavour Programme, we may get some sailing participants in a future Olympics, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our chances for getting a medal in the Olympics are in sailing, horse riding and triathlon.

An Hon. Member: Say it again. Thanks to the America's Cup.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Sailing, horse riding—

An Hon. Member: Say it again. Thanks to the America's Cup.

Another Hon. Member: How many of them are going to look like you, bye?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: That medal is gold. So, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand that there are Members who have a jaded view of the America's Cup. This is not what I am talking about. I am talking about the benefit to our students. Nobody here can argue against that. Nobody here should be throwing shade against our students being introduced to an integral part of our heritage, Honourable Member!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Honourable Member.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: So, I will continue.

The majority of students who participate in the Endeavour Programme had limited to no prior sailing experience. But 96 per cent of the students said their interest in sailing had increased. And 92 per cent said that their confidence increased as a result of participating in the programme.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at our young people, a lot of times what is missing is confidence. For whatever reason, maybe they have been told in the home, *You cannot do this*, or, *You will never amount to that*. Or they look at their peers and they feel shy. They do not have the confidence. Confidence is everything in this world. So, any programme that builds confidence in our young people, I will support it 100 per cent. Now, you cannot be overconfident and start doing stupid stuff. But this is a win for Bermuda.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, after four years, the non-profit Endeavour Community Sailing Programme offers six impactful programmes that create positive impact for Bermuda's youth. And I would like to read them out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because my memory is not that great.

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: There is the Endeavour Middle School Programme; the Endeavour After School Programme; the BF&M (Bermuda Fire and Marine) No Limits Sailing Programme; the Endeavour Graduate Programme; the Endeavour Club Development Programme; and the Endeavour Maritime Careers Springboard Programme.

Now, I wish I could go into more depth about what each of those six programmes does. But I will

not because I do not know. I have to do some more research. And I could speak on it another time.

In wrapping up, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

[Timer beeps]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Well, my time is up.

The Deputy Speaker: Your time is up.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member, Minister De Silva.

ENDEAVOUR COMMUNITY SAILING IMPACT PROGRAMME

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to say, like many people in the House, I am not going to be long, because it has been a long day.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But I just feel I have to respond to the speaker who just took his seat because he made a couple of . . . Maybe he has been up here all day and he is a little tired. But when he says that Members on this side of the House did not support the America's Cup, do not talk that nonsense. All right? Because we did support the America's Cup. And we said it many times when we were on that side of the House. We supported it wholeheartedly. So, do not say we did not support it.

What the Honourable Member forgot is what we disagreed to. And there were several things that we disagreed to. It was the cost, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When they were telling our seniors that money does not grow on trees, when they were cutting scholarships, when they were cutting programmes for our at-risk youth . . . Now, you want to talk about the Endeavour Programme? Talk about our at-risk youth that they cut! Talk to the Minister of National Security and the challenge he has with our youths who were at risk, probably up in Westgate now for the rest of their lives!

Now, do not come with that nonsense to me, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, because I am going to call you out!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I will call you out! I will call you out!

An Hon. Member: When did it start? When did it start?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: When did it start?

No, you had better just keep quiet.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: See, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you see what happens? You see what happens when you call them out?

When did it start? It started 400 years ago, bye! That is right!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It started 400 years ago! You want to ask me when it started, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Let us peel back the layers! Let us peel them back!

An Hon. Member: Yes!

Another Hon. Member: Yes, let's peel them back.

An Hon. Member: That is right! You would not know!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I would not know.

Now, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, yes. Let us go back. I will get back to him. I will get back to him.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is amazing, is it not, how you can get a Member to talk for 20 minutes about an Endeavour Programme and how good it is for the youth of this country?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Would you disagree?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And then, no, I do not disagree. It is a great programme! It is a shame we paid \$100 million to get it! It is a shame we paid \$100 million to get an Endeavour Programme.

And look. And look! The Honourable Member said that Bermuda is a sailing nation. Well, let us talk about the sailing nation. Where does sailing take place in this country? Right down on Front Street!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Right down on Front Street at the place called the Yacht Club. Why did we have to spend—

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: History and sailing did not start at the Yacht Club.

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: We were whalers, we were sailors, we were traders. That Honourable Member needs to read a book called, *In the Eye of All Trade*.

The Deputy Speaker: All right. Take your seat.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: He says it only goes back—

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat, Mr. Richards.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker? You see?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: *In the Eye of All Trade*, the book. Read it.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Richards, take your seat, please.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: See, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Honourable Member's zest to quiet me down, he does not listen. I said, where has the majority of sailing taken place in this country? And where does the majority of sailing still take place in this country? St. George's? Wake up. Stop lying to the people of this country.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the majority of sailing in this country takes place right down the end of Front Street, down at the Yacht Club. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know who the members of the Yacht Club are. And we know the size of their wallets. Where have they been for the last ump-teen years?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, if you want to talk about our young black men and the Endeavour Programme helping our young black men, like I said just now, it is a shame we had to spend \$100 million to get it.

An Hon. Member: It did not come from the Yacht Club.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: When that Yacht Club down there could have long supported black young men in this country.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member talked about the Endeavour legacy from the America's Cup. That is great. But if you are going to pump up the America's Cup, what about the other legacy that was supposed to happen, the \$330 million injection into the economy? Where has that gone? Where is that legacy? Because the last time I checked, this Island was struggling in 2017. Our seniors were struggling. Everybody was struggling. The workers were looking for work. Where is that legacy?

I will tell you what. I will tell you what. BC&M did not have any problem with any legacy. They got \$12 million to carry them through for the next couple of years. Maybe that is the legacy they were talking about. The same person who got an MBE. Imagine that, Mr. Deputy Speaker! Imagine that.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Look. They do not go out to tender. They do not go out to tender. They get \$12–\$15 million. And then, the OBA, in their infinite wisdom, give the man an OBE. Imagine that!

An Hon. Member: Incredible!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Get an OBE for getting paid to do a job that you did not even tender on.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is asking me how much I got out of it. Any work I did up in Dockyard I bid on.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Tell me something about that. And I can tell you, you want to talk about some jobs down on Southside? I bid on those, too.

An Hon. Member: The recent one, the recent one.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The recent one, yes, got another one today.

The Deputy Speaker: Honourable Members!
Honourable Member, speak to me.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to hear the Member, please.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they want to talk about bidding on things, I bid on Port Royal, too.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is right. The same one . . . watch out now. Watch it. It is going to come. Watch out when they start working. Zane De Silva, PGA Tour, Port Royal.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: You brought it up.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, no, no. Your bloggers have been to work this week, my dear friend, the Honourable Member. Look on the bloggers; it has started already. Do not say I brought it up. Do not say . . . But here we go. Here we go, bloggers.

Now, you are the last person over there, Mr. Opposition Leader, that should talk to me about bloggers. Because he knows about bloggers. He paid \$350,000 for bloggers. Oh, yes, he did! And he knows what I am talking about, too. I do not hear a point of order.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They paid \$350,000 for bloggers. I know what they do with their bloggers. Oh, no. This was the man himself, admitted it in the news. Look! Interview in the newspaper. *I was paying \$350,000 for an underground campaign, which included blogging.*

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not making it up. It is on public record.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, yes, he did!

An Hon. Member: No, he did not.

Another Hon. Member: He is making it up.

An Hon. Member: No, he did not.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, I tell you what. Prove me wrong. Prove me wrong. Look at the *Bermuda Sun*. Too bad I do not have that file with me tonight, because I would show it to him. Because you know I like evidence.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is right. No, partner, I do not play my game that way. My work gets done right here. My work gets done right here.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, see, I am glad to hear the Honourable Member Sylvan Richards say that he supports the PGA and this tournament. And I am sure that all Members will. We can put some stuff aside. But watch out, watch out, watch out! We have got five years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know some of the things that are happening already. It is okay. It is all right.

But I will tell you what. What I would ask Members opposite is this. If their people start getting up in arms because the Honourable Member Kim Swan touched on it tonight, and I know where he was going, what we need to do is embrace. Embrace this tournament. Because there are plans to help out youngsters. We have already announced we have two young black men who are trying to ply their trade. Now they will not have to go through what the Honourable Member Kim Swan went through, because when he was trying to ply his trade at that time, with the racial tensions the way they were back then, I give him a lot of credit. He did well, played on the European tour. He played all over the world. He had to fight enemies within and without.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you play a little golf, too. Can you imagine trying to play golf and then putting up with all that stuff at the same time? Not easy.

But all I am saying is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you want to get up in this House and talk about legacy programmes, let us make sure you get the whole story. Because I have no problem with the Endeavour Programme. Everything I have heard about it, mostly from Members on this side, is how well the programme is. I cannot say anything about it at all but support and praise. I just said it is a shame that we paid \$100 million to get it. Because I feel that there are people with powers in this country who can not only help programmes like the Endeavour, but what about football? What about cricket? Let us be real. You go up to the Rugby Classic. You see all the light-coloured folks. You go to a football game up there, where are all those people to support? Where were they the other night when Bermuda played?

An Hon. Member: They love football, they say.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They say they love football.

An Hon. Member: They do! They do!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I mean, I think we have got some of the most loyal followers of football anywhere! But where are they when it comes to supporting our young black men? Where are they?

An Hon. Member: Was he there? I am wondering.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, what colour am I?

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So, what I am saying is, what I am saying is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is just true. It is a fact.

Look. The Honourable Member Sylvan Richards mentioned three sports just now. He said sailing, triathlon and horseback riding. Well, how many of our young black people are involved in those sports? How many?

An Hon. Member: A lot of them.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: A lot of them. Look.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Deputy Speaker, listen. If we are not going to be honest up in this place, you know, you might as well get out of politics. You might as well get out of politics. All I am saying is one thing. All right? I could chew gum and walk at the same time, literally.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But, no, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let me say this: I hope what the MP Kim Swan touched on today does carry through and that we do get the support. It has been a lot of work put into this PGA tournament. There is a lot of work to be done. There are a lot of volunteers who are going to be needed. I hope Honourable Members opposite will encourage their friends and family to support. I hope we are not going to get . . . and I will table it next week, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker. I saved the letter to the editor when we had the Grand Slam. And the letter was written, at least he put his name on the bottom, by Robert Henderson. And some of the Members opposite might know him; he is an OBA supporter. I am from Somerset. I know him well.

He wrote a letter to the editor encouraging people of Bermuda not to come out and watch the Grand Slam because it is going to make Ewart Brown look good.

[Pause]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was just given some information. I will put it right here for Members if they wish to see it. The article, July 23rd, 2014. Title, "JetGate: 'Here's how the \$350k was spent.'"

So, when somebody says . . . look, "Steven DeCosta says grassroots election campaign—which

he ran with Derrick Green and was funded in part by \$350k donated by US businessmen—was critical in securing victory for the OBA at the polls."

He then goes on to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker (you know, because I want to finish on my other thing), goes on to say what he did with it! It goes on to say that this is what we did. The total cost of the stealth operation came to \$428,000. We could not do this campaign "without the funding." And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will say this. I had occasion to speak to Mr. DeCosta myself. And this is not hearsay, and it is not *Royal Gazette*, and it is not any party. He is the one who told me, he said, *I ran a hell of an underground blogging campaign against you guys*. He told me that to my face, told me to my face, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the Honourable Member, Mr. Cannonier, knows that I had many a conversation with Mr. DeCosta.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So, let me just say because I was on a track. All I am going to ask, Mr. Speaker, is that we as a consolidated group in this House support this PGA. It is earth-shattering! It is earth-shattering. This PGA Tour event, it is earth-shattering! The America's Cup was great, too. The Grand Slam was great for Bermuda. Not as good as this. This is a full PGA tour event. The Honourable Deputy Speaker knows what I am talking about. He plays golf, he watches golf! It is huge for Bermuda. For five years!

Mr. Speaker, I am looking. I am positive. You know my cup is always three-quarters full. Even if it is empty, it still looks full. But the thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this particular tournament, we are actually replacing what was an opposite event. It is now on the tour as a full-stage event, which will include every player, the top 50, the next 120—all of them. And it is replacing what was an opposite event. So, it is our hope, Mr. Swan, that one day maybe we will see it sooner than we think, the likes of Tiger Woods, Rickie Fowler (who is the other superstar?), [Jordan] Spieth. We are going to have [Harold] Varner here; Varner is coming, the other black male on the PGA Tour. He will be here in this tournament.

And I tell you what, he was in the last group, you will know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the PGA tournament just two weeks ago.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Yes, he was.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: All right? Okay?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, yes. He was in the last group.

But anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is that these players . . .

How much time do I have left, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

The Deputy Speaker: You have got three minutes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay.

What I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that these players who will be coming and embracing Bermuda's shores are the superstars of the future. They are the superstars of the future. I mean, eight, ten years ago, no one knew who Jordan Spieth was, or D. J., or Rory McIlroy. We did not know Justin Rose. We did not know who these guys were. They are the superstars of today. And the people who will embrace this and will be playing in this tournament are the superstars of tomorrow. I mean, we have a superstar, he is still here—Pat Horgan III, former PGA Tour player, currently playing for the senior tour.

Welcome to Bermuda again!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It is people like him who made sport what it is. It is people like Pat Horgan who come to this Island in 1986, best friends, very good friends with Kim Swan. They played a lot of golf together; they competed together. But you know what? What I say to people like him is, *thank you*. Thank you from all of us in Bermuda for sticking with us, being an ambassador for Bermuda for 30 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But you know what? There is nothing stopping some of the current superstars, our world future superstars, from being just like Pat Horgan when they come to Bermuda over the next five years, fall in love with Bermuda and continue to come back year after year after year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Minister of National Security. Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

PRISON OFFICERS ASSOCIATION MARCH ON PARLIAMENT

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, this morning we saw an exercise in democracy. MP Famous talked about what we need to do as a Government, because in just under two years we have had two marches. And people look at the disquiet as a bad thing in certain quarters. I think it represents an opportunity for us to take a barometer, for us to look at, to be introspective and for us to make an opportunity to measure

what we can do differently to make our country a better place.

I have been given the responsibility of uniformed services in this country. It is a solemn responsibility. It is something that I hold at the forefront of my mind morning, noon and night. I go to my bed, and I reflect on that which I have done. The weight of leading and leadership in this country is heavy. The responsibility of having the dominion, the budget, the responsibility to lead the uniformed services in this country is significant. I am blessed to be a Member of Parliament. I am blessed to have the Ministry of National Security under my purview.

I listened this morning, and I saw the uniformed services. They rounded the corner two by two, uniforms immaculately pressed, walking in lockstep, left-right, as their arms swung in unison, disciplined. No one speaking. Everyone standing in step. We all stood downstairs, and we looked with pride as we saw the men and women of the Department of Corrections. Some would say that that was a show of strength. It was a positive, strong exertion of strength. It was an exercise in democracy.

Sometimes, if people march, we all are skittish. We are nervous when we see people march on Parliament. This morning, I saw it as an opportunity. I was able to listen; I was able to take the criticism. I was able to listen. But let me say today was not the day where I started to listen. I have been in this role for almost two years. And I have met with the Prison Officers Association on six occasions—on six occasions.

And each time when we met, they went through a litany of matters that were going wrong with the Department of Corrections. They shared with me the concerns about the physical plant, about the mould, about the matters pertaining to GEHI and their employment. They shared with me their concerns, and on each occasion the matters were chronicled. We shared their concerns with the prison leadership team. Never did they leave our chambers and our offices with us deflecting, not measuring, not taking their concerns seriously. That is the first issue.

We value the work of every member of the Department of Corrections. Anything short of that . . . anything short of that is incorrect. And so, when we see the men and women of Corrections march on Parliament, those are our brothers and our sisters. I am mindful that when they speak of their challenges, they are the challenges that many people face in their employment, trying to do more with less.

They mentioned certain challenges that they had this morning around employment. They talked about the employment numbers. This year, in September, Mr. Speaker, 25 new officers joined the ranks of the Department of Corrections under this Government, under this leadership. In March of this year, we started another campaign where we are going out into this community. And they are going through the pro-

cess now. Twenty-two new officers are going through the process right now of the administration part to join the Department of Corrections.

They talked about the issues in the prison. They talked about the mould in the prison. Well, in front of me, I have, Mr. Speaker, the maintenance logs in one hand. In the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I have a list of items that they are working through on a weekly basis. So, what does this look like, Mr. Speaker? Because I cannot let this go unchallenged. The narrative cannot be that this Minister and this Government do not concern ourselves with the members of Corrections. That is not true.

When we look at the things that have been done, Mr. Speaker . . . And I crave your indulgence and seek your permission to read from this paper.

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the mould, the first inspection took place in September 2018. A cleaning regime was put in place. An external company has been hired. On the 27th of May, we have been getting quotes from cleaners. And the cleaners will go in to clean the mould, will go into the prison within the next three weeks. In other words, the prison officers spoke about their health and their safety. We cannot let the people of Bermuda think that this Government is not concerned about the health and safety of our schools, of our government buildings and, more importantly, these circumstances, our Department of Corrections. We have a plan in place, and we believe that will be fixed.

There is an infestation of mosquitoes. The plan is there, Mr. Speaker, and it is giving dates and times that we will work on the plan for the mosquitoes. Looking at the AC and dealing with the mouldy conditions . . . again, the technicians. Mr. Speaker, I am looking at the plan, the dates, the times that we are going through every week with the Department of Works and Engineering, the Ministry of National Security and the Department of Corrections. Having meetings every week, update meetings, Mr. Sheridan Ming from Works and Engineering along with our Ministry, sitting, looking at the plans. *What plans did you make today? How can we increase?*

I received an email from Mr. Ming this week. And the email said the lights in the library and the programmes areas have been addressed. The AC in the dental office has been repaired. The AC in the classroom was repaired. The AC for class and rooms B and C have been replaced. This report, Mr. Speaker . . . every day we are asking for the reports from the prison. *What have you done today? How can we do this?* I do not know if this is being cascaded down to the members of the POA [Prison Officers Association]. But I can tell you, I share this with my colleagues in Cabinet; every week I send them this update. They

can vouch that we send them the update of the litany of things, Mr. Speaker, that I hold in my right hand for each one of the facilities that are being shared with the Acting Commissioner of Corrections, that is showing what we are doing with reference to mould.

There was a concern about the prison officers having to deal with mentally challenged inmates. We are working, Mr. Speaker, and I will say this in this House for the third time, with Bermuda Hospitals Board, with the Bermuda Hospitals Board, with the Minister of Health, getting together, looking at, *What does mental health look like in Bermuda, and what is the plan for this country?*

There were concerns, Mr. Speaker, about specific things and the razor wire at the prison. That is a plan for the razor wire. The camera system has been replaced, Mr. Speaker. The telephone system in the prison, the PIN system in the prison, that has been replaced. That has been looked at. How can we not share all of these things that are being done in the prison on a daily basis, and someone say that we are doing nothing for the lives of our prison officers? I cannot let that go unchallenged, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: There are things that are being done on a weekly basis. And we will continue to work. And guess what? This is not a popularity contest, you know. I am going to stand and work for the members of the Department of Corrections even when they are mad, even when they do not believe that we are doing right. Because guess what? We know that our heart is in the right place. This is not done because we do not want to do it. There are limitations based upon what, Mr. Speaker? Based upon budgetary concerns.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: We are looking at things that we can do and making sure that we can measure. We had a budget in the prison for upgrades, and that was limited. And so, we had to do things on a basis that allows us to look at the most significant things first and work on things as we go through.

We are now with the Ministry of Works and Engineering, and they have the lion's share of the renovations in their budget. Colonel Burch has put together a sub-team, and they are working on those issues.

I go directly into what I believe are some of the bigger challenges. Now this matter has been sent to arbitration, so I will tip-toe through the tulips. There is a government health insurance programme, GEHI. GEHI is the health insurance programme, and we have over 5,000 people in the civil service. And each one of the people in the civil service is responsible for paying into GEHI. And so, the teachers and Works and Engineering and all of the people at each one of

the government departments, they have to pay into GEHI.

There are two entities that do not pay anything into GEHI. And the rest of the entities within Government are looking at, *How does this thing become fair for everyone?* We believe that the police officers and the Department of Corrections should pay into GEHI. We know that this is not popular in all of the quarters, especially the Bermuda Police Service and especially with the Department of Corrections, because this was a benefit that they did not have to contribute to, and now they are being asked to contribute. I understand that. But a big part of what this Government is doing, we are trying to look at what it is like to be fair for everyone. And they are being asked to pay into the GEHI. This is an opportunity for us to discuss this, when we are talking about a wage increase.

Well, if this were my money, if I were paying with my won lottery money or my salary, everybody who walks into the door, everyone whom I meet with, we would want to give them a raise. There are limitations. We talked to the Minister of Finance, and he shared with us some of the challenges that we have around the \$2.4 billion debt and what we need to do if this country is to make it through a very difficult set of circumstances.

I must be clear, Mr. Speaker. GEHI and the salary increases are not done by the Minister. That is done by the Public Sector Negotiation Team. So, this entire time, and they have been negotiating this for quite a while, I am not running away from any responsibility. I am simply saying that there is a part of this that is with a specific entity, and it is not the Minister.

When it comes to looking at the maintenance, when it is coming to look at that, that is my responsibility. I want the members of the public to know, I want the prison officers who are listening to know that no matter what you say we are going to go back to the drawing board. And like MP Famous said, this is an opportunity to see what we can do differently. Today I was racking my brain, and I was talking to my PS, and I am saying to my PS, *How can we do this differently? How can we look at the challenges through this set of circumstances? How can we learn from this to make sure that we continue to work for the people of Bermuda?*

Sometimes, as a Minister, you are put in a situation. But guess what? You have to say difficult things and do difficult things. Sometimes, you have to look at something and somebody, or some entity might be mad at you. But when you talk to your colleagues and when you talk to people around the country, you realise that you are actually going in the right direction. We are going to continue to push. We are going to continue to work hard.

To the members of the Prison Officers Association, today I listened to the Chairman of the POA, Mr. Timothy Seon. My heart was full with respect and

admiration for him. I know how difficult it is in this country to make a stand. I know how difficult it is in this country to walk and to say to your members, *These are the things we are going to press for.* But I am here to tell the people of Bermuda, *The Prison Officers Association are not our enemies. They are our brothers, and they are our sisters.* And sometimes, you have to have the opportunity to get at the table and work things out.

I have a twin brother, Mr. Speaker, and we are identical. When we were young, we would have these really difficult fights.

An Hon. Member: About who is prettier?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Who is the more handsome, of course.

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne Caines: And I will make light of it. And our mother would sit us in the room, and she would say, *At the end of the day, you are brothers! You sit in that room, and you work it out.* This Government is willing to sit in the room and work it out. This is not an easy set of circumstances.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: If you want to hold us to account, look at the 27 things that we have done to make the prison better. Challenge me when it comes to the gate that was repaired, the razor wire! Challenge me when you are talking about the safety. Are people taking drones into that prison and trying to drop contraband? They are. Ask my colleagues what we are doing now to parachute people in this country to fix it. How many technology companies have we brought in to look at these challenges?

But they talked about the CCTV that is not working. Ask them, how did we go up to that prison and make sure that the CCTV is working? The PIN phone system, pushing to get it working. The razor wire, pushing to make it work. But let me tell you something. See, the difference between a perspective and having the responsibility for it all, I have to have responsibility that the people have given me, that I hold as a sacred trust. I have that responsibility for the prison officers, for the civilian staff. But guess what? For the men and women who are incarcerated.

And so, when people come to me, and I am talking to the mothers of the lifers, their main concern through all of this palaver is, *Is my son getting the right treatment? Are we adhering to the Mandela guidelines with the requisite amount of rec time, the requisite number of visits, with the proper food/nutrition?* So, understand that when we are talking about what this looks like, as the Minister, [I] have to balance the HR part of it, the unionised part of it.

But I am also responsible for managing the husbandry of the men and women (guess what?) who are still our brothers and sisters who are incarcerated.

The reality of it is that when we look at where we need to go, I need to be able to say to a mother with her son incarcerated for life that we are working through these issues. But your son and his plan, his treatment, is still a priority. When somebody is going through the system now, and they are saying, *Minister! I was to see the Treatment of Offender Board two weeks ago. I have not had the opportunity to see them, to go in front of the Treatment of Offender Board*, we are balancing that. We have to balance that to make sure that they have the opportunity to get the right mediation for their issues so they can be able to transition through.

Mr. Speaker, my goal is not just to have this matter resolved. My goal is to have the circumstances regularised. It is our responsibility to work towards not only a resolution with the Department of Corrections and the POA and the senior management team. We have a deep and abiding concern for the inmates and making sure that their needs are taken care of. We have a deep and abiding concern for the \$25 million budget that has been put in our charge and using that effectively, making sure that is mixed with training, making sure that is mixed with the opportunity to get the right equipment, making sure that they have the right clothing on and the right equipment, making sure that we have the right security provisions going around the facilities—Westgate, Co-Ed, the Farm. There is much to do in this portfolio.

And I believe that today was another opportunity, Mr. Speaker. And I will speak personally for five minutes. It was difficult to stand there, because I remember being one of the protestors and standing for the other Government. And I found it an interesting position to be in when they were speaking and they were directing it at me. And I had to go deep within myself, and I told my colleagues in the kitchen this afternoon, and not take it personally. I do not take it personally. Because at the end of the day, we are all in this country doing what we feel is best for the people of this Island.

So, I get it, members of the POA. It is not about me and the PLP. You want a better way of life for your family. I get it that you are trying to get a better raise for your family. I get it. But do not forget that we, too . . . the only reason why we are here is for a better way for this country. The only reason why we are here is to make sure the prisoners and the people in Corrections, the inmates, have a better way of life. It is our responsibility to look at every nuance in all of our Ministry.

We will continue to work within the Ministry of National Security. We continue to take advice. We will continue to listen. And we will continue to work hard. Mr. Speaker, this is an opportunity for the Ministry to learn, for the Government to learn. I believe that pro-

testing is healthy. I believe it is a sign of a vibrant democracy. I believe that this is an opportunity. I believe this is an opportunity for our Ministry and the Department of Corrections to keep talking, to keep the dialogue open, because we are all working for the betterment of Bermuda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

We now recognise [Microphone off

[Crosstalk]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: He is getting up to speak.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: I had not acknowledged him. I was asking him, was he aware of the fact that he closes the House? That is basically what I was asking. I did not acknowledge him to speak. I said, *Are you aware?* Okay.

An Hon. Member: Would you like to speak?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Most definitely. Oh, no, we are not making it hard.

The Speaker: Opposition Leader, you have the floor.

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

The Speaker: If I had acknowledged him, you would not have been able to get on your feet, see?

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Right.

Actually, I have, quite frankly, appreciated a lot of what has been said this evening. I do believe, as I just listened to the Honourable Member who just sat down, that there certainly are some realities that Bermuda has to face. There certainly are some realities that office politicians have to face.

And one of those realities, Mr. Speaker, and I have been speaking to this for some time now, and I am sure that everyone in this House of Assembly does not appreciate when they open up the paper and they once again see that we are having challenges within the Department of Child and Family Services. And we see where people, individuals, private citizens are speaking out about some of the conduct and some of the things that are going on within this Minis-

try. And I believe that we have been patient, and we have been sitting and saying, *Something needs to happen really to get this particular department on its feet.*

And I believe at this time, after having looked at the newspaper just now, it is extremely challenging. And I am encouraging this Government, and it is my opinion that there needs to be a shuffle in the management within that department. Something needs to happen.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Department of Child and Family Services.

We continue to see, week after week, one director, supervisor, whatever you want to call it . . . there needs to be a shuffle there because people are extremely concerned.

We now see that not only are the kids within the service complaining, we have seen non-profit organisations that assist are concerned about what is going on. And I believe that our Government really needs to take a close look at exactly what is happening there, because it is evident that, week after week after week, we are continuing to see the revelations of more and more things.

What would be appreciated is that, if there is not going to be some real addressing of the leadership there, then we hear exactly what is going on and what is being done to improve the situation there so that we do not continue to see what we are seeing week after week in the newspaper.

PGA TOUR EVENT IN BERMUDA

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I also take to heart the other subject that, for most of the evening this evening has been talked about—the new PGA. And I must say that most of us—all of us on this side—have been excited about the fact that. Okay? Well, we have another opportunity here. And many of the Members of the PLP Government will know, some of them I have spoken to them, and I said, *Listen, man. You guys have got to come up with some kind of event that is going to bring some sizzle to the economy, that is going to bring some excitement about.* And we now are seeing that.

I find it interesting that the Honourable Member from constituency 2 talked about, *We fish where the fish are.* We finally are getting something after almost two years. So, I am not quite confident in the fact that we are fishing where the fish are.

But, be that as it may, the beauty is that we do have another event, a PGA event, that apparently seems to be, on the surface as we are listening to the Minister lead it out, that it is going to be bigger than the one before. These are good things. These are honourable things. And I am hoping that it will contin-

ue to do good for this Island regardless of what economic background you come from.

I certainly know that with the OBA, in all of the events that we took on, whether it was the Triathlon that spawned after the America's Cup, it was all in an endeavour to improve the livelihoods and opportunities for Bermudians.

And many times we will get up in this House and we will spar back and forth about whether or not, you know, people benefited from it. Well, we know that people benefited from it. And we know also that there were many who benefited more than others. But the context of the America's Cup was not just the America's Cup, but many of those things that were to follow out of that. And we were showing the world that we had the ability to entertain and to put on a first-class show. But not just a first-class show, a world-class show, which has spawned, and I am sure, even interest in getting this PGA done, that we can perform and put on a first-class show.

But the context of the America's Cup was not just the America's Cup, but many of those things that were to follow out of that. And we were showing the world that we had the ability to entertain and to put on a first-class show, but not just a first-class show, a world-class show, which has spawned, I am sure, even into getting this PGA done that we can perform and put on a first-class show.

That goes without saying that, I mean, just like we banter back and forth *Oh, the America's Cup was for a certain kind*, maybe white. But, you know what? Golf is a primarily white sport. And we just heard this evening that maybe two black guys may be coming. But it is a white sport.

An Hon. Member: A rich white man's sport.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Rich white male sport.

So, we are going back and forth over this whole idea of who benefits based on race. And we are both out there, whether it be the PLP Government or when we were Government, trying to bring to this Island economic stimulus—

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Point of information.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —that will allow us—

The Speaker: Point of information?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Point of order.

I believe the Member is inadvertently misleading the House. I just wanted to just clarify that in Bermuda it is probably the one example where a sport, which is globally dominated by whites, is probably enjoyed by more persons of African descent, proportion-

ately, than any other country in this world. I would say that is probably true. So the opportunity for—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —is huge in that respect.

The Member makes a correct [statement] about the global sense, in Bermuda—

The Speaker: You have made your point.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —there is . . .

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

I think what I have had to say still stands. We are bringing a white event to Bermuda, and that is the bottom line.

So, again, I appreciate this effort and I am looking forward, quite frankly, to seeing how this pans out to ensure that . . . and I must say it will be important for whatever opportunities that are brought to Bermuda and for Bermudians that we take advantage of it. One of the things that was disappointing, as far as the America's Cup was concerned, was that bids were being put out, but Bermudians were not coming and putting in their bids for the things by the deadline. And after the deadlines had come across, many of them were coming to the likes of me, and many other Ministers, saying *Well what can I do? What can I do?* Well, we have to step up our game as well to ensure that we participate in many of the events when we have these opportunities.

So, again, I appreciate and we are supporting. We are telling the Minister, the Honourable Zane De Silva, that we support this wholeheartedly and are looking forward to how this whole thing creates opportunities for Bermudians throughout the Island itself.

THE REALITY OF TODAY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Now, Mr. Speaker, I do want to speak to the issue of the reality of where we are today. And I believe that the Government is facing those realities. I believe that as we continue to see some of the things that are plaguing us at this present time in our history in 2019, and as this Government seeks out opportunities, we also recognise that there is great opportunity to speak to our people to ensure that they understand exactly where we are going. So, I was taking a look at a speech that was given by our Premier. It was a keynote speech at the 36th Labour Day Banquet. I took note of a few things as we are acknowledging some of the realities (as the previous speaker who just sat down) of where we are.

In his speech he said, "I have been waiting for almost two months to be able to address a room of friends like this. I am grateful for the opportunity, because ever since the General Election, people

have been asking our MPs, Ministers, and Members, 'What now?' or 'What comes next?'"

And, amongst all of the things that we had just listened to about the good things that the Honourable Minister of Security spoke to that he is doing to help improve the lives of the prisoners and the prison officers, the reality is that people are asking the questions, *What now?*, and *What comes next?*

Our reality as of today, Mr. Speaker, what has become next is a march—we saw that—an education march last week. What has become next is prison officers marching on the House of Assembly. And when asked by the prison officers if they had confidence . . . when asked by Gary Moreno, if they had confidence that these issues would be addressed, the reply was that they did not have confidence, no.

So, we recognise that a lot of work has to be done and we will support this Minister because they are our cousins, our relatives who are working up there. They are our cousins, our relatives who are even incarcerated there. But the reality of right now is that when the president says he has no confidence, it goes beyond the things that are being done; there is more to this story. And not to say that there is more to this story that there is a conspiracy, or something is being hidden, there is more to this story that needs to be addressed. And we have heard that the Minister is seeking, and will be seeking (which is encouraging), to address these issues.

As I asked the question, and I looked at what the Premier had said, as people were asking *What comes next?* we are now seeing the reality of today, that what has come next is work to rule, Mr. Speaker. The reality of today has said that what has come next is 12 months of declining retail sales, Mr. Speaker. What we have seen come next is news and more news of jobs being lost and more layoffs. What we are seeing today, Mr. Speaker, the reality of today, is business closures due to people not being able to keep their businesses alive and thriving, whether it is due to service tax and the likes. What has come next, Mr. Speaker, is increased cost of living. What has come next is increased cost of doing business.

And I take to heart that it is a challenge to govern. We have been in that position. I understand it well. I have been there in part of the marches and seen the concern, and have never taken it personal, because I recognise that the people coming forward to the Government are screaming out. They are looking for assistance; they are looking for help. What behaved me a bit was Honourable Members who have spoken to me on many occasions saying, *Oh, it's not personal, Cannonier; it's just politics.*

Those exact words coming from Honourable Members in our Government. So the reality of today is setting in.

So I read through, because the Premier can give some wonderful speeches. And as I read further through I realised that he also said that . . . he spoke in reference to Aecon and how marches were happening all before Aecon came about and Aecon was given our airport. I take exception to that. It was not *given* to them; they have a 30-year lease. But yet, our reality today is that we will be getting that airport back which was leased, after 30 years. The reality of today is this, though, Mr. Speaker. We have a Canadian company, a foreign company, no Bermudian interest, who is about to purchase an infrastructure to this Island that will bring down the cost of living. And that is BELCO. Not Bermudian. Once it is purchased and sold to this foreign company that is it. It does not come back to us at all. So, we have a 30-year lease with Aecon at the airport—

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is making it seem as though there is a Bermudian interest in the airport. There is no Bermudian interest in the airport at this time and, right now, not for the foreseeable future. So, none of the concessionaires will be Bermudian, none of the operators will be Bermudian. So it is exactly like BELCO. That was done under the OBA.

The Speaker: I think you are stretching from a different perspective there.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My goodness, man. My goodness. That is why we have this going back and forth. The airport is coming back to us. It has not been sold. BELCO has been, and is being, sold to a company that is all foreign.

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order?

Hon. E. David Burt: If I may . . . and it might be more of a point of clarification for the Honourable Opposition Leader will yield.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: You won't yield?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No.

Hon. E. David Burt: Okay.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No. No.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just gave you the truth. That is the truth. BELCO is being *purchased wholly*, it can never come back. It will not come back.

So, we had an opportunity—

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. E. David Burt: The Honourable Member is unintentionally, again misleading the House, because in this type of debate he is trying to create equivalence. So I would hope the Honourable Member in his statement as he is trying to compare what was owned by the government to something that is owned by a private entity if he will actually state whether or not he supports the government purchasing a private entity.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, listen, listen . . . no, that is not a point of order. You are asking me a question for a belief on something, again skirting from what it is I am saying.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: What are you saying?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I just said it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Well I can explain it to you, but I can't comprehend it for you. So, that is the bottom line.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I can't comprehend it for you, it's basic. It is basic, Mr. Speaker.

[General uproar]

The Speaker: Members, Members.

[Gavel]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It is basic, Mr. Speaker. BELCO is being sold outright. Outright! The public knows it, we are hearing from the public the same thing. I mean, certainly, one of the opportunities is that this Government could nationalise BELCO. I mean, let's get all Bermudians involved in this thing. No problem. You know, if that is the route you want to take, then take that route. But here we are, Mr. Speaker—

An Hon. Member: Amazing!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: *Amazing* is right. Amazing, when we are going to give the . . . the . . . the—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —to Canadians as well. But yet, the OBA, when it was Government was getting flak because a Canadian company was coming down to run Aecon.

If we just pause for a moment, Mr. Speaker, the public is paying attention. And that is why we are seeing the marches, Mr. Speaker, because they are now sifting through what is going on and beginning to understand.

Listen, throughout this whole political career, I said it many times before. I have seen the good, the bad and the ugly. I have seen the lies perpetrated, and continue to be perpetrated—

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I have seen the sleight of hands and it continues on, Mr. Speaker. But here we are not facing up to the fact that we were slighted . . . it is rather interesting. I said this one time before, we were slighted about the fact that we were giving away a beach, but then this Government came along and is trying to take two cities as if people are not going to sit up and pay attention to this. And that is why we are seeing the unrest that we are beginning to see. That is why, because it is not the things that they may be doing well, it is the fact that we are beginning to see that people are beginning to lose confidence. That is what we heard word-for-word today. No, they do not have confidence, despite the fact that they know that certain things may be getting fixed, no confidence.

And I can rest assured, and guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that as we go . . . and a month from now, whenever that new confidence level report comes out, I can guarantee you, by the same compa-

nies that we heard from the Honourable Member from constituency 2, talking about the many companies that are here, the international companies, I guarantee you that that report is going to come back and say that confidence is low. Low; even lower than the last report.

So, there is some work to be done. What I am speaking to is the reality of where we are today, Mr. Speaker. So there is a lot of work that has to be done. The Government may get exercised if they want, but there is a lot of work to be done.

We heard about the many number of marches that took place as an OBA Government. And now we are seeing marches with the PLP Government. And now that they are Government these marches are a positive thing. It is very interesting when you look at things and you see what is going on here. But I am encouraged by the Minister who did speak to this, that he is going to keep fighting for the good of the people of Bermuda. The reality, however, is that we have a confidence challenge. We have a confidence problem, and it has got to be saved, Mr. Speaker.

“So, what next?” That was a quote directly out of the Premier's speech. So, what is next? I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that we begin to see these issues seriously addressed. What I have learned about the people of Bermuda is that when they reach a frustrated point, it has had to happen already—

[Timer beeps]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It can't be a half an hour already.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Actually, it never got reset when we were talking. You started at 8:53. You have a few more minutes.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh?

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you very much.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: Working it out right now.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, Mr. Speaker, I will fast forward—

The Speaker: You actually have just two minutes left.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I will fast forward to my summary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You have two minutes. We have already confused you where we were trying to—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: You are taking up my time, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: You have two minutes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, the Premier ended out . . . and I must say that if I were sitting there listening to him I would say that was a wonderful speech. He said, “Well we are the people who we serve; . . . we [do] not forget . . . We cannot forget.”

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that we will hear, and we have already heard from the Premier, and he loves to say we will not be moved; we will stay the course. Well, Bermuda is saying as of today, with this march, *We will not forget*, Mr. Speaker, *We cannot forget*.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier will again say that the OBA is the past and that the PLP is the future. Yet the present escapes him. And so, last week we had a march; this week we are having a march. Last week was the past, if you look today. Today is the present. We had the prison officers marching, saying *no confidence*.

Mr. Speaker, I will close with this: I am imploring upon our Premier, what will be the future? Maybe, as we have joked many times in here, he needs to find that crystal ball, because as of today, Mr. Speaker, we have some challenges that we need to face up to. And until we face up to those challenges and stimulate this economy to get people happy about where they are, then we will continue to see lower confidence and more people marching on this House of Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. I recognise the Honourable Premier.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and good evening to you.

As the Honourable Deputy Premier moved the motion to adjourn, and I believe that the House is adjourned until June 21st, I wanted to take this opportunity as next weekend will be a holiday weekend where we celebrate our National Heroes Day, to recognise that we will not be here until after National Heroes Day. And I think that it is important that we recognise the holiday which was brought in place under the last Progressive Labour Party Government to say *thank you* and recognise our national heroes.

We certainly want to recognise, and I will read the names, Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Sir John [W.] Swan, [KBE, JP]; Sir Edward Richards, [Kt., CBE];

Gladys [Misick] Morrell; Mary Prince; Sir Henry James Tucker; Dr. Pauulu [R. N. O. B.] Kamarakafego; Dr. E. F. Gordon; and Dame Lois Browne-Evans, [DBE, JP, LLB]. Those are our national heroes. And next week we will have the opportunity to celebrate them and the contributions they made to the Island of which we call home, Mr. Speaker.

Also, next weekend there will be a few young people in the country that may be celebrating Bermuda Carnival. And I sincerely hope that persons will remain safe, will be safe, and will make sure that they take care of themselves and enjoy the spirit of the holiday in peace and harmony, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I just returned from an event that Honourable Members were invited to. And, of course, we are here inside of this House debating matters of the day. So I recognise that some Honourable Members could not make it. But I was joined by all 23 members of Bermuda’s National Men’s Football Team who are part of the 2019 Gold Cup. And the next time that we come back to this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, our Men’s National Team would have started competing in this competition and will have faced Haiti and Costa Rica and the country of Costa Rica in the great state of Texas.

On behalf of all Honourable Members who were able to attend, but I will say on behalf of the people of Bermuda, we wish our players the best. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because they are part of I would say the new golden generation of footballers. But I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, to recognise and understand, and I think that it goes very well along the lines of which the Honourable Opposition Leader just spoke, talking about the past, the present and the future. And here is what it is, Mr. Speaker.

There are quick wins that cost a lot of money, the America’s Cup is one, and there are investments which are made, which take a little longer time to show their return. Honourable Members will remember I would say around the point in time of 2006/07 the then Government made an investment in our young people that was roundly criticised in some quarters. And we made an investment in sports. We made an investment in cricket, and we made an investment in local football, Mr. Speaker. And in the speech that I gave a few hours ago, I reminded persons that the young people on our national team today, many of them came of age under the support which the Government gave to our football programmes, Mr. Speaker.

Now, just be clear; 13 months later, we are seeing the fruits and the benefits of that particular investment, Mr. Speaker. But when you invest it takes time to see return. So, I can understand and recognise that the Honourable Opposition Leader would want to make hay. And just be clear, Mr. Speaker, I do not in any way shape or form enjoy coming outside the steps of Parliament and meeting our public officers who have challenges that they would like re-

solved. But I also recognise, as the leader of this Government, that I am oftentimes my own harshest critic. And I am happy to accept the responsibility of the changes which need to be made. But here is the thing we have to remember, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Opposition Leader said the past, the present and the future. We know very clearly what the past was, Mr. Speaker. And we know very clearly what we want the future to be. And just like the investment that took a long time to germinate with our national football team, the structural changing we are making inside of our economy may take a long time. Just like the noise that was made with the investment that we made at that point in time, there is a little bit of discomfort in the transition, Mr. Speaker.

But here is what I will say: The election manifesto that this Government was elected on . . . we still have confidence that that was the right way to go, Mr. Speaker. We are still committed to executing building that better and fairer Bermuda. And not everyone will like what it is we are doing, but the fact is that in politics and in Government, every decision we make is not going to be a popular one. But you must make the decisions which are in the best interest of the people, Mr. Speaker.

So, here is where I will end, Mr. Speaker. Our young people are going to represent us overseas. They are going to represent us as part of a golden generation that was forged from investments that were made in the last decade. The future is bright, Mr. Speaker. I have no doubt about it. And that is because there is a new generation of young Bermudians who are working every day to make sure that their future is better than their past. I, Mr. Speaker, will not only put the confidence in this Government, I will put the country's collective confidence in their abilities. And just like our football team will make us proud on the field, Mr. Speaker, our next generation continues to make us proud every day.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I wish all persons a very happy Bermuda National Heroes Day, and I sincerely hope that our football team will represent us well on the field.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

And, with that, we will bring the House to a close. And we will resume again at 10:00 am on Friday, the 21st of June.

Members, as we have heard, in between there will be the National Heroes Day. Enjoy your holiday and reflect on the contributions of those who came before us, and that we too must leave a legacy that will be lasting in this country.

[Gavel]

[At 9:26 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 21 June 2019.]

[This page intentionally left blank.]

BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****21 JUNE 2019****10:06 AM***Sitting Number 23 of the 2018/19 Session**[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Mrs. Shernette Wolffe, Clerk]***The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.*[Gavel]**[Pause]***CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES***[Minutes of 7 June 2019]***The Speaker:** Members, the Minutes from the 7th of June have to be confirmed. They have been circulated. Any omissions or amendments?

There are none.

They are confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 7 June 2019 confirmed]***MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR****The Speaker:** There are none.**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING****The Speaker:** Yes.**OMBUDSMAN FOR BERMUDA ANNUAL REPORT
2018****The Speaker:** This morning I would like to announce that I have received the Ombudsman for Bermuda Annual Report 2018, which has been submitted to the House to the Speaker's Chamber in compliance with section 24(1) and 24(3) of the Ombudsman Act 2004.**APOLOGIES****The Speaker:** Also, I would just like to note that we have received notice that Minister Caines will not be present today.**MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE****PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER
PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019****The Speaker:** Yes. We do have a message from the Senate. And I will read it in its entirety. And it states:

"To His Honour the Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly: The Senate has the honour to return to Your Honourable House the accompanying Public Bill entitled the 'Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019', recommending the concurrence of your Honourable House in the following suggested amendment, which it is proposed should be made to the Bill:—"

And those amendments are in clause 9 and read as follows:

"1. By deleting the word 'March' and substituting the word 'May' in the first paragraph;

"2. By deleting the words 'appointed to a' and substituting the words 'who have served or are currently serving on any' in the first paragraph;

"3. By deleting the word 'calendar' and substituting the word 'fiscal' in the first paragraph;

"4. By inserting the word 'gross' immediately after the word 'their' in subsection 9(b); and

"5. By inserting the words 'for the entire fiscal year' immediately after the word 'remuneration' in subsection 9(b).

"The effect of the proposed amendments being such that the Amended version of Clause 9 would read as follows:

"Annual report

"9 On or before 31 May, the Premier shall lay in each House of the Legislature a report listing the names of all persons who have served or are currently serving on any personal staff during the previous fiscal year, indicating—

"(a) their functions;

"(b) their gross remuneration for the entire fiscal year; and

"(c) in the case of the personal staff of a Minister, whether each person was appointed as an expert in a specified field or as a political adviser."

That is the entire message that we received from the Senate. Mr. Premier, would you like to speak to that?

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

Under the provision of Standing Order 31(2), I move that the amendments proposed by the Senate to the Bill entitled the Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 be considered forthwith in this House.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?

No objections.

Continue.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Bill be now committed.

The Speaker: Yes. The Bill will now be committed so we can discuss the [Senate's] amendment to clause 9.

Deputy.

House in Committee at 10:11 am

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019

[Amendment to clause 9]

The Chairman: Members, we are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled . . . clause 9 of the Bill, Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019.

Mr. Premier, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, the amendments that have come from the Senate . . . it was a very interesting process, as I understand it, as the Government was not aware of the amendments prior to their tabling and/or discussion, which is something that typically does happen. And the first time they were notified was at the moment of tabling.

That much notwithstanding, Mr. Chairman, I remember that there was a debate on similar measures inside of this House. And at that time (if you will allow me to refer to my comments from the draft ¹Hansard), I said, "As it is written here and constructed, we do not necessarily believe that what he" (and it was the Honourable Member for constituency 22) "is suggesting is necessary." And therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that the amendments be rejected.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the amendments be rejected.

Are there any objections to that?

Mr. Pearman, you have the floor.

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

This was a matter that came up when the House debated this Bill. It was a matter that I had pointed out to the Premier that, in fact, the Bill, unamended as it was before the House, was technically deficient because if someone had been appointed prior to 12 months, the person's name or those people's names would not appear. And in the interest of good governance, it was suggested that what should happen every year is that all of those people who are consultants (if I may use that term in the shorthand, "consultants") are simply named and tabled each year.

That point was then picked up by my honourable friend, Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, at which point in time the Premier, quite rightly, in argue, respectfully, gave an undertaking that that is what would happen.

The fact is that a Premier's undertaking is limited to an individual. It is just this particular individual Premier; it does not bind any future Premiers as the legislation should. And this was raised in the Senate. And quite properly the Senate recognised that this was an important point. They recognised the Premier's undertaking. They recognised the points made by my honourable friend, [and] by myself. And the Opposition Senators moved this Bill to amend and record those points and were supported by the Independent Senators, the reason being that it was a matter of good governance.

I would be rather hopeful that the Government would take this opportunity to accept the amendments. I know that my right honourable friend, Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, will speak in a moment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin. You have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, I heard the Premier indicate that they would prefer to reject the recommendations that have come back from the Senate. I believe that in the constitution of our Parliamentary process, good governance has got to be the ultimate aim. And it would appear to me that the checks and balances that occur within our system come from a different set of eyes looking at a set piece of legislation and making recommendations respecting thereto.

In this particular instance, Mr. Chairman, it would appear that if the Government—and they have the numbers, so they can do whatever they like. However—

¹ 31 May 2019 Members' Proof Hansard

The Chairman: Speak to the clause. Just speak to the clause.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes.

Well, what I am saying is that if the Senate has rejected what we had sent down and has come back with a recommendation, I do not see anything in the recommendation that would suggest that there is anything less than good governance that is at the fore. And as a result, notwithstanding that it might be a bitter pill, I would ask the Government to consider that, having a rejection come back from the Senate would give us the opportunity to stop, pause and reflect that the new wording of the clause, as articulated . . . (I did not have a copy of it. It is probably on my desk somewhere. I did not see an actual copy of the amendment. I was trying to scribble it as the Speaker was indicating what the changes were. Here it is; I have it.)

But I do not believe that there is anything here that actually goes against what we would want to achieve in terms of good legislation, as well as good intent. And I do believe that the Premier, in his presentation, had indicated that they would consider these things. And if it is enshrined in legislation, then, irrespective of the person sitting in the seat, we would then have a structure which enables proper and effective execution of the intent of this legislation.

And as such, I would ask that the Government really consider accepting the Senate's recommendation on this particular legislation.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Minister, Mr. Burch. You have the floor.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Chairman, I hear the explanation. And as someone who currently serves in this House as probably a junior Member, but having served in another place as a senior Member, I reject it completely, the argument that is being put forward this morning.

It would carry some more weight, Mr. Chairman, had there been some collaboration before the Government Senators were ambushed in the Senate. If the intent is good governance, then history will record that a successive Progressive Labour Party Government had been the poster child for good governance in this country, Mr. Chairman.

There is a wider issue at play here. And I wish to highlight it, with some [leeway] from you, Mr. Chairman, in the sense that this is probably the . . . I will not go so far as to say the first time, but it is a rare occasion indeed that three Opposition Senators would coordinate (I am not going to use another word) with three Independent Senators to ambush the Government. And that is precisely what happened in the Senate.

Following on the heels of the Municipalities Reform Act 2019, Mr. Chairman, there seems to be a

pattern. And it is designed specifically and exclusively to take advantage of what, in my opinion, is an anomaly in the Westminster system, where the Government of the day does not enjoy a majority in the Senate.

And I think it is unprecedented. I mean, my opinion is that there are four Opposition Senators. And I suspect the record would show that one of those *labelled* Independent Senators has an unblemished record of—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: What is your point of order?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Senate has three [Opposition] representatives, not four. There are five Government representatives.

The Chairman: Take your seat. That is not a point of order. Take your seat.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Chairman, I believe I said it is my *opinion*. And I am setting out the reason why I arrive at that opinion. That Senator probably has an unblemished record of voting with the Opposition on every single matter that comes before that Chamber. You check it out! Check the record, Mr. Chairman. I must be touching a nerve.

[Inaudible interjection]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I have never seen you in the Senate.

I go there, Mr. Chairman. That Honourable Member has an almost unblemished record of not only voting with the Opposition, but he gives them advice. And I am not going to sit idly by and act like I am Stevie Wonder, who cannot see, or hear.

The fact of the matter is, there appears to be, to me, four Opposition Senators, okay? He votes with them consistently. I cannot say whether he attends their caucus. But it would appear so.

The Chairman: Minister, let us try to get back to the clause.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading and imputing improper motives]

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I believe that the Member is misleading the House and imputing improper mo-

tives to the individual whom he chooses not to disclose.

The Chairman: Continue, Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Okay. I could do that, then, Mr. Chairman. I am talking about Senator Jardine. And if you do not know [that], this is probably reason why you are no longer the Opposition Leader.

In any case—

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: I believe that the Member now is really starting to go into other motives than what he said at the beginning.

The Chairman: Continue, Minister. Continue.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Chairman, and so that is the reason why the Government will reject this.

First of all, you are setting a very dangerous precedent in our democracy, if you want to call it that. *Good governance*, my you-know-what! Those people do not know anything about good governance. It only suits you to talk about good governance when you are sitting on that side.

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Because certainly, when you were over this side—

The Chairman: Honourable Member, take a seat.

Honourable Leader of the Opposition, we will not have those comments here. Now, either you want to serve in this House today or you will be . . . you stay in order.

I am talking to you, Mr. Cannonier.

Thank you. Continue.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Chairman, we are celebrating, I cannot remember [which] anniversary it is next year of the Westminster Parliament in this country, 400 years, I believe. I bet you the record would show that Independent Members of the Senate have voted against the Government of the day, in those 400 years, probably more times against the PLP Government than any other Government that existed in this country. And so, you are setting a very dangerous precedent. If you want to . . . if what is being presented this morning is true and pure, that we want good governance, you know why you would do that? You would have consulted with the Government

Leader in the Senate *before* you ambushed them on the floor!

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Okay? And you would have had a conversation.

And that Leader would have had a conversation with the Leader of the country. And you could have had unanimity. But you do not.

In our system of government . . . and expect for us to sit down and take it because you are going to talk about good governance? You are talking absolute nonsense, Mr. Chairman, absolute nonsense. It has nothing to do with good governance. It has to do . . . and I guarantee you this. I guarantee you this. Those people sitting down in the Gallery, you watch the headlines tomorrow. You *watch* the headlines tomorrow. It will be exactly what has come out of their mouths today. *The PLP is not in support of good governance*. That is what you are going to get in the rag tomorrow. And that is what it is designed to do. But they never wrote it, for five years that they were in Government.

And we are not rejecting good governance, Mr. Chairman. We are rejecting duplicity and conspiracy and coordination with people who are supposed to be Independents.

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And I want the President and the Vice President of the Senate to know that they are getting a bad track record. Okay? Because even if they were consulted prior to going into that room, they had a responsibility to speak to the Government Leader in the Senate and say, *This is what is being proposed*. Rise and report progress if you want to consult with the Leader. You do not ambush the Government and then come here and expect to use your other vehicle to get us to support what you are doing.

We are not going to do it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Desk thumping]

The Chairman: Thank you.

The Chair recognises the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Cannonier. Mr. Cannonier, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, [Mr. Chairman].

I guess in the first instance I would like to hear from the Premier as opposed to from a fellow Minister.

The Chairman: No. Mr. Cannonier, you do not run this House. You make your . . . those who want to speak will speak. Continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: As I was saying, [Mr. Chairman], I want to hear from the Premier as—

The Chairman: You will hear from the Premier. We have heard [him] already; you will hear from him again. Those are the rules.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Can I ask my question? I am trying to ask a question!

The Chairman: Continue. Continue. Don't . . . you are talking to the Chair, right?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I understand, Chairman. I am trying to ask a question. You keep intervening while I am trying to ask the question.

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I would like to hear from the Premier as to exactly why . . . where the harm is, in my estimation, or in his estimation, good governance, a harmless change to this here, which he undertook to take, as he said, why he believes—

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: What is your point of order, Mr. Premier?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. E. David Burt: I am tired of the Opposition [misquoting] the words from the Hansard. When we had this debate, I said I did not consider these amendments necessary. That is what I said at the time. The document is right here. So, when they keep on saying there was an *undertaking to amend the Bill* . . . no. I said I did not consider amendments necessary. And I do believe the amendment, as written, accomplishes the same thing of which they are trying to do.

The Chairman: Continue, Mr. Cannonier.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I never got to say that he was going to . . . I did not say that he was going to *amend* the legislation, but that he said he would take it as an undertaking. Those were the words that were used by yourself, the Premier.

So, I appreciate the fact that the Government has the right to vote on this here and the likes, and not take this here, not accept the changes that are harmless. But as we were on the floor and were listening to Honourable Members talking about conspiracy to-

wards others and the Independent Senator, I mean, the Independent Senator just about wrote a whole 100–200-page book for the Government! To characterise him now as not working with them is very duplicitous, as said by the Honourable Member, talking about duplicity.

And if we are here talking about good governance, [Mr. Chairman], when you talk about good governance, look at the list of what we are doing today when we start talking about good governance and Bills. We are here doing a first, second and third reading of a Bill today. So, you know, this thing gets more duplicitous as we go along. And it almost seems as [though], if it does not fit within what the Government feels that it wants, we then have got to hear about all kinds of conspiracies and the likes towards the *Royal Gazette* and you-name-it.

I do not know these people any more than the Government knows these people, like Senator Jardine and the *Royal Gazette*. So, to come up with these conspiracies continue on the issue, then I feel that when they cannot come up with answers, *Oh, well. We'll just blame everyone else*, rather than go along with good governance.

Now, if the Premier wishes not to go with this here, then we will sit down and we will have a vote on this particular change that was . . . We used the process. The process was used. And if it went to Senate and Senate decided and the Government was not able to defeat any changes in Senate, then that is on them, not on us.

We were simply looking for good governance in Senate. We brought it up in the House. We did not get anywhere with it. So, the next recourse is to go to Senate and to see if we can get—

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Mr. Premier, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. E. David Burt: The Honourable Opposition Leader is again misleading the House.

The point was raised, and at that point in time, it was advised that—guess what?—if you want an amendment, according to Standing Orders, you must table an amendment. That was the conversation [and] discussion. The discussion at the time also said, *I do not agree with it*. So, this whole rewriting of history is not appropriate.

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

The Chairman: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER*[Misleading]*

Mr. Scott Pearman: I am afraid the Honourable Premier is misleading the House.

The Honourable Premier, in fact, told me specifically, using the words (quote), “that he would learn me up,” that the appropriate way to make amendments to legislation was via an amending Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, now you got an amendment. That is what you got.

The Chairman: Mr. Cannonier, continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. So, we will go back and forth here. This was simply something that we believed to be harmless and in the vein of good governance. We thought that this would probably be a good amendment that was not egregious in any way.

But now we understand more clearly that the reason for rejecting this [amendment to the] Bill is due to duplicity, due to the fact that there is a Member within Senate whose vote, along with the OBA in the Senate—which could be so far from the truth . . . I know that we are going at loggerheads with that particular Member on an ongoing basis, discussing matters. And certainly not in any of our meetings at all, whether it be in caucus or the likes.

So, at the end of the day, I think it is becoming very, very clear that if the Government seems to feel that it is not getting its way, then we revert to name-calling, we revert to conspiracy [theories], and we revert to all kinds of things, when all we are looking for is good governance.

So, it would be good to hear from the Premier exactly why he believes this is not in the vein of good governance.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Cannonier.

Any further speakers?

The Chair will recognise the Honourable Member Kim Swan.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. [Chairman], with regard to—

The Chairman: Hang on, Member. Let us stick to clause 9. I have [allowed] enough latitude for the Opposition and the Government. Now we will get back just to the clause. I am not having any more comments on this or that. Enough has been said.

So, if you want to talk to the clause, Member, you can. Mr. Swan, continue.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. With regard to the clause, Mr. Chairman, one of the concerns that was raised with regard to the clause, “democracy” has been used, if you would allow me just to make reference to that. And one of the difficulties that the Government would have, having spent nine years in the other place, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that we are here elected, and—

The Chairman: Mr. Swan.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes.

The Chairman: Let us stick to clause 9. There has been enough commentary already. We are just here to deal with this amendment. Now, if you want to talk about the amendment, fine. But we have had enough history.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I will yield.

The Chairman: Okay. Thank you.

Any further speakers?

Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

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

Mr. Chairman, clause 9 says that any person who is serving or has—

The Chairman: What particular part of the clause do you have?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: This is clause 9, “on or before March” . . . I am sorry, “May 31, the Premier shall lay in each House of the Legislature a report listing the names of all persons . . .” It used to be “appointed to,” and it has now been changed, or recommended to be changed by, “who have served or are currently serving on any personal staff during the previous fiscal year,” (rather than “calendar year”) “indicating their functions;” (which is very clear and very acceptable). “(b) their gross remuneration for the entire fiscal year . . .” And that is in order to be able to advise the public as to how their funds are being spent.

And “(c) in the case of the personal staff . . . whether . . .” because the legislation provides for either a political appointment or an expert appointment. So the public really does have the right to know whether an appointment has been political or whether it has been an expert appointment.

Just, if I may, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Works had indicated in his presentation that, with conversation, we could have had unanimity. The recommendations of the changes that have been made here are not egregious, in my estimation. It appears that the Government is only concerned about the process and not what this clause is intended to do. And I

think if the Government would explain whether the clause, as amended, does not attain the best possible outcome to be able to advise the public as to how their money is being spent and who is being hired during this period of time, the Government can just say that this is an appropriate way to ensure that the public knows how their money is being spent.

And as stewards of the public purse, we have an obligation, I believe, to be able to include this information for the public. And I am gathering, Mr. Chairman, it is not about the wording of the legislation. It is about the process. And I would ask that the Government consider the *wording* and whether the *wording* achieves what is in the best interests of the taxpayer.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Mr. Premier, you have the floor.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was not expecting such a long Committee session. However, I think that it has been healthy.

And here is what I will say, Mr. Chairman; I will say this. I find it absolutely, positively rich, coming from the Opposition, talking about good governance when we are discussing a Bill that is, for the first time, bringing into place the public disclosure of these particular items.

Let us be clear. Before this Bill, there was no public disclosure. And now in this Bill, the Government, on its own accord, is making these things publicly disclosed. And we are taking lectures on good governance?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: Really?

The Chairman: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member has to appreciate the fact that they—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: What is your point of order?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The point of order is that the Honourable Member is misleading the House that there has never been any disclosure.

The reason why there has been no disclosure is because the disclosure has come, not through legislation, but as the result of the Government's intent to try to hide people whom they had been hiring.

The Chairman: Take your seat. Take your seat.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And it was answered by way of our Parliamentary questions.

The Chairman: Take your seat. Take your seat.
Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: See? This is the exact point. And what you are seeing, Mr. Chairman, is the precise reason.

So, I have heard lectures, you know, from the Opposition Leader, who was talking about first, second and third readings, when there is consultation. I let the Opposition Leader know. I called the Opposition Leader from a football match to say that this is upcoming.

The fact of the matter, Mr. Chairman, is that we are trying to work. Now, as the Honourable Minister of Works said, if you wanted to do this, you would have signalled it and it would not have been thrown on the Government at the last minute without notice. And this should serve as notice, and on general principle, that if we want to have this type of working relationship, such as when we have briefings and hold briefings for Opposition Members so that they can be fully briefed about items beforehand, that is the courtesy that we extend. It would be decent that this courtesy would be returned to this side.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, as I have said, I move that the amendments from the Senate be rejected.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the amendments from the Senate be rejected.

All in favour of the rejection, say Aye.

AYES.

The Chairman: Those against?

NAYS.

The Chairman: The amendment has been rejected. The Ayes have it. The Bill will be reported to the House as—

The Clerk: The original Bill.

The Chairman: The original Bill will be reported to the House as written.

[Motion carried: The Senate's proposed amendments to clause 9 of the Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 were considered by a Committee of the whole House and rejected.]

House resumed at 10:37 am

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

PREMIER, MINISTERS AND OPPOSITION LEADER PERSONAL STAFFS ACT 2019

The Speaker: Members, I understand that the Bill has been returned to the House, [and] the Committee [has] rejected the amendments that were proposed by the message that came from the Senate, which means that a message will be sent to the other place, indicating that the original Bill will stay as printed.

Are there any objections to that?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

The Speaker: Any in favour?

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

The Speaker: It will be done.
We will move on.

PAPERS AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE

The Speaker: There are two papers to be tabled this morning . . . I am sorry, one paper to be tabled this morning, in the name of the Minister of Health.
Minister.

PHARMACY AND POISONS (THIRD AND FOURTH SCHEDULE) AMENDMENT ORDER 2019

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Pharmacy and Poisons (Third and Fourth Schedule) Amendment Order 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND JUNIOR MINISTERS

The Speaker: We have one Statement this morning, a Statement from the Minister of Education.

Minister, would you like to put your Statement?

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

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (UWI) SCHOLARSHIP OFFERINGS

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to rise and give notice of the renewal of the relationship between the Bermudian people and the University of the West Indies. Starting immediately, the Ministry of Education will provide scholarship opportunities for Bermudian students to attend the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, the Bermuda Government is serious about seeing the relationship between Bermuda and the University of the West Indies grow. As a result, the Ministry is dedicating \$35,000 from our current scholarship budget to assist students in attending one of the three [University of the West Indies](#) campuses. This funding will cover 80 per cent of the educational expenses of students, with the student paying the remaining 20 per cent. Applications for this scholarship are being accepted from now up until July 26th for the 2019 fall term, with additional information on the application process to be found on the MOED [Ministry of Education] website.

Mr. Speaker, the University of the West Indies, or UWI, has three main campuses across the Caribbean with locations in Cave Hill; Barbados; Mona Campus in Jamaica; St. Augustine in Trinidad and Tobago; and more recently, the Open Campus, an online campus which services the remaining English-speaking islands.

They offer courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels in a wide variety of fields, with medicine having been a popular course for students to take in the past. However, medicine is not the only area for students, with fields such as science and technology, engineering, the social sciences, and humanities and education being areas of focus.

UWI has had a long relationship with Bermuda, as Bermuda has been an associate country member of UWI since 2010. Although we have had students attend UWI over this period, the number of students has not been consistent, and this is something that the Ministry of Education and the University of the West Indies are seeking to change.

Mr. Speaker, Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, recently visited Bermuda, and we discussed how we could encourage our Bermudian students to take advantage of the preferred pricing we currently enjoy as an associated country. As a result of these and ongoing discussions, the Ministry of Education is happy to announce that a scholarship provision will be made to sponsor what we anticipate could be at least three students to attend the UWI this fall.

Mr. Speaker, I recognise that, to some, it may be considered late in the year to be applying to a university; in fact, UWI's registration date closes June 30th. I am pleased to let this Honourable House and the public know that the University of the West Indies has extended its application deadline for Bermudian students to attend class this academic year to August 9th, because they want to see our Bermudian students thrive and expand their knowledge.

This extension, Mr. Speaker, is an example of the great relationship between the Bermuda Government and the University of the West Indies, a relationship that we will continue to nurture.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Education remains dedicated to creating new opportunities for our students to pursue their educational goals. This means thinking outside the box and revisiting pre-existing relationships, such as this one, to make them more applicable to our needs today.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Bermuda College, Ministry staff and Sir Hilary Beckles, who has worked diligently to make this opportunity a reality for our students. These efforts will have a huge impact on, hopefully, at least three students' future now and many more in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: We have two written questions before we get to the Statement. And the first written question, I believe, is in the name of the Premier. And it was for an oral and written response, I believe.

Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and you will forgive me, as I do not have the Standing Orders in front of me. I did send an email to both yourself and the Leader of the Opposition indicating that I will move that the House defer the answers to the question until the next day of sitting, as we want to make sure that we are providing complete and accurate information to the House.

QUESTION: LIST OF MPs PAID TO SERVE ON GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE, BOARD OR QUANGO

[Deferred]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Will the Honourable Premier please inform this Honourable

House of the names of all the Members of the Legislature from July 2017 until present who have been paid to serve on any Government Committee, Board or Quango and the remuneration paid for that service?

The Speaker: Thank you.

Opposition Leader, are you in agreement?

Fine.

The next written question this morning is to the Minister Furbert from the Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin. Honourable Member, yours was for a [written response](#).

Have you received your response?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have the response. Thank you.

QUESTION: EFFICIENCY COMMISSION, \$130,000 COST, BREAKDOWN OF

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Will the Honourable Minister please provide this Honourable House with a detailed breakdown of the \$130,000 costs for the Efficiency Commission, specifying recipient, date of each instalment and the purpose for which the disbursements were made?

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members!

The next question this morning, or being that we have dealt with the written questions, we will now move on to the questions from Statements.

Minister of Education, there is one Member who has indicated that she would like to put a question to you in reference to your Statement this morning. And that is the Member from constituency 19.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

QUESTION 1: UWI SCHOLARSHIP OFFERINGS

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Honourable Minister: I was intrigued when it is indicating that \$35,000 is going to be dedicated from the scholarship budget, but that you would be able to get three scholarships.

Could you perhaps indicate to this House what is the range of the tuition at this particular university?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister, would you like to respond?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, first I would like to [preface] the answer by stating that the University of the West Indies is ranked in the top 5 per cent of all universities worldwide. And because of our relationship—which unfortunately has not been promoted in the past—we enjoy preferential pricing on the courses.

And when we looked at the average course per year, including room and board, it can range from around \$9,000 to \$11,000. So, that is where we get the idea of, potentially, three scholarships using \$35,000.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary? Further question?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary. Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: The second part of my question is, that \$9,000 or \$11,000 relates to the tuition. Is there anything that is covered in terms of housing accommodation? Because, obviously, that is what makes . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: He just said it.

The Speaker: He included it in his statement.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Oh, sorry. I did not hear that.

The Speaker: It does cover that. So, you are withdrawing your supplementary?

No further supplementaries from anyone else? That brings us to a close of the questions this morning.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

HOUSE VISITOR

The Speaker: Before I acknowledge the first Member on his feet, which is Member Swan . . . before I acknowledge you, I would just like to acknowledge in our Gallery this morning, we have a visiting mayor. We have the Mayor from Delaware.

Mr. Jerry Clifton, is it? Welcome to our shores.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you. Good. Thank you.
Mr. Swan, you have the floor.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like for a suitable letter of congratulations sent through MP Renee Ming for the 13th holding of the Dame Jennifer Smith Future Leaders Awards ceremony, for which I was proud to be the master of ceremonies. And I would like to associate Lt. Col. Minister Burch and MP Furbert, Tinee Furbert, who were there. This event, as I mentioned, is an annual event which honours some eight students from four schools in our region in the St. George's community. And the students are chosen by their principal.

I would just like to acknowledge East End Primary for Desiria Smith-Robinson; DeNunjay Omara; Jelay Carlington, from St. George's Prep; Riley Darrell, from St. David's Primary; Jade Richardson and Samoree Place; and Clearwater Middle School, Malaysia Roberts; and Eyre Cannonier, the grandson of our very own Minister Foggo. The keynote speaker, Ms. Brianna Bean, delivered a very fitting keynote address to the young people, and kept it real and made a real connection. The most outstanding thing about this is the celebration of young people achieving and the impact that they have on their peers.

On a much sadder note, Mr. Speaker, I would like a suitable letter sent to the family of Carolyn "Cookie" (DeRosa) Dill, a relative of mine and next-door neighbour of mine from Granaway [Lane], Southampton, connected to me through the Halls. Her father and my grandmother, Ivy Hall Anderson, were siblings. And she was laid to rest yesterday. And I would just like a suitable letter sent, if possible, to her family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Minister for Works.

You jump pretty quick now that you have got your cast off, right?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Yes. That is right, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: One good leg still.

The Speaker: All right.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask to be associated with the congratulations for the Dame Jennifer Smith Future Leaders Award.

Mr. Speaker, I would also ask that congratulations be sent to two schools that had their graduations last week, Thursday. I wish there would be some coordination—well, one is a private school, so I cannot even speak to the Minister of Education—because I was on skates.

First, the Grade A class of 2019 at Bermuda Institute, who were graduated last week, Thursday. One of them was my great-niece, Mr. Speaker, who, I am very proud to say, was graduated with highest honours, she and one other student. But what was also interesting, Mr. Speaker, and I had no influence over this, and I declare and decree that she was the Parliamentarian for the class. And we have had no discussions on that matter whatsoever. So, I do not know if she took a page out of probably her granny's book as opposed to mine. But I would ask that congratulations be sent to the entire class.

One of the things that stood out, Mr. Speaker, and it stands out for both graduations—and I will get to the second one in a minute—is that the students just spoke with such clarity and authority and conviction. And it was just amazing. And very encouraging to see that, clearly, part of their learning is public speaking. And they all did it exceptionally well.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like for congratulations to be sent to Primary 6 at West Pembroke School, who graduated last week, Thursday, as well. And there I have now two little people who are connected to me, one of whom graduated on that occasion. But the highlight of that graduation—two highlights, actually, Mr. Speaker. There are many, but two I wish to highlight today. One was that virtually every student participated, and they did, the entire class participated, in some shape or form, in the presentation during the graduation.

How much time have I got left?

The Speaker: About 40 seconds.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Forty seconds.

Anyway, they all spoke from memory, not the written word, and did an amazing job.

And finally, Mr. Charles Richardson was the guest speaker. And his message was really to them. And I think it resonated with them, and I would ask that congratulations be sent to them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You have still got 20 left, you know.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Twenty left? No, no.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 24.

Honourable Whip.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to have the House send a letter of congratulations to the new Councillor of St. George's, Councillor Nyon Dowling. And I do have to [declare] my interest, as he was my university roommate and also high school classmate, as well.

I will associate the Members from constituencies 1 and 2. And also, the fact that I think it is going . . . and I do not know St. George's history as well as I know Somerset's. But his brother is the Mayor of St. George's, George Dowling. And I wanted to congratulate both of them, if that has not been done already.

But also, Mr. Speaker, last night . . . I would like for a letter of congratulations to be sent to . . . even though their tour or their time and their cap is not over, they still have one more game left, I still would like a letter of congratulations to go to Bermuda Men's Football Team in the Gold Cup, as they represented the country very well last night. They punched well above their weight.

And even if you were listening to the commentators, the commentators were impressed. The commentators had a new respect. And they started, basically, sharing about how we were punching above our weight. We played better than members expected, and we got results. We got results. We got respect from the other team. And I feel as though we had Costa Rica on the back foot. Although it is not the outcome that we had expected or that we wanted, I believe that our men should be very proud, and the country should be proud of our national team and the way that they are conducting themselves, playing and representing the country.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 11. Honourable Member, good morning.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues, and good morning, Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I want to firstly thank the—give congratulations to the Minister of Education for renewing the ties to UWI (University of the West Indies). It is something that is very worthwhile. And we, as Bermudians, should be attending UWI.

I also want to congratulate the staff of Elliott School for the graduation ceremony. Twenty-three young persons graduated yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, on a sad note, I want to give condolences to the family of Reverend Williams Eugene Mac Donald Joell, a constituent of constituency 11 and originally from Back o' Town.

Also, Mr. Uel Armstrong, originally from Hermitage Road.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Dorothy Ball, nee Holdipp, who passed away.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 16, the Honourable Member Weeks.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you. Good morning, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off my remarks by associating myself with the remarks by the Member who just took his seat, for the loss of Mr. Uel Armstrong. He was a family member of mine and a good friend. We worked for many years together, on top of that. So, he is going to be a great miss. My condolences go out to his two sons, Tyree and to Damir.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to be associated with the remarks by the Member from constituency 24, with the team that is currently playing the Gold Cup. They are definitely punching above their weight, Mr. Speaker. And we have to show our national pride and our support of our teams when they go to represent us. So, let us not forget when they return to Bermuda next week to go down there and show our support.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to send some congratulatory remarks to the organisers of the 75th Edward Cross Long Distance Comet Race weekend. I would like to associate the MP from constituency 2. Mr. Speaker, these remarks and these celebrations started last Thursday, [at the] East End Mini Yacht Club. And I got a real history lesson, Mr. Speaker. They talked about the first yachting club in Bermuda was actually called Native . . . I cannot remember the name of it right now, Mr. Speaker. It has left me.

The Speaker: Senior moment.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Yes, it is a senior moment.

But it was formed by freed slaves in 1854, Mr. Speaker. And the reason that we are celebrating the Edward Cross Long Distance Comet Race is because, apparently, he was the person who made the cup for what they raced for. And I think the Minister from constituency 6 . . . or 5, actually, is his nephew. He is Edward Cross's nephew, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: So, with those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would like for us to understand it was Heroes Weekend. I would like to wish you a happy belated Heroes Weekend, happy belated Father's Day, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: —as I take my seat.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Would any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member, Mr. Simons, right here next to me. Mr. Simons, you have the floor.

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

I would like to send congratulatory remarks to Jason Sukdeo and his team for the Bermuda Heroes Weekend events. The carnival was enjoyed by many, many people, locals and foreign guests alike. It is supposedly one of the fastest-growing carnivals going. So, I wish him all the best and continued success for him and his team in the future.

I would like to also send condolences to the late Beverley Pitt. I have known Beverley Pitt for a number of years. And it was interesting. At her funeral, I thought I knew her until I heard the tributes. And I said to myself, *Well, I didn't know her well at all*, once I heard the tributes that came from the people. And what struck me the most were the tributes from young men, 20–30 year olds, who paid support. Beverley was the trailblazer for the early taxi driver, and she also did commercial painting. So, I would like to send condolences to her family.

I would like to also associate myself with the comments made in regard to Carolyn "Cookie" DeRosa Dill. She was a friend of my mother's. In addition, I worked with her for a number of years. And she was always a lady, very helpful, very pleasant and a joy to work with. So, I wish her family my deepest sympathies. And I hope that her loving memory lasts forever.

That is all I have, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 19. You have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the remarks on the condolences to be sent to the family of the late Reverend Eugene Joell. Mr. Joell, as I knew him at that point in time, was a very long-serving member, an employee of the hospital when I was Director of Finance. And he was one of those individuals who was so very diligent and took some great care of his [late] daughter Belinda. And so, I know that he was a man who was very committed. And I was very saddened to hear of his passing.

Similarly, I would like to be associated with the remarks that were sent to Jason Sukdeo and any of those persons who were associated with the Devil's Isle J'Ouvert. I am not going, myself, but knowing people who actually went—

An Hon. Member: *Joo-vay*

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: *Joo-vay*, Sorry, I should say *Joo-vay*, even though it is spelled there. *Joo-vay*.

I must admit, I realise that for all those people who went, they seemed to have had a good time, starting from Thursday all the way to Monday. So, it is very much growing, and it is getting the type of response that I think Bermuda wanted in terms of the numbers of persons who are coming. I did hear some persons talking about the numbers of persons who were coming from abroad. And I guess we have to start recognising that, for our overseas visitors, we are going to have to pay some more special attention to their needs.

And with respect to the Gold Cup, I would like to be associated with the remarks with respect to our team. I stayed up last night to actually watch the match. And I was very much on the edge of my seat when those near misses were going by. But I would like to think that, as the Member across the aisle said, we had so many congratulatory remarks made about how much we were punching above our weight. But I also think it reminded me that, as we get used to being on the world stage, I do not believe that we will be quite so intimidated by the fact that we are there. And we will start to be using the qualities and the skills that I believe we have. Because once you start knowing that you are good, you will exercise and you will have some more of those things saying, *I can do it. I can do it*. So, I am looking forward to seeing the Nicaragua match. And I am sure that we will be successful.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 28. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I would like for condolences to be sent to the family of Ms. Katherline Millicent Francis, a constituent of mine, in her 91st year, of 5 Sun Valley Road. So, yes, we would like to send condolences to her family.

Also, I would like to associate myself with some of the comments made earlier regarding the Edward Cross memorial Comet Race. Congratulations to the winner, Mr. Dale Brangman, and young 12-year-old Tarjari Rogers, who was co-pilot along with him.

Also, I would like to associate myself with the comments about the Bermuda National Team. Even though we did not get the results we wanted in the two games, it was the performances that really stood out. In both games, we held our own. We pushed them right to the end. And no one could say that Bermuda was overwrought by the experience. And hopefully, in

our third game on Monday, at which I will be in attendance, we can get a victory—our first at the Gold Cup.

Also, [I would like to] associate myself with the comments [about] the carnival over the weekend. I would like to send congratulations to the organisers, Mr. Sukdeo and his group. Also, not just for holding and hosting a wonderful event, which I attended a number of the events over the weekend, but also, as stated by my colleague on this side, the Honourable Ms. Jackson, the number of—not Ms. Jackson, Ms. Atherden—the number of overseas guests who have come. Each year, in the five years that this has been going on, we have seen an increase in numbers. So, it is a testament to the product that we are putting on, which is growing overseas visitors.

And also, on another heading, along with the carnival weekend, as the Road Safety Chairman, I would just like to send congratulations to all of those who attended these events, and that they were able to make use of sponsored minibus transportation to these events. And we saw a safe and enjoyable weekend at which we were all able to have fun, and also celebrated Father's Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We recognise the Honourable Minister for Education. Honourable Minister, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like this House to send congratulations to the graduates of Success Academy, who passed out yesterday. Mr. Speaker, Success Academy is an alternative education programme in which, sometimes, we have students who just do not respond to the traditional ways of teaching. And we have these special programmes for them.

I was very moved by watching Mr. Scott Dean and Mr. Kenyade McQueen graduate. It is a special case of Mr. McQueen, as he is graduating with his Penn Foster diploma, which is an alternative pathway to graduation that has been put in place by the Department of Education, as we identify the children who learn differently, and as we are putting additional processes in place for them to achieve educational achievement.

As a result of these two young men graduating from Success Academy, I have pledged the Ministry of Education to include them in our College Promise programme. Our College Promise programme, Mr. Speaker, is for any students who achieve the appropriate GPA to be able to attend the Bermuda College, tuition-free. So, these two young men—both of whom want to attend the Bermuda College, one wants to study culinary arts; the other one wants to become an electrician—will be able to attend the Bermuda College this fall, and should be enrolled tuition-free, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, on a very sad note, I would ask that this Honourable House join me in sending a note of condolences to the family of the late Nadine Mapp-Hawkins. Nadine was a very young woman, who actually was in the same class at Berkeley as my youngest sister. And she met her untimely death abroad. And I would like for her family to know that they are in our thoughts and prayers.

On a happy note, Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, over the Heroes Weekend, the Department of Labour, Community and Sport held a celebration of the heroes who had previously been inducted. It is known that we did not have a new hero to be inducted for this year 2019. However, they did something different for this year in recognising not just the heroes who had previously been inducted, but to invite the members of the families to give personal tributes on their interaction with the people who were National Heroes and how those heroes have impacted their lives.

I have to declare my interest, Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as my father, the late Dr. E. F. Gordon, is one of our National Heroes. And I did have the privilege and the pleasure of being able to present on behalf of my family a personal tribute. But all of the National Heroes, Gladys Morell, Sir Edward Richards, Pauulu Kamarakafego, Sir John Swan and (who am I missing?), E. F. Gordon, Dame Lois Browne-Evans, who was the very first National Hero. And I think I am missing one . . . oh, Mary Prince, Mary Prince.

And every either member of the family or a designated individual was required to give a presentation. And everybody's presentations were absolutely well received. And I am sure that the Deputy Premier would want to be associated with these remarks, as he was in attendance and had the opportunity to greet the members of the families who were actually presenting on behalf of the National Heroes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member Moniz. You have the floor.

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

I do not believe this one was done. Two weeks ago, on the 4th of June, there was the cocktail reception for the book launch by Dr. Clarence Maxwell of his new book *Prudent Rebels*.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I associate the whole House with that.

The point I wish to make, I had a conversation with Minister Foggo about this, is that there was a fine cocktail reception at the museum on the 4th of June. And then, on the 6th, there was a lecture at Bermuda College, which may have been mentioned. The lecture at Bermuda College was an excellent lecture and was filmed. And I am encouraging the Government to put that up on YouTube, as well as putting it on CITV.

I would also like to give credit to Dr. Theodore Francis II, who is the co-author, and Alexandra Mairs-Kessler, who is the other co-author of that.

In addition, I would like to congratulate Vasco De Gama [Club] on their Portugal National Day celebrations that they held on Saturday, the 8th of June. The Deputy Premier was present at that, as was Minister Foggo. And it was a fine reception.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member Tyrrell. You have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

The Speaker: Good morning.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Good morning, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I will start off on a sad note and ask if condolences could be sent to the family of the late Donald Hamilton Gray Smith, better known as "Donnie," who was a friend of the family for a long, long time. I have known Donnie. In fact, I can remember his days as a talented footballer for the now-defunct Dock Hill Rangers. And I always tried to emulate him, but I only had one foot, not two feet, at the time. So, I do ask that condolences be sent to his family and hope that he rests in peace.

Mr. Speaker, on a happier note, I wish to be associated with the congratulations to Mr. Jason Sukdeo, whom I know personally, for his efforts in putting together . . . I am not really a carnival person. So, I am not overly involved in that. But I certainly know the effort that he put in and has put in over the last five years in putting on the carnival. And I do understand—I associate my colleague, Honourable Rolfe, constituency 21—the effort that he has put in to have it grow over the last five years. And I certainly wish him much more success.

Lastly, I would like to be associated with the congratulations to the Bermuda Football Association. And I will declare my interest as a past president of the football association and say that Bermuda certainly is now playing well above its weight. But it is something that was planned way back for us to reach this

stage. People may not know what goes on behind the scenes in getting a national team to this level. But it is well-deserved. And I certainly wish them all the best, even though the last game they have to play is basically a formality, but I do see a win in that last game for them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36. Honourable Member Scott, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that this Honourable House please send a letter of condolences to the family of Ms. Ismay Bean of West Side Road in Somerset.

The Speaker: Yes. Yes.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: May I associate the Honourable Minister of Health, Minister Wilson, and yourself, Mr. Speaker, if I may.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Ms. Bean was a mother and faithful member of the Allen Temple AME Church. And she passed away just recently. And so, to her children, Jolene and Pat and Maria, I would like them to know that they have the condolences of the House, and are in our thoughts and prayers, and that Members wishing to be associated include Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, and Mr. Cole Simons.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be associated with the congratulations offered to the participants of that magnificent regatta that has been taking place for 75 years at the crossing. This year, the proceedings began from the West End Sailboat Club. And we did an excellent job at hosting the preparation. I was happy to see you there, Mr. Speaker, for the starting horn for that race.

This year, the enthusiasm was high. When we were there, Mr. Speaker, I know that we both saw a number of young sailors there.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: And it bodes well for the regatta in that it will have a future.

So, it went off very well. And I commend all three placers. First, second and third were St. Georgians. So, I want Member, Ms. Ming, to know that I stood and commended the people from the east on this matter. Thank you.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Not this year. Not this year.
Would anyone else like to speak?
No other speakers.
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

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Speaker: There are two Bills to be introduced this morning. The first is in the name of the Minister of Finance. Minister, would you like to present your Bill?

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

FIRST READINGS

ECONOMIC SUBSTANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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; Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Minister of Health, would you like to introduce yours?

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes. 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; namely, the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: Just for the sake of clarity, on our Order Paper, we are going to adjust the number of items as they are listed. So, the first Order that will be dealt with this morning is the second reading of the Government Loans Amendment Act 2019, which is listed as [Order] No. 4. But it is going to be [Order] No. 1, in the name of the Minister of Finance.

Minister, would you like to present your Bill?

ORDER

GOVERNMENT LOANS (SUSPENSION OF ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO SINKING FUND) ORDER 2019

[Withdrawn, Standing Order 48]

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Government Loans (Suspension of Annual Contribution to Sinking Fund) Order 2019 be withdrawn, according to Standing Order 48.

The Speaker: Just for clarity for the House, the [Order] No. 2 listed is actually being withdrawn so we can do [Order] No. 4.

[Order] No. 4 will allow . . . or [Order] No. 1, which it is now . . . So, the first order of business was that the Minister had to remove [Order] No. 2, which he has done. And now we will proceed on to the Second Reading of the Government Loans Amendment Act 2019.

Minister.

BILL

SECOND READING

GOVERNMENT LOANS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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

Mr. Speaker, the Government wishes this Honourable House now to give consideration to the Bill entitled the Government Loans Amendment Act 2019.

The Bill seeks to amend the Act to provide the Minister of Finance with discretion with respect to making the Sinking Fund contribution. Mr. Speaker, effective 31st of March 1993, the Government Borrowing Sinking Fund [GBSF] was established as a separate legal entity for the repayment of government borrowing under the provisions of the Government Loans Act 1978.

During each financial year, the Consolidated Fund of the government is required to pay to the GBSF 2.5 per cent of the gross public debt outstanding in the Consolidated Fund at the end of the preced-

ing financial year, fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may recall that, due to the prolonged economic conditions prevailing from the 2008 recession, the Government amended the Government Loans Act 1978 in 2009 to provide the Minister of Finance with additional capacity to respond to economic conditions that could impair the government's tax yield. One of the changes made enabled the Minister of Finance to postpone the annual contribution into the Sinking Fund, while another amendment provided for the Minister to determine that the interest expense on long-term public debt be paid from the Sinking Fund, if necessary.

The assets of the Sinking Fund are invested in accordance with the Public Funds Act 1954. And they are shown as a reduction of debt issued on the Consolidated Fund's Statement of Financial Position. The assets are currently invested in US Government and Agency securities, investment-grade corporate securities and money market funds. The primary objective of the investment strategy of the assets in the Sinking Fund is principal protection. The one-year return on the fund, as of the 31st of March 2019, was 2.63 per cent. As of the 31st of March 2019, the Sinking Fund balance was \$219.2 million.

During the 2019/20 fiscal year, \$180 million of the monies in the fund will be used to repay two tranches of maturing private placement notes. These repayments will reduce our annual interest costs by \$12.1 million and lower our weighted average cost of borrowing from 4.591 per cent to 4.437 per cent, or a reduction of 15.4 basis points.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise this Honourable House that on the 21st of May 2019, Government repaid \$100 million of private placement notes that had matured. This action reduced our gross debt by \$100 million. But the net debt remained unchanged, as the balance in the Sinking Fund was used to fund the repayments of the notes.

Mr. Speaker, in uncertain times, fiscal rules must accommodate volatility and the funds available for future budgets. Sluggish international growth may contribute to limit Bermuda's ability to increase GDP, generate or sustain employment opportunities and increase government revenue to support the provision of services. On occasions, there is a financing gap between the stimulatory policies that we would like to see in place to protect jobs and the policies that we can finance from revenues. Governments must either borrow funds to bridge this funding gap, or they must cut spending to accommodate actual revenues. Spending reductions ultimately result in public sector downsizing, which could create weakness in the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, over the last decade and a half, Bermuda has experienced recurring budget deficits and a growing national debt, coupled with periods of negative economic growth. Significant attention has been focused on our approximately \$2.5 billion of

debt, with calls to reduce expenditures, deficits and, consequently, the debt. The Government is mindful of the effects of the debt burden on the country's fiscal posture and is taking the necessary steps to prudently manage our debt through strategic refinancing designed to lower interest costs, extend maturities and reducing debt while providing the Government with the space to execute on its fiscal growth strategy.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, successive governments have been committed to the Sinking Fund. And from March 2011 to March 2018, Government has contributed \$407.3 million into the fund. Given that during these periods the Government was running deficits, we have had to borrow money to make the statutory contributions to the fund and also pay the required interest on this debt. Or, it can otherwise be described as "borrowed savings." Furthermore, during this period, the average rate of interest on these borrowed funds was higher than the rate being earned from the Sinking Fund investments.

Mr. Speaker, as announced in the 2019/20 Budget Statement, due to the uncertainty facing the Bermuda economy, mainly in relation to the unknown impacts of the implementation of Bermuda's Economic Substance regime, the Ministry of Finance reconsidered the Government's fiscal strategy for the 2019/20 budget as laid out in its pre-budget report. Accordingly, as announced, the Government decided to suspend the mandatory annual contribution to the Sinking Fund rather than borrow additional monies to make this annual contribution. This decision was made in light of the following factors:

1. Apart from the private placement notes being referenced above, the next maturity of government debt will not occur until 2022.

2. Interest expense associated with borrowing to fund the mandatory Sinking Fund contributions will be greater than the investment return generated on those funds, a concept known as "negative carry."

3. Government has forecasted operating surpluses in fiscal 2019/20 and fiscal 2020/21 as set out in the most recent Budget Statement, and it intends to contribute to the Sinking Fund or use [funds from the surpluses] to make open market purchases of its existing indebtedness.

Mr. Speaker, the Government Borrowing Sinking Fund is still an important part of the Government's debt management strategy, as its primary purpose is to be used to repay public debt.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is to modernise the Act and provide a level of flexibility in the process to allow Government to make the appropriate responses during times of uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, to provide some context, when the Act was drafted in 1993, government was running surpluses and government debt was minimal. Therefore, the Sinking Fund contributions would have been immaterial as a percentage of the government's expenditure. In fiscal 2018/19, the \$64.2 million contribu-

tion represented approximately 5.7 per cent of Government Current Account spending, including debt service. Additionally, the Government has been borrowing to fund its mandatory contributions to the Sinking Fund. Surely, the policy intent when the Act was drafted was not to borrow funds to place into the Sinking Fund.

This legislation effects the policy objectives mentioned above and provides for the following: It gives the Minister of Finance the flexibility with regard to making the contribution to the Sinking Fund, provisions for making contributions to the Sinking Fund, for excess funds borrowed, and the sale of land remains the same, as these are fiscally responsible.

The changes to the provision of a government having to make to the Sinking Fund contribution before the 30th of June of each fiscal year—a contribution will now need to be made within the relevant fiscal year. It removes the provision for government having to pay interest to the Sinking Fund for late payments. It makes little sense for government to be paying itself interest. And it allows the Sinking Fund to be used to purchase the government's public debt. And this would allow the government to then cancel any of the notes that it purchases without paying the make-whole provisions.

It repeals the power of the Minister to suspend contributions to the Sinking Fund, as this provision is no longer needed. And it provides that this amendment applies to the current fiscal year, being that no contribution is to be made to the Sinking Fund.

Mr. Speaker, we have discussed the suspension of the Sinking Fund with the credit rating agencies, and while they recognise that the Sinking Fund is a positive feature of Bermuda's credit profile, as it reduces liquidity risks, they have noted that, from a credit standpoint, its effectiveness is limited because government transfers to the fund were financed by the incurrence of new debt.

Furthermore, on account of liability management operations conducted by the Government in recent years, which have extended our debt maturities, the immediate need of the Sinking Fund is reduced. One agency noted the following, and I quote: "The Sinking Fund continues to provide overall credit support to Bermuda, as it helps the Government to meet its debt obligations. Nonetheless, should the government continue to post fiscal deficits, pushing debt stocks higher, contributions to the fund will also rise and continue to be mainly financed through additional debt, thus decreasing the fund's effectiveness as a savings mechanism."

Mr. Speaker, I trust that I have provided sufficient evidence to support this transformational policy change. And in closing, I wish to assure the public that the Government and this Minister of Finance are sensitive to the challenges which arise when debt is unsustainably high, and to reiterate that the Government

has a plan of action to reduce public debt and to guide the country to a sustainable fiscal path.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I now welcome other Honourable Members' participation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his presentation. It is interesting that we are here taking this step to modernise, as he has indicated, the Government Loans Act so that the Sinking Fund becomes a more focal and focused point of what the Government intends to do with its financing.

Mr. Speaker, it is my contention that paying debt is the hallmark and part of good fiscal prudence. The idea of having a sinking fund, historically, as the Minister has indicated, arose from a Government's necessity to create debt in order to sustain its policies while, at the same time, providing for the ability to repay that debt when it became due out of a fund that was set aside.

I hearken back to the March debate that we had on the budget, in which the Government proudly announced that it had balanced the budget for the first time in "X" number of years since, I believe they said, 1993. And it was my comment at that point in time that, in the absence of requiring a contribution to the Sinking Fund, anybody can have a surplus of money when they do not pay their bills. And that, effectively, is what the Sinking Fund caused us to focus on—make sure that when you know what your income is, you know what your expenditure needs to be. You need to manage your finances in such a way that you do have extra.

Clearly, as the Minister has indicated, with the Government's inability to manage its processes and its financing in such a way to produce surpluses in the budget, then clearly it does not make sense to have a legal requirement to put money into a sinking fund when that money is not there. So, to borrow money at a higher interest rate to be able to put it into a savings account that is generating a lower interest rate, with a negative interest impact, clearly does not make sense. And we understand that.

But there is one thing that I believe we must focus on. And that is that the Government must appreciate that we have got to cut the suit according to the cloth. And, as the Honourable Member from constituency 2 always says, you must measure twice and cut once. And what we have seen is a reluctance by the Government to be able to curtail its expenditure.

So, it is effectively "business as usual." And then there is no money left over to save. I think that this has got to be the key.

We do not want to borrow money at a higher interest rate than we are getting in terms of the investment of income that we are earning. But by the same token, if we do not take the steps to curtail our expenditure and to really tighten our belts, Mr. Speaker, we are going to consistently find ourselves in the situation of having additional debt that we are going to be hard-put to repay.

Now, the Minister has indicated that it is his intention, as he mentioned in the Budget Statement, in 2019/20 and 2020/21, to repay some of the money that . . . Oh, and maybe he said 2022. Maybe we will start to repay some of the debt that is outstanding. I think that it is very, very important, Mr. Speaker, to focus on the necessity—the balanced budget and to curtail expenditure.

Now, the Minister has constantly, and the Government has constantly criticised us in the Opposition, suggesting that they cut staffing in order to be able to cut expenditure. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that cutting expenditure from a government perspective does not necessarily entail the reduction of government staff by way of leaving people unemployed. There are things such as entrepreneurial encouragement that the government can do whereby specific segments of the public sector can be encouraged to create a business environment, with government being the client, so that the costs of operating certain segments do not fall on the government purse. And that will be able to normalise and regularise what government expenditure will ultimately end up being, without seeing people being put out on the sidewalk and out of work.

I think that because our mind-set, historically, has been that government employs people; therefore, they have a job, and therefore, we have got to find the money to pay them. And nothing has been looked at in terms of encouraging that attitude which says, *This particular segment . . . we could actually take these members off the books. And they can still have themselves a viable employment opportunity through their own business creation.* It may be a novel thought. It is not something that is a comfortable idea, that people . . . if you are accustomed to going to work Monday through Friday working for government and getting a pay cheque at the end of the month, the idea, perhaps the uncertainty of a business start-up at the initial outset . . . but the rewards that could be obtained as time goes on, Mr. Speaker, could be immeasurable for people for, number one, not having that dependency and wondering next year, *Is this the year that I'm going to get cut, because government truly does not have the money? Or, Can I sustain my own upkeep through the creation and the running of my own company?* That is what we need to start to encourage people to do.

Mr. Speaker, when our young people come back from college . . . I can remember, if I can use a personal anecdote, my younger son going off to college. His father said to him, *You need to go to school, get educated, get your degree, come back and get a job.* And my son's reaction to his dad was, *Yeah. Like you, Dad, and have a heart attack in the process.*

So, the attitude that our young people have is a little bit more liberal in terms of, they are looking for their own opportunities to be able to sustain themselves, to create businesses. And that same young man of whom I speak, Mr. Speaker, is now living in Cambodia with a company that he is operating, and the ability to sustain himself in his own business environment, and not having taken the advice of his dad to go to school and get educated, come home and get a job and hope for somebody to hand out a pay cheque to you at the end of the week.

So, I think that we have to look at empowering our people, Mr. Speaker, in a circumstance in which they can sustain themselves, still be able to live and to be able to adopt a business model that will suit them and their families, and not continue to be a burgeoning responsibility for the Government.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I understand what the Minister is trying to do here with this legislation, it is critical for us that we start to look at the methodology by which we can retire the existing debt that exists, that we have. And then we also need to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we do not continue to dig ourselves into a bigger financial hole.

The one thing that a Sinking Fund contribution has done, historically, is to focus. And notwithstanding that as time . . . I think into the early 1990s and into the mid-1990s, as the Minister indicated, the Government was operating on surpluses. And therefore, it had minimal debt. And therefore, a contribution to the Sinking Fund was not a major challenge at that point in time.

In 2009, as the Minister indicated, there was an amendment to the Government Loans Act to suspend the necessity to deposit money into the Sinking Fund, because that money was not there. And I believe from 2009, certainly for the next two years, that attitude of saying that we did not have the money to put into the Sinking Fund was a critical part of the Government's planning process. Certainly, from 2012 into 2017, notwithstanding that this money was put into the Sinking Fund, it was at a cost.

But sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we look at the cost. And while I say the delta between the borrowing cost and the return on investment cost, which I think the Minister indicated was sometimes averaging out to 4.591 per cent of cost as against a 2.63 per cent return on investment, what we have found, Mr. Speaker, is that you put the money in that account, it forces you to be aware of exactly what it is that you have to work with. And it forces you to start to look at cutting back where you can cut back.

We were criticised as a Government, Mr. Speaker, every step of the way by saying that, *You cut back on staff. And you cut back on this, you cut back on that.* But we were looking to cut the suit according to the cloth. When this Government took over again in 2017, it was like, you know, *Just throw caution to the wind. Let me just go back. Let's bring on all the people. Let's forget about all the savings that had been made during the course of the 2012–2017 period of time. And let me just, you know, bring back everybody. Forget about the expenses. Do what we have to do.* And get to budget time for 2019/20 and say, *We've balanced the budget!* But there has been no contribution to the Sinking Fund.

And while I understand that the Minister would not have wanted to borrow to make that contribution, sometimes you focus on what your responsibility is. And in the absence of that focus, Mr. Speaker, we can continue to just waltz around and tip-toe through the tulips and forget about our fiscal prudence and responsibility.

So, I believe it is critical, Mr. Speaker, that the flexibility that the Minister has introduced, according to this Bill, obviously is something that must be done because we do not have the financing that we would like. We do not have a superfluous amount of money that is floating around. We had to consider that the Bill that we are going to be debating in a little while, in terms of the economic substance, was going to create . . . it could, conceivably, have created a negative impact on our Bermuda finances and the money that was going to be available and whether companies were going to stay or not.

So, I understand that this was a consideration at the time. But I believe that it is critical for us to know that, whatever we do, we have to stick with the premise that paying debt is a part of our fiscal prudence and that we should make sure that we continue to infuse a fiscal discipline in everything that the Government intends to do.

So, we do not want to see the Government going further into debt and paying money to be able to sustain the debt that they have by, you know, going into debt to save money to pay off money later on. It also does not make sense to pay interest on the outstanding contribution to the Sinking Fund. For Government pay interest to itself . . . obviously, that is something that we can certainly support.

But I believe that, if I make no other comment today, the importance of fiscal prudence has got to be the methodology by which Government proposes to conduct the people's business, going forward, so that we will find that we are in a position to pay off whatever debt exists, to repurchase any public debt that we have out there, Mr. Speaker, and to minimise the necessity for payments. This can only be done when we start to look at slimming down our overall expenditure or increasing our economic activity, because that is the other side of it, Mr. Speaker.

We can continue with all the expenses that we have at the moment. But if we do not increase our economic activity to bring more money into the kitty, Mr. Speaker, we are going to find that we are going to be challenged. We are going to be challenged with this problem for time immemorial.

And certainly, I know that, from the people of Bermuda, within this last budget, Mr. Speaker, they were taxed and taxed and taxed and taxed. And everything they looked at . . . we get complaints on a daily basis. We have so many new taxes. We have so many increases in taxes. We have foreign currency purchase taxes which went up. We had land taxes that went up. We had commercial entity taxes that went up. We had, you know, sugar tax that went up. You know, everything went up. And people are complaining about the fact that they have to pay more taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the only way that we are going to be able to get money into the government's kitty is for there to be tax infusion, or new economic activity. And what we have not seen is . . . we have heard comments about the intent, but we have not seen the intent for economic activity become a reality so that the people of Bermuda can get some kind of relief. So, we need to be able to be pushing as a Parliament, as a country. We need to be forcing ourselves not just to save, but we need to be able to come up with effective budgeting whereby we know exactly what money is coming in, what money we have to spend and how we can be able to salt away some in order to retire the existing debt for the benefit of the people of Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member Moniz. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

I would like to follow along in a similar vein to my honourable colleague, Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

The Minister, in presenting his case from a finance point of view, is being most persuasive in saying, *Well, it doesn't make sense putting money aside if you're borrowing to put it aside, or if you're paying interest on it and the interest you get on it is less than the interest you pay on your outstanding debt.* So, he has made a very convincing case.

But, unfortunately, once he makes that case, it is very difficult to imagine a situation when he would see it as appropriate to pay *into* the Sinking Fund. So, I mean, is he quietly here just getting rid of the Sinking Fund? I mean, he is saying, *Oh, well, you know, I'm giving myself greater powers to not pay into the Sinking Fund, and it never makes sense to pay into it. But in the future, if I ever think it sensible to pay into it, I'll pay into it.*

Well, in what circumstances would the Minister say it would make sense to pay into the Sinking Fund? Are there any conceivable, likely circumstances where this Minister of Finance would see that it would be sensible to pay into a Sinking Fund?

Some of us, you know, are accused of being old-fashioned, and perhaps we are. You know, people like to keep a little money aside for an emergency for a rainy day. However they keep it, whether in a bank savings deposit, et cetera, you know, clever people would say it makes no sense. But sometimes, it is useful to have a buffer, so that when you can come along you can make payment on some unexpected circumstance where you have some money. You need money all of a sudden, and maybe the cost of borrowing is high. You need the money; you have got it there. You have stashed a bit of money aside for that rainy day. The rainy day comes, and there the money is. So, all those people who said you were terribly foolish for putting any money aside suddenly say, *Oh, he was a clever chap. He put some money aside, and he was ready for that totally unexpected circumstance when he needed money suddenly and it would be difficult to get.*

So, perhaps the Minister in his response can say what exactly the circumstances are when he would see it as sensible to start putting money into the Sinking Fund again? Or, is it a highly unlikely event?

The difficulty I have, you know, in the case he makes for this year is the sensible case in the difficult economic circumstances that Bermuda presently faces. But we have got to be realistic here. We have an economy in the doldrums. We have had increasing taxes. We have an ageing population. We have had 12 or 13 months of retail sales decline. We have insurance companies that are consolidating and merging and laying people off. There have been hundreds of people laid off.

The retail sales, we have had retail companies close. We have all seen that Cooper's are closing out their ground-floor business, selling it off to Brown & Company. Well, they are not doing it because they were making a ton of money. I mean, they are doing it because they want to get rid of it. And Brown & Company thinks that they can perhaps make a penny off of it. But all of the signs are out there. It is a very difficult retail environment.

And what you are seeing in the larger industry, the insurance industry, is less employment. Companies are trying to be more efficient. And I would suspect, my own feeling about the company . . . and the Minister can speak to this, but the feedback I am getting from people is that business confidence is down, particularly in the international industry. Business confidence is down. We know consumer confidence is down because of shrinking retail sales. So, consumer confidence is out the window.

So, what is the Government doing? We know that their big initiatives have so far failed to make any

substantial increase in Bermuda's economy to bring in foreign investment. And those are the circumstances behind this. We have seen, as my honourable colleague, Pat Gordon-Pamplin, said, increases in loads of taxes—land tax, foreign currency, purchase tax. Of course, foreign currency, purchase tax, affects everything because everything is brought in, anything in the retail sector. The sugar tax, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. The cost of living is going up, and we have a shrinking base of Bermudians. We are still all waiting, of course, for the promised immigration reform.

And, you know, unfortunately, this is all up against a backdrop of our competition. One of our main competitors, the Cayman Islands, seems to be in an economic boom. All the reports you get from Cayman is of the size of their population, their property prices are going up, and their economy is booming. So, you know, we would assume that, in economic terms, they are doing something right, while we sit here. And we certainly appear to be in the doldrums.

So, that is my difficulty with the Sinking Fund. That is your money for a rainy day. To me, the Minister is taking it because we are in a rainy day. That is where we are. He is in difficulties financially, so he is saying, *I have got to take this money and use it to pay down debt, because we don't know what else to do.* And that is why I want to see more of a plan from him. Where are we going forward? Are we just going forward on a wing and a prayer? Or is there a real financial plan to re-invigorate this economy? So far, I just have not seen that.

And I wish that the Minister could share, not necessarily with me in the House, but with the members of the public, where he sees this economy going. We have already seen, you know, warnings that came from the SAGE [Commission], it came from the National School of Government, that the size of the public service was too large; there are too many public employees. But what we have seen under this Government is encouragement to hire more people while at the same time cutting services.

So, you know, as I have said many times before, your trash is being collected once a week. We have had difficulty with the buses. But we see more people being hired. And from our point of view, you see the wrong message being sent. You know, when the Premier says, *Oh, I'm encouraging my Ministers without personal staff that they should rush out and hire personal staff,* somehow he thinks that does not result in a greater number of public employees.

Those are the challenges, I think, that this Finance Minister is facing. And I would like for him to be a bit more specific about where he thinks we are going to be next year, whether he is going to be putting money into the Sinking Fund, or under what circumstances he would consider putting money in?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2. Honourable Member Swan.

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

As I listened, I am reminded of “the sky is falling” syndrome. And it is an important political narrative that would have persons buy into an Opposition narrative aimed at trying to paint the Government in the worst possible light. I do not speak for the Minister of Finance, but I support the Minister of Finance, my colleague. And I know he is quite able and prudent in his methods. And I am sure that he understands all of that which is required to save for a rainy day.

I find it interesting that the Opposition, who were once the Government, went into significant deficit spending using taxpayer money on the backdrop of cutting the same services that they are suggesting that this Government is prepared to bolster. We make no apologies about being concerned about the workers of Bermuda. And we are very mindful of the reality that caused the Government, in the mid-2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 period, to have to go into deficit spending. It was called the recession, a global one at that, one which the Opposition, of which I participated very ably in, were quite successful in blaming the Government for a global recession. We did that. It was a narrative in 2009 that, as companies were leaving Bermuda, it was because of the PLP. We did that, and we did it well.

And so, let Bermuda be mindful that the same narrative that would have portrayed that, would try to portray something like this Government does not concern itself with fiscal prudence. I would just have to encourage persons to look at the Budget Book and to look at the column of actuals as it relates to what the bottom line of indebtedness was in 2017 and 2018 at \$3 million. If you would look back, if I had the Budget Book for, say, 2014/15, the actuals, when the Opposition were the Government, inherited would have been probably around \$1.92 million. Very little discussion took place about the billion dollars of indebtedness that took place under that administration. Very little ink was given to that.

And when you look at that narrative, that the-sky-is-falling narrative, if \$3 million in indebtedness—billion dollars in indebtedness—was the actual in 2017/18, what this Finance Minister has portrayed in an estimate that goes down as far as 2021/22 is the same \$3 million. So, in conservative estimates, steadying the ship from deficit spending is something that this Government has taken on board in a real way.

But, look. I do not expect the Opposition to jump up and down and recognise those points of prudence. I do not! It is not their job. Their job is to paint us in the worst possible light. And that is my job, to point that out, because that is what we see.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. This Opposition is certainly not trying to point out the worst in PLP, as he noted. That is not our intent. We are looking for fiscal prudence here, and that is what we are discussing—fiscal prudence.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Not some conspiracy narrative.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I am not pointing out a conspiracy narrative. If the Honourable Opposition Leader wants to talk about fiscal prudence, I am looking at the Budget Book. I am not making this up! I am looking at numbers! I am looking at numbers that point out—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes. We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member once again is misleading the House. The numbers do not point out that we are trying to cast the PLP Government in a dark light. The numbers . . . we are looking at the numbers. And we are not saying that the PLP is this dark entity that is trying to do all these bad things with these numbers. And that is what he is suggesting!

The Speaker: Thank you.
Member.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I am suggesting that the numbers suggest that the PLP *is* acting in a prudent manner, but in the same time is looking out for Mr. and Mrs. Working Bermuda, who were not taken in consideration by a previous administration, Mr. Speaker. And so, the Government—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member once again is misleading the House. Under the OBA Government, confidence was *not* down. Retail sales were *not* down. Those are the numbers.

Under a PLP Government, we are under a confidence level that has never been seen before. In 12 months, a year now going—

The Speaker: Okay. We got your point.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you.

The Speaker: We got your point.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker, when this Government comes forward with initiatives, such as FinTech, for instance, we have seen persons, like the Opposition Leader, get up and say how much he would support that. But then, in the next breath, his colleagues would go out and tweet or go on social media and say the exact opposite and purport the exact opposite.

And we have seen some of the difficulties with regard to banking as it relates to bringing about the transformation which is required in this economy. So, no one is making any illusions about some of the challenges that are faced.

But I do not expect anybody to jump up and down from the Opposition to make mention that a financing deal was, in fact, struck just this week for the [Caroline] Bay. You talk about transparency? It was that Government, the OBA, when they were in Government, they did not even tell the people of Bermuda that the people of Bermuda were on the hook for \$165 million right on the heels of an election.

I do not hear any points-of-order. Point-of-order me on it if it is not true!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It is *not* true.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Bermuda was on the hook. And now, and now, this week, when the Opposition is on the floor of this House talking about confidence, they will remain silent by the fact that the principals of that major project now have secured some significant funding to be able to complete it.

And let me tell you this. The Honourable Member, Mr. Zane De Silva, the Honourable [Minister] of Tourism, and the Honourable Member for Works and Engineering, and responsible for the golf courses, Mr. Tyrrell, are bringing significant . . . I always say you have got to fish where the fish are. I make no bones about it. In my trade in golf, there are many people who fit the profile of looking to be able to see the possibilities that exist in this country's economy.

Well, let me tell you where they are going to be in October for five more years. They are going to be up in Southampton and around Bermuda. They are going to be able to see [Caroline] Bay from the drones as they are being broadcast around the world, as the Government makes it possible—without building another island for them to do it, without going into significant debt to be able to do it.

We are going to be fishing where the fish are in Southampton in the field of golf and looking at opportunities to do just what the Opposition are suggesting that we do not seem to want to . . . do not seem to know anything about in some regard, in an inadvertent way. And I am here to tell you that you cannot in one breath talk about confidence without giving Jack his jacket. And Jack in this day is the amount of money that has been injected in this project to complete it, that would have a significant economic boon on the aims and objectives of a PLP Government, which, in fact, looks at life a lot differently than the way that the OBA does. There are some philosophical differences in the way in which we would look at doing things as a Government.

But let me say this. The Finance Minister is one whom I have a great deal of confidence in being able to set out why it is necessary for him to bring this amendment to the House to regularise what was presented during the budget. And I will defer to his wisdom in his summation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No other . . . Honourable Member Simons, constituency 8, you have the floor.

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

This has been very interesting, Mr. Speaker. I would not want to be in the Finance Minister's seat at this time. As was said by my colleagues, Bermuda is going through some very interesting times from an economic point of view. And we all have to, as one [Member] said earlier, measure twice and cut once. And when it comes to our finances, we have to be more prudent.

Now, I heard the Minister indicate that he basically has suspended the contribution to the Sinking Fund. I understand his reasoning, as was said by my colleague Honourable Trevor Moniz. But I think, at the end of the day, he also needs to take from one part of his Ministry and give to another. So, in cutting back on the Sinking Fund contribution, I would have liked to have heard how he was going to implement an austerity programme to cut back on other expenses to reduce the debt.

To me, that would have made eminent sense, and it would also have shown that, *You know, okay. Well, I'm cutting back on the contribution to the Sink-*

ing Fund. And to offset that, I'm going to put in some programmes that will reduce the debt, reduce the size of government, reduce some of the programmes that we offer so that the debt can be better managed. And I am waiting to hear his comments in that light.

I would like to also address the issue of creditworthiness. How is this going to impact our creditworthiness, from a regulatory . . . not a regulatory, but a credit rating point of view? Obviously, our government debt is reviewed on a regular basis by Moody's and other rating agencies. And what is their take on our not making a contribution to the Sinking Fund? Does the Minister have a plan in place that will say, *Well, this is the plan for the next three years, given the current economic situation. We will basically waive our contribution. And in so doing, we have made up on the other end—i.e., the cost of government and the cost of debt.*

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to have our interest expenses at the levels where they are at now. Mr. Speaker, the interest expense is basically larger than most of the departments in government. And they are around \$120 million a year, or even higher, Mr. Speaker. So, again, it is important that we reduce the interest expense. And the only way we can do that is to reduce the debt and refinancing of some of the debt. And it is important that we show discipline to our investors—i.e., our credit holders and the rating agencies. Because if they can do that, we can get debt at a cheaper price and a more cost-effective price, and hopefully reduce the cost of interest that is attached to our debt, and thereby making more programmes available to the people of this country.

So, again, as was said by my colleague, to the Minister, what is the big picture? What is the plan? You cannot address the waiving of the Sinking Fund contribution in isolation. Everything has a cause and effect. And I would like to have heard more details on the cause and effect of the action that he is taking. I would like to also have information on, you know, what have the rating agencies suggested. I mean, they have regular contact with these people, how will that impact our creditworthiness?

You know, at the end of the day, it is difficult. It is very, very difficult. And we all have to manage our books. And there are some compromises that occur. But at the end of the day, it is about, are we moving ahead from strength to strength from a financial point of view? And are we doing our best to stimulate the economy to grow the top line? And at this point in time, I see no evidence of any new industries that are substantially growing our GDP that will ensure that there is more money in circulation which will result in a greater contribution to the government's coffers.

So, again, what is the big picture? What is the plan going down the road in regard to the Sinking Fund? And how do the Minister and Government intend to manage it going forward within the next two or three years to ensure that our creditworthiness is not

compromised and that we can show and demonstrate that our debt is under control and that we are able to service it through interest burdens that will not contribute to being a heavy burden on the Government and people of Bermuda?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member . . . ?

We recognise the Honourable Member Pearman, from constituency 22. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I was not actually going to speak to this Bill. But sometimes, when people say things in this House, it sets off a chain of events. I think it is deeply regrettable that the Honourable Member from St. George's, who spoke two speakers before me, felt the need to cast the comments being made about this legislation in the context that the Opposition is seeking always to *paint the Government in a negative light*. And he described us as trying to present an "economic narrative."

Now, "a narrative," Mr. Speaker, as we know, is a story. And stories are usually fiction rather than fact. But the fact is we have seen 13 consecutive months of declining retail sales. And we are in a struggling economy. I echo the words of my honourable friend, Mr. Cole Simons, who said that he would not envy sitting in the chair that the current Minister of Finance sits in. I echo that. It is an unenviable job that he has. And it is incorrect for the Honourable Member for St. George's to say that all we do is try and cast this in the worst possible light; we do not.

The Opposition was supportive and commended the Government, and indeed the BTA [Bermuda Tourism Authority] and indeed Minister Zane De Silva on the last occasion about the PGA Tour. We commended them. We did not take objection to it. That is fact, not narrative, not fiction, not story.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member is—

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: The Honourable Member, I believe, is inadvertently misleading the House. I happen to look on Facebook. I see his colleagues who contribute to aspersions that are made [about] this Government in any number of areas, and including what he just mentioned.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Go ahead, Member.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Speaker, I am not misleading the House. I was here last week. The Leader of the Opposition and I both commended Minister Zane De Silva and the BTA for their efforts. And it was a job well done for the benefit of all of Bermuda. And we are proud to support them on that point.

And the suggestion that we are trying to talk the economy down, that we are going around saying *The sky is falling* is unhelpful. We are pointing out fact, not fiction. We are dealing with numbers, not narrative. So, Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully say that when we are dealing with legislation such as this—which is important, which should not lead to unnecessary inflammatory and inaccurate debate from the Member from St. George's—we should deal with the Bill that is in front of us.

I do appreciate that the Minister of Finance has a very difficult job. And for my part, he is doing it well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I had hoped this morning, through kind of a well-written brief and presentation, not to have sparked any controversy with this proposed amendment.

[Laughter]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Having said that, having said that, you know, we are where we are. We do what we do. So, let me try to answer some of the questions that have been asked this morning as succinctly as I can.

One of the things—and this is not about me. One of the things that I have noticed in my eight months as the Minister of Finance is that there is a wall in my Ministry that has pictures of all of my predecessors. And as I looked at the pictures on the wall, I realised that all of us have very differing backgrounds. There are a couple of . . . there is a physician, there is a chemist, there is an engineer. There are a couple of guys who were asset managers. There is an entrepreneur, an IT professional, a lawyer. I am the first of my kind, as an expert in capital markets. And so, with that expertise, I bring, I think, a certain value to discussions around things related to our debt situation and how we address them.

I think the approach that we have taken . . . and I have tried to be very careful. Because one thing that I noticed on day one in this job is that it is . . . it is an awesome job. It takes on lots of responsibility. And it is easy for those who are not in the seat to be critical. And so, out of respect for my predecessors, understanding the weight of the obligations that come with this job, I have stayed away from being critical. Because in the moment, people make the best deci-

sions they can, based on the information that they have.

With respect to the Sinking Fund, it is a concept that is rooted in history. You float debt. And as a way of ensuring that you can pay it back you provide money into a fund in order to sink it. And so, when you float in the issuance, you sink on the redemption.

The Sinking Fund today has about \$118 million in it, after having repaid an issuance of \$100 million of private placement notes. One of the things that people, I think, need to fully understand about Bermuda is, when we first issued private placement notes, the audience for those notes, the investors in those notes were primarily insurance companies. Those notes tended to cost more than public market debt. Today, most of our debt is issued in the public markets. We are a AA- rated country, a very highly rated sovereign, by the way.

I could take the Sinking Fund proceeds today and go and use those monies to buy back debt that is currently outstanding. But I have chosen not to, because I believe that the concept of the Sinking Fund is one that has value, and we are going to save that money to use it to redeem notes at the end of the year. So, rather than increasing debt to pay back debt, we are going to wait and be prudent.

Similarly, we are not going to incur debt at an interest cost greater than what we can achieve on it in savings. It does not make any sense under the current circumstances. As a finance expert, I can present a set of circumstances where it makes sense to borrow money at a higher rate than you can get it in savings. But we are not in those circumstances today. And so, my advice and my policy position are that we not do that anymore.

There has been some talk about the numbers. And so, let me give you a preview of the numbers. We had estimated in the budget presentation that the Government would take in approximately \$1,079,000,000 in revenue, and spend for fiscal 2018/19, \$931.9 million, leading to a deficit of approximately \$102.6 million. We were roundly criticised during the Budget Debate for having numbers that were shy of the original estimates.

I can report today preliminary numbers. Our revenue numbers were actually \$6 million above the estimate that was presented in February. And our expenditure numbers were \$15 million less than what we projected. So, the budget deficit for 2018/19 came in substantially lower than was originally projected and what was presented in the revised presentation. So, the notion that people are not focusing on the numbers and [not] trying to manage the public purse appropriately are not true.

With respect to the plan, I think I outlined the plan in my brief. But, simply put, I have not chosen to raise the debt ceiling as a way of instilling some sort of discipline in terms of how this Government conducts itself. Any monies that are received in surpluses

should be used to either contribute to the Sinking Fund or make public market purchases of existing securities. So, basically, I am buying back the debt—not spending the money, not frivolously wasting the money.

The rating agencies have been very clued-in on what it is we have been doing over the course of the last 15–16 years with the Sinking Fund, especially as we have been borrowing to fund it. It is equivalent of taking your credit card and spending \$1,000 on it, and then going and putting \$1,000 in the bank and saying, *Well, I've got \$1,000 saved*. But net/net, you have zero. It is as simple as that. Most people do that because they have to do it; we do not have to do it that way. It costs us more money to borrow to save. And as we start thinking about being prudent, being fiscally prudent and making smarter decisions, this was one that I could not support in light of where we find ourselves.

As a general matter, I speak with authority for the Government with respect to matters of finance. And I am very careful in the words that I use because I understand the power of my saying something. So, I have said this before, and I will say it again. We are projecting a surplus for 2019/20. We are two months in. In the remaining 10 months, we will see how well we do versus those projections. We are projecting a surplus in 2020/21 and 2022. And we will see how the economy moves over the course of time to deliver on those results.

There is no surplus today. There is a projection of one. And I think it is important that I say it, provide the right context in terms of what the Government's position is with respect to our budget. We have *projected* a surplus.

Rating agencies are fine with this. And in my brief, I think I mentioned that the Sinking Fund continues to provide overall credit support to Bermuda, as it helps the Government to meet its debt obligations. Nonetheless, should the Government continue to post fiscal deficits, pushing debt stocks higher—meaning borrowing more money to fund the Sinking Fund—contributions to the fund will rise and continue to be mainly financed through additional debt, thus decreasing the Sinking Fund's effectiveness as a savings mechanism.

So, we are going to use the surpluses to buy back debt—in effect, reducing debt. We are working not to increase the debt ceiling, so we cannot borrow anymore unless we need to. And I will not make an absolute statement that I will not raise the Sinking Fund . . . I will not raise the debt ceiling, because I do not want to be in the business of making irresponsible statements as a Finance Minister. If the country has a disaster that requires the Government to intervene, provide assistance in rebuilding, we may have to borrow those monies, and I will not lock myself in by saying we are not going to raise the debt ceiling. Because I am sure that all of us in this House would agree that

we have an obligation, as a Government, to support our residents, especially in times of disaster.

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

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Will we have the Honourable Member from constituency 2 take the Chair?

House in Committee at 12:18 pm

[Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan, Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

GOVERNMENT LOANS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Chairman: Good afternoon, Members.

We are in the Committee of the whole [House] to consider the [Government Loans Amendment Act 2019](#), under the Minister of Finance.

Minister of Finance, you have the floor.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move clauses 1 through 6.

The Chairman: It has been proposed that all clauses be moved.

Any objections?

No objection. Continue on, Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Chairman, clause 1 is self-explanatory. (Sorry.)

The Bill seeks to amend the Government Loans Act 1978 to provide for special arrangements in respect of the Sinking Fund.

Clause 1 is self-explanatory.

Clause 2 amends subsection (2) of section 12 by repealing the subsection and substituting subsections (2) and (2A). Under the new subsection (2), the Minister may, in each financial year, pay into the fund out of the Consolidated Fund an amount equal to 2.5 per centum of the public debt outstanding or such other amount as he may deem appropriate upon taking into consideration the annual budget. Under the new subsection (2A), in each financial year there shall be paid into the fund out of the Consolidated Fund any amount from the sums borrowed under section 2(1) that is in excess of the annual budgetary requirements and the whole or part of any amount realised from the sale of land by the Minister responsible for Works and Engineering, as approved by the Legislature.

Clause 3 amends subsection (4) of section 12 by repealing the subsection and substituting subsections (4) and (4A) so as to require that contributions payable under the new subsections (2) and (2A) of section 12 shall be paid within the applicable financial year and to provide that interest shall not accrue in the

case of non-payment of the contributions within the applicable financial year.

Clause 4 amends section 12A(1)(a) to provide that the Sinking Fund can be applied to purchase the public debt.

Clause 5 amends the principal Act to repeal section 12AA, as power of the Minister to suspend contributions without incurring interest is now provided for under section 12 as amended by clauses 2 and 3 of the Bill.

Clause 6 provides for amendments to the principal Act to be deemed to apply to the financial year 2019/20.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member from constituency 23.

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

Mr. Chairman, I just have a question in respect of clause 3 on page 2. And this is [new] subsection (4A). And the existing legislation speaks to, if the Sinking Fund contribution is not made, then there is an interest amount that needs to be paid into the fund, into the Consolidated Fund, in respect of that late payment, if I can put it that way. My question is, and I believe the Minister may agree with this, Why would we not just suspend the idea of interest payments?

And I say that from the perspective that, while I recognise and I advocate that money should be paid into the Sinking Fund, and I understand that the interest in the absence of those payments is effectively a penalty for non-payment, does it really make sense for Government to be taking money out of the Consolidated Fund to be paying into the Consolidated Fund interest for money that they have not put into the Sinking Fund? Somehow, it just does not seem to make an awful lot of sense.

Can we not consider suspending the idea of interest on non-payment of Sinking Fund contributions, because it is really government paying government? And does it really make any sense?

I think the challenge that we have is either we are going to contribute to the Sinking Fund or not. This gives the Minister the flexibility to say that if the budget dictates that there are no additional funds, that there could be contribution to the Sinking Fund, that he has that discretion so to do. But somehow, the interest element of it just does not seem to make an awful lot of sense. And I am just wondering whether the Government would consider whether, in fact, the . . . I mean, it says, "No interest shall be incurred where a contribution referred to in subsection (4) is not paid" in the year that "it was determined as payable under subsection (2) or required to be paid under subsection (2A)."

But if you stop to think about it, the whole idea of government paying itself interest seems to be a

nonsensical argument. I understand that when it was initiated before it was effectively to focus on the fact that if you cannot cut your suit according to your cloth therefore you would be penalised as a result. But given how this has become very fluid in terms of how we will be approaching contributions to the Sinking Fund, and while I heard the Minister indicate that it is his intention to be operating a . . . he is projecting a surplus for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 in which there will perhaps be funds to be able to pay into the Sinking Fund during that period of time or purchase back debt so that we reduce our net debt situation, the idea of this interest still seems to boggle me a little bit. What is the efficacy of it? What sense does it make to be paying interest to ourselves as a Government? I am just curious.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member care to speak to clauses 1 through 6?

Honourable Member from constituency 24 [*sic*].

Mr. Scott Pearman: Twenty-two.

The Chairman: Twenty-two. Sorry. I went one up. You got to go back one down.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And now that you are sitting in the Chair as opposed to [sitting] behind me on my previous remarks, I hope those are now forgotten.

[*Laughter*]

Mr. Scott Pearman: I just do not know if the Honourable Minister wants to [answer] the question posed, and then I will pose a separate question. I am entirely in your hands, Mr. Chairman, as to how to proceed.

The Chairman: You have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes.

I just had a question, one question about clause 4. And I think the Minister has clarified it. But for the benefit . . . this can be quite complicated stuff, and we use lots of complicated phraseology and terms. But I understand the Minister to be saying, and I understand clause 4 to be effecting, that what is taken from the Sinking Fund will be solely used to repurchase debt. And I just would invite the Minister to clarify that for those listening. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Does any Honourable Member care to speak to clauses 1 through 6?

Minister.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

With respect to the Honourable Member from constituency 23, my MP—

[*Inaudible interjections*]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: You will never know.

The [new subsection] (4A) that you refer to . . . actually, the point you make is a valid one. And the existing legislation calls for it. There is a suspension in the payment, that interest, actually . . . government pays itself interest. And so, the point of the new subsection (4A) is to remove that feature completely. It did not make any sense then, and it does not make any sense now. So, we are fixing it by saying that there will no longer need to be a penalty of interest on any funds that are not paid into the Sinking Fund.

And in actual fact, because we are removing the mandatory nature of the contributions, that should never be a problem anymore.

With respect to the question from the Honourable Member from constituency 22, the Sinking Fund is . . . what we are trying to do here is . . . the discipline is that the funds will be used to either repay outstanding debt that is maturing, as we did in May and will do again in November, or we will use the proceeds to go out into the open market to buy back debt.

There is a feature in the legislation that allows for the Sinking Fund proceeds to be used to pay interest on existing government debt. I do not contemplate, at least in the budgets that I have presented for this fiscal year and next year, that this will be the case. The funds are primarily used to repay existing debt or can be used to repurchase . . . repay existing debt that is maturing or repurchase existing debt that is outstanding to retire it.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Does any other Member care to speak to clauses 1 through 6?

There seem to be no other persons wishing to speak. Minister, would you like to move the clauses?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Chairman, I move that all six clauses stand as approved.

The Chairman: Okay. It has been moved that all clauses be approved.

Any objection?

No objection.

[*Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 6 passed.*]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Chairman, I move that the preamble be approved.

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

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed or amended.

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

Are there any objections?

No objections.

The Bill stands approved. And we will report the Bill to the House.

[Motion carried: The Government Loans Amendment Act 2019 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 12:28 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT LOANS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Speaker: Members, are there any objections to the second reading of the Government Loans Amendment Act 2019 being reported to the House as printed?

No objections.

It will be reported as printed.

It is now 12:28. At 12:20 *[sic]*, there is a normal break that takes place at this time. And rather than proceed to the next item, I am going to ask the Deputy—

An Hon. Member: Twelve-thirty?

The Speaker: It is 12:28.

An Hon. Member: Yes. You said “at 12:20.”

The Speaker: Oh, oh, oh. I am sorry, 12:30. I am sorry. Yes. Thanks for the correction.

But it is 12:28; we are two minutes from 12:30. Rather than start the next item, Deputy, would you like to—

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I move that we adjourn for lunch until 2:00 pm.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Any objections to that?

No objections. The House now stands adjourned for lunch until 2:00 pm.

[Gavel]

Proceedings suspended at 12:29 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:04 pm

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[Continuing]

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Members we had gotten to the point before lunch where we had concluded the first item that was up for debate this morning and that was the Government Loans Amendment Act 2019 and we were about to proceed to the second item on today's Order Paper.

And for the sake of clarity, this item is actually one that is going to have its first, second and third reading today, which has been agreed to by both sides. And I just want to mention it, in that it is not something that we would normally do, and it is not something that I want to see become standard or [a] custom. Because of the significance of it, it has been agreed and we are going to allow it to proceed [in this] way, but by no means, Ministers, do I want this to become a standard practice.

With that said . . . Minister.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 29(1)

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 29(1) be suspended to enable the House to proceed with the second reading of the Bill entitled Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Any objections?

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to this, if I may, because I think it is incumbent upon the Minister to give an explanation, not just to the House, but to the public of Bermuda, why we are doing this. This is unprecedented, except for the last occasion upon which we dealt with the Economic Substance Bill.

So I understand that, in principle, the Opposition has—

The Speaker: Is your microphone on?

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Yes, my microphone is on.

The Opposition have agreed to do this, but I think that it should go on record from the Minister why we are in a position of doing something so important and needing to suspend [Standing] Order 28 *[sic]* to do it all in one day.

I notice that the House did not sit last Friday; I cannot believe that some version of this Bill was not available last Friday. All week I was looking for some announcement from the Government that this was going to take place today and there was nothing from the Government. It makes it look as if there was some cloak and dagger involved.

I would have thought the Government would have wanted to announce that they were going to deal with this matter today in a public forum, not here . . . not in a private forum, not in secret meetings, but in a public forum. People seem to forget we are doing the people's business. And while I understand certain information may be sensitive information, it cannot be sensitive to the degree that you cannot tell the people of Bermuda, *Look, we're coming back here to look at the Economic Substance Bill to make a substantive change.* And they could have done that at any time.

If that is not the case, the Minister needs to explain why that is not the case, why he would not have been able to table a copy of the Bill or make a statement to the House last Friday or the week before.

I notice we took a break last Friday as if we had nothing to do, and then this Friday we are in a huge rush saying we have got to rush, rush, rush, rush this through. And so I would have thought . . . I do not like to see this as a practice. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that you do not like to see it as a practice as well. And I think it is incumbent on the Government to explain themselves to the people in Bermuda . . . just with respect to suspending [Standing Order] 28 [sic] with respect to this Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your leniency.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, let me first start by saying I thank the House for its indulgence in suspending [Standing Order] 29(1).

But to the Member's point, the Ministry of Finance hosted a briefing session on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week for Members of the Opposition.

An Hon. Member: On Monday.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: On Monday, to brief them on—

The Speaker: Tuesday, because Monday was a holiday.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: On Tuesday or Wednesday of this week—I was off Island attending to other matters—to brief the Opposition, who, I understand, like me, are representatives of the people of Bermuda. And so in no way was the Government trying to not

consult Bermuda about what was going on with respect to this amendment.

Earlier today there was discussion about process, and I think the Honourable Member may have been referring to process. And I accept his point around good process because good process is orderly, predictable, and it is good for our Government. However, in instances of national interest sometimes we have to suspend process in order to be expedient, in order to be pragmatic, in order to get the people's business done in a timely fashion to minimise harm.

And in this instance we sought to do as much. I am certainly willing to offer a broader explanation around the whys, if folks feel that that is required. But this is a matter of national urgency, that if we do not do something the potential ramifications for the Bermudian people and Bermudian economy are significant.

The Speaker: Thank you. Did you wish to give a broader . . . or are you fine?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I am sorry, sir?

The Speaker: Did you wish to do a broader, or are you okay?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I am fine, unless—

The Speaker: Okay. So are you going to do your introduction now?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I am going to do the introduction now, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: And I should have asked . . . sorry.

Is there objection to the suspension of Standing Order 29[(1)]?

An Hon. Member: No objection.

The Speaker: No objections.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 29(1) suspended to enable the second and third readings of the Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019 to be taken during this sitting.]

The Speaker: Continue, Minister.

BILL

SECOND READING

ECONOMIC SUBSTANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019 now be read the second time.

The Speaker: Any objections?

None.

Continue.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, the Bill now before the House is the Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019. This Bill will exempt entities that are tax resident in a qualifying jurisdiction from the substance requirement of the Economic Substance Act 2018.

Mr. Speaker, on the 17th of May Bermuda was removed from the EU's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes because the EU was satisfied that our economic substance framework met its standards.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Finance is in the process of analysing the various approaches to economic substance adopted by other criterion 2.2 jurisdictions. Criterion 2.2 is a standard of assessment used to determine whether harmful tax measures are prevalent in a jurisdiction based on its legal framework and the economic evidence.

There are several areas of divergence between Bermuda and the Crown Dependencies and overseas territories which will be dealt with in due course. One area that poses an immediate and significant threat to Bermuda's economy and requires urgent attention relates to tax residency. Mr. Speaker, it is imperative for Bermuda to align its economic substance legislative framework as it relates to tax residency with that of other 2.2 jurisdictions and to do so before existing entities become subject to economic substance requirements on July 1, 2019.

Mr. Speaker, under a tax residency exemption, entities that are tax resident in a qualifying jurisdiction would not be required to be subject to substance requirements in their jurisdiction of incorporation. Mr. Speaker, Bermuda does not exempt entities that are resident in another jurisdiction for tax purposes from economic substance requirements. The absence of such an exemption in the Bermuda legislation puts Bermuda at a serious commercial disadvantage relative to all of our competitors.

Mr. Speaker, there is a serious risk that up to 20 per cent of Bermuda's registered entities may be forced to relocate from Bermuda to one of the other 2.2 jurisdictions, simply because those other jurisdictions have the certainty of a tax residency exemption. If all such Bermuda entities do relocate, that will result in a direct and irreversible loss to Bermuda of substantial government fees and a very serious loss of economic expenditure in the jurisdiction and the loss of, potentially, hundreds of Bermudian jobs.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the most immediate and significant amendment that is required at this

stage is the addition of an exclusion for entities that are resident for tax purposes in a jurisdiction outside Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, an exemption from economic substance requirements for entities that are resident for tax purposes in another jurisdiction are based on the following OECD principles:

- a) A tax residency exemption must not be used to circumvent substance requirements; therefore, safeguards must be put in place.
- b) Evidence must be provided to support a claim that an entity is resident in another jurisdiction.
- c) Once an entity claims to be resident in another jurisdiction for tax purposes, such a claim and supporting evidence must be exchanged with the jurisdiction where the entity claims to be tax resident and the jurisdiction of residence of the immediate parent, ultimate parent, and ultimate beneficial owner to ensure full transparency with regard to the tax residency claim.

Mr. Speaker, existing companies are required to comply with requirements of the Economic Substance Act by the 1st of July. As I have indicated, due to the potentially significant impact on the Bermuda economy, it is critical that this amendment come into force before July 1st.

Mr. Speaker, when I met with Mrs. Lyudmila Petkova, Chair of the code of conduct group for business taxation in April, I expressed my concerns about a potential lack of a level playing field between criterion 2.2 jurisdictions, and she invited Bermuda to put our concerns in writing.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke with Mrs. Petkova and her technical team on the telephone about 10 days ago and sought her support for advancing this amendment before the 1st of July. I can say that the discussion was very productive. Following that call I wrote to her formally and presented her with a draft Bill for her consideration. I also wrote to Mr. Pierre Moscovici, the Chair of the EU Commission, seeking his support. Two days ago I spoke with Mr. Moscovici by telephone and the conversation was very positive. I have also informed Mr. Robert Jenrick, the UK's Secretary of the Exchequer, of Bermuda's intent to amend our legislation to create a tax residency exemption before the 1st of July.

Mr. Speaker, over the last three days the FHTP [Forum on Harmful Tax Practices] has reviewed the legislative framework of the 2.2 jurisdictions. Accordingly, as part of Bermuda's legislative framework, a draft Bill, together with a full explanation of the reasons for this urgent amendment, were formally submitted to the FHTP for review. The House is advised that the results of the review will be released to the public upon notice from the OECD.

Mr. Speaker, the House is advised that the amendments are in line with the FHTP standards as follows:

- a) Entities that are resident for tax purposes in a jurisdiction outside of Bermuda, that are not listed on Annex 1 to the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, i.e. the blacklist jurisdictions, will be able to avail themselves of the revised framework.
- b) Such an entity must provide to the Registrar evidence of tax residency in another jurisdiction for each relevant financial period.
- c) The information received by the Registrar will be provided to the foreign competent authority of a relevant jurisdiction in which a holding entity, the ultimate parent entity, and the owner or the beneficial owner of the entity is incorporated, formed and registered or resident.

Mr. Speaker, the Act is also amended to widen the scope of exchange of information to all relevant jurisdictions, not just EU member states, in relation to high-risk IP entities, entities that are in breach of economic substance requirements, as well as entities that claim to be resident for tax purposes in another jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, the Bill is in line with the FHTP stated principles, and with those comments I invite other Honourable Members to participate.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I recognise the Deputy Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of information here, and although I know there is backwards and forwards, I want to be able to present it so that people can actually understand what is going on.

I have to say thank you to the Minister and to the Premier. The Premier actually called me on Sunday, while I was at a wedding, to ask me if we would be amenable to having this legislation presented to the House on Friday, and I told him that we would. And I had an email exchange with him on Tuesday and we had a meeting at 4:15 pm, to which all of our parliamentary colleagues were invited to attend. And at that meeting it was explained to us the reason that we had to do this.

And I guess, for me, Mr. Speaker, I look at it from a different perspective other than politically. I look at it from an industry perspective. And I recognise that this is something that we need to have done in order for Bermuda to be a competitive jurisdiction.

The OECD and the EU continue to bombard us with regulations and legislation and things that they require us to do as a jurisdiction. And so, as I think I have said before in this House, they started with the

TIEAs, they have ended up here with economic substance, and who knows where we are going to go beyond that.

So Mr. Speaker, the basis of “economic substance” is to eliminate what they call “base erosion profit shifting” or BEPS. And I am going to see if I can break it down so that Mr. and Mrs. Smith can understand it. So, what happens is, if you have a company like Google and Google makes a million dollars, they will pay tax on that million dollars and then what profits they have left over they will send to Bermuda or Cayman or another jurisdiction so that they pay a lower tax rate. So it is not tax evasion, it is tax planning, as far as I am concerned. And so the EU and the US and other places believe that they are losing out on revenue because these people are setting up companies in Bermuda and they are shifting their profits to Bermuda.

I understand that economic substance is deemed to assist the US and the UK and other jurisdictions from eroding their own tax base, but my understanding is that most countries which have a tax system actually devise a tax system that they believe will support their infrastructure. And I do not know if anybody has seen a US or a UK tax return, but the tax return has different formulas and if, you know, you calculate this to “Y” and then you add this to “X” and then at the end of the day you figure out what it is that has to be paid for your tax. The calculation is devised by those jurisdictions. So if an entity has money left over after they have paid the relevant amount of tax that they are supposed to pay, why is it that country’s business to determine what they do with the profits that are left over? When I get paid, after I have paid all of my bills and done what I needed to do, should my boss tell me, *Well, Ms. Scott, I think you need to put that \$500 here or there?* What right does he have to do that?

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: No, but if I did have \$500 left over.

Well, you know, we have got what is supposed to be known as the rule of law and sovereignty, where somebody cannot come into *your* country and tell you what to do in your country. And I do not understand how Bermuda, Cayman, BVI, Turks and Caicos, Jersey . . . have allowed the EU to do this. If they want to collect their tax dollars, then let them set up their own legislation. Why do we have to set up legislation to do their dirty work for them?

Why do we have to be a repository of information to benefit them? We do not have a tax law in Bermuda. If they have imposed a tax law and they have mismanaged their funds or they have overestimated what is required for their infrastructure, then why should wealthy businesses support governments in that way? I do not agree with it.

Now the interesting thing about base erosion profit shifting is that it is generally done by intellectual property companies—so Google, Microsoft, and Apple. And we knew that Google was here in Bermuda and we knew that Google was (in quotes) “a big offender.” And so this should really be the Google legislation, not economic substance. But we are where we are. So, knowing that this was intended to target Google, what is really disappointing is that there were amendments made to our legislation—two clauses—that discussed intellectual property. And the minor technical omission which caused us to be on the blacklist was in respect of intellectual property.

If any clauses were to be amended in that legislation, that was the last one that should have been amended. We should have not found ourselves on the blacklist. I went to meetings for two and a half years where we met with the Minister, we met with people from Luxembourg, we met with the BMA, we met with industry, to avoid ending up in the position where we are. And I am going to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that if the person who is responsible for us being on the blacklist was in private industry, they would have been walked out the door.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Some Hon. Members: Mm-hmm.

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: And I am sorry, I realise that whoever it was has a job and a family, but we are now on the back foot because of a human mistake! And that is unacceptable to me, and it should be unacceptable to the Premier, to the Minister of Finance, and to all of Bermuda because we are now jeopardised! [There are other] jurisdictions that have legislation that is effective. We have legislation that is onerous and is nowhere near what is in the other jurisdictions’ legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we have people that are leaving Bermuda . . . and the Minister is correct. We had to have this in by the 1st of July. And people are asking, *Well, why are we waiting until the eleventh hour to do this?* My understanding is that we were working to get ourselves off the blacklist first. It is unfortunate that while we were working to get ourselves off the blacklist that the OECD decided to do a technical assessment of our economic substance regime. They have a team in here that is looking at foreign harmful tax practices. And so every piece of legislation or amendment that we make in terms of economic substance now has to be approved by the OECD. We cannot just go and make our own legislation.

And so because the Government was not sure where the OECD was going to land in terms of tax residency—remember that they are imposing this legislation on the BOTs [British Overseas Territories]

as well as the Crown Dependencies, and each of those entities . . . or jurisdictions, I am sorry, have different regimes. Some have tax; some do not. And so we did not know where they were going to land in terms of whether they were going to accept our definition or our carveout for tax residency. So we had to wait for them to approve it. And, you know, no, I am not happy about having to do a first, second and a third reading today, but for the sake of expediency we have to have it done. We are playing catch-up to try to get ahead.

So I understand that people are upset about it, I hope that the general public understands that this is the reason that we had to do it. I do not believe that . . . you know, I think that it was a situation where the Government was between a rock and a hard place. Yes, I am the Opposition and maybe I should not acknowledge that, but it is what it is. And I am looking at it from an industry perspective and we have to do what we have to do to make sure that our industry and our jurisdiction is a place where people want to come and invest their money.

So, Mr. Speaker, we had to get off the blacklist. And I do not think that anybody recognises the severity of how we have been hampered by being on the blacklist, even though it was only for two months. So we have lost our competitive disadvantage [*sic*], we still do not have the amount of certainty—

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Sorry, “advantage” (yes, thank you).

We do not have certainty because we still have other changes that we need to make to our legislation. I have a colleague who has a trust company and she was in the UK two months ago. And, if you will allow me, she sent me an email—

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: —and she was so upset. She said:

“Dear Leah, I am in London today for what I thought and expected to be a meeting with one of our large families and their advisors for general update and planning. It was somewhat of a surprise to receive our walking papers from a family that we have looked after for over 14 years. The reason was all about economic substance and consolidating their structure to Monaco. This represents 10 entities—both Bermuda companies and trusts—an approximate fee revenue of over \$250,000. I had hoped that due to the number of Bermuda entities in the structure that it would have remained, but due to uncertainty inadequate” (sorry “uncertainty in the word ‘adequate’”) “in what is adequate substance, has led them to move the entire structure. I know you are getting it from all angles, but at the end of the day we hope that some

good will come of this, but I have a sinking feeling that Bermuda may suffer more than expected. I have a staff of 17 Bermudians and I have business decisions to make.”

That is one that I know of. We had a structure that is coming to our firm—15 trusts and companies. But when we got blacklisted they decided not to come to Bermuda. They decided to give us the administration, but the companies are going to Guernsey.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have here this legislation that provides a tax carveout, but it does not provide for tax residency. And so, in my portfolio, I have a number of companies that are based in the BVI, what this legislation does not do is allow that BVI company to evidence in BVI that it has a residency certificate and does not have to comply with BVI substance. This is important because if we . . . if they cannot demonstrate to BVI that they have substance in Bermuda then there is no reason for them to stay in Bermuda.

And so this is why I say that we are at a competitive disadvantage because other jurisdictions have that certainty. They have their means of demonstrating that companies are tax compliant or resident in their jurisdictions.

So I was hoping that we could include a provision like that in our legislation, but unfortunately . . . and the Premier was very honest with me. The fact of the matter is that our legislation is preapproved, so we do not have *consultation*, we have *direction*. The OECD tells us, *This is what we want, this is how we want to see it*, and we are just informed of it. So it does not matter what we say in terms of, *Well, this isn't going to work for the industry, this isn't going to work for the jurisdiction, can we make some amendments?* And we cannot. And so, you know, we are handcuffed, we cannot do anything, they believe that they are getting money out of the jurisdiction that they are not getting, and to be honest they are cutting off their nose to spite their face. Because when all of the offshore territories go under, they will recognise the revenue that was being brought into their countries from these entities being offshore.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the substance legislation was intended to apply to companies who are doing what we call “relevant activities.” And so those relevant activities are banking, finance, leasing, [and] holding companies. For some reason, Bermuda has amended its legislation so that holding companies mean every single company, every partnership, and every LLC in Bermuda. Every entity that holds or manages assets comes under economic substance, so we do not even have to worry about having a relevant activity, you are just a holding company, your activity is relevant and you fall under economic substance.

So that needs to be changed. They have a definition in Cayman, they have a definition in BVI, they have a definition in . . . whosie-whatsit . . . Turks and Caicos.

So, Mr. Speaker—

[Laughter]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: So, Mr. Speaker, all I am saying is that the blacklist has really messed us up and really put us behind. And I do not know [if] we can catch up.

And we think . . . you know, one of the things that we continue to say is that if we can get our legislation on par with at least the other jurisdictions, then we will have a level playing field. But the truth of the matter is that level playing field with Cayman and BVI and all those other jurisdictions, is actually irrelevant, because do you know who we are playing against now? Miami, Hong Kong, the UK, Singapore—onshore—these are who we are playing [against]. And so now, we have to determine what our value proposition is. Why should somebody come to Bermuda? Trump has reduced the corporate tax, you have got more trusts in Wyoming, Delaware, Nebraska, and more money laundering going on in those places than you do in Bermuda. Have you ever heard of Bermuda being . . . being . . .

An Hon. Member: Cited.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: —Cited (thank you), for a big money laundering case or anti-money laundering? No. But, Mr. Speaker, just the other day, if you do not mind.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Deutsche Bank . . . “Deutsche Bank Faces Criminal Investigation for Potential Money-Laundering Lapses”—

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: That is Trump’s bank, yes.

Multiple money-laundering offences and a whistle-blower were disregarded. She put in reports and they were ignored. She was their compliance officer and she flagged these transactions concerning Trump’s and his son-in-law’s, Jared Kushner’s, accounts since 2016.

That is not Bermuda. That is not Cayman. That is not Turks and Caicos. That is the United States. But we are the bad eggs in the basket.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is ridiculous that we have to be subjected to this. And I think that, you know, we look at FATCA . . . now, when we were “seduced” into entering into FATCA arrangements,—

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Seduced.

The US said that by 2017 they would enter into reciprocal arrangements so they would do collec-

tion of data and information. And when we were introduced to CRS [Common Reporting Standard], they said that they would become party to the CRS agreements. Well, we are still waiting. The US has no intention of binding itself or collecting information, but they want everybody to provide them with information on US people who are no longer living in the United States. Why should we be the repository, the collectors of their information? We do not get paid for doing it. If you have not managed your administration to the degree that you do not know who is where, whose fault is that? What does that have to do with us as a jurisdiction? Absolutely nothing.

So, you know, the imposition of substance is supposed to create this level playing field, but again, the question is not whether our entities are going to go to the Bahamas or anywhere else, it is are they going to go onshore? And so we need to look at how we create a value proposition for people to come to Bermuda. And I do not know what the answer to that is because right now there is nothing that makes us different than anybody else. We do not have an exciting piece of legislation that people say, *Well, you know what, I know Bermuda has economic substance, but I'm going to go down there.*

So there are still several changes that we need to make to our legislation, Mr. Speaker, and those include . . . are we going to make a change to the definition of "holding company" so that the definition is confined to pure equity? Are we going to have guidance notes? I understand from the Minister that the guidance notes are almost ready to be released, but those are going to be general guidance notes, they are not going to be industry specific, so we still have got a ways to go for each sector to make their contribution, so finance, banking, trusts, corporate. So how far are we from that when we have got an implementation date of July 1, and we cannot provide any guidance to our clients?

One of the relevant activities under economic substance is financing and leasing. And right now that definition covers trusts. So if I have a trust, and I am renting an apartment or a house to a beneficiary, that is a leasing arrangement. That is a relevant activity, and it is covered under economic substance and it has to be reported. So when are we going to change that definition?

And then what are we going to do to make Bermuda an attractive jurisdiction? How are we going to get people here and how are we going to get them to invest in our country so that we can remain who we are as a jurisdiction?

And I think that we are going to have some real challenges ahead of us, Mr. Speaker. I think that, you know, we are all hoping that economic substance is not going to cause capital flight, but we are seeing that it is doing that already. We do not want to see a mass client exodus. But if we do not have a value proposition, and if we do not have legislation that is at

least comparable to other jurisdictions, then, you know, I would go set up in the Caymans or the Bahamas because at least I know what I am getting. We do not know where we are going with this.

And, you know, the greatest irony is that, Mr. Speaker, research that was conducted last year identified Ireland—not a Caribbean country, Ireland—as the world's largest base erosion profit shifting jurisdiction, and that Ireland had more BEPS than the aggregate of the entire Caribbean. That is all of the Caribbean and Bermuda! They do not have economic substance. They are part of the EU; they do not have economic substance.

No one in the OECD pays taxes, Mr. Speaker. Did you know that? They are chasing everybody else down for their taxes, and they do not pay taxes. This is a salary and benefits packet for somebody in the OECD.

The basic salary . . . with your leave, Mr. Speaker, please.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: ²The basic salary is specified in the offer letter and is payable in euros, as are all other allowances (family-related allowances, expatriation and installation) . . . Emoluments are exempt from taxation in most Member countries of the Organisation, including France.

"Income tax in the United States: A specific article (article 3) of the tax reimbursement agreement between the USA and the OECD excludes from the US tax reimbursement programme all OECD official who are liable to pay income tax in the United States

"Income tax in Canada: Officials of Canadian nationality serving at OECD headquarters are exempt on French soil, of income tax on the emoluments they received from the OECD."

But they have the unmitigated gall to expect us to collect their tax debts for them and they do not pay taxes! How is that fair and how is that right?

And what I would like to see is for all of the jurisdictions to pull themselves together and tell the OECD, *You know what? We're not doing it. When you start doing it, then we'll start doing it. But until then, you collect your own data, you collect your own tax, and you let us be to do what we have to do as a jurisdiction.*

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: The ultimate goal—and what they have done from TIEAs to economic substance—is to dismantle this jurisdiction. I said it before, and I will say it again. At the end of the day they do not want to see people of colour being successful. They can hide

² [OECD Better Policies for Better Lives](#)

it behind Google, they can hide it behind whatever they want, but they do not want to see us being successful.

But you know what? I hope that people will continue to acknowledge that we are a good jurisdiction, that we have good legislation, and that somehow, somehow, we are able to find our way out of the muck and mire of all of the imposition that has been sent down to us from the OECD and the European Union.

And I know that the Premier and the Minister have a tough job navigating through all of this, it has been extremely frustrating for industry, I have vented my frustrations to both [of them] and they have been very gracious and accommodating. But Mr. Speaker, we cannot let the EU and OECD sound the death knell for Bermuda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, could I just declare my interest? I did not say so when I was speaking.

I am the President of the Bermuda Association of Licensed Trustees and the General Counsel for Harbour International Trust Company. Thank you.

The Speaker: All right. Thank you.

We now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I believe that anybody having listened to my colleague having just spoken, would have a great understanding and an appreciation of the passion that she brings to this topic because it has been her life for the last two and half, going on three years.

It is important to note that when the Minister spoke in his opening remarks, he said there are times that we are required to suspend the process for expedience, for pragmatism, and to avoid harm to our jurisdiction. Very clearly, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House wish to support the Government in respect of these amendments that must be made to minimise the down side which has been foisted upon us as a result of not just some of the actions that have been taken, but because of the imposition to which my honourable colleague has just spoken most eloquently and that I do not necessarily need to reiterate.

But with that said, I also think, Mr. Speaker, that we have to accept our share of responsibility in terms of finding ourselves in a situation in which now we have to arrange for our legislation to come up to

par with other jurisdictions with which we have been in serious competition where their legislation has already been implemented, has been accepted . . . the wording has been accepted by the OECD, and now we are having to adjust our legislation to make sure that we come up to scratch.

Why are we in this position? My honourable colleague mentioned that if we had been able to spend less energy working ourselves off of the blacklist and trying to instil a level of confidence in people who would invest in our country, then maybe we would have been able to look at some of these amendments a little bit earlier. But what it looks like now is that by comparison to the BVI, to the Cayman Islands, to Jersey, Guernsey and other overseas jurisdictions, we are effectively sucking hind tit from the perspective of our legislation now having to catch up.

Now, one would have thought that as important as this Economic Substance Act is, that when we were looking at the initial implementation of this legislation we should have been examining this 15 ways from Sunday to make sure that we were not being disadvantaged and that we were not being put on the back foot *vis-à-vis* the countries with which we have normal ordinary competition. Notwithstanding that we are required in an inordinate way to now dance to the tune of the EU, the OECD, and everybody else, we now have to ask them *how high?* when they tell us to jump and we ask them *how high?* when we are on the way up.

Mr. Speaker, that is not a satisfactory position for Bermuda to be in. We have worked hard, long, and assiduously, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that our jurisdiction has been a pristine, blue ribbon jurisdiction such that people want to come to Bermuda, they want to be able to invest here. They want to be able to be confident that our infrastructure and our pristine reputation is one that they are gearing towards and not now—perhaps for the first time that I can recall, certainly in my adult life—see that companies are thinking in terms of extricating themselves from our jurisdiction because of some level of deficiency and some uncertainty that they feel in respect of what we have failed to do.

The IP issue to which my colleague also spoke is one that ought never to have happened. When that legislation came through and we found that we were told that we had a date certain by which we were required to have representations in by the 24th (I believe it is) of February, and then, for whatever reason, somebody . . . and we do not know whether it was identified by the OECD, whether it was identified by ECOFIN, whether it was identified by us. But there was an omission that was made in our legislation that ought never to have happened.

My colleague said if something like that had happened in the private sector, that person would have been turfed out. Why? Because the impact of

that failure to be able to identify something that was crucial to our legislation was overlooked.

Now the Premier was gracious in saying he will take responsibility. Well, if the Premier is taking responsibility, then maybe he needs to step down, because that was something that was egregious—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —it was egregious to the jurisdiction, it was harmful to the jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, and it is not something . . . it is not something that we can take lightly to be able say, *Okay, it happened and now let's move forward*, because what is happening now that we are having to move forward is that we are further back down the crease, Mr. Speaker.

It is one thing to say *let's catch up with our competitive jurisdictions* which are the primary choice of a lot of our investors. But what is happening is that if we are already further back down the wicket . . . they have started down the track, Mr. Speaker. They are in the relay race where they are ready to hand over the baton and we are still just jumping out from the starting line.

Mr. Speaker, that is not acceptable.

I think that what we have to start doing is to stop overlooking incompetence when we see it and call it for what it is, because our jurisdiction is being harmed as a result of the things that have been done or overlooked that we should not be giving a pass to. We should be saying this is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, very clearly, as I said, we want to be able to support Bermuda being able to ensure that our economy remains stable, that our employment situation is not diminished and that the actions that we take with our legislative processes are not such that companies have decided—or will decide—that we are not sufficiently certain or confident that setting up in Bermuda is the right thing to do.

This has never been a challenge that we have had to face in the past, Mr. Speaker. We have not faced this challenge. We have always boasted that we are the place, we are the blue ribbon, we are the *crème de la crème*, we want you to come to us. And what has happened, Mr. Speaker? Now, there are other jurisdictions who have gotten out ahead of us. My question is, at what point in time did we compare on our economic substance what we were trying to do with what already existed in other jurisdictions, such that our legislation did not make us deficient?

So, clearly, if BVI and Cayman and Guernsey and Jersey and other jurisdictions have appropriate wording in terms of tax exemptions in their legislation for tax jurisdictions, why are we just catching up? Why did we not either consult with, or, at the very least, if we were not going to consult with our competitors (and I can understand that there may be a reason therefore) . . . but if we were not going to consult with

. . . at the very least did we not examine their legislation to make sure that what we were passing in this Honourable House was appropriate?

That is one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, for our conversation this morning. Because what we are meant to do here is to pass legislation that is good legislation. And irrespective of process, that people can get their knickers in a twist because they do not like the way something was done, let us look at the ultimate outcome. Is the ultimate outcome going to inure to the better benefit of all of the people of Bermuda? Is the economy going to be improved as a result of legislation that we implement here? And I cannot see that it has happened in this particular instance.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that we can just continue to claw our way out, claw our way out, claw our way out. And notwithstanding all of the impositions and the restrictions and the requirements that have been foisted upon us by these external agencies, Mr. Speaker, we have to show that we can still hold our own.

The bottom challenge that we have with other jurisdictions is many of them have something else upon which they can rely in order to maintain their economies. We do not. We have our reputation, we have our legislation. We do not have any manufacturing. We do not have any other industry, Mr. Speaker. And we have, as I said, historically been the *crème de la crème*. And now we are scratching to try to reach the top while, you know, the water is boiling beneath us and we are trying to scramble our way out of a boiling pot. And this has been done primarily because, I believe, we have failed to take the necessary steps to ensure that our legislation is not just on the cutting edge, but better than our competitors.

We have mind and management and intellect that we have had years and years and years of history. Why are we competing with a jurisdiction such as Ireland for the type of business that we are getting here? Why are we now looking at a challenge with respect to how we are presented in terms of other areas . . . other states in the United States—people from which they used to flee and come to Bermuda because of our preferential ability for them to be able to have proper deployment of their tax dollars.

And my colleague is absolutely 100 per cent right, who should be telling us what to do after your money . . . you pay your taxes when you earn your money. If you decide to save it . . . I always have a problem that they charge you taxes on your savings interest because they charge you tax on your primary money when you made it, and then if you have got something left over and you decide that you are going to salt it away rather than spend it in the economy, then they charge you . . . that is almost like taxing you twice. And do not worry if you buy a house or something. You buy investments and then you want to rid yourself of those investments, you find yourself in a

situation in which you have got to pay taxes on the money that you already paid taxes on to save to get the investment that you have got. And it is just a never-ending cycle.

And we are being dictated to by an environment and an entity that decided that they are not getting enough tax money. That is not good enough.

And outside of that, Mr. Speaker, my only other comment that I wanted to make is that when we talk about a competent authority we are required to provide information to a competent authority when so required. "Competent authority" is not defined in the principal Act, and I believe that it might be . . . at least not the copy I have. I do not know if there is a revised copy, but I do not see that "competent authority" has been defined in the principal Act. And I think that that is something, in terms of the interpretation, we might want to ensure that that gets included so that the legislation we finally end up passing looks like something that we would be proud of.

Notwithstanding that we are already clawing our way out to try to catch up, notwithstanding that we exerted far too much energy getting off the blacklist than we would have done had we just taken the necessary precautions, had we dotted the i's and crossed the t's and not had to come to this Honourable House to make apologies, to be able to say to somebody that, *You gave us a date of February 24th by which we had to comply with your requirements*, we find a mistake after the fact, we complied by the 4th of March, and we have the gall and the audacity and the arrogance to say, *Well, your meeting is not until the 12th, you got the information by the 4th, so we are in compliance*. No, we were not in compliance.

Mr. Speaker, when I looked at the memo that came from the . . . if I could just, with your permission, Mr. Speaker?

There was a memo from the General Secretary of the Council of the European Union to the Permanent Representative Committee and the Council and it spoke to how Bermuda had some deficiencies but made a commitment to be able to rectify where our deficiency was in order to be able to comply with their requirements.

And in that, Mr. Speaker, the one thing that they highlighted was the fact that Bermuda had intended . . . if I can find the exact wording and I do not want to . . . let me see where it is . . . basically to say that Bermuda was meant to comply by a date certain and did not. And that when we did rectify our error that it was too late to get into their meeting of the 12th of May . . . no, sorry, 12th of March . . . whatever the date was. The 4th of March was the date that they did it. Their meeting was the 12th of March. We were too late once we did supply that information.

Now, with us, with our small size, we do something wrong, we come to Parliament, we put a first, second and a third reading in on the same day, and then we run across the street to the other place

and we say, *This has got to be done because we have the date certain of July 1 by which this legislation has to come into effect*, and it can happen. We are like down the street, we are around the corner, we are across the road and we can do that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But in the context of when you are dealing with these major organisations, such as the OECD, such as the European Union, you do not have that flexibility. And when they ask you for something by a date certain they mean it by that date certain.

If you are told, Mr. Speaker, that the train leaves at 12:07 and you get to the platform at 12:08—

The Speaker: You are late.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —you are lucky if you see the taillights of the train going down the track. They do not wait for you. And we have to understand that notwithstanding, as wonderful as we think we are, we cannot be so arrogant to think that others will operate and that we are the axis on which they turn.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: We are not.

We are wonderful, we know we are wonderful. We are going to pull out of this because we have the confidence that with mind and management and intellect and everything else and intellectual property that we possess in our jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, we know we can come out of this as a country. We know that we are going to be in a position of maintaining a level of employment for our employees.

The ones that are going to fall by the wayside in the very short term are going to be those where the companies have not believed that by July 1 we are going to be in a position to satisfy their requirements. Those are the ones who may already have made decisions, as we heard my honourable colleague speak in terms of the correspondence that she had from her colleague who was over in the UK, where they are pulling companies out, pulling trust funds out of Bermuda because there was uncertainty with respect to the adequacy.

That is a black eye for us, Mr. Speaker. We do not like being in this position. And I rue the day that we felt that it was okay to not have the excellence that is required. We do not and should not accept mediocrity. And we should not make excuses for it. We do not have, Mr. Speaker, a bunch of mindless minions who think that mediocrity is okay. We do not. And we should not.

We need to demand excellence. We need to make sure that legislation, when it comes, is not just appropriately drafted, but is appropriately vetted so

that once presentations are made to whoever they need to be made, notwithstanding how much we may disagree with them asking, but if we are in the game we have to play by their rules and unfortunately if their rules dictate what we are required to do, then we have to do it.

And let us put our arrogance in our pockets and let us move forward for the better good of Bermuda in doing things that are appropriate for us, Mr. Speaker, that make sure that we do not find ourselves in the situation that we are today in which we are on the hind foot, basically, trying to appease an environment, an external regulatory environment, because we have done something that is not particularly appropriate.

We need to be able to stand up, Mr. Speaker. We talk . . . we boast about punching above our weight, let us show that we can do it, let us show that we cannot just punch above our weight, but that we can make up some of the ground that we have lost by what we have seen—the things that have gone wrong. And that once this legislation is passed, Mr. Speaker, we can continue to ensure that we just continue to gallop down the track to try to make up the ground that we have missed out on.

So Mr. Speaker, as I said, apart from looking at the definition in the principal Act, I think it was important to me to get off my chest the fact that we could have been better and we were not. And we have now created and allowed to creep in a level of uncertainty to our business partners that should never have happened. So the fact that we now have to do our first, second and third reading—we accept that, Mr. Speaker. We have to do it. We have to support the Government for it.

We should never have been in this position.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Now I recognise the Honourable Member . . . are you yielding? Okay.

Honourable Member Commissioning, you have the floor.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the artist Prince had a very popular song, it was called “Party Like It’s 1999.” And not only within this Chamber, but beyond this Chamber throughout Bermuda, in some of the most influential offices of Bermuda in the private sector, people are still acting as if it is 1999, as if the international business sector, flexing its muscles in Bermuda, was still going to have its way in a global environment that was conducive to, firstly, its incubation, and then sustained growth throughout that period and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, you have heard me speak before in this Chamber. My historical timeline sees the growth of neoliberalism that goes back to around the period of Reagan and Thatcher—the late 1970s, early 1980s to mid-1980s. But as I have said, I believe that

period, that era, ended with the financial collapse of 2008. One of the chief by-products of that period was the growth of these offshore business centres, most of which were in the British Territories region . . . offshore business centres that were on steroids, and Bermuda was no exception.

My point is this, Mr. Speaker. We do not seem to be wanting to accept here that that era is over and that the geopolitical sands are shifting and will continue to shift considerably. We need to accept that this is the reality we are dealing with. And until we can face that reality I think we are going to have a very hard time reengineering Bermuda in such a way that is going to be reflective of the new geopolitical realities which are establishing themselves even as we speak.

And so we had the neoliberal era upon which the formed the rise, subsequently in the mid to late 1980s, of what we now call globalisation—the very ease of capital shifting across borders, the ease of migratory patterns of labour across countries. That was characteristic of that era. But that era is over. I think the Members on the other side . . . I heard the Deputy Leader and the Member from [constituency] 22 [*sic*], who just sat down—

An Hon. Member: Twenty-three.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioning: Twenty-three.

—who spoke of the rank hypocrisy of, in this case, the European Union, and their imposition of these rules that we now must embed into our own domestic legislation. The hypocrisy, of course, is that those same European elites—both in the government and private sector—were the chief drivers of these offshore centres, such as Bermuda, and the role they played in that global economy.

So nothing should indicate to us more that this era is over than those same elites now saying the game is up! Will we reach the point where we will acknowledge that?

Just to give an indication to your listeners out there, Mr. Speaker, or our listeners, the other day we had a very successful delegation from BDA along with our very astute and capable Finance Minister take a junket to Toronto, Canada. And in the accompanying story the following statistics jumped out to me: In the newspaper it is reported that Bermuda is Canada’s fifth largest export market.

I repeat: Bermuda is Canada’s fifth largest export market. It is ranked along these lines: the US, UK, Germany, France and Bermuda representing a fifth of trade and services between Canada and Bermuda. Can you believe that? Because I still do not. But it goes to show you the extraordinary role Bermuda has played in that global economy.

When we talk about Bermuda and the fact that Bermuda has been exporting services each annum, each year, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars, it has been driven largely by the growth of that

international business sector—insurance, risk management, and you can go on down the line. But that is what we are dealing with here. You see, along with the explosion of what I call the neoliberal global economy from the early and mid-1980s up until 2008, was the extraordinary rise in income inequality, particularly in the same western countries, in Europe and in the US, from which most of this change—this geopolitical change—is occurring. Countries are becoming wealthier in terms of the explosion in private wealth, but increasingly their governments are becoming poorer and poorer because of the erosion of their tax bases. Yes, it is hypocritical, but they have the power.

The Member, again, from Southampton . . . [constituency] 30, is quite right to indicate about the role of the BEPS phenomenon in Ireland. It is extraordinary. I am talking about hypocrisy here. But guess what? Ireland is a member of a club, and we are not.

And let me tell you the other thing from a geostrategic perspective that is going to happen. Once the UK leaves the EU—I still think that is going to happen—we are going to be in an even more vulnerable position *vis-à-vis* the European Union. Because with the UK—despite my reservations about us still maintaining that constitutional link with them—has been a country that, within the halls of the European Union, has stood up for measures that have benefited Bermuda and helped to maintain the benign orientation of the EU towards Bermuda and most of these Overseas Territories that have become leading international offshore centres.

Of course, it was in self-interest. Most of the dominant elements within the UK's political and economic elites have all benefited from the maintenance and the explosion of these phenomena in these offshore territories. So let us not act like they have exactly been doing us a favour, but that is the reality of what is called *réalpolitique*, which is a French expression. Those who have the power will wield it and use it to their own benefit.

So I am not going to say that we have lost the public relations battle. I think I am still going to stay on that ground, which I think is very solid, that the geopolitical sands have shifted. But I will say this: In the world that is emerging the fact that Bermuda has been able to use its own form of tax arbitrage by maintaining a 0.0 per cent corporate tax rate increasingly will not accrue to our benefit. And we need to put that script to bed, or bury it, because it is not going to accrue to our benefit to continue to have that as our argument.

And Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda have heard the argument so many times—*Hey look, we have had that system of taxation for the last 100-odd years; we did not put it in place to penalise or disadvantage the member countries of the European Union*—as if that argument in and of itself now is sufficient to turn the public relations tide our way.

And speaking about Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, I can very well understand how since 2010 or 2011 many of them have been wondering, scratching their heads, as to what we do up here beyond bringing forth legislation to maintain our position geopolitically as a major offshore business centre. Going back to 2010 and 2011 with the TIEAs, Mr. Speaker . . . you were here, and before that. Every other sitting we were dealing with legislative requirements that were being mandated from overseas regulatory powers which had the ability to impose those regulatory strictures upon us.

Even now, again, many I can understand would think that we do not do the people's business here. Although this is part of the people's business. Because while we seek to meet these requirements, and in this case, to ensure that the carveout which disadvantaged us against some of our competing offshore territories, we are cognisant of the fact that while there may not be a lot of awareness among a significant percentage of Bermudians as to what occurs in IB, we do know that many of our people work in that sector—your uncle, your cousin, your niece, your mother. Do we have enough Bermudians in that sector? After four decades you have heard my gospel on this, how many times? A thousand over the last 20 years. By this time we should have had the majority of people in that sector as Bermudians, and it should have also reflected our racial demographics as well.

So we know there have been major, major, milestones that have never been reached. But, nonetheless, it is still a sector that provides jobs and opportunity and brings in significant foreign exchange to these shores. But let us not seek, again, to recreate what we had circa 2003, 2004, 2005, 1998 or as Prince says "1999." This Government recognises that those geopolitical shifts have occurred and are continuing to occur, [and they] are going to undermine that model. It is already beginning to do so, and there is no going back.

And so we are trying to do the hard work of reengineering Bermuda's economy while ensuring that the bottom is not going to fall out with the pre-existing one. And it is no easy task. And I do not envy the position of our Premier and our new Finance Minister in walking that tightrope.

I would ask Bermudians out there to trust this Government. When you hear criticism coming about our attempts to foster a FinTech-based economy . . . this is part of the reengineering. Bermuda now represents a best in class in terms of that growing industry. When you hear us talking about other new and exciting economic developments that will bear fruit this, too, is part of this reengineering of Bermuda's economy. We have no choice.

So Mr. Speaker, I am going to wrap up here and say that I am very happy about the bipartisan nature of the debate that we are hearing. I thought that the comments, particularly from the Member from

[constituency] 23 and the Member from [constituency] 30, were very, very good . . . their contributions. I hope the spirit continues and that there is a greater realisation that there is no going back, that those sands are shifting, and that we must reengineer this economy in order for us as a country to survive as we continue into the 21st century, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 11. Honourable Member Famous, you have the floor.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, colleagues, the listening public in Bermuda and afar.

Mr. Speaker, I am a mechanic by trade so a lot of this stuff sounds like jargon to me. And I am quite sure it sounds like jargon to 99.9 per cent of the other population.

So I had to get learned-up by various different sources. First of all, I want to thank the Minister. I see some people want to give him a shellacking, but I want to thank the Finance Minister. In one year he has done a magnificent job. I do not see him much because he is constantly on the road promoting Bermuda, helping to transform and protect our economy. So first of all, thank you to him and thank you to his Minister because we cannot forget the workers.

Mr. Speaker, let me break it down for the public because, again, some may not fully understand the severity of what is going on here. The Overseas Territories, which includes Bermuda, BVI, Cayman Islands, to a lesser extent Turks and Caicos and Anguilla, are under threat. They are under constant threat. As a matter of fact, the whole Caribbean is under constant threat through constantly changing goalposts by the EU, OECD and whoever else decides, *Hey, let's blacklist this country.*

Mr. Speaker, through the hard work of the Finance Minister and his team we have gotten ourselves off of a list we should never have been on. But let us look in retrospect, Mr. Speaker. Any given country could end up on the blacklist depending on the mood of some people. I am not calling any names, but some people who were not on the blacklist this time were on the blacklist last time. So there is no distinct pattern to say . . . as the Honourable Member from constituency 30 has already said, there has been no record of any money laundering charges in Bermuda. None. Thirty per cent of our legislation last year was based on anti-money laundering, being in compliance. So it is not as if we are a lax jurisdiction.

Being on the blacklist has caused some challenges for us. I do not work in the industry, but I talk to those that do. It has created some challenges for us. What does it mean to the public? It means a company that may have come here may not come here. It

means a house that could have gotten rented, did not get rented. It means the car that could have gotten brought did not get brought. It means the child that might have gone to a private school did not go to a private school. Consequently, it means less money in our economy. That is the crux of the matter here. And if you multiply that by 10 companies, you are maybe looking at 200 different people that are not here . . . maybe.

On December 17th of this last year, 2018, this House in a bipartisan matter met on a Monday to pass the Economic Substance Act, or the first phase I should say, because we understand the threat that is at us. We all understand the threat. But it is for us to continuously educate the general public about that threat. And you know what is amazing, Mr. Speaker? I have a daughter, she is 25. She and her friends were WhatsApp'ing each other and she said, *Daddy, my friends are mad at you.*

Mad at me? Why are they mad at me?

Yeah, we are on the blacklist now.

I am like, *What do you mean, we're on the blacklist now?*

She said, *You know, this is going to be bad for our future.*

What is my point, Mr. Speaker? I had to educate her about the depths of what is going on. I had to send her an article by the former Minister of Finance, who actually laid out what is really going on. But the point is that our young people grasp the dangers of us being deemed as not in compliance, all right?

So we have moved forward in the public knowing . . . public awareness. Let me bring something to the public. There are some countries up in England in York called the Crown Dependencies—Guernsey, Isle of Man, and . . . what is the other one?

An Hon. Member: Jersey.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Jersey, that is it!

Crown Dependencies. They are our competition. This week they said, *Hey, guess what guys? We're going to sign up for the public register of beneficial ownership.* What does that mean? That means they are trying to beat us to the punch.

So, again, this goes back to the fact that we possibly will have less people here, less cars brought, less houses rented, or sold in some cases, and our GDP goes down. So we have to be conscious of that. We have to be flexible. Things that we did not consider 5, 10 years ago we have to consider now. It is called survival. And we will consider that. We are not oblivious to the reality.

Here is another reality, Mr. Speaker. As of tomorrow, there is going to be a new Prime Minister in the UK. I will not call the names.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: They what?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: There will soon . . . let me correct myself. Soon there will be a new Prime Minister of the UK. Now, if it is the person who it is most likely going to be, this is the same person that put the UK on a path that they are on now called “economic turmoil.” So how does the same guy who put them on the path for economic turmoil now become the leader? I really do not understand that one.

But what is my point, Mr. Speaker? What does that have to do with the Overseas Territories? That has everything to do with the Overseas Territories. We dodged a bullet a few months ago from the Foreign Affairs Committee, they backtracked on the things that they wanted or attempted to put towards us. Are we going to dodge that bullet again with a new leader?

Here is the bigger threat, Mr. Speaker. The UK is going to face another general election soon, and if there is a change of Government, the new Government—potentially—[will be] even less friendly towards the Overseas Territories. So let us reiterate. Prime Minister Theresa May has resigned. There is going to be a new Prime Minister who changes his mind every minute. There is going to be a potential change of Government in the UK who are unfriendly to the Overseas Territories. So all of us in the Overseas Territories have to be mindful of this threat—all of us. And we will have to constantly have to . . . unlike what the Member from constituency 30 said, we are really not in a position, honestly, to tell the EU, *No, we’re not going to comply with you.* None of us are, unfortunately. So, for the time being, we are going to have to keep adjusting to these constantly changing goals.

So, again, I am going to go back to the Minister of Finance. I am going to put a challenge to him. The challenge I am going to put to the Minister of Finance is to help to continue to educate the people of Bermuda about these threats. Educate us about why we are doing these Economic Substance Acts. Educate us about the flexibility that we are going to have to [have] in order to survive.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close up here. Today we had one of those rare forms of bipartisanship, because we are all on the same boat. Some may be in first class, some may be in steerage, some may be on the deck, but we are all on that same boat. And I suggest to the Honourable Members in the Opposition, in situations like this, you could leave out the daggers when you are trying to blame somebody in our Ministry because that is irrelevant at this point.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: At this point it is.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close up here. All of us love the standard of living that we have. We may not like paying the bills we pay, the high prices. But we have a relatively good standard of living in this country. This Economic Substance Act and all the other Acts that are going to follow are what we need to maintain our standard of living.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Finance Minister.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Any other Member? I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36. Honourable Member Scott, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, very briefly I would like to also begin by noting what has been done and what has been accomplished by the amendments being brought by Minister Dickinson this evening.

So I take a slightly different tack from that being taken by the spokesperson for the OBA, Ms. Gordon-Pamplin. The very fact that by a simple legal fiction introduced into the legislative language at clause 2 of this Bill, that redefines what an “entity” is, something that was not done in the 2018 Bill admittedly, but, you know, one swallow does not a summer make. Nor does one little glitch of omission from a piece of legislation leave us in a world of trouble. We have the capacity in this country—always have had the capacity in this country, in this Island, this territory—for having a reputation in this area of wealth management and responding to the challenges, whether they be from Delaware or from the EU, of responding adroitly and deftly.

And today is a perfect example of that. And I think that the Minister should take heart in the fact that he, with his leadership and his team responding and the private sector with whom he has consulted, producing this simple legal fiction to address a carveout and an exemption is something that we should be commending ourselves about, as opposed to the narrative which should not be dictated to us by the Honourable Member Patricia Gordon-Pamplin that we are scrambling back and trying to claw our way back.

Bermuda has an excellent set of materialities on which to call upon, we always have. The creation of this low tax territory and the herd effect that it has had historically in this country, a low tax regime, a clean jurisdiction, as opposed to, as was noted by the honourable spokesman for Finance, Ms. Scott, when she cited Deutsche Bank and the presence of the vast amounts of deleterious conduct that we find on the American seaboard, compared or contrasted with Bermuda. We can leverage these contrasting value-added in this country in quick time, as I submit has taken place over the last little [while], led by our Minister of Finance, Mr. Dickinson.

And so I take a different view. I believe that we should be deploying the very build-up of the intellectual capital that we have residing in Bermuda, the mind and management and presence of client services offered over all of these years, and the power and thought power that it gives us to be responsive. That is what we should be focusing on. And there is little point . . . and I agree with my colleague, Mr. Famous. There is little point in carping. Rather, we should have a task group assessing what the value is of this EU proposition in any event. For example, is this economic substance policy really going to result in more capital ending up in European cities?

If that is a real flaw or an assessed or analysed flaw or weakness in their policy, that begins to provide us with solutions as to whether what they are seeking to do, just by way of subaltern policy from afar to jurisdictions that they fear or predict as threats to their tax base, if it really is a policy that is weak, then our analysis should make that analysis that it is, and then continue to look for the solutions, continue to look for answers to reposition ourselves so that their efforts—their meagre, weak, un-thought-through efforts—are less impactful on us. That is where I think and I believe is where we should be devoting our time, our intellectual capital and prowess and energies, as opposed to spending too much time criticising or being critical of ourselves or saying that we are scrambling back. We have never had to scramble back.

This country, the jurisdiction that the current Minister of Finance has inherited and taken over, is a noble one, is one that has . . . we have never . . . I have never . . . I have watched this space for a long time in Bermuda growing up here. And this is a rare occurrence—a piece of legislative glitching that has put us or repositioned us adversely.

And I say again, the fact that we . . . and the speed with which we have recovered is testament to the strength of the jurisdiction and our prowess. And focus on that, and then do better than just focus on it, deploy in a task group, the way that we had a task group that led and looked into FinTech, deploy a task group that looks for ways to both leverage our strengths of low tax, a jurisdiction that can be preferred to jurisdictions that wealth prefers to reside in where the jurisdiction is clean and has a reputation for good regulation and sensible and reasonable regulation.

For you see in . . . and both Mr. Commissiong and Mr. Famous spoke about this. Mr. Johnson may . . . will soon be the change of guard in Britain; Trump, President Trump will also change, he is not going to be around forever. So when Mr. Commissiong speaks of the geopolitical sands being ever with us, one of the important factors about the geopolitical sands to which my colleague referred, is the quality closely associated with these geopolitical sands is their volatility and their ever quick-moving nature. And these present opportunities for countries like Bermuda who have

been accustomed to responding quickly to changing circumstances in which we can find opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

So we may, with this very need to deploy our intellectual power, as has happened over the last few weeks within Chambers and with the Minister of Finance and his team at the Ministry of Finance to devise a simple legal fiction and introduce it into the amendment today. This is an opportunity for us to deploy in equal terms, Mr. Speaker—in equal terms—new and even more far-reaching and effective positioning policy to fend off any future developments of these geopolitically fast-moving sands and to exploit them . . . and to exploit them, Mr. Speaker.

So Ms. Gordon-Pamplin should not be setting the narrative for us that we are . . . to be fair, she acknowledged what I have acknowledged that mind, management and client services present here have given us great, great practical power—the thought power, the experience in the industry of wealth management, insurance, et cetera—has given us . . . and that is what we should be crowing about, focusing upon, and both deploying and exploiting in the quiet of the hours when we are at our day's work so that today's legal positioning, just in simple amendments, is expanded, leavened with new yeast, to really position us to positions that we have not even yet thought about or come up with to deal with the changing world in which we find ourselves.

So the time is prime, Mr. Speaker, for Bermuda to deploy our know-how, our prowess intellectually, and to exploit the herd effect of this low tax, clean jurisdiction to make an assessment of the apparent threat from this churn that has been deliberately driven, possibly even a clearly thought-through churn deliberately foisted upon us by the EU, and come up with better and improved mousetraps . . . or just one mousetrap if that is all it takes.

Mr. Speaker, Facebook has recently made this important announcement of the Libra to pay for its products and services.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Zuckerberg has generated with his team Libra, which is intended to be currency that can be transferred via that social media platform with its value based on a basket of real life currencies rather than on cryptocurrencies.

This is yet an ideal example, Mr. Speaker, of the geopolitically shifting sands that are taking place in our world and the opportunities that therein reside. And I only mention it in the context that the environment into which this amendment that we are discussing now fits should be one that does not cause us to shrink like violets but to acknowledge our well-deserved capacities for being adroit and responsive and using the strengths of our reputation that has been ours to enjoy over these years. And at the same time, yes, to innovate and to come up . . . but not to be caught up in, *Oh, we are behind*. It reminds of the

Trump thing about *Make America (or Bermuda) Great Again!*

We have always been good at this. We have always been good at this, and we should quickly adjust, change the gear into fourth, and keep coasting at a good speed so that we do the work for the people of this country and generate the revenues for the consolidated fund more and deploy our revenues [for] education and seniors and health care and all of the important areas that make our life in Bermuda one that is the envy of the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 10. Honourable Member Dunkley, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, first off I want to thank my colleagues, the Honourable Members Ms. Scott and Mrs. Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, for their presentations. I think it was refreshing to hear the representative from constituency 30 give a perspective after declaring an interest of what she and the industry face generally because it is something that the listening audience certainly would appreciate when we come to the debate in this House. I think it was also important that my colleague from constituency 23 laid it out as, I guess I think it would be appropriate to say, as only she can do.

But Mr. Speaker, in following this debate today it appears to me, in my context, that Bermuda has gone from being a leader in many instances to being a follower. And I will come back to that as I get through the comments that I want to make today, but Mr. Speaker, in December of last year (the Honourable Member from constituency 11 referred to the original debate that we had) I made some comments which I will not repeat directly. But in the context of what I said Mr. Speaker, we live in a dog-eat-dog world, that every jurisdiction wants a part of another jurisdiction that is successful, or every jurisdiction that sees another jurisdiction that is successful wants to try to undermine that jurisdiction or make it more difficult for them to do work.

And then we live in a world, Mr. Speaker, not only is it dog eat dog . . . and we know how dogs can turn on each other sometimes as best of friends and have a scrap or something—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, interpolation from my side of the House was quite funny.

But not only will friendly dogs turn on each other from time to time, but we live in a world now where alphabet groups will say, *No, no, no, no, don't*

do as I do, do as I say. And it is quite interesting if you look at, as my honourable colleague did, at what taxes other jurisdictions place on themselves and how they criticise you . . . it makes you wonder and scratch your head.

So Mr. Speaker, we know because not too long ago we sat on that side of the House and we were well aware of the challenges and we were well aware that no matter what you do, that bar will continually rise or that playing field will continually get rejigged for its boundaries, Mr. Speaker. And that is very concerning and that means that we will continue to come back to this honourable place, with regularity, to deal with these types of legislation which are critically important to our community.

And yes, we realise that the Government is in a rush because of the importance to the industry. It is critically important to the industry. We have done our work on this side and we have talked to people within industry so we understand the critical importance it is to them. And as you have heard through this debate, Mr. Speaker, there already has been some seepage to what we would expect to be business that would be comfortable here in Bermuda and would be comfortable going forward. And we need to arrest that as quickly as we can. But some of the damage has been done and I do not think any one of us in this House could stand here today, Mr. Speaker, and say that with this piece of legislation the seepage will end because this is just a continuation of what will take place.

It is also, in light of the rush because of the importance of the industry, Mr. Speaker, it is important because the economy seems to be weaker now than it has been in previous years—because of some seepage, because of attacks from other parts in the world. There is no doubt we have seen many parameters that show that our economy is weakened to some extent.

So, Mr. Speaker, we come here today, we have been through why we are having the first, second and third readings, and I hope the Honourable Finance Minister, when he has an opportunity to wrap-up at the end of this debate after listening to the debate, can perhaps put a little bit more context about how we got to this position. I tried to listen closely and I tried to make some notes, but I still have some questions out there. Because the Honourable Finance Minister said that he met in April with the EU, a few days later he put in writing the challenges that we had, and then about 10 days ago the Minister said he spoke on the phone and then legislation was drafted, Mr. Speaker. So I appreciate that context, Mr. Speaker. But what I would like to know, because I did not hear it during this debate, is when was this problem first identified, Mr. Speaker?

I think that is a critical part for us to understand, because my colleague, the Honourable Member from constituency 30, I believe, said that this was

preapproved legislation. Because my honourable colleague said that it was requested to the Premier that a draft be put forward with an amendment. And the reply back was that this could not be the case because this legislation was preapproved.

Now Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, this is a serious challenge in itself and a serious acknowledgement in itself because if we now are dealing with the EU on the basis of preapproved legislation, that always allows that we will be a follower and not a leader, Mr. Speaker. That always allows, Mr. Speaker, that we will be under severe time constraints to rush into judgment.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Mr. Speaker, could I just clarify?

The Speaker: Yes, you may.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Ms. Leah K. Scott: And maybe I did not . . . I guess, say it correctly.

Essentially, before we can enact any legislation, what we draft has to go to the OECD, so that is . . . so they have to determine whether or not what we are putting forward is going to be acceptable to them. So, I do not know if that is what your meaning is of “preapproved.”

And so if I did not explain it correctly, then I just wanted to clarify that. Okay.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity for my honourable colleague to try to clarify.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: That does not . . . Mr. Speaker, that does not change the context of what we are facing here today and with our relationship with some of these overseas bodies.

It is clear now that they want to look at everything we are doing before we do it, Mr. Speaker. Therein itself lies a challenge, Mr. Speaker, because this body—

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker: Your point of order, yes.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

I was going to sit and stay quiet and then wrap-up at the end giving some more detail around timelines, but clearly this conversation is going way off track. And so let me . . . can I . . . if you . . . with your indulgence—

The Speaker: Provide the clarity.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: —provide some context.

When the Bill . . . when the legislation was passed last year, I had concerns expressed to me by numbers of members from the industry groups around Bermuda. I committed at the time to address concerns once we had heard from the EU with respect to their judgment on our legislation.

Bermuda, for the record, had tried to work with other Overseas Territories jointly in crafting our legislation. We spoke, and then people stopped cooperating. So this notion that we went off on our own, doing our own thing being arrogant, is not true. It has no basis in fact.

Once the EU rendered its judgment, we were advised by Her Majesty’s Treasury to not change our legislation until we were off the list. And given that we had been on the list, and everybody wanted to get off the list as soon as possible, we followed that advice.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Well—

The Speaker: Well, make your point and then you can have your seat and you can finish that when you do your wrap-up.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Okay. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Member?

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

Mr. Speaker, that is helpful information. That would have been helpful at the start of the debate.

Now, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair . . . speak to the Chair, do not get sidetracked.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, no, I will not be sidetracked. The interpolations from that side show that you are hitting the point, Mr. Speaker.

So Mr. Speaker, I appreciate from the Honourable Finance Minister that when the legislation was passed last year the advice given was to go through the process and do things in what would be (my words) the most appropriate time for doing it. And if

we had had that information earlier through this process it would have helped.

Now, in regard to the Overseas Territories, if Bermuda needs to go on its own to get some things done as far as legislation is concerned, if other Overseas Territories or other bodies that have like interests to us do not work with us, we should go on our own. I do not know where that word “arrogant” came from, but arrogant is not the right word. We are protecting our people’s interests, which is important, Mr. Speaker.

When I sat and had the responsibilities as Premier it was sometimes difficult to get other territories to go with us in certain areas, because they tended, at times, to want to keep their head below the parapet so it did not get shot, when we knew there was an issue on the horizon, Mr. Speaker. And Bermuda has always been the place that will deal with issues when they come up, or before they come up if we see that happening, Mr. Speaker. So if we have to go and leave other people behind, we will have to do so, Mr. Speaker, because it is very clear that this legislation today has our full support. You will probably have few questions in Committee about it because we understand the simple nature of it, Mr. Speaker. But we also understand the severe impact to our industry here and to our economy.

Now, we will come back to this House any time there is a need or an opportunity to do something if we have to have a first, second and third reading as long as we are kept in the loop on it, Mr. Speaker. But today is not the end of where we go from here, Mr. Speaker, because it is very clear to us that as we go through this process our relationship with the bodies that we have to deal with for this type of legislation is not as strong as it should be. And what do I mean by that? It means that they tend to want to dictate to us rather than to listen to our point of view. And that is not a healthy relationship to be in, Mr. Speaker.

And as far as the Government is concerned, I am sure they know that they have the full support of the Opposition in trying to turn that relationship so that there is a better understanding of what we do in our jurisdiction and so that there is more opportunity for us to protect our interests going forward and to further our interests going forward, Mr. Speaker.

The precept of the current arrangement is not going to work because we cannot just keep jumping and drafting and coming to this House to pass legislation that is under strict timelines and legislation that is critical to our community. And so we are here today to do exactly that. But if we continue to go forward without leading, more in a following mode, we will have very difficult months and years ahead, Mr. Speaker.

We heard Honourable Members from that side talk about a FinTech-based economy and exciting new developments in our economy, Mr. Speaker. If the Government—any Government—is sidetracked with last-minute changes that have to be made under

very difficult timeframes, it takes away from the crucial important need of expanding our economy, taking care of opportunities, or seizing opportunities before other people seize those opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the last point I want to make here as I speak . . . and it is a reflective point, Mr. Speaker, because I think you have seen over the past couple of months an Opposition who does their role differently than the former Opposition, the PLP. And what do I say by that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, if the shoe was on the other foot today, and the OBA was over there and the PLP was over here, what would the approach have been for the PLP in its Opposition on this legislation?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And the Honourable Member Zane De Silva says (from constituency 29) we would not be saying anything but support.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Of course.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that Honourable Member would have been on a rant . . . he would have . . . there would have been a verbose conversation so loud, louder than last week or the week before, that the roof would have come off this place, Mr. Speaker.

But this Opposition has been pinpointed with their support and made some valid criticism, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Fantasy.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now I hear the Deputy Premier say *Fantasy!* No, Mr. Speaker, because there was important legislation that came through this House and it was made political all the time. We are not going to make politics over this legislation because it is for the good of our people, Mr. Speaker. It is for the good of our people, Mr. Speaker, so we are going to be here to support this.

But what we will say, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to change the context of the relationship with the EU because right now they have our tail and they shake it and they wag it, Mr. Speaker, and that is not going to be healthy because we will back here again and again and again.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members on the other side would like some suggestions on what we would do about it. Well, the first thing that could happen, Mr. Speaker, is to get the Opposition involved a little bit earlier than Sunday afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Get the Opposition involved a little bit earlier—

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Members, Members!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —than Sunday afternoon.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order.

The Speaker: Members, Members!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Members!

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is certainly misleading the House, because he just asked a question and he did not even come to the meeting he was invited to . . . if he cares so much.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Continue on.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Continue on . . . Members.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —that is the most ridiculous point of order because—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It is true, though.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —the Opposition Members were invited to the meeting.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Why didn't you go?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: There are two comments I want to make to that, Mr. Speaker. I was off the Island, Mr. Speaker. The invitation to the meeting came when?

An Hon. Member: Tuesday morning.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Tuesday morning for Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Hey, you got an invite.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, notification came to the Opposition on Monday.

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take a point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. E. David Burt: That Honourable Member is misleading the House. And I am not certain if the OBA Opposition is not talking to the UBP Opposition, but we clearly spelled it out with the Honourable Member who is the Acting Opposition Leader.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, he—

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The Honourable Premier said misleading the House, but he did not give a comment on how [it was] misleading the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —that the Government contacted the Opposition on Sunday—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You just said Tuesday afternoon, make up your mind!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Check the Hansard, go check the Hansard. You know you are—

The Speaker: Members!

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: You are incorrect so much you cannot remember when you are correct.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Sit down, sit down.

We are not going to have this conversation going back and forth between two Members. If anybody wants to talk, you talk to me. Talk to the Chair; not to the Members across the floor.

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

Sometimes interpolations are just too good to leave alone, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Well, you have got to be bigger than that.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: So, Mr. Speaker, the Government—

The Speaker: You have got to be bigger than that.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: —wanted advice as to how we could work through this situation. Contact the Opposition earlier. We are willing to work with you to work through issues of national importance.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Member.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: But contacting us at the last minute will lead to challenges in making this happen in the right way.

And Mr. Speaker, as it has happened before on a piece of legislation, it does not allow the time for the Opposition to look at it, and mistakes can happen. There is legislation that has come to this House in a rush and we have had to come back and amend it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a pretty straightforward piece of legislation, so that probably will not happen in this case. But if the Government wants some advice, contact us earlier, contact us as soon as they know there is a rush to judgment on this issue and we would be willing to sit and get together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Is there any other Member?

I recognise the Premier.

Premier, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, my comments are going to be brief. And the . . . it is very interesting because . . . and it is . . . I know that the Honourable Members opposite have forgotten what it is like to be in Opposition and they have been there for two years. But there is just the very nature of this political system which we have, and some of the nature of it is that they are uninformed. And that is just the way that the system works sometimes.

But I can assure you that when we talk about value for money, the Government is certainly getting value for money from the Honourable Minister of Finance and the amount of work and energy and effort which he has been putting into this particular instance.

And what I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that I do not want to necessarily say that the Opposition speaks with forked tongue. But we understand the various constituencies that we represent. We understand quite plainly, simply and clearly that the Honourable Minister of Finance has been consulting with

business organisations back and forth on these particular matters—the Registrar of Companies, the task force which has been established. The Honourable Deputy Opposition Leader is nodding her head because she knows. And these are the types of consultations which have been going on for many, many, months, Mr. Speaker.

So I find it interesting and rich that, clearly, the people who the Members opposite attend cocktail parties with would have filled that in. That is just a fact, Mr. Speaker. Clearly the people opposite who are, you know, whose names are part of the law firms, who are inside of these meetings, would have filled them in. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that when we had a draft Bill, it was shared.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am uncertain if the Honourable Minister of Finance went through the process to get here, but we are dealing with multiple different things here. We are dealing with the OECD, we are dealing with the EU, we want to make sure that we get these things right and it is a very delicate balancing act.

Here is the fact. The fact is that during [the time] the original economic substance items, [when] these particular measures were put forward, some of the challenges which we had, the tax residency issue which some persons spoke about *if we saw it in other people's legislation, why wasn't it in our legislation?* We specifically asked for these carveouts from the European Union. And at that point in time the technical officers denied them.

This is not the first time that I have said that in this House, Mr. Speaker. It is not. We specifically stated that—and it is something that is known—and the people on the task force and others know and understand that, Mr. Speaker. We went back and the Honourable Minister of Finance stated very clearly that once the listing decision was made we will look to do the level setting that was required. It was every intention to have this piece of legislation done earlier. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? The Ministry of Finance this week is in Paris for an OECD Forum on Harmful Tax Practices assessment and the OECD is the one that is running the process for measuring economic substance. And, therefore, we wanted to make sure that we were in line with the OECD and we could not get that answer until Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, in writing. Those are the facts.

Now, guess what, Mr. Speaker? As the Honourable Minister of Finance said, you have to be flexible. And I appreciate the flexibility of the Deputy Opposition Leader who was at a wedding while I was at a football game and having to chat, and understanding and recognising and the letters being sent to the notifications so that people were clear, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that we all know that when finance legislation comes to this House dealing with our international business sector, both sides of the aisle hold hands.

But let us be clear, Mr. Speaker, this is not really Mr. and Mrs. Smith's business. You are not going to find economic substance written inside of a Progressive Labour Party platform. You are not going to find the people who are challenged with the challenges in the economy and the challenges with housing and other things talking about economic substance. And so time is taken from Mr. and Mrs. Smith's agenda to focus on these matters. But they are done and they are pushed through.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here is what is interesting. All of these items were explained in the briefing session. Ministry officials were made open and there were numerous questions that were asked. We make sure that we have these sessions, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the information is shared and so there can be no questions so we can come here, and instead of the sound and fury—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House in terms of all information being shared in the briefing sessions because I will have to say that the . . . we received a draft copy of the legislation, which would be the basis of the meeting that we held, and on that draft copy of the legislation we were told that we were not meant to share that outside. So with that prescription to not share that legislation we did not even have the opportunity to go and speak to people in industry with whom we might otherwise have been able to communicate and consult.

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. E. David Burt: Okay, Mr. Speaker, now I am getting to the point, because there was something that was breaking back and forth.

The Ministry of Finance consults with industry as a matter of course. That is what happens. That is it. And so the consultations happened with the outside bodies already. They are part of the task force. The legislation was shared with the Opposition so that the Opposition could be aware of what would be coming here for debate. But the policy and those items were already shared.

And as the Deputy Opposition Leader indicated when she gave her speech and understood, these processes where we are bringing legislation here is legislation which has already been preapproved as meeting the guidelines and the test. That was the clarification which we got during the various items.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this stuff is difficult. But here is the fact, Mr. Speaker. We are a part of the global economy. We have committed to having an insurance industry. We have committed to EU Solvency II. We have committed to being part of the OECD's Forum on Harmful Tax Practices. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, as global rules change, we will have to change as well. That is a fact. So the sound and fury from Members opposite in some way saying that we should just ignore global rules, it is almost as though . . . what are you trying to say? We understand where we are, industry understands where we are, and I am hopeful that the Opposition understands where we are.

This legislation here today is something that we would have loved to have brought earlier. Again, we would have loved to have brought this earlier. But because of the very strange timing between the OECD Forum on Harmful Tax Practices assessments and the deadline, that is the reason why it was not able to be brought and/or tabled before this time, Mr. Speaker. It is that simple. Sometimes these things happen.

And Members opposite compare us to other jurisdictions all the time. There was no sound and fury in BVI when they called a special session and passed their Economic Substance regime in one sitting. There was no sound and fury in Cayman where they had a special session and passed their Economic Substance regime in one sitting.

An Hon. Member: Nope.

Hon. E. David Burt: But here this is what we have, Mr. Speaker. We hold hands on these items . . . I remember when I was Shadow Minister of Finance and there was a Minister of Finance on this side, and when things came dealing with these matters we say *on financial matters we hold hands*. And I would hope that the former Premier, who just said that the Opposition would act differently, would just cast his mind back and remember how we got through the multiple pieces of financial legislation and all those various items and all the blacklist that happened under the former administration and all the rest. Those are the facts.

Some Hon. Members: Rubbish. Rubbish.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, you do not remember a blacklist from France that happened while you were in office?

Some Hon. Members: Ooh! Ooh!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Really? Let's be clear. These things happen all the time, Mr. Speaker, all the time.

That is the nature . . . that is the nature, Mr. Speaker, of being in Government.

We accept the responsibility, and we will continue to press on. But what is clear, Mr. Speaker, is that some persons on that side get it, and some persons on that side do not. And those who want to continue to play politics can do so, but I would hope that at one point in time the two separate Oppositions can speak as one in this House as opposed to us having to listen to the OBA Opposition and the UBP Opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. We do not have two Oppositions. We have one OBA Opposition. And while he may want to score—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —political points in respect of that, it is important for the record to ensure that this is clarified.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think enough has been said back and forth and I am sure that the public has had enough information—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —to make some determination.

I will say that all of us in the Opposition recognise that this has to be done. If Members were clear, there has been some concern and asking of questions as to how we got to the point that we are that we would have to have a last minute briefing concerning matters without, of course . . . in having that briefing suggestions were put forward. And, unfortu-

nately, because of the time factor some of those were not even . . . well, none of them were able to be incorporated or even considered because of the time factor. And I think that is part of where the concern is, that if we are going to be consulted . . . then consultation means that maybe we have some ideas as well and we would like to present them and maybe for those to be considered. But this was a *fait accompli*.

So if we are going to have consultation, just come out and say this is a *fait accompli*, this has to be done and there is no adjusting of it and the likes, and we are going to move forward. And I think that is where some of the challenge is.

What I wanted to do just briefly was to clarify for the public . . . I listened to the Premier saying that Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda are really not going to understand this and I take exception to the Premier actually saying that, because what invariably will happen, as we listened to the Honourable Leah Scott read an email on how companies were going to potentially pull out, that is Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda who are going to lose their jobs. And so for the Premier to get up and make such a statement, quite frankly, is very concerning, because Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda stand the risk of losing their livelihoods.

And so what we need to do is we need to ensure that, as far as possible . . . I have a lot of faith in the Finance Minister as he continues on with the work that he needs to do. I believe that we can do better as far as consultation is concerned. We have had some great consultation, actually. But in notification, I think that we probably could have been notified a bit sooner, considering the fact that this was already a done deal.

And so I get the thrust of going back and forth. But I wanted to make those points. Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda need to know what is going on, especially when we are talking about an industry that contributes over 80 per cent to our GDP. That is scary that we would not explain what is going on to the public. And I know that the Finance Minister will continue on and get out to the public and ensure that they understand. But that is a major, major issue if we are going forward and we are not letting the public be aware.

I wanted the public to know, Mr. Speaker, of the symbiotic relationship that we have with jurisdictions that fall under the EU and under the even broader branch of the OECD. There was a study that was done back in 2013, I believe it was, by a company out of Washington DC. And that company basically stated this: *that Bermuda had a symbiotic relationship with Britain*. And it mentioned many other jurisdictions as well, but I am just highlighting the relationship with Britain. It said that *Bermuda and the core business that it partakes in supports*—and I want Bermuda to hear this very clearly—*supports over a hundred thousand jobs in the UK*.

Talk about a symbiotic relationship. What we do as a jurisdiction here in Bermuda supports a hun-

dred thousand jobs! In addition, it went on to explain that not only a hundred thousand jobs, but it is *generating over \$1.4 billion annually*. Talk about a symbiotic relationship.

And so from both sides of the House—from the Government and from the Opposition—we have heard how we feel that this is very egregious, that we continue to jump through hoops. And it is concerning for us because it, quite frankly, is an attack on Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, because as we see the decline in retail sales, that all is connected directly to the industry that we are talking about because they are spending money. This is all connected.

The other thing that I wanted to point out about this is that in my travels prior, when we were Government with our Finance Minister Bob Richards (the former Minister), we had this thing that we used to say to the Brits about a public register. And I just wanted to speak to clarify. I was listening very intently as the Honourable Member Famous was talking about Jersey and Guernsey and their going public with their register. We used to say *you go first* because whoever goes first, loses.

And I believe, quite frankly, that because these jurisdictions are going with a public register it really is a strategic move to force and push us in that direction. It is beneficial for us *not* to have a public register. That is why companies wish to come to Bermuda.

And so I just wanted to make sure that the public understood that, with some of these jurisdictions going that route, it is certainly is not to their benefit at all. We need to maintain the fact that we will . . . we have got a register and, quite frankly, how . . . I would like to know how the United States and Britain and the likes, who have no clue of a register and who owns what . . . it is going to take them a decade just to get all of that information together and to be able to comply by 2023, or whatever that year is. It is going to take a magical feat in order to accomplish that, Mr. Speaker.

So, again, I want Bermuda to understand as they travel that the symbiotic relationship that we have and the business that we do creates hundreds of thousands of jobs across the EU jurisdictions. And it, quite frankly, is very egregious to see us in this position. We are in this position and that is why we are calling for, as you have heard from some of our Members, there are . . . people expressing their feelings on the Opposition side. We are all on the same page. But what we would like to see is some forthcoming . . . and time to be able to present things and to consult, not over five days.

And I was looking through my phone and the Premier said he called me, and I have no calls from the Premier at all, you know. And then he said he emailed me, well, okay, I do not see any emails here so I am not sure what address he emailed it to. He has emailed me before. But I have no emails at all.

Now that could be because I was travelling and maybe there was a mix-up there at the time, I do not know, but—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, I am not making excuses.

But we are in support, Finance Minister. We want him to know that. We are a bit concerned about the timing because of this. And we also recognise that because we are or we were blacklisted, close scrutiny is being placed on Bermuda. I mean we were termed as being “tricky.” We still have not gotten to the bottom of why they termed us or coined us as being “tricky.” I would like to understand what they are talking about. No one seems to be able to clarify that. Why were we being tricky?

So, again, Mr. Speaker, we will move forward and we will support the Finance Minister as he moves forward to get this stuff done, but we will not stop [asking] questions and being concerned about timing as we move through these very important issues that face Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I do not see any other Member moving. Minister, would you like to wrap-up?

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

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I am not going to respond point by point to everything that has been said. I think that to some degree the back and forth has been kind of exhausting for us in here and for some of us listening.

But what I would like to say is this blacklisting, for the two months that it happened, was clearly not ideal for us. And none of us would have wished, if we could do it all over again, to have had to suffer through this experience for a second time. But it happened. And we have to decide as a country whether we are going to move beyond it and figure out how we move forward in a constructive way, or whether we are going to allow this to be the equivalent of a shackle around our ankles.

I heard comments about how this blacklisting is causing companies to leave. No one knows for certain why companies choose to leave. Companies choose to leave all the time. It is inappropriate—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER*[Misleading]*

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

For clarity, we do know why companies leave because, notwithstanding that companies may not choose to share with the Minister of Finance the reasons why they have elected to leave, they certainly share with us. And that is one of the reasons why it is important to have the consultation so that we can help to quell some of the anxieties that companies have, to show that we are in support of what the Government is trying to do.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, again, companies choose to leave Bermuda all the time.

And we can choose to surrender or we can . . . I hear comparisons all the time about how people are upping and leaving and going to Cayman, and they are upping and leaving and going to other places. And I am a believer in this concept that there are many, many bodies that have responsibility for helping to move this country forward. It is interesting that when we run into periods of challenge there seems to be an expectation that Government needs to be the one doing all the rowing in the right direction.

And what I say is this: Companies come here because we are a beautiful jurisdiction, we have . . . it is a lovely place to come and do business, we have a great reputation. And we also have a number of really, really, high-quality, outstanding service providers. They are not just here because they like the Island. They are here because they have relationships with people who provide excellent service.

And so, when we hit a bump in the road . . . as I ask my children when they complain about a problem, *Now what?* Are we going to surrender? Or are we going to fight like we have always fought? The fact of the matter is the world today is different than it was 30 to 40 years ago. And we have made it our reputation . . . we have made it our stock in trade to adapt as a country to the circumstances that we find ourselves facing.

These threats from the EU or the OECD are not going to stop. And we should not allow these threats to stop us from being what we are. We should adapt, we should show our innate ability to be innovative, our ability to kind of provide good service and good solutions—things that have made us successful over the course of the last five or six decades, . . . actually longer than that. We should continue to kind of push forth with those things instead of cowering our heads and kind of crying, *Woe is me*.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to commit the Bill.

The Speaker: Deputy?

[Pause]

House in Committee at 4:14 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL**ECONOMIC SUBSTANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019**

The Chairman: Members, we are now in Committee of the whole House for further consideration of the Bill entitled the [Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019](#).

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Chairman, the Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019 amends the Economic Substance Act 2018 by creating an exemption for Bermuda registered entities that are registered in another jurisdiction for tax purposes.

This means that the Act will not apply to an entity that is registered in Bermuda and engaged in a relevant activity and provides sufficient evidence that it is resident for tax purposes in another jurisdiction. The information received by the Registrar will be provided to the foreign competent authority of any relevant EU member state or other jurisdiction with which Bermuda has entered into an agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move clauses 1 through 4.

The Chairman: You may. Continue.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Clause 1 is the standard citation clause.

Clause 2 amends section 2 by amending a “non-resident entity,” and defines a “non-resident entity” as an entity which is resident for tax purposes in a jurisdiction outside Bermuda that is not in Annex 1 to the EU list of non-cooperative jurisdictions, i.e., a blacklisted jurisdiction.

Clause 3 inserts a new section 5A requiring a non-resident entity that carries on a relevant activity, that claims to be a resident for tax purposes in another jurisdiction, to provide evidence of such tax residency for each relevant financial period.

Clause 4 amends section 6 by adding two new subsections: (1A) and (2A). Under subsection (1A) the Registrar is required to provide the competent authority the information provided to him by a non-resident entity, i.e., evidence of tax residency claimed in another jurisdiction. Subsection (2) is

amended to require the competent authority to provide information received from the Registrar in relation to an entity that is in breach of the Economic Substance requirements for a relevant financial period as well as a high risk IP entity to a relevant jurisdiction, not just a relevant EU member state.

Subsection (2A) requires the competent authority to provide information received from the Registrar in relation to a non-resident entity to a relevant jurisdiction, not just an EU member state. The words “or other jurisdiction” are also inserted after the words “EU member state” in subsections (3) and (5).

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Ms. Scott, you have the floor.

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

I recognise (and I think we have batted this back and forth) that we really do not have the opportunity to make any changes to this legislation. But I just would like to have it on the record that, while we are supporting the legislation, I do hope that at some point in time we can actually address the carveout and provide some sort of definition that allows companies that are here to evidence that they are tax resident in Bermuda so that they do not have to form substance in other jurisdictions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin. You have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, I am referring specifically to clause 4—

The Chairman: Four.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —and this is on the second page under [new] subsection (1A) in which we specify that “With respect to a non-resident entity, the Registrar shall provide . . . the competent authority.”

And I noted in the earlier debate that there was no reference in the description to “competent authority” and I just wondered whether the Government would want to ensure that the principal legislation either includes that, or perhaps if he could explain why it is important or why it is not necessary to include it.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Minister, do you want to respond to that?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Yes, sir.

Addressing questions in the order in which they were given, with respect to further amendments to the legislation, I committed to industry, the various industry stakeholders, in December and have reiterated this commitment in my subsequent engagements with them over the course of the last five, six months that I will undertake to make the relevant amendments to the legislation to ensure that Bermuda is not placed at a competitive disadvantage. That will include consideration of the issues with respect to kind of defining whether a company is tax resident in Bermuda or not.

The process for us making amendments to this legislation has been divided up into two general phases. The first phase is to address those things that needed immediate fixing, and the second being all of the other issues. And in due course we will work towards resolving those differences.

With respect to the definition of a “competent authority,” I noted the Honourable Member’s point earlier and I would refer her to the substantive legislation section 6(5) which sets out the definition for what a “competent authority” is.

The Chairman: Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, are you okay?
Mm-hmm. Yes?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: If you do not mind, Mr. Chairman, I would like to give her . . .

The Chairman: Oh, yes. It is okay?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I am satisfied with this. I just had looked for it in the interpretation section under the alphabetical—

The Chairman: Right.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —segment, and I did not see it there and that was the reason I asked the question.

But, thank you, I appreciate the information from the Minister.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Minister, do you want to move the clauses? Move the preamble first . . . no, the clauses, first, sorry.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: Yes, just move that the clauses be approved.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I move that all four clauses be approved.

The Chairman: Yes.

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

Are there any objections?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 4 passed.]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: 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. Curtis L. Dickinson: I move that the Bill be reported to the House as amended—

The Clerk: As printed.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: —as printed.

An Hon. Member: No amendments.

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.

[Motion carried: The Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 4:22 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

ECONOMIC SUBSTANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members.

Is there any objection to reporting to the House the Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019 as printed?

No objections. So moved.

That now brings us on to the next item on the Order Paper, which is the third item we are doing today but listed as [Order] No. 5. It is the Electricity Amendment Act 2019 in the name of the Minister of Home Affairs.

Honourable Minister, would you like to present your matter?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

BILL

SECOND READING

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that the Bill entitled the Electricity Amendment Act 2019 be now read a second time.

The Speaker: Any objections to that?

None.
Continue, Minister.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Bill entitled the Electricity Amendment Act 2019 to be read for a second time. This Bill seeks to amend the Electricity Act 2016 to expand the requirements for granting consent to the transfer or assignment of licences.

Mr. Speaker, you will be aware that in my Ministerial Statement on the 7th of June, I indicated that I was tabling this Bill to assure the proper regulation of the electricity sector, particularly after the announcement was made that the Ascendant Group was for sale.

Mr. Speaker, I must reiterate that I have every confidence that the RA (the Regulatory Authority) will perform the due diligence required prior to making a decision on whether to approve the transfer of any licence, particularly now that the team is led by Chief Executive Mr. Denton Williams. You will note that under his stewardship a number of long-standing issues have either been completely or are currently out for public consultation. These include the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP); the granting of new Integrated Communications Operating Licences (ICOLs); and Consumer Protection Standards and Open Internet.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Honourable Members have seen the educational advertisements featuring the RA's cow. Although some might tire of the cow advertisements, I find them quite entertaining and informative. This is all in keeping with the consumer protection mandate of the RA to engage and to promote the interests of [the] consumers of Bermuda.

However, Mr. Speaker, you will be aware that things have not always gone that smoothly at the RA. History has instructed us that in any organisation there should always be adequate checks and balances.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to remind Honourable Members that section 6 of the Electricity Act 2016 defines the purposes of the Electricity Act; namely, "to seek—

"(a) to ensure the adequacy, safety, sustainability and reliability of electricity supply in Bermuda so that Bermuda continues to be well positioned to compete in the

- international business and global tourism markets;
- “(b) to encourage electricity conservation and the efficient use of electricity;
- “(c) to promote the use of cleaner energy sources and technologies, including alternative energy sources and renewable energy sources;
- “(d) to provide sectoral participants and end-users with non-discriminatory interconnection to transmission and distribution systems;
- “(e) to protect the interests of end-users with respect to prices and affordability, and the adequacy, reliability and quality of electricity service;
- “(f) to promote economic efficiency and sustainability in the generation, transmission, distribution and sale of electricity.”

Mr. Speaker, these are admirable purposes that also underscore the commitments made to the people of Bermuda by this Government in the 2018 Throne Speech, including addressing high energy costs and increasing the uptake of renewables.

Mr. Speaker, I must also remind Honourable Members that section 8(1) of the Act provides me with the authority, as the Minister, to “issue Ministerial directions to the Authority regarding any matter within his authority respecting the electricity sector.”

Section 8(2) states that “Ministerial directions shall be designed with due regard to the purposes of this Act.”

Mr. Speaker, I issued Ministerial directions to the RA on the 19th of March, after we were informed by the Board of Ascendant Group Ltd. that they intended to sell the company. While I do not intend to repeat all the verbiage in my directions to the RA, I would like to highlight the following paragraphs, which are important to this debate:

“Pursuant to section 15 of the Act, in discharging your functions, including the consideration of any change in ownership of any licensee under the Act or of any proposed concentration under section 87 of the Regulatory Act 2011, you must act in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Act as set out in section 6. As we discussed and, as you would know from statements made by the Government” (and I am continuing to quote from my directions here, Mr. Speaker) “the Government is concerned with ensuring that the above purposes are met and that, in particular, where possible, section 6(e) which speaks to the purposes of protecting ‘the interests of end-users with respect to the prices and affordability and the adequacy, reliability and quality of electricity service’ is given the highest priority, provided there is no detriment to section 6(a) which speaks to ‘adequacy, safety, sustainability and reliability of electricity supply in Bermuda.’

“I expect that while the Authority considers whether to grant its consent to any transfer of owner-

ship, as delineated in section 30 of the Act, deliberations consistent with this direction will provide additional layers of diligence, which we have discussed and will better safeguard the interests of the rate-payers and further strengthen the application of the Act.

“Please note that this direction in no way obviates any of the other regulatory processes established around the transfer of ownership of any licensee, but rather adds to the process.”

Mr. Speaker, now to the Bill at hand which amends section 30 of the Act. The amendment provides that:

1. An Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) must be approved under section 44(2) and published under section 45 of the Act and that due regard is had to the IRP when the Authority makes its decision whether or not to give consent.

I would like to highlight section 44(2) which states that “The Authority may approve the Integrated Resource Plan if, acting in accordance with the regulatory principles and any administrative determinations, it considers that the final draft Integrated Resource Plan is the best approach to meeting the purposes of the Act and complying with Ministerial directions.”

2. Requires the Authority to consult the Minister and obtain his approval before it consents to the transfer or assignment of the TD&R (the Transmission Distribution and Retail) Licence or a Bulk Generation Licence.
3. The Minister may refuse his approval, but only if he is satisfied that the Authority’s intended consent to the transfer or assignment is not in accordance with Ministerial directions.

Mr. Speaker, after my Ministerial Statement of the 7th of June, concerns were raised that the sale of Ascendant Group does not require a transferee licence because it is Ascendant Group being sold and not BELCO. However, I would like to draw Honourable Members’ attention to section 30(2) which states: “Transfer includes change in control of the licensee, where ‘control’ refers to” (and this is defining what change in control is in some effort in clarity) “(a) the power, whether held directly or indirectly, to exercise decisive influence over a licence holder, including by directing its management and policies, whether through”—

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Could you just reference the legislation?

The Speaker: Say again?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I just would like a point of clarification.

The Speaker: Sure, point of clarification.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Just the legislation, which section?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Section 30(2).

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Of the?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Of the Electricity Act.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Oh, okay.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I will restart with where I was reading about transfer: "(2) Transfer includes change in control of the licensee" (this is section 30(2) so that the Honourable Member can follow where I am going) "where 'control' refers to—

"(a) the power, whether held directly or indirectly, to exercise decisive influence over a licence holder, including by directing its management and policies, whether through ownership of shares, stocks, or other securities or voting rights, or through an agreement or arrangement of any type, or otherwise; or

"(b) the ownership of 25 percent or more of the shares, stocks, or other securities or voting rights, including through an agreement or arrangement of any type."

The proposed sale of Ascendant Group does reflect a change in control of the licensee as described in section 32 [*sic*].

Ms. Leah K. Scott: [Section] 30 subsection (2).

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Not 32.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: [Section] 30 subsection (2).

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: If I misdirected . . . or persons were confused by my remarks, I apologise. It is [section] 30 subsection (2).

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: [Section] 30, in brackets, (2).

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I hope that is helpful to Members, and I apologise to Members who are listening who may have been confused by that.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay, thank you.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, finally, I have repeatedly noted in my previous statements regarding this matter that the BELCO plant is a strategic asset, which is used by all residents of Bermuda. It is critical to our social and economic well-being. Therefore, it is

the duty of this Government to ensure that any proposed sale will promote economic efficiency and sustainability in order to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel, increase the use of renewables and make electricity more affordable for all residents.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude I would like to recognise the stellar work of the team at the Attorney General's Chambers who worked on this Bill to its fruition, and also the work of the Permanent Secretary of Home Affairs, Ms. Rozy Azhar, who has worked tirelessly to deal with these issues as they have come to the attention of the Ministry and working with Chambers to make sure that the work that we had to do around this very important issue of the potential sale of the Island's only utility has become an issue and a matter for the Government to consider.

So I thank all those who have been involved in the work around this matter and the work that will continue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I now move that the Bill entitled the Electricity Amendment Act be read for a second time and put to the House for consideration.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Deputy Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I guess the major concern that I have about the legislation is the fact that the RA was set up to be an independent body. And I am not sure that injecting politics into the RA by allowing the Minister to approve licences . . . kind of impedes upon the independence of the Authority.

And I guess I am questioning the timing of the legislation because BELCO has been up for sale since last year, so why are we just bringing this legislation forward now?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[*Misleading*]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I do not believe the Honourable Member is intentionally misleading . . . the announcement of the sale of BELCO only came this year. And I do not believe they had made any announcement to sell their company until early 2018 . . . the actual process and the announcement of their clear intent to sell came earlier this year, March to be exact.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Fair comment, but I think that the Minister actually rightly said that we were aware of

negotiations, I guess, since 2018, whether or not this announcement came in 2019.

So I guess the real issue is that we should have had a finalised IRP so that whoever is acquiring the shares knows exactly what they are getting. And the concern is that when this takes place, will our rates change? Is staffing going to change? Will there be unexpected operating costs that were not anticipated?

The other thing is that the amendment, as far as I can see, tends to allow for Ministerial overreach. And the Minister does have, under the Electricity Act, as he cited, the ability to provide Ministerial direction as he also does under the Regulatory Act.

So I guess the purpose of having an independent body is to allow for them to be able to make decisions and, generally, when you have independent bodies you try to constitute them with people who have the necessary skills and expertise and knowledge to be able to run whatever sector they are supposed to be responsible for. So it is concerning when you have people that are devoting their time to contribute to the running of the Authority and to making decisions to, essentially, then be micromanaged because whatever they do or whatever efforts they expend can then be overturned by the Minister.

So I am hoping that the RA will be left to do their job. I know this is one of those situations where the Opposition will have their say but the Government will have their way and that there really is not anything that we can do to make any changes. But I think it is important that we start understanding and respecting the independent bodies that we have set up. This is now the fourth, I guess, instance where we are having a piece of legislation amended to allow for the Minister to be able to exercise some control or some insight.

So we need to determine if we are going to have truly independent bodies, if they are going to be independent, or we are just going to have Government have control over everything rather than having bodies set up, give them independence, only to have it reversed.

And I actually do not really have anything other than that to say, Mr. Speaker. As I said, although we may not agree with the legislation, it will pass. And I just hope that the RA will be able to do an effective job, notwithstanding that at the end of the day the Minister has the ability to make a decision in terms of the transfer of the licence.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Deputy Speaker. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate and thank the Minister for bringing this amendment to give the Government of the day the final approval on any sale of BELCO.

We all know that BELCO is a so-called private company. And I say “so-called” because BELCO . . . their electricity really should be nationalised. And so they . . . we cannot continue to leave ourselves open to a private company that can do almost what they want. And I am just hoping one day that the Government, even if we start now, that the Government should acquire some interest in BELCO, with the eventuality down the road of taking it over or at least having at least 51 per cent of the shares in BELCO. Some sort of figure where we can have a say, because we should have a say. Water, electricity, [and] housing is essential to any country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am also happy about this because I think Government should be requesting of any company, such as BELCO, will we continue to have Bermudians . . . will their jobs be protected? Will we have a Bermudian CO? We have one now. Will that continue in future? And training for Bermudians . . . the objective of BELCO . . . I am pretty sure, there are a high number of Bermudians out there and we need to keep that ratio of Bermudians there. Yes, granted, we always need some outside expertise. I do not have a problem with that. But the majority of the people should be Bermudian, Mr. Speaker.

So I think this is very good because BELCO is . . . the public, really, has financed BELCO in all the years that it has been there. And I say that because every time BELCO wanted to do a capital investment they came to the public. And most times they were granted a rate increase to pay for infrastructure. I do not have any shares in BELCO. Why should I be paying for the infrastructure and then I have still got to pay my bill? I do not . . . I do not benefit from that and, like most people in Bermuda, they do not benefit from that, but they have been the ones that have been paying for infrastructure at BELCO and I do not think that is right.

Now, if the Government was to acquire 30 per cent in the future, if that is the number we set, or any Government sets, in BELCO . . . because I think Government—any government, regardless of who the government is—should have a say in the decision-making of BELCO. I would like to know is this new company . . . are they going to put cables underground, particularly along the shorelines where when we have a blow or hurricane, those are the lights that normally go out first? I think some of those cables need to go underground so that if we are out of electricity that it would not be a long ordeal as it was, I think, in 2002 or 2004 when we had a hurricane. I know I was out for about 12 days.

So I think we can cut that number down, we probably can never stop it, because it is an expensive venture to put cable underground. But because it is

expensive it does not mean we should not do it. I think we need to do it.

So Mr. Speaker, again, I applaud the Minister for bringing this Bill because we need to have some control.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

No other . . . we recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 9. Honourable Member Moniz, you have the floor.

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

Well, that was an enlightening speech and certainly shows a slightly different policy than the one that the Minister has brought to the floor of the House. And I guess that is the concern that we have on this side, that there is not some political agenda with respect to this change in legislation.

It is always dangerous to have . . . you know, it is generally viewed as once a power has been given out to a quango to operate, you have given them instructions on how to do it, you have appointed the people that you want to run the thing, that you should have the faith and trust in them to do the job.

And when we see this . . . and it is sort of eleventh hour, I mean, I think people have known for years that they were trying to sell BELCO, at the latest by the beginning of 2018. And it seems to be now they have found a purchaser they are in the process of selling. Now at the eleventh hour, the Government is trying to shut the gate to the barn before the horse escapes.

So, you know, you wonder what . . . and fair enough, the Minister has gazetted directions, which is the appropriate way to go under the principal Act. But there is concern here for the consumers that this is going to be the best deal for the people of Bermuda as a whole. The Honourable Deputy Speaker was speaking to his own constituency—the unionised workers of BELCO. But there is a larger constituency which is what Bermudians are going to pay for their electricity.

And I know these issues are very difficult ones with energy because there are whole, huge groups of people out there with very aspirational plans. I have seen all sorts of public meetings putting forward plans that we should have, you know, all solar energy and wind farms out on Challenger Bank and being very aspirational. But those . . . in my view, when people have asked me, I am saying well those are longer term plans that as the technology matures, hopefully, Bermuda will be able to move in the direction of renewable energy. But you are not going to be able to do that all in one step and at one go. It is going to be a process over a period of time.

And you know, Government's responsibility is to run this in a smooth fashion so that BELCO is able

to modernise. And the interests that the Government should be looking at always . . . and I have no reason to doubt the Deputy Premier in this. He is looking at the interests of the people of Bermuda. That is first and foremost [thought] in his mind over anything else. And as long as it proceeds in that fashion we on this side will support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member . . . I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36. Honourable Member Scott.

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

Mr. Speaker, there seems to always in the Bermuda context to be this dichotomy. The role of a labour government—always—is to ensure that it is protecting the interests of the workers of the country. In the Bermuda context where the Progressive Labour Party was both conceived as a defender of workers and labour, and it was not the Government or the party that had control or ownership of the business sector or the banking sector of capital, what else does the Opposition which classically are the party, and when they are the Government, they are the Government of the banking sector, the retail sector. When Ministers who own these entities sit in this House and govern in the interests of those sectors, they distinguish themselves always from a labour government. And it is just normal.

I sometimes think that I am in a parallel universe when I hear the Honourable Members invite a labour party government to not do things such as we are doing today giving Ministerial, Government oversight of a labour party government, oversight of a national asset—its sale, its role in employing people, protecting people, protecting people from prices. I know that in discussions in my caucus we have had concerns that the share price that was at this premium share price compared with the price quoted on the stock of the BELCO share, and yet the sale being proposed for this yet unconsummated sale is going to be passed on. There should be . . . not only a Regulatory Authority will be alive to this risk, but certainly the Minister should be. And that is what a labour party government sets out to do.

So we should make no apology, nor can we adopt as the former Shadow Attorney General seems to have a concern that there is some political agenda. It is not political. It is just simple good practice. It is labour politics that the Minister has an important say and an important control over this sale, the transfer of a national asset.

And that is the way it is and we should . . . the cognitive dissonance that occurs in the House from that side of the House who generally support and are members of the business, and what we try to do, as the best we can as a party that has and that stands on principles of labour protection and labour rights with-

out having the power, yet, of being a party that owns capital in this country and can govern and drive policy into owned black capital, then this is what we are going to get. And we make no apology about it.

I recall that the Opposition Leader Mr. Cannonier in the previous debate, advocated very labour like and labour right policies that the Government should just nationalise and buy BELCO . . . just buy it. So that was a rare departure by the Member of the OBA who generally supports business and would be supporting this idea that is being promulgated by the Honourable and Learned Member Mr. Moniz, or the concern being expressed by the Deputy Opposition Leader, that there is lack of independence implicit in the role of a Minister having a completely significant say in compliance by any transferee of a national asset having compliance with ministerial directed terms and conditions.

And you know we really should be happy to see this. In all of the parts of the world where there are national assets of water or energy or telecommunications, this applies. And yet we . . . this is why I say this alternate universe I sometimes feel that I am living in. We read about it and hear about it on CNN all the time. We know how the American SEC regulates finance and how the American systems and the Canada systems and the European systems behave when there are these kinds of exercises.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: The regulators. Yes, that is—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Yes, well, and we have not forgotten how to mimic it by having a regulator. After all, we put the RA in place. But we add belt and braces with ministerial oversight. We did it with the Authority for Tourism and many of the others, for which we make no apology. We are . . . for which we make . . . and by the way, has anybody seen that the sky is falling as a consequence of these PLP policies?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Yes? No.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: You make light of it. But, you know, the parallel universe again . . .

The Honourable Member my colleague, Mr. Commissioning, has been driving liveable wage and just functioning in this country. French philosophers have been advocating and advising the world about the removal of capital by capitalists to themselves, just hauling it off, removing it and skimming it away from the 98 per cent, up to the 1 per cent it ends, and 98 per

cent of us do not participate in capital—this incredible dis-equality debate that goes on day in and day out in our world.

And I would hope that the Opposition is not over there advocating that we just continue to applaud these kinds of developments where we are trying to hold the tide back—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: —hold the tide back and ensure . . . frankly, we need to do more. We need to do more, but hold the tide back about these very grim, grim dis-equalities of wealth, of putting bread on the table and single mothers being able to cope with the cost of living in this country.

And so when it comes to the payment of energy . . . and, by the way, it is no different from the payment of all of these other, you know, roaming charges in the telecommunications industry. When it comes to belt and braces and ministerial oversight, I applaud the Minister. I applaud the provision at clause 3 of the Bill (I hope I have chosen it right) where the Minister has this oversight, notwithstanding the governance of introducing, Mr. Speaker, the normal practical governance of assigning a regulatory role to a transaction such as this one, which is a transfer of an energy enterprise in this country.

And let us not lose sight of the fact of the wider context. The wider context is that we are very much engaged in Bermuda, as we are across the world, in better distribution of fairness in wealth, making life easier for the average man, making costs of coping and surviving, just removing that as a survival enterprise into one where there is just fairness. But if we just open our hands widely and not have a tight governmental presence and regulatory presence—and so by extension governmental presence and regulation and control—then we are just going on with the status quo.

And so the provision very much rejects the continuation of the status quo as we seek, with all of the labour-like policies that the Government has been concerned with since 2017, to ensure . . . this is just typical and normalised labour policy in the context of the transfer of an important national asset.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Any further speakers?

I recognise the Opposition Whip. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

So I would just like to have a few words around how we are actually going to make the transition. The Regulatory Authority was established in 2016, so they are still getting themselves up on their

feet. I understand that the strength of the Regulatory Authority when it was established was more around telecommunications. And so, you know, the electricity—

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: The Honourable Member is, perhaps, not intentionally misleading the House. The Regulatory Authority has been in place since 2011. Its regulation of electricity began in 2016.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Thank you. Yes, accepted.

So the Regulatory Authority has had, you know, only a few years to get themselves up to speed, as far as the electricity industry is concerned. And as I know they have brought in some consultants to assist them—and I am segueing to the Integrated Resource Plans—I am aware that BELCO and BE Solar have both submitted IRPs. So there is probably a learning curve for the Regulatory Authority as they read through and process some of the ideas from these two particular reports that have been produced.

But they are, as I understand it (“they” being the Regulatory Authority), now going to have to create their own Integrated Resource Plan which will lay out what Bermuda would like to see in the future. And clearly, based on consultation . . . and certainly the conversation on the street is that renewable energy is definitely the long-term goal and the general direction in which we would like our energy to go in the future.

But putting that vision aside for a moment, the reality is that we have got an ageing power station that has just brought in a number of engines to the Island that are diesel and/or can be used for LNG. So no matter what we do, we are stuck with a transition from a very traditional model to a very futuristic model around renewable energy.

So now whether it is the Regulatory Authority that is going to have to decipher through this, or whether it is the Minister who is basically going to have to take the lead on this, we are going to have to find a company who may be willing to come in and purchase BELCO and be able to make that transition.

And it is not going to be an easy one. And I do not honestly know whether we have got the expertise on Island to help us to make that transition on our own. So we are going to probably have to depend on the purchaser of BELCO to help us to make that transition. So I guess my concern is that we may come up with an Integrated Resource Plan that may not be best suited for, you know, the sort of reality of the

Bermuda infrastructure. And with that, I have read a comment that said, *Yes, we may have to write a few Integrated Resource Plans before we get to exactly where it is we are going*, and that is understood. But I guess I just do not want Bermuda to get stuck in a situation where we are dismissing the potential purchasers of BELCO because we do not see a clear line of sight to our long-term vision, not realising that there may be steps in between there where we are going to have to compromise on the generation of our electricity until we can get to the renewable energy.

So that would be something concerning, and I hope that the Government keeps us informed, and the Regulatory Authority keeps us informed of those kinds of transitions.

The other side of it is the labour, the staffing. Certainly, the Member who spoke before me was passionate about the labour force, in particular, at our electric utility. And my other piece of the long-term vision is, How are we going to transition those engineers who are maintaining and taking control of our diesel engines, who may be quite well-versed in the new engines that have arrived in Bermuda, but may not have the training and the exposure to some of the renewable energies? And what is the Government going to do to protect that, if that is what they want to do? If they want to take the existing BELCO model and change it into renewable energies. And how are they really going to set out a plan to protect the workforce who are knowledgeable in the traditional energy generation that we have presently at BELCO into expert and skilled practitioners in renewable energies?

So that is going to be something of a challenge for the Minister to be able to carry out in tandem with the implementation or the acceptance of an external company to purchase BELCO and develop, hopefully, and conform to renewable energies at some point, but that also the labour force is going to be supported in also making that transition.

So there is a huge challenge ahead. I believe that all hands need to be on deck for this because it is our life source. I mean, everything. If I say it to the . . . you know, we cannot have Internet without the electricity, so this is really, really our lifeblood on the Island. And so we have to tread carefully and make sure that whatever is decided, whatever the Minister approves, whatever company the Minister approves to be brought into Bermuda, that we will maintain reliability and that we will make a smooth transition from a very traditional model to renewable energies.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Members.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 21. Honourable Member Commissiong, you have the floor.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that everything has to be on the table right now. I mean, we just had a previous discussion, without debate, and I do not want to get into any reflection here. But across so many areas of Bermuda's life, Bermudian life, and our economy, we are at an inflection point. And no less in the area of energy generation.

So, you know, we are currently . . . we have been served by a post-World War II model with respect to that and BELCO, and it is certainly . . . it is not sustainable. I mean, I heard my honoured and learned colleague from [constituency] 36. He made reference to the living wage. But the reality is, and I am going to be quite honest to not only the colleagues here but to the persons listening, we are not going to be as successful as we need to be with respect to the implementation of the living wage unless there are other public policy reforms that are going to be implemented in tandem with that.

And we had the discussion around this when we had our committee. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, she is fully aware of wherever I am going. So along with that we need a reduction in the cost of health care. We need a reduction in the cost of energy, which also has to be an integral piece of any potential reform and prospective sale of BELCO. It has to deliver—has to deliver—that benefit primarily to the Bermudian people and consumers, but also to Bermudian businesses, because the cost of energy is one of the most major headwinds hurting our competitiveness.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: And finally, getting back to the living wage piece, we need tax reform in this country. It has to be part of the whole suite of public policy reforms that we must address now.

Now more specifically in terms of BELCO, I heard my colleague, the Member from constituency 5, the Deputy Speaker. He brought up the issue of nationalisation and of course I know that within the PLP, particularly going back into the late 1960s and early 1970s, along with mainstream parties in the developed world, that was not a taboo subject. I am not at a point now where I am advocating that the Government should own all of BELCO, but let us put this in perspective. In many developed countries you have state ownership of significant private sector holdings.

So, if I may, Mr. Speaker, for example in Germany, the German government owns Deutsche Bahn which is the largest private rail network in Europe. They also have Hapag-Lloyd which is a name familiar with us, a major shipping (is it shipping containers?) and shipping-related matters. They own 23.2 per cent of that. The German government owns 12 per cent of Airbus, 15.6 per cent of Commerzbank, 12.7 per cent of Volkswagen Group, 14.5 per cent of

Deutsche Telekom, and T-Mobile, they had 17.4 per cent of that.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: That is in Germany.

In France, there are also significant holdings of private companies. They are managed under a particular group on behalf of the French government. The organisation is called *Agence des participations de l'État* and they control the ownership of the French stake holding in a number of private companies including the airports of Paris, Air France-KLM, Dexia, EDF, Angele, Orange, Orano, Renault (which has been in the news of late), and it goes on and on and on. So we should not view this as being something taboo that is not within the mainstream of western political economy and it is not new whatsoever.

Now, is it too late for us to contemplate having, not 100 per cent ownership of BELCO, talking about Government, but even a 10 [per cent] or 15 per cent stake? I also may add in both the German and French models they also, in addition to having ownership stakes of these companies, minority ownership stakes, they usually have board participation as well; maybe one, maybe two persons on the various corporate boards. That is something we need to think of. Like I said, nothing should be off the table here because we are at that point now in Bermuda's development.

With respect to sustainable development, more so reducing our carbon footprint, I had a conversation only recently with the Minister of Transport and we talked about moving the needle when it came to electric buses, for example. And I would go further and say not only electrification of our bus fleet in terms of power generation, but of course the public fleet in general, the government vehicles, for example. We need to start setting hard targets and moving toward that. One of the ways that it is going to be doable and sustainable is getting back to the issue of reducing the cost of electricity in Bermuda.

So I think that this is coming at the opportune time to lay down a marker. I think it is important that we have our Government having a critical role to play even at this late hour with respect to the pending sale of BELCO to ensure that Bermuda's interest is going to be looked after and to ensure that those things that we are going to need the new owners to agree to are going to be on the table and are going to be those that are going to be in the best interest of Bermuda, not just in terms of the workers of BELCO, but Bermuda more broadly at this juncture of our development.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member . . .

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 22. Honourable Member Pearman, you have the floor.

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

We have had a little wander today. We are supposed to be talking about the Electricity Amendment Act. We have heard about tax reform and living wage. And I suppose if they are allowed to take these slight detours, you might permit me a quick one as well.

The Speaker: It depends.

Mr. Scott Pearman: My learned and honourable friend from constituency 36 referred to what is being done as, *holding the tide back*.

Now that is a reference to King Cnut: King Cnut who was a Scandinavian king, who ruled most of Scandinavia and Britain. And in around 1027, King Cnut went down to the coronation of the Holy Roman Empire. And at the end of his life he sat in his throne on the sand by the shore as the tide was calling in and he held his hand out to stop the tide and the tide did not stop.

Now that story is often told as an example of arrogance, because King Cnut was a powerful man. And people often misinterpret and miss-tell the story as being about someone who believed he could stop the tide. And that is not in fact what the story was about and that is not why he did what he did. Yes, he was wielding power, but by sitting in his throne by the tide on the sand, and by failing to stop the tide, he was to let all men know how empty and worthless is the power of kings.

And why do I say this? Because this Bill, forgive the pun, is about power as well, both kinds, BELCO, but also ministerial power. And it is interesting again to pick up on from my friend from constituency 36, because when backed into a corner he started to speak about how normal this was. Of course it is normal. Look at the United States. Look at the FCC, he said. Yes, look at the United States, look at the FCC. Look at the *regulator* in the United States; because these are independent bodies that are sensibly created. Indeed, as the Deputy Premier said earlier, I believe the Regulatory Authority was created in 2011. They are created to remain independent of government to ensure and to protect against the misuse of government power.

And this is the problem we face. We have seen a casino commission, a gaming commission that was set up to be independent of Government, and yet the Government wades in. Now we have no casinos; no bank in the US that is willing to transact because of the Minister's involvement. We have seen an independent Bermuda Tourism Authority, and yet again the Minister wades in.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I am hesitant to take this point of order because the Honourable and Learned Member is actually talking about a point that is irrelevant to this Bill. But that is not why I raised my point of order.

It is that the assertion that due to Ministerial influence is why we do not have corresponding banks here in our gaming or our proposed gaming industry is false. And I think that it has been very clear by the path that we have taken with gaming in that this has to do with issues of the banking relations in, like, Bermuda and the hesitancy of the corresponding banks that we deal with in North America and elsewhere to approve such relationships, not to do with any governmental influence.

But that is really an irrelevant point to the Act we are dealing with, but I felt it important to raise because it was an accusation that was false made by the Honourable and Learned Member.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Speaker, as to the point of order, the reason that we do not have correspondent banks prepared to bank the assets of gaming from Bermuda, were there to be any, is because of the legislative change by this Government to put in Ministerial interference.

I stand by that statement. I have repeated it. I have been careful in what I have said.

If the Deputy Premier does not appreciate that, then I would suggest he speaks to correspondent banks about their concerns about potential for corruption in the gaming industry, and he might learn a thing or two.

The Bill seeks to assert the clunking fist of Government over an independent regulator. The parallel with the casino and the gaming industry in Bermuda and the independent commission is appropriate and apt, and I stand by it. The parallel with the Bermuda Tourism Authority and ministerial interference is appropriate and apt, and I stand by it. Unfortunately, and I will go to the Bill, we now learn that if under clause 2 [new section 4](5) the Authority, the Independent Regulatory Authority, intends to give consent to something, quote, if I may, Mr. Speaker? "it shall first consult the Minister and obtain his approval."

If that is not a King Cnut assertion of power, I do not know what is.

It would be far better if we let independent institutions remain independent and do the role that they are supposed to do without Government sticking its nose in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise Honourable Member Swan from constituency—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Members!

We recognise the Honourable Member Swan from constituency 2.

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

The Electricity Amendment Act is all but one page, but speaks to some very significant matters pertaining to legacy in Bermuda.

I have listened, and the Member that just spoke mentioned, “ministerial power,” “misuse of Government power,” and said it very forcefully. And it is a repetition of what I spoke of to earlier today about a narrative. Those were his words.

But let us talk about ministerial, governmental misuse of power. If you went to BELCO today and googled “BELCO history,” it will come up as thus: “Not available,” “Page not found.” Why would that be so? Who would have owned BELCO in 1904? Who would have been the shareholders of BELCO in 1969? In 1950? Their names might be associated with persons who sit in this very House, who sat in that very seat that the Speaker sits in, who sit in the very seat across where the Honourable Deputy Leader sits in, that might even have the same name as the Honourable Member that just spoke. I am just saying.

When you talk about misuse of power, the way in which misuse of power that allowed the BELCOs, the legacy establishments of this country to exist, that is the travesty.

And let me talk about for ever so briefly about veto power, okay? We have experienced veto power that . . . I support independence for Bermuda, okay? I supported and stood at the polls in 1995 in support of it, and I will do it again. But we see veto power as it is exercised in Bermuda. We had the Progressive Labour Party have a Bill pass with the cooperation of the then Government Member be vetoed in this very country. And the very Governor of this country has veto power every day in this country. But that is okay. But when a Government elected by 59 per cent of the people of this country comes forward with legislation, the Opposition, in conjunction with the Governor, has veto power that no one wants to talk about in that appointed Members can veto. And that is real. And it is tied to a constitutional construct which speaks to our historical construct. And that is the reality of Bermuda.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I mean, you had the very Opposition Leader, not too long ago, in this very House make statements. And I read from the Hansard. These are the words of Mr. Cannonier, you

know it says, “³Mr. Speaker, BELCO is being sold outright. Outright! The public . . . we are hearing from the public the same thing. I mean, certainly, one of the opportunities is that this Government could nationalise BELCO.”

Those are the words from the very Opposition Leader of the Government today.

And what we need to hear is what his position is on it. I am quite happy for him to do so. But let us not, you know . . . when it comes to the Progressive Labour Party wanting to put forward legislation, you know, the code words and the code languages are constantly coming forward, [like] *mis-Ministerial power* and *misuse of Government power*, when the very Government of the day can be vetoed on any legislation by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office through the Governor.

But that is okay for persons who are quite comfortable with the legacy arrangement that has been handed down to them by their forefathers. I do not accept that. It is wrong. And any right-thinking person would know that it is wrong because the playing field is tilted in one direction to favour those who inherited the legacy. It is tilted in that way. And it is as clear as clear can be. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? When you look at the way in which BELCO went down, it was not that clean cut . . . it was not. And questions certainly need to be asked.

And let us look at other jurisdictions throughout the world. People like to talk about the FCC and other places like that, you know. Persons in high authority in other jurisdictions also have veto power. But it is okay; it is *them*. And I would say that as we start looking at these legacy establishments that run rampant in Bermuda, as we look at the unlevel playing field that the Progressive Labour Party Government is prepared to address, let us not forget that there are persons who benefit from this system, who would fight tooth and nail to keep it in play, because truth be known, with that type of money and power that comes with it, they do not need a government to be able to do whatever they want in an environment. That is the truth.

And so when the Government . . . and let me say this, because I am getting sick and tired of these code words, you know, *misuse of Government power*, and so forth. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, since 1998 some of the most progressive, fair-minded legislation has come from the Progressive Labour Party? I mean, you know, we talk about ministerial misuse of power. You know, when we saw we had an airport where we had an organisation, we had a group of concerned people in Bermuda that got a PATI request that revealed some of the skulduggery going on behind the scenes. But that is okay. And that is the type of thing that is okay for them to do and support.

³ [Official Hansard Report](#), 7 June 2019, page 1837

And you know what? When I googled BELCO history . . . I would invite every young scholar out there to research that history. There is an old saying, in audit . . . you know, *follow the money*. Follow the money from 1904. Follow it to today, and you will see where that trail leads and you will know where the howls come, when it comes to what it is going to do for . . . and when a Government is looking at ways to make the playing field level. You will hear the howls.

And you know what? Mr. Speaker, the less informed and respectfully ignorant may not even see it happening under their very eyes, and they might see the opposite. Well, I am here to tell them, Mr. Speaker, that there is a lot more than just this Electricity Amendment Act that needs to be looked at when you talk about this scenario.

As I have often said, business people, if they could find a way to charge me for the air, they would do it. And they would find a way to get somebody to regulate it too. We cannot move in this world without energy. But yet we are seeing things that happen with us in major, major areas being farmed out. And if a Government sees that this is not in the best interest of the collective all, rather than the shareholder few, where can it express its concern? Where can it, you tell me, and how should it?

But it is okay for the Governor to set up on that Hill every three years being recycled over to come here and have veto power over us, but we are not good enough to have that type of oversight over ourselves. Something is wrong with that picture, too, very wrong.

I am here to tell you that it is very wrong. And the reason why you would hear the howls because if you were to examine that history and that financial connection to those legacy institutions, you will see where it is coming from—through persons not interested in this country being level because it does not benefit them. And that is the unfortunate tragedy, because it is so much good for us all as people if they would embrace that.

And I am here to say that this Government is introducing this mechanism with good intentions and I would argue that for anybody to say, you know, that this Bill is associated with misuse of Government power is imputing improper motives on my Deputy Leader. And I do not accept that. I do not at all, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you are probably far better than me. This whole scenario as it relates to this energy thing . . . I am just a country boy, so I will just quote a little quote from *Glory*, a movie that I have seen over and over again, Denzel Washington. *Colonel, it stinks. It stinks real bad.*

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

We now recognise the Leader to the Opposition, Honourable Member.

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

I take to heart the comments by the previous Member, from constituency 2, towards BELCO. I think as I look back on some of the discussions that we have had concerning BELCO, I am sure that we are all aware of the history of BELCO. We continue to hear it repeated over and over. But here and right now, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to be very clear about who works over there right now. If there was a poster child company when it comes to hiring Bermudians and promoting Bermudians, it would be BELCO. I must declare my interest.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: My eldest daughter who grew up, and we are talking about coming from labour roots, is now an attorney with BELCO, and so—

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order. I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I know that the Opposition Leader is not intentionally misleading the House, but I felt that I had to because I think he is inadvertently misleading the House.

In recent months, the amount of BELCO employees that have stopped me because of displacement is a major concern. I just had to put that out there because the Opposition Leader was making a reference that would have negated that very reality.

The Speaker: Okay. All right. Member, you had a little latitude there.

But . . . Opposition Leader, continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

So, I will go back to my point and that is BELCO has come a long way. Is it where we want it to be? Certainly not. That is why we are here today continuing to discuss how we improve things as far as this utility is concerned in Bermuda. But there is no doubt whatsoever that those who are at BELCO and continue to be employed at BELCO have realised the benefits of many, from labour and business, who stood by the fact that we needed equality, that we needed fair benefits concerning Bermudians who were working there. And so, as we fast forward to today, yes, I am sure that there are concerns still there. But when I look at BELCO, it is one of the few companies that we can truly say looks out for Bermudians.

When I look at the shareholdings of BELCO, I also understand that Bermudians own 70 per cent of those shares. The breakdown of that, I do not know.

And you know, I am hearing that the breakdown though, that 70 per cent, has been there for a while. I checked the history of it. And so, they are not cashing out right now. With the potential buy of this BELCO, they should be buying shares right now, so I do not know what you are talking about.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I have listened very carefully. And I wanted to be fair with my comments concerning this here. The real concern really is, if we are putting in regulatory authorities, if we are putting in bodies, and if you think about this particular regulatory body that [we have] right now for energy, we have a former person from BELCO who is now the Chair of this body. And so, this person was appointed by the Government. So, some of the . . . I guess, a fair question is okay, well, if you appointed the Chair, if you appoint—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: He was a former . . . I am talking about he is the Chair—

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, okay.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Minister.

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I think again, I do not believe the Opposition is purposely misleading the House or the public, but I think it is important to understand that the Government does not appoint the CEO of the Regulatory Authority.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes. Mm-hmm.

The Speaker: Is your microphone on?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: The CEO is employed by the commission.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: The commission is appointed by a panel. This is all in the legislation, so any Member of the Legislature can look at it. A panel which includes the Minister responsible, the Attorney General, and the Leader of the Opposition, and in the last

appointment the former Leader of the Opposition was a part of that panel.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: So, the Government does not impose any leadership on the Regulatory Authority, because that is essentially what the Opposition Leader said. But I do not believe he was intentional in saying that.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Fair comment. Yes, Mr. Speaker, fair comment.

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I do accept that.

The point that I am getting to is [that] the normal concern would be, okay then, if we have a regulatory body that is in place, that we are trusting in, it is a body that, again, is well vetted to ensure that we get good people within that particular area of expertise, then the question is, Why do we then need ministerial oversight over this?

Do we not have faith in our judicial system, because the recourse before this Bill is passed is if the Government finds that they are not in agreement with it, then they can take it to court and then a fair trial would be had concerning the issues. We are now averting that process, which is why we have a judicial body put in place. And now what we are saying is that if the Minister feels that, you know, he does not like the way that it is going, then he or she can intervene.

Now, I understand that, but my concern would be that with the changing of Governments back and forth, where is the consistency then going to be in this? The whole purpose of the regulatory body is to create consistency there. So, I get the concerns, why many of my Members on this side are asking the questions.

And then there was this reference to me getting up and saying that, Well, go ahead and nationalise it. And listen, if we cannot then as legislators up here, the PLP as Government and the OBA as an Opposition [can] encourage our people, it is a publicly traded company to buy shares in this, I mean, I am sure you have watched enough television shows. If you do not like who owns the majority of shares, then get a bunch of people together and buy them out! Go get a bunch of people together and buy the remainder of shares in BELCO and benefit from it.

So, when I hear that, you know, well, Government might have 30 per cent share of it or this kind of a thing, well, listen, nationalise it! Yes! I have got to think it through a little more, but nationalise it! That way, guess what? Everybody in Bermuda owns it. Blacks own it, whites own it, everybody owns a stake in this utility.

And I will give it some more thought, and maybe I will flesh it out in a motion to adjourn at some point in time. But, certainly, that is an option that is on the table! It certainly is! And that is why before when I said, Well, hold on a second, I kind of felt like, Well, hold on a second. We are going to sell out to a Canadian, a foreign private company who invariably is so-called 'white,' but then we are going to complain about the white Bermudians in Bermuda. And I am saying to myself logically, Well, what, we prefer a white Canadian over a white Bermudian? So, let's sit down and discuss this thing! That is what people are saying on the street.

And I am walking every day in town, around town, and I am listening to these comments coming back, which is why I am saying what I am saying. So bad! We do not want a private company, we are going to have difficulty trying to control it . . . nationalise it then!

Let's see if we can manage a utility like this here. It is not beyond us. I believe that we have already shown that we have got Bermudians who can lead. We have seen many Bermudians leading out at BELCO. So, this is an option that is on the table. But what is concerning is that we kind of have this whether it is the OBA . . . sorry, or I should say the Government and whether it is the Government of today or whether it is the OBA as the Government, the public is basically saying, *Well, hold on a second. I am not sure I want a Minister having full control like this here.* And that just goes toward people's opinions of politicians, period!

That is just the way that it is. And that is why I was making the suggestion, Oh, okay, fine, we can remove this whole issue, we are going back into the history and this and that, let everybody own it. Sure, I am putting it on the table. That is a serious option that is available to us.

But we cannot be casting one sector of Bermuda saying, Well, we don't want them involved. Listen, man! I am encouraging you, Bermuda. Buy some shares in BELCO. You saw what the price is going to be if these people buy it. Buy some shares, Bermuda! I mean, my granny, good old Labour Granny Ethel, I mean, my goodness, she had shares in Stevedoring Services! When she passed away, that is when we found out about it. She was exercising her right. I wish she would have told the rest of us about it.

But my point is that we have an opportunity and rather than going down the road and just trying to paint, you know, almost in a blanket statement white people as being the bad and benefiting from the old, well, here and now, right now, let's get some black people involved. You know? And it is almost as if we do not have black business owners today. This House of Assembly is full of them. And so, when we start talking about business, we just automatically refer to business as being white. Well, we have come a long

way! Blacks own businesses and are trying to thrive just like everyone else.

And so, I am hoping that as we move forward, certainly, we understand and we recognise where this Bill sits. It will be encouraging that we, as an Opposition, and this Government will continue to exercise the right to speak to our Bermudians about their options that are available out there, but there are options.

And so, my concern—I go back to my concern—is that, you know, with Governments potentially changing back and forth we could see some irregularities. We basically want to see consistency in this area. And so, I am hoping that if this Bill and understanding that this Bill will go through that we are going to see the consistency that is necessary and needed for Bermudians to thrive. And I recognise that we are going to be looking at this potential sale with this company that they will be looking out for Bermudians, but I also recognise that BELCO as of today got some great Bermudians over there. Great, great Bermudians.

And so, I applaud this Government for saying that they are going to be looking out for Bermudians, but by no means make the mistake to think that the OBA is not concerned about every single one of those members who work for BELCO who bring us power on a daily basis. And when hurricanes hit, they are probably one of the best or *the best* in the world at restoring us back to normalcy, which has been the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Minister?
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, my contribution on this Bill will be brief. And the reason why I think that it is important to speak on this is because it is a national issue.

I am grateful for the Honourable Member for constituency 2 who reminded the Opposition Leader of his comments a while ago, because . . . or two weeks ago, because I would have thought on such a seminal issue of a power company that the only time we would have heard of such a bold declaration and statement from the Leader of the Opposition or Leader of the One Bermuda Alliance, the only time that we would hear it would not be just during motion to adjourn, but it would have been something that would have been pronounced. And instead of *fleshing out a plan* and saying *he might give it some thought in a future motion to adjourn*, that when he was speaking on a particular issue he might have actually been thinking about what he was saying before it was actually said.

But it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, because at the same point in time that the Opposition says that they do not want ministerial interference, yet they want the Government to buy the power company. It is a very

interesting dichotomy there. So, he says to nationalise the power company, and nationalising a power company is what governments do, they buy things—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Premier is inadvertently misleading the public and this House.

I did say that it was an *option*. I was not saying that this is what I am solely promoting, but that it was an *option* that we should be looking at.

The Speaker: Continue.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, leadership requires you to make a decision. It does not allow you to just go ahead and . . . well, if that is what you want to do in the Opposition, then go ahead, if you want to give the people of this country non-clarity insofar as the direction in which you are going. Because you cannot say that you are going to take private property by nationalising and then without actually saying that this is the policy—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Premier is inadvertently misleading the public once again.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I did give an explanation as to why I thought it was potentially a good reason.

The Speaker: Premier?

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

I will go back to the comments, because when we talk about the options, we have to make sure that we are very clear. And I think I made this clear before and this is the reason why I am happy that the Honourable Member took to his feet to try to explain his particular position.

And the only thing that I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that if the option which he suggests is the

option which should go forward, then the question is how exactly does that happen? And the only way that actually happens is an amendment to the Electricity Act, which is what we are doing today.

Now, just to be clear, Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that it is the policy of this Government to take private property.

An Hon. Member: Ooh! Ooh!

Hon. E. David Burt: I am not. No, I am not. That is your place, because I am not.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: No, no. I am not saying that it is the policy of this Government to take private property.

But what I think, Mr. Speaker, which is interesting, is the fact that we see once again the Opposition at war with itself.

We have seen it time, and time, and time again today, Mr. Speaker. And the only thing I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that the people of this country deserve clarity when it comes to the major issues of the day. The Government has been clear on this particular issue. The Government has been clear on where it stands. The Government has been clear insofar as the brief that was given by the Deputy Premier, the approach that is going to be taken in the review of any sale, and to make sure that the ultimate political responsibility lies with a Minister who has accountability to this House who was elected.

That, Mr. Speaker, is what responsible Governments do. Think through the policy, make sure that you understand what it is and the approach which you are taking and acting responsibly.

And the one thing I would say with the Opposition Leader is that probably the best place to come up with national policy is not during motion to adjourn, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Minister?

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

I must say, I did not realise this debate would cultivate such strong, I guess, submissions from a variety of, and perhaps I am just being slightly facetious, because perhaps I knew it would. Because clearly the sale or the anticipated sale, I should say, because there is no confirmation of sale of the company. There has been an announcement of an intended sale which has to go through a number of processes before it actually is approved, which is why we are here today, to frame that process in a way that will be in the best public interest.

And so, a number of interesting submissions were made today by a number of Members. And cer-

tainly it seemed to be that the chief submission by the Opposition by its spokesperson was a concern about the fact that the legislation being proposed today takes away some of the independence, if I can frame the work of the regulator. And as I think is understood that the Regulatory Authority is a body that regulates electricity and telecommunications in the country. And it is their responsibility and they operate as an independent body in the oversight of those respective industries. And there is specific legislation obviously around that. There is the general legislation of the Regulatory Authority, and then there is the sectoral legislation.

Now, the sectoral legislation of discussion today is the Electricity Act 2016. But there is also the Electronic Communications Act, which is the sectoral legislation that oversees the telecommunications industry. And what is very interesting, and this is dealing with one of the questions raised by the Opposition, it appears as if the Government is going far and inserting itself into the decision making of the Regulatory Authority in a way that is not appropriate.

Well, we are here amending a particular section of the Electricity Act 2016, but I would implore Members to go and look at the Electronic Communications Act 2011, which was passed at the same time as the Regulatory [Authority] Act of 2011, and there is a section 18 [in the Electronic Communications Act 2011] which has to do with integrated communications operating licences. And in that section, if you will allow me to read, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Continue.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: [Section] 18(6) of that piece of legislation says this: “An ICOL shall not be transferred or assigned, and may be terminated by the Authority in the event of any such transfer or assignment or if there is a change of control over the licensed entity unless the transfer, assignment or change of control is authorised in advance, in writing, by the Authority acting with the written consent of the Minister.”

That has been in place since 2011. In the corresponding Act, the sectoral legislation, which is the Electricity Act . . . the Electricity Act was absent of that particular provision. So, the change we are making today mirrors the Electricity, the—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order. We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

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

The Minister is comparing the Communications Act with the Electricity Act in terms of the fact

that one may have and the other one may not have a particular clause. But you are talking about two completely separate industries, in which the Communications Act, there were several communications companies involved. In the Electricity Act there is one major provider of electricity.

So, notwithstanding that the wording in the legislation may be different, underneath the Regulatory Authority, you cannot compare . . . it is like comparing apples with oranges.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Minister?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: May I resume, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Minister, continue.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Sectoral legislation for the telecommunications industry, sectoral legislation for the electricity industry, overseen by the Regulatory Act. They play the same role for the two respective industries.

That is the only real substance here that is essential, and the clause which has already been in place since 2011, and certainly a former Government, if they were so aggrieved, could have made the change themselves if they thought there was too much ministerial oversight there to reflect what was in, you know, or to reflect in another way.

My only point is that the changes we are making with the Act that we are discussing today mirrors exactly the same power which exists in the area of telecommunications for the Minister. So, there is not an overreach here.

But I do appreciate the concern of Members, because these are sensitive issues. The question of what happens with the only licensed utility in a country that is the transmitter, distributor and retailer of electricity is a key factor in what happens with the country, which is the very reason that we are bringing this amendment today.

And there are certainly things happening within the scope of that industry that merit the Government having a more special attention to what happens. We do not have a country that has multiple utilities. Now, there are other bulk providers of electricity such as the Government itself—is a bulk provider of electricity. In the future, there will be another bulk provider of electricity, i.e., the Solar Finger, which will be operated on government land and is a government-sanctioned project. But there is only one real key player, and that is Ascendant, which owns BELCO.

That makes BELCO, as I outlined in my Statement, a strategic asset in the eyes of this Government, and for the reasons I stated in my Statement. And it is felt as we are in this process with certainly as my change . . . as a change proposed in the Bill talks about the Integrated Resource Plan, which is

going to play a role with shaping the future direction of how we shape our energy infrastructure and platform for years to come, it is important that for all the reasons that we have stated already that the Government have an important say in the protection of the public interest. And that is key to what we are doing here. We are acting in a way that we believe will best protect the public interest.

And might I also say that there was some commentary by Members about the role of the regulator as somehow this check on government power. Well, that may be just one of the roles regulators play, Mr. Speaker. A regulator also plays, and perhaps if Members took time to read the legislation around our regulatory framework, they would also know that there is—and I stated it as well—there is a mandate to protect the public interest.

And I can say as having had some involvement with the formulation of the legislation that would become the Regulatory Act and the ECA Act and back in the late—

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: —from 2009 to 2012, that these acts were chiefly, particularly the Regulatory Act, was to ensure that the public interest will be protected, that there was a regulator that would play somewhat of an arbiter between private interests and public interests. That is one of the key reasons that the Regulatory Authority was created, not just to check on Government power, because that is already . . . and that check is built into the legislation with the processes of appointment with how it operates and how it engages with the Government.

No different from the Acts that govern the Bermuda Monetary Authority. Right? But here we are. And we are facing . . . and interestingly enough, it seems as if sometimes Members' memory get short, because it is not like we have not had a history of where major private assets in the country were being . . . where ownership was being transferred or a licence to actually operate has not been the subject of legislative oversight.

We have seen it in the banking industry here. There was a time when charters had to be approved by the Legislature, and the change of ownership of a charter was the subject of legislative debate. We saw in 2004 with the change of ownership of Bank of Bermuda to HSBC, there was a Government involvement in that. We have seen when a certain bank came into crisis. The Government was asked to get involved and assert itself in the issues around the future of a certain financial entity. And it was asked to provide support for that. I am talking about Bermuda. I could go to other countries and talk about this.

So, I think Members need to, in a wider context, understand how things often have to work when you are confronted with unique situations that may

have a broader impact on the country that sometimes the Government is asked, or if it is in the public interest for the Government to be involved. It happened with HSBC, it happened with Bank of Butterfield, and it has happened where this Legislature was—and perhaps the legislation was different at that time—but it was involved with the transfer of ownership of bank charters, and was required to opine on the change in transfer and control of that instrument which gives a person a licence to operate a bank in the country.

And if we even just jump to some other countries . . . very recently, I know the mention of the company Renault, a major car company in Europe, and the sale, or a possible sale, of that company, which was suspended because of certain political considerations in France. We have seen with a company that is not too far from the Bermuda experience, which is Aecon—the proposed sale of Aecon to a private entity which perhaps has some connection with the Chinese government was the subject of a private interest and a private proposal for sale. It is well known that because of perhaps some concerns by the Canadian government that sale never went through.

So, let us move this veil off that somehow there is some suspicion about legislative or Government power having some . . . perhaps in the wider public interest, being involved with the transfer of private entities, particularly if those private entities have a wider economic or social significance to the jurisdiction. We have seen it with ports in the United States, proposed sale of ports to foreign entities where the US government basically has a say. And because of the strategic nature of those types of sales and how ports operate, and the proposed sale of certain other assets in the United States, the government has said no, not just regulatory approval, but the actual central governments.

So, let us put all that into context. So, I know there was this talk of ministerial overreach of power and so on. But let us be clear. What we have outlined today is an amendment that will ensure that before the Integrated Resource Plan is published and finalised, that the sale will not go through. It must be subject to that, because the law actually contemplates that the utility and the industry will be subject to that particular Integrated Resource Plan.

So, it is to ensure that this happens, and there will be no question legally that a future possible owner of the utility will now understand that its operation will be subject to the IRP.

Now, there were some other issues that came up in the submissions by Members which I do not want to comment on here, because they pertain particularly to the process of the proposed sale. And I do not want to comment on the merits of the proposed buyer. I do not think that is appropriate, because if we are as Members seen to want to ensure that if we are governed by a regulatory process, the House should also respect that

I do not think this is appropriate because if, as Members seem to want to ensure, we are governed by a regulatory process, the House should also respect that as well. And that process is subject to regulatory approval, not only by the regulatory authority of the day . . . let's just roll that clock back. We have the BMA, we have the Ministry of Finance, we have the Registrar of Companies all playing a role with whatever transfer and control may happen, and playing a role with the scrutiny of that proposed sale long before it may even get to the Minister . . . it does get to the Minister if this particular Bill is [passed].

So there is a long process here, and I do not believe it is appropriate for the Minister, being myself, in this Legislature, to make any comment about what may or may [not] happen. But I do believe that I can assure the House that those matters will be the subject of scrutiny of the proposed sale. We will be looking to make sure that the public interest . . . and you can paint that as wide as you wish it to be.

And Members in this House today have spoken widely about what that is, what they believe the public interest is. All of that will be a part of the scope that will be considered. But the legislative scope of the power of the Minister in this, if there was concern of this, is defined by the Electricity Act, section 6. It is outlined in the directions of which under section 8, the Minister can give, and those directions are on the public record.

They are not secret. They are not . . . anyone, any member of the public, any Member of this House, can read those directions and ensure that those directions are followed. And they are the reference and scope upon which the Minister will make the decision about the merits of the sale at that period of time.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I would like to now move that the Bill be committed.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
We will go to Committee.
Deputy?

House in Committee at 6:02 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Chairman: Honourable Members, we are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled the [Electricity Amendment Act 2019](#).

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Bill seeks to amend the Electricity Act 2016 to expand the requirements for

granting consent to the transfer or assignment of licences.

Clause 1 is self-explanatory.

The Chairman: You want to move—

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I'm sorry.

The Chairman: —clauses 1 and 2?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I would like to move all clauses, if that is agreeable to the Opposition.

The Chairman: How many, two?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, there are only two.

The Chairman: Yes. Continue.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Uh-huh.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: If the Opposition, of course, is agreeable to that.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I am not going to answer that interpolation, Mr. Chairman, I will [keep] my focus on you.

The Chairman: Yes.

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Clause 1 is self-explanatory.

Clause 2 amends section 30 of the Act. A new subsection (4) provides that the Authority's consent shall not be given unless an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) has been approved under section 44(2) and published under section 45 of the Act and that due regard is had to the IRP when the Authority makes its decision whether or not to give consent. A new subsection (5) requires the Authority to consult the Minister and obtain his approval before it consents to the transfer or assignment of the TD&R Licence (Transmission, Distribution and Retail) or a Bulk Generation Licence. A new subsection (6) provides that the Minister may refuse his approval, but only if he is satisfied that the Authority's intended consent to the transfer or assignment is not in accordance with the Minister's directions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Deputy.

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin. Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, in respect of clause 2, I am just . . . this is clause 2 [amended section 30](4)(a), with respect to the integrated plan, does the Minister have indication as to when the IRP, the Integrated Resource Plan, is likely to be approved and gazetted, or published as it says. Is there any indication? Is it in train? Is it not yet being done? Do we have any idea in that respect?

The Chairman: Minister, you want to answer that?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, I am happy to give some clarity to the House on that question. I am going to say a little bit more than I have to, only because I believe it is of public interest about the IRP. The IRP process started in October of 2017 and that process has been ongoing, but the expectation is that this summer the IRP will be published and made available to the public for public consideration. And I am talking about before the end of the summer.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
Ms. Gordon-Pamplin?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, just one other.

In terms of the Ministerial approval, according to clause 2, where it says, "[(6)]The Minister may refuse to give his approval under subsection (5), but only if he is satisfied that the Authority's intended consent to the transfer or assignment is not in accordance with any Ministerial directions issued pursuant to sections 8 and 9." The question that I have is: Does the Minister have any preferential approach towards giving this Ministerial direction, or is it all being open and left to the . . . or the presentation of any interested parties and then make the decision at that point?

In other words, is the Ministerial interest, or the Ministerial direction, likely to be . . . has it been predetermined that this is a particular framework within which we want to operate, or is it going to be dependent on whomever decides to make application?

The Chairman: Minister?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Perhaps the Honourable Member does not remember, but I gave a Statement in this House—

The Chairman: Give it to us now, please.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: —about my, like, directions. I believe the date is March 15 [sic]. I gave a Statement and those—

The Chairman: What is the Statement? Just answer the question.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, the Statement gave in detail what those directions are.

The Chairman: Yes, but the—

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Those directions are the scope upon which—

The Chairman: Hang on.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I'm sorry.

The Chairman: The Honourable Member is asking a question. We require the answer. Not what you did two months ago, or whatever, just give the answer.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: The directions exist already. They have already been made. They had to be made public already. Those directions have been gazetted already, as well. And that is the specific scope that the Minister can operate in. It cannot operate outside of those directions in determining the approval, or not approval, of the transfer of control of the licence. That is the legal scope that the Minister has to operate in. He cannot operate outside of that.

The Chairman: Thank you, Deputy.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Just a quick question for clarity.

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Can the Minister give us any broad, sort of indication, without . . . I don't have a copy of the Ministerial Statement from March. I realise that it is probably in the public domain, but I just wonder for the purposes of this, if there is just a broad overview that the Minister might be able to share. If not, that is fine, if he does not have it, but I would be curious for the edification of the public.

The Chairman: Okay.
Minister, can you help her out?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes. I will happily give a copy of my March 19th [sic] Statement to the Honourable Member.

The Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: And of course my brief outlined all of the details that I presented, what those directions are, which is actually section 6 of the Electric Act. It is essentially the substance of my directions.

The Chairman: Is that satisfactory, Honourable Member? Ms. Gordon-Pamplin?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I'm satisfied.

The Chairman: Okay.

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

I have just been handed a copy of the Ministerial Statement. Actually, this is from Friday, 7th of June, but it may have what I am looking for.

The Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: So I will have an opportunity to have a look through and if there are any further questions, I will be happy to ask the Minister offline.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
Minister.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I would like to now move all clauses, be approved.

The Chairman: Number them.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Clauses 1 and 2.

The Chairman: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: And I move that the preamble be approved.

The Chairman: Hang on.
It has been moved that clauses and 1 and 2 be approved.
Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 and 2 passed.]

The Chairman: Now you can . . .

Hon. Walter H. Roban: 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. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be presented to the House as printed.
Any objections to that?

The Bill will be reported to the House. Thank you.

[Motion carried: The Electricity Amendment Act 2019 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 6:10 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Speaker: Members, are there any objections to the Electricity Amendment Act 2019 being reported to the House as printed?

There are none.

It has been moved and approved, reported.

We now move on to the next item on the Order Paper for today. And that item is the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019 in the name of the Premier.

Premier, would you like to present your item?

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019 be now read the second time.

The Speaker: Any objections to that?

No objections?

Continue on, Premier.

BILL

SECOND READING

BERMUDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the House today seeks to amend the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Act 1980 to permit the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation to form subsidiary companies, or join in the incorporation of any company to further any public/private partnership in keeping with the functions of the Corporation.

The Bermuda Economic Development Corporation [BEDC] is a provider of business management advice and financial assistance to the local small and medium-sized business sectors in Bermuda.

The BEDC is currently responsible for overseeing the operations of the Economic Empowerment Zones (EEZ), for providing financial support and tech-

nical advice to small and medium-sized businesses, for managing the operations of outside vendor markets, and for managing vendors in issuing vendor licences.

Since the establishment of the 1980 Act, and a partnership between the Bermuda Government and the local banks, the BEDC has been, and continues to be, Bermuda's premier source of free confidential advice for entrepreneurs and business owners. BEDC's mission is to inspire, inform, support and grow new and existing businesses through education, guidance, data provision, advocacy, networking, and financing.

The Corporation has a focal vision of helping to create an expanded pool of inspired entrepreneurs running successful businesses that fuel Bermuda's economy.

The Bermuda Economic Development Corporation's remit has expanded significantly over its lifespan. Originally conceived in 1980 as the Bermuda Small Business Development Corporation to only have responsibility for the Island's small businesses, in 2011 its responsibility grew to embrace the Island's medium-sized business sectors, the three Economic Empowerment Zones, and establish vendor market sites. Then, in 2015, its remit was expanded again to have legislative oversight of all of the Island's local pedlars and vendors.

Mr. Speaker, today we are here to mark the continued evolution and expansion of the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation with this new amendment to its legislation. The amendment will allow the BEDC to enter into formal corporate arrangements in association with other persons for the purpose of aiding those persons in the development of a new business, or a new undertaking.

The Corporation's key objective remains to assist the Government in encouraging economic growth for Bermuda's local small and medium-sized businesses. However, increasing numbers of entrepreneurs are seeking more than just investment capital or loan guarantees in support of their endeavours. As such, the BEDC is committed to developing a range of creative business support services and products to meet the needs of modern business. To take advantage of the protections afforded to incorporated entities, entrepreneurs often seek the added assistance of BEDC as more than a lender or guarantor.

Mr. Speaker, the BEDC currently has, through section 5(2) of this Act, the power to borrow money, lend money, to make grants or guarantee loans, and to acquire, hold and dispose of personal and real property. The BEDC can also do anything incidental to any of its powers.

Whilst the broad power currently contained in section 5 of the BEDC's Act may already lend itself to create subsidiaries, it was recommended that out of an abundance of caution the specific powers to create subsidiaries be included in the Act. The proposed amendments will allow the BEDC the specific power

to engage in the incorporation of entities in support of public/private partnerships. In addition, as part of the incorporated entity, the BEDC would have the opportunity to exercise greater oversight in support of the businesses supported through its existing powers. The amendments will only focus on local companies, or LLCs, this, with the goal of specifically assisting in the development of new business ventures.

Ministerial approval will be required for the formation and divestment of any company through this provision, and the BEDC will divest itself of its shares in a local company, or resign its membership in a local LLC as soon as it has fulfilled its purpose.

Mr. Speaker, with this legislative amendment the Government desires to continue to create an environment where entrepreneurs can benefit from economies of scale through the creation of shared assets. This also includes shared infrastructure. The ability for the BEDC to create subsidiary companies based on a public/private partnership model will progress this concept of shared assets for entrepreneurs. We currently see the beginning of this concept with the BEDC's incubators, shared spaces, shared resources, and shared supports.

The BEDC has the resources and structures to partner with entrepreneurs to more easily bring their ideas to market, stay in partnership beyond those critical start-up years, the first three to five years, and then exit the company once it is solidified. These partnerships are even more critical if the company operates in an industry the Government is desirous of growing. It is anticipated that the implementation of this new legislation can be managed from within the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation's existing resources and funded from within the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation's existing budgets.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, a key national objective continues to be entrepreneurship. Bermuda's local small- and medium-sized businesses are the lifeblood of our Island's economy. As such, the Government of Bermuda intends, through this legislative amendment, to broaden its reach to foster local economic development activity. Without question, the Government is serious about encouraging a viable and reputable local entrepreneurial environment with the BEDC providing tangible support and advice. To this end, the Government will continue to ensure that local economic development is a priority by putting businesses and entrepreneurs first and creating sound, progressive policies for their success.

Mr. Speaker, what I will say before I close is that we have already done a number of items inside of our platform to make sure we help small business, whether that was a doubling of the guarantee capacity for the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, whether that was the elimination of taxes for new start-up businesses, making sure that businesses have easier access for start-ups, and now we have

the new programmes which are giving direct micro-loans, which you have seen, have new businesses starting up and for persons employed. This is continuing on the Government's agenda making sure that we support entrepreneurs.

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

Hon. E. David Burt: With those remarks, Mr. [Deputy] Speaker, I now invite the Honourable Members to participate in this debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin. Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

I just had a couple of questions based on the presentation that the Premier has given. Firstly, he spoke to the actions that have been taken by this Government with respect to doubling the capacity of available funding, no taxes for start-ups, and the microloan programme that has been implemented. And I just wondered if the Premier can give us some indication from a public perspective in terms of what is the uptake on the provision of loans and the provision of funding in terms of what capacity, the capacity is there, but what of the capacity has been used? That is just a general information [question].

Now, according to the legislation that we are debating, and according to the Premier's information, under the BEDC they will be able to purchase shares in a local company. And I heard the Premier say that in a period of between three and five years that investment (as it were) of public funds into these entrepreneurial opportunities will reach its maturity (if I can put it that way) over that period of time. I guess that is the initial intent. Whether it needs to be longer or shorter, obviously, will depend on individual circumstances.

But I have to question how this actually is going to work. If we are talking about a new start-up, then perhaps there is not a whole lot of equity value in a new start-up. But what happens at the point in time that over that three- to five-year period of time when the BEDC has determined that their involvement has reached its natural end, what methodology will they use in order to divest themselves of the interest?

Is it going to be based on the amount of money that was put in at the outset? Is it going to be at an appreciated value if the company into which they have put money has now grown significantly so it has a far higher equity value, far higher book value, than at the purchase date? Is there likely to be some clawback, as it were, of any benefit that the public money has

been used [for] in stabilising this company and helping to grow the company? Will the Government or the BEDC, through their funding, get any benefit out of the divesting of the interests of the BEDC?

The other question that I had was . . . when the BEDC, in purchasing shares of a company, it shall become a director and a chief executive. My question is, when we are talking about the BEDC, which is assisting an entrepreneurial company to get off the ground, the question begs, if you have . . . you know, the Honourable Member Mr. Simons has decided that he has got this wild and wonderful idea, business venture and the like, and he gets in and he grows it, and it becomes really super successful. But it is an investment in widgets. And do we have the expertise within the BEDC to become the chief executive of that company when effectively the business idea and the promulgation of that idea rests with the entrepreneur.

I am just a little bit curious to understand how it would actually work for the BEDC to become the chief executive of an entity over which they may not necessarily have the specific expertise to be able to manage and to grow that business to its ultimate excess.

The Deputy Speaker: Member, please speak into your microphone.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, surely. Certainly, yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: So those were my questions. Obviously, I understand what it is that they are trying to do, but the terminology of the legislation as it presently exists is giving us cause for concern from a pure business perspective. From an accounting perspective, obviously, it is my concern, if we take \$100 out of public funds to put into this company, when all is said and done are we going to get \$100 back? Are we going to get \$150 because the equity in the company has grown?

The corollary of that is, we put \$100 into a company today, what happens if that business does not succeed? Because I believe that history has shown us that a significant number of new start-ups do not actually succeed. So I am just wondering what we have put in place in order to minimise and to ameliorate any negative impact of the financing that is going to be put into any of these start-up and entrepreneurial opportunities, if they are not as successful as we would hope.

So those are my questions, and presumably I will get the answers when the Premier is ready to wrap. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Ms. Atherden. You have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Mr. Deputy Speaker, through you to the Minister, and perhaps this is just for clarification. When I read the section which talks about the Corporation purchasing the shares and shall be appointed a director and the chief executive of the company, I guess it would be useful for us and for the public to understand how the BEDC, as a corporation, would exercise this function. Recognising . . . and this is sort of partially what my colleague was saying, recognising that one presumes that there will be an "individual" that will be the chief executive officer, and therefore I am just curious as to how that person is chosen.

And the other side of it is, while I understand why the BEDC in the past has loaned money to particular entities because they believe those entities have a product or an initiative that they believe is worthy of investing in and it has got some potential for success, I just wondered why one would decide that it is important to be the chief executive officer as opposed to being on the board. I mean, that then takes a whole stream (if you will) of expertise, et cetera. I know that the BEDC has lots of expertise in terms of managing, in terms of directing, but I just wondered why they would, you know, shift that to chief executive officer which then presumes that you have lots of specialty in a number of areas.

I just wondered if the Minister could explain why they decided to go from the role of being an investor to the role of being a chief executive officer, recognising that, I would presume, there are going to be a number of companies that the BEDC is going to invest in, and they are going to be done simultaneously because, based on what has been said in the past, and the Minister's indication that this is part of their programme, and I am certain that it is going to be expanding.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member, Ms. Leah Scott.

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

I would like to support the legislation. I think that it is a good idea. I am happy that entrepreneurship is being promoted. I guess with a corporate background, my concerns are just making sure that things are done correctly and that things are put in place correctly.

I noticed that the legislation says that the BEDC will purchase shares in the company. So I am just wondering, in terms of how they are going to structure these things, whether the BEDC is actually going to set up a joint venture company and then that joint venture company would then participate in the

ventures and investing in the businesses of the entrepreneurs? Or how is it going to be a shareholder?

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: The other question is, under [clause 5] [new section 13A] subsection (3)(a), the BEDC will be appointed a director and a chief executive officer. Will it be the entity itself, or will it be a representative of the BEDC that is going to represent?

Does the BEDC have the capacity to even be a corporate director? Does the BEDC have the capacity to even be a shareholder? And once the BEDC enters into these arrangements with a local company, is it envisaged that they will have a shareholder's agreement and that shareholder's agreement will actually set out the terms of the relationship, how they are entering into the relationship, how many directors the BEDC gets to have, how long the relationship will last, how you get out of the relationship?

So if I go to the BEDC and I say, *I would like to set up a company. I would like to borrow \$10,000.*

And the BEDC says, *That's fine. We'll lend you the \$10,000 and we will help you incorporate a company.*

We set up the company and the BEDC becomes a director. As the company grows and I pay back that \$10,000 loan, does that mean that the purpose for which the BEDC was belonging to that company has now been fulfilled? I have repaid the terms of the loan and then they will exit? How will they exit?

The other thing is, you know, directors require personal liability. And so, is the BEDC going to have insurance to cover the people that it is going to appoint as directors and shareholders of these entities? How are they going to protect themselves? Because directors' and officers' liability insurance is expensive.

So, just in terms of, you know, I fully support entrepreneurship. I think that it is an excellent idea and I have other questions that I could probably take offline and go to the BEDC and find out more information, but generally, just in terms of the overall structure, I would like to see a structure in place that protects both the BEDC and its representatives and the people who are going to be working with the BEDC with their investments. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Hadley Cole Simons.

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

An Hon. Member: Nelson.

The Deputy Speaker: Nelson, I forgot Nelson.

[Laughter]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, like the rest of my colleagues, support the endeavours of the BEDC. I support their role in economic growth for small businesses and medium-sized businesses.

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I support their ability to provide advice, inspiration, guidance, networking, financing, et cetera.

The issue of directorship, obviously, has been the topic of the day. My question to the Minister is: What criteria, or what trigger, will the BEDC have in place to say, *It's time for me to get involved in this company?* And can an entrepreneur invite the BEDC, or a representative from the organisation to sit on their board? What protocols or criteria are in place for the appointment of these directors? As was said earlier, I have no objections with the appointment of directors.

I have some concern about the appointment of the CEO. As my colleague indicated earlier, the CEO's appointment should be left to the entrepreneur who knows the business. To me, the director should provide guidance from a strategic point of view. They should provide guidance from a reputational risk point of view. They should provide guidance from a financial risk point of view. They should provide guidance from a compliance to the Companies Act [point of view], and also [from a] financial point of view. To me—

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: Point of clarification, if the Honourable Member will yield.

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. E. David Burt: I just want to, for a general basis, because I see where the debate is, and I just want to make sure that I remind Members opposite, and for the edification of the entire House, this has to deal with wholly owned subsidiaries, where there are no other parties involved, which the BEDC set up, and then joint ventures, and the various things are there that are applicable. So, when we are talking about the issue of a CEO of a company serving in that capacity, for a wholly owned subsidiary is one thing, whereas there may be a joint venture for a public/private partnership.

So I just want Members to realise that there are multiple different types of structures, and I do not want us to purely focus on one portion where an entrepreneur may, you know, where we may want to put

in a structure where you have convertible debt from a microloan or something else. It is to add the additional flexibility. So I just want Members to know that there are multiple different things.

So the CEO might be a part of a wholly owned subsidiary, whereas a member of the board or other type of advisement [can] be something inside of a joint venture, and the flexibility that is here that . . . [so there is flexibility for each option]. I could have saved that to the end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it might help for the debate so Members can understand. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Simons, you want to continue?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes, so I think . . . I take the Premier's comments and I also take the view that if the officers of the BEDC take a more active role in providing guidance from a director's level, then we have to ensure that those employees who are involved at the director's level and providing guidance from a strategic point of view, reputational risk or risk point of view, compliance point of view, that they have the appropriate training to ensure that those businesses get the best advice, that they are directed for best practices and that, you know, they look at costs based on what is in Bermuda.

I declare my interest, my wife is chairman of the Institute of Directors, and I know that they would be willing to help these small businesses as they evolve, and also provide support to the BEDC and other organisations.

To me, it is about governance. It is about supporting our reputation, and it is also about helping the entrepreneurs to become better leaders of their industry of their businesses. I mean, as I said, the role of director is to provide guidance, support, resources, networking, and some handholding to ensure that their businesses succeed based on best business practices.

So, again, I would like to ensure that some type of training programme is in place for the appointment of the directors of these companies because it is a serious issue. And I think the entrepreneurs deserve the best support, the best guidance, and the best directorship that is available on this Island.

Again, my question is: What criteria will be implemented so that the BEDC can decide, *Well, the development of this start-up is at a level that really requires our assistance.* What would that level be? What criteria would trigger the BEDC to appoint a director? Or, if I have small business and I invite the BEDC to become a director, what criteria will the BEDC use to accept the invitation? So, again, just general questions. I might have some more in the Committee discussions. I would like to start off with that. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?
Premier, you have . . . I'm sorry. Mr. Tyrrell. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sorry I was so slow at getting up that time.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, I understand.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: I certainly wish to support this Bill, the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019. I thank the Premier for bringing it forward. I am almost tempted to describe it as being transformational because it certainly lends itself to what this Government is trying to do in terms of helping, certainly, small business or small businesses. But my two main reasons for supporting . . . well, my main reason for supporting this Bill is sort of twofold. As I said, I certainly feel it is transformational and it is something that [supports] our decision that we have made, it is in our Throne Speech, our Speech from the Throne, to help small businesses. And it also goes to the fact that where we are making tough decisions and not shying actually away from, or shirking away from them, especially if it is going to be of a benefit to . . . whether it is a segment of the population or a majority of the population, those that we call Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda.

Secondly, I have several small to medium business entrepreneurs in my constituency who talk to me all the time about help from the Government and they are certainly [praising] some of the things we have done. Of course, some of them are of more long-term and have sort of an effect now, but later on down the road they will see exactly the direction that we are going. So, certainly, as I said, these entrepreneurs have already been assisted by the BEDC and they speak very highly of the help that they have been getting from them. So I certainly want to congratulate the management there.

Let me say that the amendment that I certainly have some interest in, if you don't mind, Mr. Deputy [Speaker]. It is clause 3—

The Deputy Speaker: We are not in Committee yet.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: But I just want to read it, if you do not mind because—

The Deputy Speaker: We are not in Committee yet.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: I understand that, so I will just make reference to it. How's that?

[Laughter]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Mr. Deputy Speaker, most of these aspiring business entrepreneurs generally look like me, so I certainly encourage this. But I also encourage other entrepreneurs as well to direct their attention to the BEDC because they can certainly get the help. The playing field for a very, very long time has been not even, certainly not level. And so I see this as an opportunity for them to go and get assistance.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, I support this amendment because, as it was stated earlier, nothing should be left off the table, everything should be discussed, and I think this is going to be a help in general. Thank you, very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: You are welcome.

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Christopher Thomas Famous.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Good evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Good evening, colleagues. Good evening, Bermuda, and to everyone else who is listening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to speak, not to the clauses because you are going to tell me to sit down.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: But I am going to speak to the spirit of the Bill.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: He was listening.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, he was.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Deputy Speaker, my grandfather had a mantra, *Nothing ventured, nothing gained*.

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: That has been passed on to everybody in my family.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yesterday, or two days ago, there was an announcement of one business being sold, or being bought by another business. In normal circumstances, no one would have batted an eyelash. But somehow, because somebody who, I don't know, did not grow up on Front Street, is buying this business, the question is asked, *Where did he get that money? Where did he get that money?*

The Deputy Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Well, let me tell you where he got that money.

My family came here, well, some of my family came here from St. Kitts with nothing. My grandfather used to have to sell pigs and bananas. He passed that on to his children and his grandchildren. This one particular grandchild took that family trait and carried on. He grew bananas and sold them. Then he started buying other businesses, cleaning pools. Not making any money, but building connections, building up business knowledge because there was no formal place to learn and teach you how to be a businessperson, outside of certain things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at age 14, I wrote a letter to the then Premier. I am not going to say who, but you can take guess who that was. I wrote a letter. There was no email, no WhatsApp, I wrote a physical letter and said, *I would like to learn about business things*. I got a call maybe two days, three days . . . well, sorry, two weeks later, because it was snail mail, that said, *Go see this lady at this building called Melbourne House*.

Melbourne House, for those who do not know is on Victoria Street where Weir Enterprises is, they got the blue building, anyway, there is a small, one-person operation called—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, where Sound Stage used to be.

There was a small, one-person operation with very [few] resources to teach a person how to start a business or grow a business.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Speak to me. Continue speaking.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Deputy Speaker—

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Order, order, order.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to see the small business corporation now become the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation. You know why, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We sit around this room, and for the last 21 years, give or take a little bump in the road between 2012 and 2017, we have had political power in this country. But you know what? For 400 years we never have had economic power.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: And this Government has to transform this thing.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Can I stop hearing the murmuring?

Anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

An Hon. Member: Muttering.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Muttering.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, through the BEDC and other organisations, this Government is going to help her people transform themselves from simply being employees to being business owners. Because, as we all know, Bermudians spend plenty of money educating their children, hundreds of thousands of dollars. They come back here and either cannot get a job or cannot get a job in the field [in which] they studied. Or, if they do get a job, five years down the line, somehow or the other, they are being made redundant.

So what do we need to do? We need to teach our people how to start their own businesses, how to sacrifice for those three, four, five, six, seven years to make those businesses successful. But it is more than a sacrifice, it is knowledge. It is having the knowledge. Not everybody can go back to school and learn and get an MBA [Master of Business Administration]. So the BEDC provides courses.

Let me make it a little bit more personal, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Eight years ago my wife started a business. She has been through numerous BEDC courses, left, right, and centre—accounting course, QuickBooks courses, StreetWise “MBA”—all these courses. Her business . . . because I do not get anything out of it—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Okay, I get a free haircut. Her business has become—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

An Hon. Member: Where?

Mr. Christopher Famous: Okay, a free shave.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Her business has been relatively successful in a short period of time. But it is only because . . . not only, but it is because of the help she has [received] from the BEDC, Mr. Ray Jones, in particular; [Jamillah] at Mind Your Business; and before that, Ms. Roxanne Christopher; Ms. Smith. I could go on . . . Ray Lambert. They have all helped her and

countless others, so I can speak to the success of BEDC and the dedication that they have.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a responsibility to try and help those who are willing to transform themselves from simply being employees, highly paid, highly educated employees, to being employers, being business owners. But I say to them, the sacrifice has to start now. A business is not going to be successful overnight. Some people have had 400 years of, you know, perfecting their business. We do not have that. So if you are willing to do that, the BEDC is there for you. You have to take advantage of it.

And I glory in the spirit of this Bill. I will not get into the details of it because, quite frankly, I am not that guy. But what I do know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that five years from now we have to see more Bermudian business owners. We have to. As we heard earlier, we are under threat. Bermuda's landscape is not going to be the same five years from now [like] it was 10 years ago. What are those people who got master's degrees going to do? What are they going to do? They are going to have to do something.

So, I say to those, again, to those who are thinking about starting a business, *Don't just willy-nilly do things. The BEDC provides free advice, free education, free courses. These are your tax dollars; take advantage of it.*

Now, specific to this Bill, I am not going to go into just . . . I am glad to see that there is public/private oversight. I am glad to see there is shared assets and shared spaces, and I am glad to see that the overarching (what is the word I want to use?) spirit of this Bill is to help transform our country, our countrymen, countrywomen. Because, again, I go back to yesterday when I read this, when this person said, *Where did he get this money?* I was so incensed because that person is my brother. And what that person was saying is that black people are not supposed to have money.

And we have to—we have to—break that mind-set, not of those who do not like us, but of ourselves!

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Christopher Famous: We have put in our own minds, *We are going to be business owners!* Because, guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? People have for years talked bad about the Caribbean. You go to any Caribbean island, you walk around their capitals, those buildings are owned by black people. You walk around our capital, who are these buildings owned by? Not us!

Who are the major businesses owned by? Not us!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Christopher Famous: So, again, the mind-set has to change with us. And I am glad that the BEDC has transformed from that one-person operation to what they are now. And I say to the Premier, *Thank you, Mr. Premier.* To the staff at the BEDC, *Thank you, very much.*

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Any further speakers?

Mr. Premier, take . . . you have it.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank the Members for their contributions to this particular debate.

I would like to echo the comments from the Honourable Members from constituency 26, Warwick South Central, and constituency 11, MP Christopher Famous, who spoke about the excellent work that is being done by the members of the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, the staff, and their employees that are there. I had the pleasure of having that department underneath my ministerial remit. Before me, it was Minister Jamahl Simmons. And both of us have had an extremely pleasurable experience with both the board and also the team which is there. And I would like to, of course, recognise Ms. Erica Smith, who is here joining us today, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. E. David Burt: I would like to say that I am pleased with the support of the Members for this particular piece of legislation. I am grateful that certain Members understand what a game changer that this can actually represent, and the additional flexibility which is a necessary requirement. And oftentimes, Mr. Speaker, people will hear me talk about the fact that we have institutions which were built under structures that cannot necessarily deliver and are not nimble and flexible enough to deliver for the future. And so, what we are doing here is allowing an organisation that has a reputation that can assist entrepreneurs, and [this will] provide them additional ways in which to assist entrepreneurs.

There were a few questions that were asked. There was a question from the Honourable Member for constituency 23 about the volume of support of which Bermuda Economic Development Corporation gave. There are currently 18 existing guarantees for a total of \$1.3 million. But what is more remarkable is that what is very popular, of course, is the direct lending programme from the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation, and that is the microloan programme. There are currently 43 direct microloans. The total balance outstanding on those microloans is

\$463,342. Of note, Mr. Speaker, there are no losses yet, and only one loan has been called and the [dollar] amount that was remaining on the [loan] that was called was \$1,202.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: So, now, Mr. Speaker, I know that there were a lot of questions which were asked about valuations and different things. And what I am saying is that the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation is not intending on reinventing the wheel. There are many types of organisations that exist in venture capital funding, seed funding. Those types of assistance and those types of structures are relatively common, and the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation feels relatively confident and sees that it could take advantage of those things. But what it can also do, Mr. Speaker, is assist companies that may be cooperatives in setting up their corporate arrangements and actually playing a part in that.

So when we are talking about shared assets and some of the examples which I have given, and I will give at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, is that, for instance, people, you know, want to engage in a certain activity. And let's say that certain activity is screen printing for shirts and other types of things. And say, for instance, there are five individuals who come to the BEDC looking for money for this activity. And as opposed to the BEDC giving out five separate microloans, or five separate grants, or to five different people \$10,000, maybe they buy a really big machine, a very powerful one for \$25,000 and it is shared amongst the persons who are a part of this.

Because one of the things that we have and one of the challenges for entrepreneurs in the Bermuda economy, Mr. Speaker, is that the Bermuda economy is very small. So it is difficult to scale. And if you make a very large upfront investment, it is more difficult to recoup from that investment. But we also have assets which are not fully utilised. So if you have shared assets that can be more fully utilised, then that means that you have a lower start-up cost and you can get a better return while also providing more competitive pricing.

And what you would have seen, as we have stated inside of our election platform, speaking about cooperative economics, what you would have seen with the BEDC insofar as pushing cooperative economics, it is those types of things which we are looking to promote. And the flexibility which is allowed underneath this particular amendment which we are doing today, will allow those types of structures that can be set up with the assistance of the BEDC to assist in those particular areas. And that is what it is that we are looking to do, Mr. Speaker, to provide different ways to make sure that we can assist entrepreneurs and other persons in getting started and looking at

new ways of doing things in 2019, as opposed to the original construct of the Act in 1980.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of questions and I note that the Honourable Member from constituency 8 declared his interest, that his wife is the director *[sic]* of the Institute of Directors and—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: —the Chairman, and she is always writing these wonderful pieces in the paper, promoting her organisation very well. What I will say to that Honourable Member is that any item which is necessary to facilitate the proper establishment of arrangements to be done, whether that is insurance, directors, qualifications, et cetera, will be taken on by the BEDC. The BEDC does have a very good board. That board, I have found, is incredibly attuned to risk and making sure that those things are handled. And I am certain that these things will be taken into account. And I thank the Honourable Member for his question on that.

There was a question that asked, What criteria may the BEDC look at? I think that there is not necessarily a criterion in where the BEDC will look to be involved. I think it will be if a company, whatever structure and in looking at how these things are going to be arranged, may want to have participation from the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation. It may be that microloans right now are limited to \$20,000. The BEDC is looking at upping that limit to a little bit more. It may be that a combination of traditional collateral on convertible debt from different structures, and equity base in convertible debt, there are lots of different things that could be there, but this is to allow flexibility away from just the traditional modes of financing and/or business support which we have [when] the BEDC issues a loan guarantee, or more recently gives a (how would I say?) direct microloan.

And as I indicated when the Honourable Member from constituency 8 was grateful to yield for a point of clarification, there are joint ventures. But there may also be subsidiary companies. And so this type of arrangement allows for multiple different types of set-ups. So, for example, there may be a wholly owned subsidiary, Mr. Speaker, where the BEDC may set up a vehicle or a subsidiary to finance the purchase and bring on investors for the upgrade of a property in one of the Economic Empowerment Zones, for instance, and allow it to raise capital for that and to have persons be a part of that capital structure so that there can be improvements that are done in any of the Economic Empowerment Zones.

It can also be a joint venture. An example that I will give is maybe a joint venture with a local credit union to provide banking services to those persons and businesses who are unable to get banking services in other places. There is an issue with being un-

banked, and this might be something that assists growing entrepreneurs [to gain] access to banking services which they may not have currently. Or, from an equity participant, as I have indicated earlier, it may be someone with a microloan who is looking to do convertible debt, or looking at some other type of support structure for their business, Mr. Speaker.

So those are the options that are available. This is very broad. We are making it broad for a specific purpose, to allow the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation flexibility. But also there is a measure of accountability to this Honourable House insofar as the Minister responsible will be the only person who can authorise these arrangements in the end. And those persons will have to be held accountable as we typically do under the ambit of collective responsibility.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that I have answered the questions of Members. If not, I am certain that there will be more questions when we get into Committee.

I move that the Bill be read a second time and committed.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?

No objections.

The matter will now move to Committee.

Deputy.

House in Committee at 6:58 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL

BERMUDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Chairman: Honourable Members, we are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled [Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019](#).

Premier, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, I move clauses 1 through 7.

The Chairman: Continue.

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

Mr. Chairman, this Bill seeks to amend the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Act 1980 (the principal Act) to provide for the Corporation to enter into formal corporate arrangements, in association with other persons, for the purpose of providing assistance to those persons in the development of a new business or a new undertaking.

The Bill also enables the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation to form public/private partnerships, creating companies or LLCs, or commercial venture projects to assist entrepreneurs.

Clause 1 is self-explanatory. This is the citation of the Bill.

Clause 2 amends section 2 (Interpretation) by inserting definitions for local company, local LLC and undertaking. The definition of "local company" is taken from the Companies Act 1981; the definition of "local LLC" is taken from the Limited Liability Company Act 2016, and the definition of an "undertaking" is taken from the Economic Development Act 1968.

Clause 3 amends section 4 (Functions of the Corporation) by amending the list of functions to include assisting persons in the development of a new business or a new undertaking by entering into formal corporate arrangements in association with those persons. This expands the remit of the BEDC providing the scope of the Corporation to assist in developing new local enterprises or projects through formal corporate arrangements.

Clause 4 amends section 5 (Powers of the Corporation) by amending the list of powers to include the power to enter into formal corporate arrangements in association with other persons. This provides the Authority for the BEDC to enter into public/private partnerships in creating companies or commercial venture projects approved by the Government.

Clause 5 inserts section 13A (Power with respect to companies and LLCs) which sets out the manner in which the Corporation is to exercise its powers when entering into formal corporate arrangements in association with other persons, and for bringing its involvement in those arrangements to an end. This allows the BEDC on its terms with the Minister's written approval to purchase shares and be appointed a director or chief executive of a local company, to be a member and be appointed a manager of the local LLC, to incorporate a local company or to form a local LLC. This also allows the BEDC with the Minister's written approval to divest itself of all shares of the local company or resign its membership in a local LLC where its purposes have been fulfilled, or for any reason.

Clause 6 amends section 22 (Offences) to provide for it to be an offence for a person to enter into a formal corporate arrangement with the Corporation fraudulently or dishonestly. This expands the offences to include any fraud or dishonesty in the creation of a local company, local LLCs, or commercial venture project with the BEDC.

Clause 7 provides for this Act to come into operation by notice published in the *Gazette*, which will be done by the Minister responsible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: The Chair recognises the Honourable Member, Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

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

I would like to refer to clause 5, which inserts section 13A into the principal Act. During the debate of the whole [House,] we actually had the Premier, by way of explanation, indicate that the Corporation could conceivable form wholly owned subsidiaries and it is under that guise that they would be appointed as director and the chief executive officer of the company. Now, what I would like to do is go to clause 5, [new section 13A] subsection (3), where it says, "Where the Corporation—(a) purchases shares in a local company under subsection (2)(a) or incorporates a company under [subsection] 2(c), it shall . . . be appointed a director and the chief executive of the company."

Now, under [new section 13A] (2)(a) it effectively says that if the Corporation purchases shares in a local company that is registered under the Companies Act . . . so, those purchases of shares registered under the Companies Act does not suggest necessarily that the Corporation will be purchasing all the shares. So, it will not be able to say that this will be a wholly owned subsidiary. So the question begs, as I asked during the regular debate, at what point in time . . . why is it appropriate that the Corporation should become the CEO, the chief executive, of the company under [new section 13A] (3)(a) if the Corporation does not own all of the shares of the company?

It would seem to me that the entrepreneur being the one driving the type of business in which he might be interested would be the more appropriate person to be the CEO, as opposed to having the Corporation take on that role. So, I am just wondering, because the premise of having a wholly owned subsidiary, as the Premier alluded to, would be that the Corporation owns all the shares.

So, whether they are majority or minority shareholder there is still, if they owned more shares than somebody else, like over 51, 50 per cent plus 1 of the shares, they would be a majority shareholder. And as a majority shareholder maybe they might be in a situation in which they could take on the chief executive of the company. But if there is a minority shareholding, or if there is any other shareholding, if the Corporation has not purchased a majority of the shares, I am not sure that it is appropriate for the Corporation to become the chief executive of a company. So, I hope I have clarified my question.

The other issue that I did question is, again, in clause 5, [new section 13A] (4), where it speaks about the divestiture by the Corporation of shares in a local company, or if it should resign its membership in a local LLC. The question is, What is the basis for the evaluation of the value at which the Corporation will exit that company? Will it divest based on the amount of money that it put in in the first instance? Or will it look for some kind of a growth for that public fund to say, *I lent you 100, you have had it for three or four years, you've made 1,000* . . . is my divestiture going

to have a part of that appreciation of the value? Basically, you look at book value or at some level of equity. Will that be determined at a cost, or will it be on a market value? In other words, is it going to be an equity value of the company?

And the other question I have is when the Corporation is becoming a director, are there any fees to be paid to the director for providing that service? And would there be D&O [directors and officers liability] insurance that would be provided by the Corporation for the entity to ensure that any challenges that might come under claims and personal liability with respect to D&O, that they are taken care of.

The Premier also mentioned, and this is under clause 3 with the power to purchase, to incorporate a local company. This is . . . I am sorry, clause 5, [new section] 13A (2)(c) "to incorporate a local company under the Companies Act . . ." We did hear that if an entrepreneur approached the Corporation, then that entrepreneur will have the ability to have that discussion with the Corporation to say, *I need "X" amount of money to do this particular project*. That is understood.

But under what premise will the Corporation decide that they are going to incorporate a local company, which then would foot the criteria of having a wholly owned subsidiary? But under what criteria would they make that determination? Will they say that there is a need in this particular area? Or would they make the determination that they have had interest being expressed, and as a result of that interest, and for shared resources, it might then be expedient to incorporate a local company?

So, I am just wondering if the Premier can answer those questions. I would be appreciative. Thank you.

The Chairman: Any further questions on [clause] 5?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Chairman, if I may? On clause 5—

The Chairman: Just one second, Premier.

Any further questions on clause 5? Let us complete that first.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Chairman, if I may, it is an important point on clause 5.

The Chairman: You want . . . Okay. Go ahead.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has pointed out something that is incorrect in the Bill, and I appreciate her attention to that.

I have no idea how that got past our scope. But an amendment is being prepared, Mr. Chairman, on clause 5. And the clause 5, under [proposed section 13A (3)(a)] and under 13A (3)(b), the [word]

“shall” will be changed to “may.” And that amendment is currently being prepared by the representative from the Attorney General’s Chambers.

So, I just want to make that clear before there was any further comment. And I am happy to answer any further questions on clause 5.

The Chairman: Okay.

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

The Chairman: Honourable Member Simons.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Clause 5, item [new section 13A] (4), the divestiture of the shares in a local company. Can the Minister confirm the process whereby the divestiture will be authorised? Will there be a corporate resolution to support it at the BEDC level or at the corporate level? Will it be limited? Will the divestiture be approved by the board members? And will you have to have the approval of the Registrar of Companies to divest the BEDC shareholding? That is my question on clause 5.

So, basically, I am asking—

The Chairman: Clause 5, [new section 13A] (4).

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Clause 5, [new section 13A] (4). So, basically, I am questioning the process of approvals before a divestiture takes place in the resolution.

The other question is on [clause 3, new section 4(1)] “(aa) to assist persons in the development of a new business or a new undertaking by means of formal corporate arrangements” My question is this: Who actually provides the instrument for the corporate arrangement? Will a legal firm be required to draw up the corporate instrument to support the corporate arrangement? And who will pay for it? Will the BEDC pay for it? Will the entrepreneur pay for it? Or will it be split between the two?

This instrument is very, very important because the instrument, I suspect, will have to be filed with the Registrar of Companies. And if there were any banking issues, the banking would like to see an official instrument that will confirm the structure and operations of the corporate arrangement. So, if you could provide some more details on who will craft the instrument, who will agree on the instrument and who will pay for the instrument so that it forms a part of the corporate documents for that particular company.

The Chairman: Member Gordon-Pamplin.

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

Mr. Chairman, the Premier’s interjection just now with respect to the wording which needs to be amended . . . and I accept that, and I appreciate that,

but if we are going to change the “purchase shares in a local company” (and this is under clause 5, [new section 13A] subsection (3))—

The Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin:—where he said that they *may be appointed a director and the chief executive officer* . . . it would seem to me that it would be more appropriate for that to be “and/or,” or just “or the chief” You know, “and/or.” So, in other words, if the Corporation does not own 100 per cent of the company, of the shares of the company, then it may not be appropriate for them to be appointed as a director or chief executive officer. I believe it should not be . . . because the way it reads now, it says, *it may be appointed a director and the chief executive of the company*. But I believe it should be “and/or.” So, it would be one or the other, or both. So, that gives that flexibility. And I wonder if the Premier could have a look at that amendment and make the determination if that is appropriate.

The other question that he did not answer as yet was with respect to the value at the point of divestiture. Was it going to be a book value, market value, cost? How are they going to determine what the Corporation will get back at the point at which they divest themselves of any shares in the company?

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Mr. Premier.

I am sorry. Mr. Pearman . . . Okay.

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

I will try to answer the questions while the drafter is preparing the amendment on clause 5.

There is a question from the Honourable Member from constituency 23 how does the Government or the Corporation determine whether or not there is a wholly owned subsidiary that is necessary and needed? And what are the different things? One example you gave with the shared resources may be a possibility if that is determined as the best way to go. The BEDC will have flexibility.

But I think also, in my closing comments in the general debate, I also stated, for instance, there may be a property that is seeking renovation that the BEDC may find it wants to do it, and to find it as a method to set up a separate structure in order to raise capital for participation into that type of particular thing. So, those are the options that we are talking about. It just allows the BEDC flexibility in doing things. Right now, the BEDC cannot technically own a property and other things, but it may want to find itself, in doing business in the Economic Empowerment Zones, may want to form a subsidiary company for vendor markets in order to have a separate structure for there that it can actually have its own separate thing.

So, those were the types of options allowing the BEDC to have that level of flexibility inside of its affairs.

There was a question as to how will the value be assessed? It has been a while since I have done finance, so I do not want to get myself into talking about the capital asset pricing model and other certain things. But it would be in the standard form of which these things are assessed normally. So, it might be book value. It depends on the circumstances that present themselves. And, of course, the entrepreneur or the business and the board will have a view of those particular things.

There was a question from the Honourable Member from constituency 28 [*sic*] regarding the—

An Hon. Member: Eight.

Hon. E. David Burt: Constituency 8. Sorry. Sorry, Dennis.

Question from [the Honourable Member from] constituency 8 questioning the processes that would be followed, whether they be a board resolution or others. And what I would say is the proper processes, which are necessary under the Companies Act, in order to make sure that anything is completed, whether it be resolutions, by vote of the BEDC we have to remember that decisions which are made by the BEDC are made by the Board of Directors of the BEDC. So, the board will make those types of decision, and those particular items will be reflected in the minutes. And they would be filed with the Registrar of Companies if they are necessary to do so, as you understand that this will fall under all and any and all requirements underneath the Companies Act or the LLC Act.

There was a question regarding legal services that would be provided. In this particular instance, the legal services may be provided internally or they may be provided externally. I know in the instance of where the Bermuda Housing Corporation formed a subsidiary corporation and joint venture for the Bermudian Beach project, those services were provided internally by, I believe, the Attorney General's Chambers. So, it all depends on whether or not it is done internally and/or externally and whether the items are shared. It is not specific, and we are not spelling that out. But if there is a need for those services, which particularly there will have to be in order to formalise them, they may be provided internally at expense to the Government, or they may be provided externally if that is needed. And I guess, the actions may be handled by the entrepreneur in its entirety or handled by the company, and it will be handled by the split of what exists.

The Chairman: Any further questions?

Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. I appreciate that the Premier says it has been a while since he has

done the accounting side of things, but I have to declare my interest in that that is my world. And that is the area—

[*Inaudible interjection*]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Finance. That is the area in which I am really most comfortable.

So, my question is, Is it the intention of the Corporation to, hopefully, grow such that the Corporation can get some profits out of the environment so that there is money to be able to put back into the system? How they value it, I can understand that that will be determined at the time. But what would be the process if this new venture does not succeed? So, in other words, there is likely to be some kind of . . . there would have to be authority to write off any balances or any value where there has been a diminution in value. So, there would have to be some kind of authority.

And I am just wondering how that would be handled, how the Corporation will handle such [things] in terms of the authority to write off any irrecoverable balances.

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

That authority exists currently right now to do that from the [Bermuda] Economic Development Corporation. They do take losses. I mean, and that is the business which they are in. So, there are some times that guarantees will come due. They will then, under the guarantee arrangements, have to go after possible assets. The assets may not be there; they have to take those losses. I mean, that is what happens.

But this is the whole purpose of organisations like this. And entrepreneurs . . . not everyone is going to win. But you want to have more winners than you have losers to ensure that those businesses can survive. But whether it is the BEDC here, whether it is the Small Business Administration in the United States, whether it is the organisation in other countries, the provision is recognised that there will be some losses in this particular instance.

I think the BEDC has an excellent track record of managing those particular items, as has been seen with the microloan programme. Out of 43, only 1 has been called. They are very good at making sure they assess the risk in advance. But, you know, there are economic conditions. There are many different things that may happen.

But to answer the original question of whether or not the intent is for these items to be profitable, absolutely the intent is for the items to be profitable. And if, say, for instance, we are going with a shared services venture, talking about a screen printing and having, you know . . . because one of the things that the BEDC has spoken about would be, you know, the entrepreneur's house where they have these things. For instance, they have them in Miami, where they have

these spaces where there are various entrepreneurs, who are there using shared services. They are sharing in the purchasing of particular assets and all the rest.

If you have a screen printing operation and you are doing this and all the rest, and you are charging for the use of that machine for the time that it is [being used], and then those items are done. And maybe someone wants to buy out the BEDC's portion to take a bigger piece of that or buy it outright. Those things can be valued in the regular way in which companies are valued. And I think this entrepreneur would understand and accept that. And it is part of growing financial literacy in Bermuda. It is not just debt financing, but equity financing and how you value equity financing when things are set to grow and when things are delivering standard returns over a period of time.

The Chairman: The Honourable Member Pearman.

Mr. Scott Pearman: I tried to sit down. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question is also on this same subsection that we have been looking at, which is clause 5 of the Bill at page 2, which inserts section 13A. And I am looking at 13A (3)(a), which is the subsection, I think, that the Honourable Premier indicated, Mr. Chairman, was being in consideration for an amendment in a moment.

May I just add this. I know we had a bit of a kerfuffle today on amending Bills. But this is offered in the right spirit.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Scott Pearman: If "shall" is to be amended to "may," may I also just point out that 13A (3)(a) says this: "Where the Corporation" (which is the BEDC) "(a) purchases shares . . ." et cetera, incorporates, et cetera, "it shall" (or now "may") . . . "It", of course, is the BEDC, which is a corporation. I have looked at the definition of the Corporation in the main Act. A corporation cannot serve as a director or, indeed, as a chief executive officer. A person has to. So, presumably, that should be not "it," but "a member of the board of the BEDC," or similar or something of that nature, because it cannot be the Corporation itself; it would be impermissible.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Honourable Member Hadley Cole Simons.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes. Clause 5, [new section 13A (3)], Where the Corporation (a) purchases shares . . ." Can the Premier help me with this? Are we going to invest—

The Chairman: Put your microphone on, Cole.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Are we going to invest an equity position in a company because we want to help that entrepreneur succeed and provide them with seed capital to succeed? Or are we investing in the company because we see a real investment opportunity from a speculative point of view?

So, my question is twofold. Will the BEDC look for investment opportunities? Or is there a mandate to provide equity capital for entrepreneurs to make their business succeed and not necessarily looking for investment opportunities from an investment point of view?

The Chairman: Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

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

While the Premier is getting the answer to the other, my final question is that I did ask about D&O insurance. And I did not get a reply to that yet. So, I wonder if the Premier could let me know. Is there going to be directors and officers liability insurance?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Oh, I am sorry. I did not hear the response to that. Okay. Sorry. I did not hear that.

The Chairman: Any further?

Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: For clarity for the Honourable Member . . . for clarity, I did say that any arrangements which are necessary and proper, whether they be directors and officers insurance or other things, to make sure that the interests of the BEDC are protected will be in place. And I did . . . but I will be very specific and answer the question there.

In regard to the question from the Honourable Member, the BEDC is not going out to seek . . . just to be clear.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes. Yes. The BEDC is not going out to seek. This is not all of a sudden the BEDC is going to look for companies to start buying up and running. And it is not the purpose of this in any way, shape or form.

I think that we have a market that is relatively robust. And there are lots of different things. However, there may be entrepreneurs who are looking to get started up. There may be persons through different things. There may be, as I said, from a shared services model, a cooperative model or other types of particular instances.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Ms. Atherden.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

I did not think that the Premier had answered the question with respect to the corporate element in terms of whether the Corporation could be a director and a chief executive officer, whether a corporation could be that. If he could do that for me, please.

The Chairman: Premier.

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

Mr. Chairman, the drafter and those items, I do believe that it satisfies the law. I am happy for the Honourable Member who is no longer in his seat—

The Chairman: He is right here.

Hon. E. David Burt: —to signify any particular place and area where that is contrary to the Companies Act. I know there are persons here, but I just want to make sure it is specific. Because the information which we have is that it should be fine.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: Mr. Premier.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: You can.

[Pause]

The Chairman: She will make some copies.
Mr. Pearman, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. I understand that when I was out of the Chamber—

The Chairman: No, that is fine.

Mr. Scott Pearman: —the point came up again.

The point is this, is that obviously the concept of a chief executive officer or the concept of the director is *someone* who owes duties to a company. And that task is performed by *an individual*. The idea that you would have a corporation as a chief executive officer of a company is a bit nonsensical.

I mean, if that is what Government wants to achieve by this Bill, fine. But—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Scott Pearman: No, respectfully, it does not.

But again, it was offered in the spirit of improving the legislation—legislation which we support and commend.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Pearman.
Any further speakers?
Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Honourable Member from constituency 22.

I will note that the Clerk was in receipt of a written amendment that is being copied for circulation on that particular basis. And I am happy to entertain any questions or any comments on any other clause.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

Okay. I guess we are waiting for the amendment. It is being copied presently. Just give us two minutes.

[Pause]

The Chairman: Premier, do you want to move the amendment?

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 5

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

Mr. Chairman, I move that clause 5 of the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act be amended as follows: In clause 5, [new] section 13A (3)(a), delete “shall” and substitute “may,” and delete “and” and substitute “or.” And in [new] section 13A (3)(b), delete “shall” and substitute “may.”

The Chairman: Do the second one again, 13?

Hon. E. David Burt: [New section] 13A (3)(b), delete “shall” and substitute “may.”

The Clerk: Just 13? Is it 13? Oh.

The Chairman: [New section] 13A (3)(a).

Hon. E. David Burt: We are in clause 5. And it is the places where it says . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes. So, we have 13A (3)(a) and 13A (3)(b).

An Hon. Member: Yes.

The Chairman: Ms. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. I would just like to speak to the amendment, that we are deleting the . . . this is in clause 5, [new] section 13A (3)(a), where the last part of that in which we are deleting “and” and substituting “or.” It still does not quite get us

to where we want to be, because this is saying that the Corporation *may* be—*may* be—appointed a director “or” the chief executive officer. But could they not be both?

The Chairman: And/or.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Could it not—should it not be “and/or”? I am just curious.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am certain that the drafter spoke, and I am not going to take extra . . . those are drafters who know far better than me on the implications.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. No, I am just wondering.

Hon. E. David Burt: And so, from the “or,” I am assuming that they have the power to be both.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay. All right. Okay. Thank you.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
Mr. Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the contributions of Members on this, and I move that the clause 5 be amended as submitted. I move the amendment.

The Chairman: It has been moved that clause 5 be approved as amended.

Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

[Motion carried: Clause 5 passed with amendment.]

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Mr. Chairman, I will then move that clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 be approved and stand part of the Bill.

The Chairman: It has been moved that clauses 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 be approved.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, just for clarity, clauses, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7.

The Chairman: Yes. It has been moved that clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 be approved.

Are there any objections to that?
No objections.
Approved.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 passed.]

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

Mr. Chairman, I move that the preamble be approved.

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

Any objection to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

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

I move that the Bill be reported to the House as amended.

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

Any objections to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

The Bill will be reported to the House as amended.

[Motion carried: The Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed as amended.]

House resumed at 7:30 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

BERMUDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Speaker: Good evening, Members.

Is there any objection to the Bill, the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, being reported to the House with the amendment, as amended?

No objections. It has been done.

The Speaker: That now brings us to the third readings today.

Minister of Finance.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled Government Loans Amendment Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objections?
None. Continue.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

GOVERNMENT LOANS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I move that the Bill be now read a third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: It has been done.

[Motion carried: The Government Loans Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: The second one. Do your second [third] reading.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objections?
There are none. Continue.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

ECONOMIC SUBSTANCE AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I move that the Bill now be read time a third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: Yes.

[Motion carried: The Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: Deputy Premier, would you like to move yours, do your third reading?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Electricity Amendment Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objections?

No. Please do so.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I move that the Bill be now read a third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: It has been moved and passed.

[Motion carried: The Electricity Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: Premier.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objections?
No objections. Continue on.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

BERMUDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019 be now read a third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: It has. And now it is passed.

[Motion carried: The Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: Premier, stay on your feet. That brings us to the end of this day.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that this Honourable House do now adjourn until Friday, July 5th, at 10:00 am.

An Hon. Member: July 5th?

Hon. E. David Burt: July 5th.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Does any Member . . . Whip, are you standing for a particular reason?

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Yes. I was hoping to—

The Speaker: Would anyone like to speak to that motion?

[Laughter]

FACEBOOK LIBRA CRYPTOCURRENCY AND BERMUDA

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: I was hoping to be able to speak to the motion to adjourn, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, Mr. Speaker. In 1775—

The Speaker: You remember that?

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Yes, very clearly.

In 1775, Mr. Speaker, the United States Marine Corps performed their first amphibious assault, which was in The Bahamas. And this was to be able to help supply them for gunpowder and weapons for their Revolutionary, or their War of Independence. They were successful with their raid in Nassau, Bahamas. And so, what they then did was then go out and look for another British Overseas Territory that would be not too far from the United States mainland and could possibly have gunpowder for them to use for their ships.

They found such a place. And that place was 750 miles off of the Carolinas, namely, being Bermuda. They came and then were successful with another amphibious assault. And thus, after they were successful, we then ended up talking to them and saying, *Hey, you know what? We don't really like the British that much anyway. All you had to do was ask, and we would help you out in the long run.*

Now, I bring that up because one of the Marine Corps' mottos is, *Improvise, adapt and overcome.* And that ties into what I am talking about, because where we are with our economy, meaning that financial services, insurance, we cannot continue to be re-

active. We have to be proactive. And one thing that you will notice is that . . . and the reason that this is coming up now, is that if you would notice that this week, a popular website, a popular service that all of us use in some way, shape or form in this House, this Chamber, this Island, Facebook, is planning on launching a cryptocurrency named Libra.

And I hear Members asking, *What is cryptocurrency?* Cryptocurrency is actually a form of FinTech, or financial technology. And so, therefore, when you talk about Facebook going into cryptocurrencies, I know that the Bermuda people have been hearing about cryptocurrencies, and it has been driven by basically the same party for the last, I would say, four to five years. If you want to go back in history four or five years to 2014, I think the first time that it was officially mentioned as part of the PLP platform was under former Opposition Leader Marc Bean in the Reply to the 2014 Throne Speech.

And so, now that we have had these visionaries who . . . now, the current leader, the current Premier has been utilising and taking advantage of the party's current platform, or current medium, which has been the Government, to be able to push FinTech, to be able to push the vision that we need to be a major player in the FinTech, in the cryptocurrency, in the blockchain spectrum.

Now, although this has come with huge pushback from the then Government in 2014, who did not do anything to advance the cryptocurrency/blockchain/FinTech industry here in Bermuda, to the now current Opposition, who (I will say, to put it politely) provides even more pushback, even more (I will say) animosity towards cryptocurrencies and blockchains. But yet . . . and they have called it *the bogeyman*. They—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. The Honourable Member has a tendency to generalise. We have been supportive and have said over and over in this House that we support the industry. There have been hiccups within the industry that we have spoken to that are of concern to the people of Bermuda. But we have said categorically that we support FinTech! He needs to get it sorted!

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Yes.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is coming from the same party who said that they supported legislation

earlier today, but then had Members speak against it. So—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Ah! Ah! Ah!

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I just believe that that statement cannot go unchallenged.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: You jumped too quick. You jumped too quick.

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

The Speaker: [Member], just stay on track with where you need to go and do not get caught with these little side turns because they take you to the wrong spot.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Just stay where you are going and you will be okay. Do not be sidetracked.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Okay, Mr. Speaker. I will be guided by you, Mr. Speaker.

But going back to the Facebook Libra and how it is being released today. Now, the thing is that if Facebook has been working on this for the last year and the PLP Government has been talking about this for two years, this puts us ahead of the curve not just for Facebook, but ahead of the curve, I will say, internationally in the sense that what is happening with Facebook right now, Facebook has the banking opportunities, the banking abilities. But they are having trouble with the regulatory side of things. And now, what we have been doing for the last two years has been putting a regulatory framework together.

So, now the vision of the two former . . . the vision of the former Leader and current Leader of the PLP has now put this country in a position to possibly take advantage of something of a budding industry, a budding niche in the financial services, where there could be an exchange of information, there could be an exchange of services given. So, Mr. Speaker, what I want people to understand is that we continue, while others are out there and they are more guided by the traditional model of the country, *Quo Fata Ferunt*, (where the fates may carry us,) which puts you in a reactive position almost every time.

Maybe the fact that we can use this current administration, we can use this current situation, where Facebook . . . and the United States Congress has gone to Facebook and said, *Can you delay the launch of your cryptocurrency? Because we need to figure out how to regulate it.* Where here in Bermuda, we have already got the regulation taken care of. We already have a framework for them to move where an industry, a niche, a financial service product like that could move forward.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Pioneering.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: And as the Member Commissiong says, "pioneering," this could be a significant revenue generator for the country. I am not saying that this is what is going to happen. I hope it does. I hope it does. But I want to be very cautious. I want to be cautiously optimistic in where I go and to set realistic expectations for the Bermuda people.

And the thing is that the Opposition Leader—

The Speaker: You are getting a little off there.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Opposition Leader just got up and mentioned that they support FinTech, but yet, they do their constitutional duty.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: No, no. I am working with you. I am working with you, Opposition Leader.

They do their constitutional duty as the loyal Opposition to highlight perceived challenges, perceived shortcomings and concerns. And I know that it has been said time and time again in this Honourable House that there are certain areas in which we have to work together. The economic substance is a prime example, where all parties can win, all parties meaning both, not just the Government and Opposition, but the average person in Bermuda.

So, what I want the average person listening to my voice right now to understand is that you are now starting to see the green shoots of the seeds that have been sown by this party, not just over the last two years, but since 2014. Even though the times got hard and we were chastised about different things, concerns were raised on different aspects, the thing is that I want people to see that not just on the football field are we punching above our weight. And it is also being translated into one of our major pillars, or our major pillar, of this economy.

And when you hear the PLP talk about a diversification of our economy, that does not mean to sacrifice any current or existing aspects of our economy. That means to build on top of that. It means to be able to add to that. And so, therefore, when we start pushing FinTech . . . and could you imagine, Mr. Speaker, if what I say does come to fruition, where

Facebook does come to the Bermuda Government, to the PLP, and says, *Hey. We need your help. Hey. We want to base part of our operation here in Bermuda for some reason or some shape or form.* Or even say that . . . and this could be where a deal could be struck where we say, *You know what? Take some our youth. Take some of our young coders, or have an internship of some sort.* We just announced earlier today the scholarship with the—

An Hon. Member: That is age discrimination, man.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: True, true. Sorry.

[Laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Honourable Member said that talking about the youth and coding is sort of age discriminatory. But I understand.

But the thing is that we just mentioned about a partnership and scholarships with the University of the West Indies.

So, I want Members in this House to understand that there is a strategy to what we are doing. I want the public to understand that there are things that have been done, there are decisions that we have made that might not make sense right now, that might not have made sense back in July 2017. But I can understand, and I want you to understand. I want you to really capture the fact that we are here. We are not making transactional decisions. We are making decisions that will be transformational, that will level the playing field in every aspect of Bermudian life.

And what that means . . . and when you are talking about transformational, that means that there are going to some people who do not like to see their piece of the pie, their piece of the rock, their piece of the industry, their profit margins getting smaller. And they are going to cry out. And there are Members in this House who will represent those voices.

But I want you to understand and remember that, as we level the playing field, those members whose profit margins, those members of our society whose piece of the pie, whose piece of the rock is getting smaller, understand, believe and know that this means that somebody deserving, another aspect of the community who has not had, another aspect of the community who has always been marginalised, another aspect of the community who has almost always struggled is now getting not just a handout, but a hand up.

And that these members of society who have struggled all this time can now start to fulfil their beliefs, their dreams and their purpose. They can become successful and positively contributing members of this society. And as they become successful, their success is our success. And I do not say “our success” as in just the PLP. I say “our success” as everyone, all 36 Members of this Chamber. Because, re-

member. When we fail up here, the country and the people fail out there. But when we succeed in here, when we level the playing field, when we remove roadblocks and obstacles that did not need to be there in the first place, this makes it easier for others to enter into industry. This makes it easier for other members of this community to create industry.

Because, Mr. Speaker, although I am one of the younger Members . . . actually right now I am the youngest Member in this Chamber, right?

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: You mean right at this moment.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Right this moment, just this moment, just this moment.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: I am living in the moment. I am living in the moment. That is why I did not say “this House,” because I know the Members in the House. But . . . right?

But the thing is that, although I am (and I will be more accurate) one of the youngest Members in this House, history is not lost on me, Mr. Speaker. I understand that there was a time when the decisions and political decisions of this country were made down at the yacht club and ratified up here in this House. There were times that there were decisions made by Members who were in this House who had glaring conflicts of interest. But those times are no more. Although the ramifications and the effects of those decisions, the effects of those actions are still being felt today, that is what we are here to correct.

And while we are correcting that, just understand—and I am stressing this point . . . and I stress this point, I repeat it because it is so true. In this country, with the transformational governance and politics that we are providing, Mr. Speaker, the haves will continue to have. But the have-nots need to have more. And in doing that, that does not mean that we have to rob Peter to pay Paul. And, yes, Members are saying that I have said that before. And, yes, I purposely say it again.

And, Mr. Speaker, once again for those in the back of the room who cannot hear me. The haves can continue to have, but the have-nots need to have more. And that means not just more money; that means more access to opportunity, access to resources, access to capital, access to be able to have the quality of life that they deserve. No longer should a select few in this community control the majority. And when I say “control,” I mean economic control.

I mean, why is it so hard to start a business here in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker? Why is it that we have to do so many of the things we have to do—jump through so many of the hoops? Because somebody

gets paid from it. And this is what I am talking about when I say “somebody.” Remember, the majority of the laws that we are living by today and guided by today were passed, were ratified, back in a time when there were Two Bermudas, when basically those who were successful were white and those who were unsuccessful or had barriers of entry were black, Mr. Speaker.

And as you can see, this society has changed significantly since then. The society has changed significantly since then. The infrastructure in which society is based on has not. So, therefore, there is indirectly an institutionalised racism, Mr. Speaker, which means that this is where the transformational part of politics comes in. This is where Facebook Libra cryptocurrency comes in, Mr. Speaker. Because it is forcing us to change the way we have always done business. It is forcing us to make sure that there are individuals who can participate in an economy, an industry that was almost off limits to them before.

And the thing is, I want Members to—

[Timer beeps]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Oh, wow.

The Speaker: Oh.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Wow.

The Speaker: Member, I believe that time is for you. That clock is for you.

I do note that no one else has risen, though.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: No one else rose, right? No one else rose.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: We are going home early tonight. We are going home early tonight.

[Gavel]

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Good evening. We will see everyone on the 5th of July. Yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Sergeant? Sergeant is not here.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: No.

[At 7:54 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 5 July 2019.]

[This page intentionally left blank.]

**BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
2018/19 SESSION**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
INDEX**

MAY and JUNE 2019

*This Index is arranged alphabetically with “Order of Business” headings and MPs’ names in **bold**. “Bills” are arranged both alphabetically and procedurally (i.e., First Reading, Second Reading, Committee, Report, Third Reading). [Dates of Sittings](#)*

A

Adjournment, motions thereon

Arbitrade

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1515–1517, 1719–1720

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1834–1835

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1823

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1817–1820

Bermuda Day

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1647

Bermuda, doing what is best for

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1820–1823

Bermuda's Homeless

Weeks, Mr. Michael A., 1511–1513

Bermudians

of Portuguese descent

Weeks, Mr. Michael A., 1722–1725

putting them first

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1721

Bishop Spencer Facility

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1533–1534

Brown, Dr. Ewart, cost of police investigation into

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr., 1722

Cabinet Committee on social issues

Commissiong, Mr. Rolfe, 1645–1646

Child and Family Services Department

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1646, 1833–1834

Report of investigation into

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1730

Community Clubs, support for

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1720–1721

Cost of living, rising in Bermuda

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1734–1738

Credit card services fee, incorrect information released

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1642–1643

Efficiency Committee-Chairman's remuneration

DeSilva, Hon. Zane J. S., 1725–1729

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1716–1718

Furbert, Hon. Wayne L., 1730–1734

Adjournment, motions thereon (continued)

Endeavour Community Sailing Impact Programme

DeSilva, Hon. Zane J. S., 1826–1830

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1824–1826

Facebook Libra Cryptocurrency and Bermuda

Scott, Mr. W. Lawrence, 1928–1931

Gang violence reduction initiatives

Caines, Hon. Wayne, 1647–1650

Job Creation and the economy

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1523–1527

DeSilva, Hon. Zane J. S., 1529–1533

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1535–1536

Job opportunities, creating for black men

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1534–1535

Media, biased

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1538–1541

Parliamentary decorum

The Speaker, 1650

Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar

Caines, Hon. Wayne, 1517

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1522–1523

PLP Backbenchers

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1738–1739

Prison Officers Association march on Parliament

Caines, Hon. Wayne, 1830–1833

Reality of today

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1835–1838

Sir John Swan

disrespectful comments about

Commissioning, Mr. Rolfe, 1645

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1643–1644

The Speaker, 1645

reactionary racist comments by

Commissioning, Mr. Rolfe, 1537–1538

T. N. Tatem Middle School

Rabain, Hon. Diallo V. S., 1812–1814

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1814–1817

Tale of two articles

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1729–1730

Tourism, offering solutions to enhance

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1739–1740

UK Government's attempted intervention into Bermuda's domestic affairs

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1641–1642

Upcoming events

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1838–1839

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update

Caines, Hon. Wayne, 1517–1522

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1513–1515

Announcements by Speaker or Member presiding

House visitors

Clifton, Mr. Jerry, Mayor of Delaware, USA, 1850

Moment of Silence

James, Mr. Lloyd, former MP, 1475

Ombudsman for Bermuda Annual Report 2018, 1841

Parliamentary

decorum, 1650

Strengthening Seminar, 1475

Sir John Swan, disrespectful comments about, 1645

Arbitrade (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J.

Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, 1914

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1506–1507, 1558, 1852–1853

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1590–1594

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1674–1676

Premier's Question Time

FinTech Development Fund, 1486, 1487

Question Period

Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019, 1661, 1662

Government Reform Strategic Plan, tabling of, 1555, 1556

T. N. Tatem Middle School update, 1657

University of the West Indies (UWI) Scholarship Offerings, 1849, 1850

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1709–1713

B

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon; Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Bermuda College mobile application app update (See Premier's Question Time)

Bermuda Day (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Bermuda Deposit Insurance Corporation 2017 Annual Report (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019 (See Bills)

Bermuda Hospitals Board Annual Report 2014 (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Bermuda Monetary Authority Annual Report 2018 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Bermuda Public Accountability Board 2018 Annual Report (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Bermuda, doing what is best for (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Bermuda's Homeless (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Bermudians of Portuguese descent (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Bermudians, putting them first (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Bills

Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019

First Reading, 1667

Second Reading

Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1914

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1911–1913, 1918–1920

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1916–1918

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1913

Scott, Ms. Leah K., 1914

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1914–1915

Tyrrell, Mr. Neville S., 1916

Committee, 1920-1926

Clause 5 amended, 1925

Report, 1926

Third Reading, 1927

Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019

First Reading, 1855

Second Reading

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1887–1889

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1889–1890

Commissiong, Mr. Rolfe, 1878–1880

Dickinson, Hon. Curtis L., 1870–1871, 1890–1891

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1883–1887

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1880–1881

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1875–1878

Scott, Hon. Michael J., 1881–1883

Scott, Ms. Leah K., 1871–1875

Suspension of Standing Order 29(1)

Dickinson, Hon. Curtis L., 1868, 1869

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G., 1868–1869

Committee, 1891–1893

Report, 1893

Third Reading, 1927

Electricity Amendment Act 2019

First Reading, 1757

Second Reading

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr., 1896–1897

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1905–1906

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1903–1905

Commissiong, Mr. Rolfe, 1899–1900

Jackson, Ms. Susan E., 1898–1899

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G., 1897

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1901

Roban, Hon. Walter H., 1893–1895, 1906–1909

Scott, Hon. Michael J., 1897–1898

Scott, Ms. Leah K., 1895–1896

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1902–1903

Committee, 1909–1911

Report, 1911

Third Reading, 1927

Bills (continued)

Government Loans Amendment Act 2019

First Reading, 1668

Second Reading

Dickinson, Hon. Curtis L., 1856–1858, 1864–1866

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1858–1860

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G., 1860–1861

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1864

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1863–1864

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1861–1863

Committee, 1866–1868

Report, 1868

Third Reading, 1927

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019

First Reading, 1511

Second Reading

Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1590–1594

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr., 1582–1584

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1627–1631

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1622–1627

Commissiong, Mr. Rolfe, 1609–1611

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1584–1588

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1620–1622

Furbert, Hon. Wayne L., 1578–1582

Furbert, Mrs. Tinee, 1589–1590

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1569–1578

Jackson, Ms. Susan E., 1615–1618

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G., 1598–1600

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1611–1613

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1608–1609

Scott, Hon. Michael J., 1605–1608

Scott, Mr. W. Lawrence, 1594–1598

Simmons, Hon. Jamahl S., 1613–1615

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1602–1605

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1618–1619

Tyrrell, Mr. Neville S., 1601–1602

Wilson, Hon. Kim N., 1566–1569, 1631–1634

Committee, 1634–1640

Report, 1640

Third Reading, 1640

Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019

First Reading, 1855

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019

First Reading, 1566

Message from the Senate, 1841–1842

Second Reading

Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1674–1676

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1668–1669, 1679–1681

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1669–1671

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1671–1674

Jackson, Ms. Susan E., 1676–1677

Bills (continued)

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 (continued)

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G., 1677–1678

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1677

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1679

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1676

Committee, 1681–1689, 1842–1847

Report, 1689, 1847

Third Reading, 1716

Bishop Spencer Facility (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Black men, creating opportunities for (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Brown, Dr. Ewart, cost of police investigation into (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Brown, Hon. Walton

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1500

Burch, Lt. Col., Hon. David A.

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1508–1509, 1559, 1666, 1750, 1850–1851

Kings Wharf Rehabilitation, 1549–1551

Railway Trail and Gibbets Island, 1653–1654

West End Development Corporation (WEDCO), 1744–1745

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr.

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Brown, Dr. Ewart, cost of police investigation into, 1722

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1502–1503

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1896–1897

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1582–1584

Premier's Question Time

Public Education PLP Reform update, 1489

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1695–1698

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1801–1805

Burt, Hon. E. David

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Media, biased, 1538–1541

Upcoming events, 1838–1839

Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, 1911–1913, 1918–1920

Cabinet Committee on Social Issues, 1544–1545

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1503, 1557, 1667, 1751

Consultants and Advisors-Revised Construct, 1545–1546

Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1887–1889

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1905–1906

FinTech Business Unit Education Initiative update, 1742–1743

Government Reform Strategic Plan, 1543, 1546–1547

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1627–1631

Historic losses of citizens' property, establishing a commission of inquiry into, 1741–1742

Labour Advisory Committee (LAC), Sub-Committee: Reviewing the Retirement Age 2018
Report, 1476, 1477

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1668–1669, 1679–1681

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1511, 1689–1692, 1714–1716

Bus Service

Public Bus Service (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

C

Cabinet Committee on social issues (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Caines, Hon. Wayne

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Gang violence reduction initiatives, 1647–1650

Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar, 1517

Prison Officers Association march on Parliament, 1830–1833

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1517–1522

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1562

Gang Prevention in Primary Schools, 1547–1548

Hurricane Season, 1746–1747

Immigration Reform update, 1548–1549

Trade Winds Exercise, 1745–1746

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1480–1481

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event, 1834–1835

Bermuda Day, 1647

Child and Family Services Department, 1646, 1833–1834

Job Creation and the Economy, 1523–1527

Parliamentary Strengthening Seminar, 1522–1523

Reality of today, 1835–1838

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1500–1501, 1564–1565, 1663, 1755–1756

Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1889–1890

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1903–1905

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1622–1627

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1669–1671

Premier's Question Time

Consultants, Ministers and/or Junior Ministers as paid consultants, 1486

Perseid, MOU with, 1483, 1484

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1485

Question Period

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event, 1749

Government Reform Strategic Plan, tabling of, 1555

Historic losses of citizens' property, establishing a commission of inquiry into, 1748

MPs paid to serve on government committee, board or quango, and remuneration for service, 1849

Railway Trail and Gibbets Island, 1660

T. N. Tatem Middle School update, 1655, 1656

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1493, 1495, 1496

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1692–1695

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1769–1774

Child and Family Services Department (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

investigation (See Premier's Question Time)

Report of investigation into (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Commission of Inquiry

Historic losses of citizens' property, establishing a commission of inquiry into (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Commissioning, Mr. Rolfe

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Cabinet Committee on social issues, 1645–1646

Sir John Swan

disrespectful comments about, 1645

reactionary racist comments by, 1537–1538

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1502

Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1878–1880

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1899–1900

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1609–1611

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1702–1705

Community Clubs, support for (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Companies and Limited Liability Company (Beneficial Ownership Transitional Period Extension) Order 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Confirmation of Minutes

18 March 2019, 1475

22 March 2019, 1475

10 May 2019, 1543

17 May 2019, 1651

31 May 2019, 1741

07 June 2019, 1841

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches

Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1506–1507, 1558, 1852–1853

Brown, Hon. Walton, 1500

Burch, Lt. Col. Hon. David A., 1508–1509, 1559, 1666, 1750, 1850–1851

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr., 1502–1503

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1503, 1557, 1667, 1751

Caines, Hon. Wayne, 1562

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1500–1501, 1564–1565, 1663, 1755–1756

Commissioning, Mr. Rolfe, 1502

DeSilva, Hon. Zane J. S., 1500, 1565, 1667

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1509–1510, 1559–1560

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1508, 1563–1564, 1666–1667, 1753–1754, 1851–1852

Foggo, Hon. Lovitta F., 1505, 1563, 1666

Furbert, Mrs. Tinee, 1504, 1665, 1755

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1664, 1854

Jackson, Ms. Susan E., 1505, 1562

Lister, Mr. Dennis III, 1559, 1853

Ming, Mrs. Renee, 1508, 1563, 1665–1666, 1753

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G., 1854

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1750–1751

Rabain, Hon. Diallo V. S., 1501

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1501–1502, 1754, 1853

Roban, Hon. Walter H., 1663, 1751–1752

Scott, Hon. Michael J., 1504–1505, 1565, 1756, 1855

Scott, Mr. W. Lawrence, 1558, 1851

Scott, Ms. Leah K., 1503, 1752

Simmons, Hon. Jamahl S., 1506, 1756

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches (continued)

Simmons, Mr. Scott, 1505–1506, 1754–1755

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1503–1504, 1560–1561, 1665, 1852

Smith, Mr. Ben, 1752–1753

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1507–1508, 1562–1563, 1664–1665, 1751, 1850

Tyrrell, Mr. Neville S., 1507, 1561, 1854–1855

Weeks, Mr. Michael A., 1510, 1560, 1663–1664, 1754, 1852

Wilson, Hon. Kim N., 1558

Consultants

Consultants/Advisors-Revised Construct (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Ministers and/or Junior Ministers as paid consultants (See Premier's Question Time)

Professional Services/Consultants and Advisors-Revised Construct update (See Premier's Question Time)

Cost of living, rising in Bermuda (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Credit card services fee, incorrect information released (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Cryptocurrency

Facebook Libra Cryptocurrency and Bermuda (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Customs Tariff

(Approved Businesses) Notice 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

(Approved Organisations) Amendment Notice 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

D

DeSilva, Hon. Zane J. S.

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Efficiency Committee-Chairman's remuneration, 1725–1729

Endeavour Community Sailing Impact Programme, 1826–1830

Job Creation and the Economy, 1529–1533

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event, 1747–1748

Bus Service, 1483

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1500, 1565, 1667

Marine Board Control over Maritime Traffic (No. 2) Notice 2019, 1477

Merchant Shipping

(Anti-Fouling Systems) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Compulsory Insurance of Shipowners for Maritime Claims) Regulations 2019, 1476

(International Safety Management (ISM) Code) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-Operation Convention) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Port State Control) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476

(Prevention of Oil Pollution) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476

(Prevention of Pollution from Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Registration of Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477

(Repatriation) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477

(Seafarer's Employment) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477

(Ship-to-Ship Transfers) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Survey and Certification) Regulations 2019, 1477

DeSilva, Hon. Zane J. S. (continued)

Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels

(Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Control of Vibration at Work) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Health and Safety at Work) (Artificial Optical Radiation) Regulations 2019, 1477

Transport Green Paper 2019, 1551–1552

Motion to accept, 1757–1760, 1808–1812

Report, 1543

Dickinson, Hon. Curtis L.

Bermuda Deposit Insurance Corporation 2017 Annual Report, 1543

Bermuda Monetary Authority Annual Report 2018, 1651

Bermuda Public Accountability Board 2018 Annual Report, 1543

Companies and Limited Liability Company (Beneficial Ownership Transitional Period Extension) Order 2019, 1476

Customs Tariff

(Approved Businesses) Notice 2019, 1476

(Approved Organisations) Amendment Notice 2019, 1476

Economic Substance

Amendment Act 2019, 1868, 1869, 1870–1871, 1890–1891

Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476

Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2019, 1476

European Union Tax

Delisting, 1552–1553

Listing, 1478

Government Loans

Amendment Act 2019, 1856–1858, 1864–1866

(Suspension of Annual Contribution to Sinking Fund) Order 2019, 1856 (Withdrawn)

Partnership, Exempted Partnerships and Limited Partnership (Beneficial Ownership)

(Transitional Period Extension) Order 2019, 1476

Taxes Management (Large Ship Infrastructure Tax Prescribed Forms) Regulations 2019, 1543

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H.

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Arbitrage, 1515–1517, 1719–1720

Credit card services fee, incorrect information released, 1642–1643

Efficiency Committee-Chairman's remuneration, 1716–1718

Sir John Swan, disrespectful comments about, 1643–1644

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1513–1515

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1509–1510, 1559–1560

Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1883–1887

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1584–1588

Premier's Question Time

Consultants, Professional services/consultants and advisors-A Revised Construct, update, 1487

Question Period

Planning Board Applications appeals and enforcement, 1553

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1493, 1494, 1495, 1496

E

Economic Substance

Amendment Act 2019 (See Bills)

Amendment Regulations 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Education (See Public Education)

Efficiency Commission, breakdown of \$130,000 cost (See Question Period)

Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019 (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon; Papers and Other Communications to House; Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Electricity Amendment Act 2019 (See Bills; Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Endeavour Community Sailing Impact Programme (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

European Union (EU)

Tax Listing or Delisting (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

F

Facebook Libra Cryptocurrency and Bermuda (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Famous, Mr. Christopher

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Bermuda, doing what is best for, 1820–1823

Bermudians, putting them first, 1721

Community Clubs, support for, 1720–1721

Job Creation and the Economy, 1535–1536

Job opportunities, creating for black men, 1534–1535

UK Government's attempted intervention into Bermuda's domestic affairs, 1641–1642

Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, 1916–1918

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1508, 1563–1564, 1666–1667, 1753–1754, 1851–1852

Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1880–1881

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1620–1622

Premier's Question Time

Bermuda College mobile application app update, 1491

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1707–1709

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1797–1801

FinTech

Business Unit Education Initiative update (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Development Fund (See Premier's Question Time)

Perseid, MOU with (See Premier's Question Time)

Foggo, Hon. Lovitta F.

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1505, 1563, 1666

Labour Relations Section, role of, 1481–1482

Furbert, Hon. Wayne L.

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Efficiency Committee-Chairman's remuneration, 1730–1734

Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019, 1651, 1654–1655

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1578–1582

Furbert, Mrs. Tinee

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1504, 1665, 1755
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1589–1590
Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1789–1793

G

Gang Violence Reduction Initiatives (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J.

Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, 1913
Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1664, 1854
Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1875–1878
Government Loans Amendment Act 2019, 1858–1860
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1569–1578
Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1671–1674
Question Period
 Efficiency Commission, breakdown of \$130,000 cost, 1849
 Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019, 1660, 1661, 1662
 T. N. Tatem Middle School update, 1656, 1657, 1658
Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1698–1702
Government efficiency, measure to increase (See Premier's Question Time)
Government Loans
 Amendment Act 2019 (See Bills)
 (Suspension of Annual Contribution to Sinking Fund) Order 2019 (See Orders)
Government Reform Strategic Plan (See Papers and Other Communications to House;
 Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

H

Health

Bermuda Hospitals Board Annual Report 2014 (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019 (See Bills)
Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 (See Bills)
Pharmacy and Poisons (Third and Fourth Schedule) Amendment Order 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)
Historic losses of citizens' property, establishing a commission of inquiry into (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)
Hurricane Season (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

I

Immigration Reform update (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)
Information Commissioner's Office Financial Statements 2018 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

J

Jackson, Ms. Susan E.

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1505, 1562
Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1898–1899
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1615–1618
Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1676–1677

Jackson, Ms. Susan E. (continued)

Question Period

Cabinet Committee on Social Issues, 1555

T. N. Tatem Middle School update, 1659

West End Development Corporation (WEDCO), 1748

Job Creation and the Economy (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

L

Labour Advisory Committee (LAC), Sub-Committee: Reviewing the Retirement Age 2018 Report (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Labour Relations Section, role of (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Lister, Mr. Dennis III

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1559, 1853

Question Period

Gang Prevention in Primary Schools, 1554

M

Marine Board Control over Maritime Traffic (No. 2) Notice 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Media, biased See Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 (See Bills)

Merchant Shipping Regulations (various) (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels Regulations (various) (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Message from the Senate

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1841

Ming, Mrs. Renee

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1508, 1563, 1665–1666, 1753

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1781–1785

Moment of Silence

James, Mr. Lloyd, former MP, 1475

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G.

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1854

Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1868–1869

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1897

Government Loans Amendment Act 2019, 1860–1861

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1598–1600

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1677–1678

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1776–1781

Motions

Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019

Furbert, Hon. Wayne L., 1668

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age

Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1709–1713

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr., 1695–1698

Burt, Hon. E. David, 1511, 1689–1692, 1714–1716

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1692–1695

Commissioning, Mr. Rolfe, 1702–1705

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1707–1709

Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1698–1702

Motions (continued)

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age (continued)

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1713–1714

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1705–1707

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr., 1801–1805

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1769–1774

DeSilva, Hon. Zane J. S., 1566, 1757–1760, 1808–1812

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1797–1801

Furbert, Mrs. Tinee, 1789–1793

Ming, Ms. Renee, 1781–1785

Moniz, Hon. Trevor G., 1776–1781

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 176–1797

Scott, Hon. Michael J., 1807–1808

Scott, Mr. W. Lawrence, 1774–1776

Scott, Ms. Leah K., 1760–1764

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1785–1789

Smith, Mr. Ben, 1793–1795

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E., 1765–1769

Tyrrell Mr. Neville S., 1805–1807

MPs paid to serve on government committee, board or quango, and remuneration for service
(See Question Period)

O

Ombudsman for Bermuda Annual Report 2018, 1841

Orders

Government Loans (Suspension of Annual Contribution to Sinking Fund) Order 2019,
1856 (Withdrawn)

P

Papers and Other Communications to House

Bermuda Deposit Insurance Corporation 2017 Annual Report, 1543

Bermuda Hospitals Board Annual Report 2014, 1476 (See *also* Statements by Ministers
and/or Junior Ministers)

Bermuda Monetary Authority Annual Report 2018, 1651

Bermuda Public Accountability Board 2018 Annual Report, 1543

Companies and Limited Liability Company (Beneficial Ownership Transitional Period
Extension) Order 2019, 1476

Customs Tariff

(Approved Businesses) Notice 2019, 1476

(Approved Organisations) Amendment Notice 2019, 1476

Economic Substance

Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476

Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2019, 1476

Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019, 1651

Government Reform Strategic Plan, 1543

Information Commissioner's Office Financial Statements 2018, 1651

Labour Advisory Committee (LAC), Sub-Committee: Reviewing the Retirement Age 2018
Report, 1476 (See *also* Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Marine Board Control over Maritime Traffic (No. 2) Notice 2019, 1477

Papers and Other Communications to House (continued)

Merchant Shipping

- (Anti-Fouling Systems) Regulations 2019, 1476
- (Compulsory Insurance of Shipowners for Maritime Claims) Regulations 2019, 1476
- (International Safety Management (ISM) Code) Regulations 2019, 1476
- (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-Operation Convention) Regulations 2019, 1476
- (Port State Control) Regulations 2019, 1476
- (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476
- (Prevention of Oil Pollution) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476
- (Prevention of Pollution from Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulations 2019, 1477
- (Registration of Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477
- (Repatriation) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477
- (Seafarer's Employment) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477
- (Ship-to-Ship Transfers) Regulations 2019, 1477
- (Survey and Certification) Regulations 2019, 1477

Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels

- (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2019, 1477
- (Control of Vibration at Work) Regulations 2019, 1477
- (Health and Safety at Work) (Artificial Optical Radiation) Regulations 2019, 1477

Partnership, Exempted Partnerships and Limited Partnership (Beneficial Ownership) (Transitional Period Extension) Order 2019, 1476

Pharmacy and Poisons (Third and Fourth Schedule) Amendment Order 2019, 1848

Taxes Management (Large Ship Infrastructure Tax Prescribed Forms) Regulations 2019, 1543

Transport Green Paper 2019 Report, 1543 (See also Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Parliamentary

decorum (See Announcements by Speaker or Member presiding)

Strengthening Seminar (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Partnership, Exempted Partnerships and Limited Partnership (Beneficial Ownership)

(Transitional Period Extension) Order 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Pearman, Mr. Scott

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Child and Family Services Department Report of investigation into, 1730

Tale of two articles, 1729–1730

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1750–1751

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1901

Government Loans Amendment Act 2019, 1864

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1611–1613

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1677

Premier's Question Time

Child and Family Services Department, abuse investigation, 1488, 1489

Question Period

European Union Tax Listing, 1491–1492

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1713–1714

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 176–1797

Perseid, MOU with (See Premier's Question Time)

Pharmacy and Poisons (Third and Fourth Schedule) Amendment Order 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Planning Board Application

appeals and enforcement (See Question Period)

approval time (See Question Period)

Planning Process, streamlining of (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

PLP

Backbenchers (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019 (See Bills)

Premier's Question Time

Bermuda College mobile application app update

Famous, Mr. Christopher, 1491

Child and Family Services Department, abuse investigation results

Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1488, 1489

Consultants

Ministers and/or Junior Ministers as paid consultants

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1486

Professional services/consultants and advisors-A Revised Construct, update

Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1487

FinTech Development Fund

Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1486, 1487

Government efficiency measures

Tyrrell, Mr. Neville S., 1490

Perseid, MOU with

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1483, 1484

Public Education PLP Reform update

Burgess, Hon. Derrick V., Sr., 1489

Public schools, closure/mergers of

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1487, 1488

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1485

Prison Officers Association march on Parliament (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Public Education

Bermuda College mobile application app update (See Premier's Question Time)

PLP Reform update (See Premier's Question Time)

Public schools, closure/mergers of (See Premier's Question Time)

T. N. Tatem Middle School update (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

University of the West Indies (UWI) Scholarship Offerings (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Public Service

Labour Advisory Committee (LAC), Sub-Committee: Reviewing the Retirement Age 2018 Report (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age (See Motions)

Q

Question Period

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event

Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1749

Cabinet Committee on Social Issues

Jackson, Ms. Susan E., 1555

Question Period (continued)

- Efficiency Commission, breakdown of \$130,000 cost
 - Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1849 (Written answer follows Index)
- Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019
 - Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1661, 1662
 - Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1660, 1661, 1662
 - (See also Motions)
- European Union Tax Listing
 - Pearman, Mr. Scott, 1491–1492
 - Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1492
- Gang Prevention in Primary Schools
 - Lister, Mr. Dennis III, 1554
- Government Reform Strategic Plan, tabling of
 - Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1555, 1556
 - Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1555
- Historic losses of citizens' property, establishing a commission of inquiry into
 - Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1748
- Immigration Reform update
 - Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1554
- MPs paid to serve on government committee, board or quango, and remuneration for service
 - Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1849
- Planning Board Application approval time
 - Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1553 (Written answer follows Index)
- Planning Board Applications appeals and enforcement
 - Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1553 (Written answer follows Index)
- Planning Process, streamlining of
 - Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1492
- Railway Trail and Gibbets Island
 - Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1660
- T. N. Tatem Middle School update
 - Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1657
 - Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1655, 1656
 - Gordon-Pamplin, Hon. Patricia J., 1656, 1657, 1658
 - Jackson, Ms. Susan E., 1659
 - Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole, 1658, 1659
- Trade Winds Exercise
 - Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr., 1749, 1750
- University of the West Indies (UWI) Scholarship Offerings
 - Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1849, 1850
- West End Development Corporation (WEDCO)
 - Jackson, Ms. Susan E., 1748
- Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update
 - Atherden, Hon. Jeanne J., 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499
 - Cannonier, Hon. L. Craig, 1493, 1495, 1496
 - Dunkley, Hon. Michael H., 1493, 1494, 1495, 1496
 - Scott, Ms. Leah K., 1494, 1498, 1499

R

Rabain, Hon. Diallo V. S.

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

T. N. Tatem Middle School, 1812–1814

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1501

T. N. Tatem Middle School update, 1651–1653

University of the West Indies (UWI) Scholarship Offerings, 1848–1849

Railway Trail and Gibbets Island (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Reality of today (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Regulations

Economic Substance

Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476

Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2019, 1476

Merchant Shipping

(Anti-Fouling Systems) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Compulsory Insurance of Shipowners for Maritime Claims) Regulations 2019, 1476

(International Safety Management (ISM) Code) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-Operation Convention) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Port State Control) Regulations 2019, 1476

(Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476

(Prevention of Oil Pollution) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1476

(Prevention of Pollution from Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Registration of Ships) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477

(Repatriation) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477

(Seafarer's Employment) Amendment Regulations 2019, 1477

(Ship-to-Ship Transfers) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Survey and Certification) Regulations 2019, 1477

Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels

(Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Control of Vibration at Work) Regulations 2019, 1477

(Health and Safety at Work) (Artificial Optical Radiation) Regulations 2019, 1477

Taxes Management (Large Ship Infrastructure Tax Prescribed Forms) Regulations 2019, 1543

Retirement Age

Labour Advisory Committee (LAC), Sub-Committee: Reviewing the Retirement Age 2018 Report (See Papers and Other Communications to House)

Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age (See Motions)

Richards, Mr. Sylvan D., Jr.

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event, 1823

Bishop Spencer Facility, 1533–1534

Cost of living, rising in Bermuda, 1734–1738

Endeavour Community Sailing Impact Programme, 1824–1826

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1501–1502, 1754, 1853

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1608–1609

Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1679

Question Period

Immigration Reform update, 1554

Planning Board Application approval time, 1553

Trade Winds Exercise, 1749, 1750

Roban, Hon. Walter H.

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1663, 1751–1752
Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1743–1744, 1893–1895, 1906–1909
Information Commissioner’s Office Financial Statements 2018, 1651
Planning Process, streamlining of, 1478–1479

S

Scott, Hon. Michael J.

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1504–1505, 1565, 1756, 1855
Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1881–1883
Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1897–1898
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1605–1608
Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1807–1808

Scott, Mr. W. Lawrence

Adjournment, Motions Thereon
Facebook Libra Cryptocurrency and Bermuda, 1928–1931
Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1558, 1851
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1594–1598
Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1774–1776

Scott, Ms. Leah K.

Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, 1914
Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1503, 1752
Economic Substance Amendment Act 2019, 1871–1875
Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1895–1896
Question Period
Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1494, 1498, 1499
Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1760–1764

Simmons, Hon. Jamahl S.

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1506, 1756
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1613–1615

Simmons, Mr. Scott

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1505–1506, 1754–1755

Simons, Mr. N. H. Cole

Adjournment, Motions Thereon
T. N. Tatem Middle School, 1814–1817
Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, 1914–1915
Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1503–1504, 1560–1561, 1665, 1852
Government Loans Amendment Act 2019, 1863–1864
Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1602–1605
Premier, Ministers and Opposition Leader Personal Staffs Act 2019, 1676
Premier's Question Time
Public schools, closure/mergers of, 1487, 1488
Question Period
European Union Tax Listing, 1492
Planning Process, streamlining of, 1492
T. N. Tatem Middle School update, 1658, 1659
Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1785–1789

Sir John Swan

disrespectful comments about (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)
reactionary racist comments by (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

Smith, Mr. Ben

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1752–1753

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1793–1795

Social Issues

Cabinet Committee on Social Issues (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Speaker (See Announcements by Speaker or Member presiding)**Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers**

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event, 1747–1748 (See also Question Period)

Bermuda Hospitals Board Annual Report 2014, 1481

Cabinet Committee on Social Issues, 1544–1545 (See also Question Period)

Consultants and Advisors-Revised Construct, 1545–1546

Efficiency Committee, Consolidated Overall Report of, April 2019, 1654–1655 (See also Motions; Question Period)

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1743–1744

European Union

Tax Delisting, 1552–1553

Tax Listing, 1478 (See also Question Period)

FinTech Business Unit Education Initiative update, 1742–1743

Gang Prevention in Primary Schools, 1547–1548 (See also Question Period)

Government Reform Strategic Plan, 1546–1547 (See also Question Period)

Historic losses of citizens' property, establishing a commission of inquiry into, 1741–1742 (See also Question Period)

Hurricane Season, 1746–1747

Immigration Reform update, 1548–1549 (See also Question Period)

Kings Wharf Rehabilitation, 1549–1551

Labour Advisory Committee (LAC), Sub-Committee: Reviewing the Retirement Age 2018 Report, 1477 (See also Papers and Other Communications to House)

Labour Relations Section, role of, 1481–1482

Planning Process, streamlining of, 1478–1479 (See also Question Period)

Public Bus Service, 1483

Railway Trail and Gibbets Island, 1653–1654 (See also Question Period)

T. N. Tatem Middle School update, 1651–1653 (See also Question Period)

Trade Winds Exercise, 1745–1746 (See also Question Period)

Transport Green Paper 2019, 1551–1552

University of the West Indies (UWI) Scholarship Offerings, 1848–1849 (See also Question Period)

West End Development Corporation (WEDCO), 1744–1745 (See also Question Period)

Westgate Correctional Facility, work to rule update, 1480–1481 (See also Question Period)

Swan, Mr. Hubert (Kim) E.

Adjournment, Motions Thereon

Bermuda Championship PGA Tour Event, 1817–1820

PLP Backbenchers, 1738–1739

Tourism, offering solutions to enhance, 1739–1740

Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1507–1508, 1562–1563, 1664–1665, 1751, 1850

Electricity Amendment Act 2019, 1902–1903

Government Loans Amendment Act 2019, 1861–1863

Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1618–1619

Retirement Age, Revisions to mandatory public service retirement age, 1705–1707

Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1765–1769

T

- T. N. Tatem Middle School update (See Adjournment, Motions thereon; Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)
- Tale of two articles (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)
- Taxes Management (Large Ship Infrastructure Tax Prescribed Forms) Regulations 2019 (See Papers and Other Communications to House)
- Tourism, offering solutions to enhance (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)
- Trade Winds Exercise (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)
- Transport Green Paper 2019 Report (See Motions; Papers and Other Communications to House)

Tyrrell, Mr. Neville S.

- Bermuda Economic Development Corporation Amendment Act 2019, 1916
- Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1507, 1561, 1854–1855
- Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1601–1602
- Premier's Question Time
 - Government efficiency, measure to increase, 1490
- Transport Green Paper 2019, Motion to accept, 1805–1807

U

- UK Government's attempted intervention into Bermuda's domestic affairs (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)
- University of the West Indies (UWI) Scholarship Offerings (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)
- Upcoming events (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)

W

Weeks, Mr. Michael A.

- Adjournment, Motions Thereon
 - Bermuda's Homeless, 1511–1513
 - Bermudians of Portuguese descent, 1722–1725
 - Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1510, 1560, 1663–1664, 1754, 1852
- West End Development Corporation (WEDCO) (See Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)
- Westgate Correctional Facility
 - Prison Officers Association march on Parliament (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon)
 - work to rule update (See Adjournment, Motions Thereon; Premier's Question Time; Statements by Ministers and/or Junior Ministers)

Wilson, Hon. Kim N.

- Bermuda Hospitals Board Annual Report 2014, 1476, 1481
- Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches, 1558
- Health Insurance Amendment Act 2019, 1566–1569, 1631–1634
- Pharmacy and Poisons (Third and Fourth Schedule) Amendment Order 2019, 1848

~~~~~



**Dates of Sittings: Pages in Hansard:**

|                                         |           |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|
| 10 May 2019 (19 <sup>th</sup> Sitting)  | 1475–1542 |
| 17 May 2019 (20 <sup>th</sup> Sitting)  | 1543–1650 |
| 31 May 2019 (21 <sup>st</sup> Sitting)  | 1651–1740 |
| 07 June 2019 (22 <sup>nd</sup> Sitting) | 1741–1840 |
| 21 June 2019 (23 <sup>rd</sup> Sitting) | 1841–1932 |



**2018/19 SESSION**  
of the  
**BERMUDA**  
**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**Parliamentary Questions**  
**Answered In Writing**  
**(May and June 2019)**



*Government of Bermuda*  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS**

RESPONSES BY

**The Hon. Walter Roban, JP, MP**  
Minister of Home Affairs

TO QUESTIONS TABLED BY

**The Hon. Michael H. Dunkley, JP, MP**

Due Date: May 17, 2019

---

**Question:**

1. Will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House what is the mean time taken for the resolution of planning appeals for each year from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018?

**Answer:**

The typical length of time can vary anywhere between three to six months.

There are a multitude of variables that impact the length of time it takes to process an appeal, including:

- whether the appeal is lodged by the applicant or a third party;
- whether there were objections filed for the original planning application;
- the time taken by the appellant to respond to the Director's Case produced by the Department of Planning; and
- the availability of the overseas planning inspector to provide an independent assessment.

**Question:**

2. Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many planning applications per month have been handled for each planning officer in the Department of Planning from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019?

**Answer:**

Currently statistics collected are not collated by planner. However the chart below identifies number of completed planning applications for the time period from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

**Number of Planning Applications Resolved by Month**

| <b>Month</b>   | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>2019</b> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| January        | 21          | 39          | 38          | 23          | 0           | 23          |
| February       | 45          | 44          | 27          | 43          | 50          | 33          |
| March          | 53          | 48          | 45          | 56          | 45          | 43          |
| April          | 44          | 51          | 48          | 34          | 25          |             |
| May            | 51          | 43          | 36          | 47          | 40          |             |
| June           | 48          | 60          | 26          | 36          | 58          |             |
| July           | 45          | 54          | 28          | 31          | 38          |             |
| August         | 48          | 55          | 49          | 34          | 46          |             |
| September      | 60          | 45          | 40          | 33          | 36          |             |
| October        | 38          | 12          | 27          | 30          | 58          |             |
| November       | 47          | 37          | 29          | 37          | 42          |             |
| December       | 30          | 20          | 23          | 50          | 40          |             |
| <b>Totals:</b> | <b>530</b>  | <b>508</b>  | <b>416</b>  | <b>454</b>  | <b>478</b>  | <b>99</b>   |

Notes:

1. These stats exclude 'Renewals'
2. Zero in January 2018 due to Development Applications Board members not being appointed.

**Question:**

3. Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many enforcement actions have been taken by the Department of Planning on a monthly basis from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019?

**Answer:**

This question requires a clearer definition of “enforcement actions”. Therefore we have attempted to include all the investigations and actions performed by the Enforcement Officers:

- a total of 8 Enforcement Notices have been issued;
- 41 Direct Action cases have occurred which are those instances where an Enforcement letter or interview with the landowner causes them to remove the unauthorized work; and
- The following table confirms the number of complaints regarding unauthorized development that were received by the Department of Planning.

## Complaints Received by Month

|              | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Jan</b>   | 9    | 6    | 6    | 14   | 8    | 9    |
| <b>Feb</b>   | 18   | 18   | 11   | 15   | 7    | 9    |
| <b>Mar</b>   | 14   | 19   | 8    | 11   | 13   | 10   |
| <b>Apr</b>   | 15   | 17   | 12   | 10   | 13   | 15   |
| <b>May</b>   | 18   | 19   | 17   | 17   | 16   | 3    |
| <b>Jun</b>   | 18   | 16   | 15   | 16   | 17   |      |
| <b>Jul</b>   | 12   | 8    | 10   | 19   | 8    |      |
| <b>Aug</b>   | 5    | 16   | 15   | 10   | 12   |      |
| <b>Sep</b>   | 14   | 5    | 12   | 19   | 14   |      |
| <b>Oct</b>   | 14   | 13   | 7    | 12   | 20   |      |
| <b>Nov</b>   | 10   | 10   | 7    | 10   | 9    |      |
| <b>Dec</b>   | 7    | 12   | 8    | 11   | 4    |      |
| <b>Total</b> | 154  | 159  | 128  | 164  | 141  | 46   |

•



*Government of Bermuda*  
Ministry of Home Affairs  
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS**

RESPONSES BY  
**The Hon. Walter Roban, JP, MP**  
Minister of Home Affairs

TO QUESTIONS TABLED BY  
**Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, JP, MP**  
Shadow Minister, Home Affairs and Environment

Due Date: May 17, 2019

---

**Question:**

1. Will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many planning applications have been approved on a monthly basis from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019?

**Answer:**

The below table which details the monthly statistics of planning applications approved on a monthly basis:

| Month          | Number of Planning Applications Resolved by Month |            |            |            |            |           |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
|                | 2014                                              | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019      |
| January        | 21                                                | 39         | 38         | 23         | 0          | 23        |
| February       | 45                                                | 44         | 27         | 43         | 50         | 33        |
| March          | 53                                                | 48         | 45         | 56         | 45         | 43        |
| April          | 44                                                | 51         | 48         | 34         | 25         |           |
| May            | 51                                                | 43         | 36         | 47         | 40         |           |
| June           | 48                                                | 60         | 26         | 36         | 58         |           |
| July           | 45                                                | 54         | 28         | 31         | 38         |           |
| August         | 48                                                | 55         | 49         | 34         | 46         |           |
| September      | 60                                                | 45         | 40         | 33         | 36         |           |
| October        | 38                                                | 12         | 27         | 30         | 58         |           |
| November       | 47                                                | 37         | 29         | 37         | 42         |           |
| December       | 30                                                | 20         | 23         | 50         | 40         |           |
| <b>Totals:</b> | <b>530</b>                                        | <b>508</b> | <b>416</b> | <b>454</b> | <b>478</b> | <b>99</b> |

Notes:

1. These stats exclude 'Renewals'
2. Zero in January 2018 due to Development Applications Board members not being appointed.

**Question:**

2. Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House how many building permits have been approved on a monthly basis from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019?

**Answer:**

The table below represents the total combined figure per month for Residential, Commercial and 'Minor Works' (Permitted Development) issued Permits:

| BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| MONTH                   | YEAR | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| JANUARY                 |      | 68   | 57   | 56   | 62   | 45   | 75   |
| FEBRUARY                |      | 62   | 67   | 69   | 71   | 52   | 77   |
| MARCH                   |      | 67   | 73   | 57   | 63   | 51   | 63   |
| APRIL                   |      | 80   | 62   | 78   | 75   | 75   | 75   |
| MAY                     |      | 72   | 99   | 84   | 90   | 60   |      |
| JUNE                    |      | 69   | 80   | 71   | 52   | 56   |      |
| JULY                    |      | 83   | 85   | 81   | 50   | 66   |      |
| AUGUST                  |      | 71   | 75   | 77   | 73   | 56   |      |
| SEPTEMBER               |      | 79   | 79   | 90   | 50   | 56   |      |
| OCTOBER                 |      | 63   | 69   | 53   | 59   | 61   |      |
| NOVEMBER                |      | 66   | 58   | 63   | 56   | 70   |      |
| DECEMBER                |      | 63   | 60   | 51   | 51   | 60   |      |
|                         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

**Question:**

3. Would the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House what is the mean time taken for issuance of planning permission from the initial application to Planning Board approval in each year (by quarter) from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019?

**Answer:**

The table below contains the requested quarterly statistics. It is important to note that there have been fluctuations over the past 4 years because of unfilled positions. The majority of positions have now been filled:

|            | Average time in weeks taken to resolve planning applications |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
|            | 2014                                                         | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
| Jan - Mar  | 5.8                                                          | 5.1  | 5    | 5.8  | 6.3  | 4.8  |
| Apr - Jun  | 6.5                                                          | 5.3  | 4.9  | 6.1  | 8    |      |
| Jul - Sept | 5.6                                                          | 5.1  | 5.9  | 7.1  | 7.5  |      |
| Oct - Dec  | 3.9                                                          | 4.9  | 5.3  | 7.1  | 5    |      |



**Cabinet Office**

---

TO: The Hon Patricia J Gordon-Pamplin, JP, MP  
Shadow Minister of Health

FROM: The Hon Wayne L Furbert, JP, MP  
Minister for the Cabinet Office

DATE: June 14 2019

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS**

**1. Will the Honourable Minister please provide this Honourable House with a detailed breakdown of the \$130,000 costs for the Efficiency Commission, specifying recipient, date of each instalment and the purpose for which the disbursements were made?**

The detailed costs and payments for the Efficiency Committee are as follows:

| <b>Payment Date</b> | <b>Payee</b>     | <b>Amount</b> | <b>Explanation</b>        |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| 29/03/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 23/04/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 15/05/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 27/06/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 27/07/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 16/08/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 19/09/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/10/18            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 2,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/01/19            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 1,500.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 4/3/2019            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 1,500.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 28/03/19            | RICHARD L. JAMES | 1,000.00      | Efficiency Committee Fees |



|           |                            |          |                           |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| 6/9/2018  | KARAMOKO S DARRELL DICKENS | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 19/09/18  | KARAMOKO S DARRELL DICKENS | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/10/18  | KARAMOKO S DARRELL DICKENS | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/01/19  | KARAMOKO S DARRELL DICKENS | 1,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 28/03/19  | KARAMOKO S DARRELL DICKENS | 500.00   | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/03/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 23/04/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 15/05/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 27/06/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 27/07/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 16/08/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 19/09/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/10/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/11/18  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 6/12/2018 | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/01/19  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 28/02/19  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 28/03/19  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 28/04/19  | WAYNE L FURBERT            | 5,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/03/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 23/04/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 15/05/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 27/06/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 27/07/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 16/08/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 19/09/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/10/18  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 29/01/19  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,500.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 28/02/19  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 28/03/19  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |
| 2/5/2019  | JAMES S JARDINE            | 2,000.00 | Efficiency Committee Fees |