



**2020/2021 SESSION  
of the  
BERMUDA SENATE  
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**21 DECEMBER 2020  
Virtual Sitting**

*Sitting 6 of the 2020/2021 Session  
(pages 87–96)*

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

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**BERMUDA SENATE****OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
21 DECEMBER 2020  
VIRTUAL SITTING  
10:01 AM***Sitting Number 6 of the 2020/2021 Session*

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

**The President:** Good morning, Senators.  
The Senate is now in session; shall we pray?

**PRAYERS**

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

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

*[Minutes of 16 December 2020]*

**The President:** The Minutes are of the 16<sup>th</sup> of December. Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Good morning, Madam President and colleagues.

**The President:** Good morning.

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, be taken as read.

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

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Madam President, I move that the Minutes of Wednesday, the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, be confirmed.

**The President:** Is there any objection to that motion?  
No objection; the Minutes of Wednesday, the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, are confirmed.

*[Minutes of 16 December 2020 confirmed]*

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

**MESSAGES**

**The Clerk:** No messages, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Mr. Somner.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**The President:** There are none.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS****APPOINTMENTS TO SESSIONAL  
AND STANDING COMMITTEES**

**The President:** I do have one announcement for Senators. And that is in accordance with the Sessional and Standing Committees of both Houses, I wish to announce the Senate members of the following committees:

On the **Private Bills Committee**, Senator Michelle Simmons, the Vice President, and Senator Arianna Hodgson have agreed to represent the Senate on that committee.

And on the **Register of Members' Interest Committee**, Senator Lindsay Simmons and Senator Marcus Jones have agreed to be representatives on that committee.

And on behalf of the Senate body, I would like to thank them for their agreement to serve on these committees.

**NOTICES OF MOTION**

**The President:** There are none.

**PETITIONS**

**The President:** There are none.

**STATEMENTS**

**The President:** We have two Statements from Senator Richardson. The first one is the Parole Board Report.

Senator Curtis Richardson, you have the floor.

**PAROLE BOARD REPORT 2017–2020**

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** Good day, Madam President and everyone.

Madam President, I am pleased to introduce the [Report of the Parole Board for 2017–2020](#), in compliance with section 8 of the Parole Board Act

2001. As we may be aware, under the Act the board is an independent body empowered to make decisions governing the time and conditions of release of inmates by assessing the risk they pose to the community and to themselves.

Madam President, the parole process starts at the beginning of an inmate's incarceration. It is the inmate's responsibility to demonstrate the ability and willingness to live a prosocial life through recreational and vocational goal-setting programmes. In addition, a convicted person must have served one-third of their sentence and otherwise present a low risk to the community before being considered for parole. The board is mandated to meet with all incarcerated persons who are eligible for consideration of parole three months prior to their parole eligibility date (PED). Madam President, the board was able to meet with all such persons as specified before their PED, with the exception of one inmate due to the global pandemic.

For the years under review, Madam President, the board highlighted changes resulting from a 2019 Supreme Court ruling and a female parolee at large; both of these matters had their genesis in 2016. The board has worked to change its process of governing and handling of parole breaches and recalls successfully since.

Madam President, the board continues to work well in its role as part of the criminal justice system. Senators will note that the grant of parole is not taken lightly, as the report indicates: "The safety of the community weighs heavily with the Board (and) each deliberation is done with grave consideration." The board extends its gratitude to its partner agencies, given the challenges placed upon them to accomplish the parole process. Madam President, I too would like to commend the cooperation and commitment to duty of the Department of Corrections and Court Services personnel for their role in assisting the board to meet its mandate.

Madam President, during the reporting years, the board granted parole to 37 persons, and seven parolees were recalled. Additionally, the board met with 129 post-released parolees for update reviews, and 12 were deemed to have re-offended seriously enough to be recalled.

Madam President, the complexity of the board's decisions includes the facts of the crime, past history, treatment needs, community and family support, risk to re-offend, and input by the Department of Corrections and the victim. Before inmates are considered for parole, they must meet two elementary requirements, those being obtaining (1) suitable pre-approved accommodation and (2) employment. The board also considers suitable educational pursuits in the place of employment. Madam President, as of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019, most inmates had been successful in obtaining employment. It is important to note that post COVID-19, employment has become more challenging.

Madam President, the board also gave some recommendations as it relates to programming and facility improvements, which the Department of Corrections and the Ministry Headquarters are addressing.

Madam President, I wish to thank the former Chairman, Mr. Rolfe Commissiong JP, and the other members of the board for their service and commitment to the administration of justice under their remit. Madam President, I would also like to welcome the new Chairman of the Parole Board, the Honourable Derrick V. Burgess JP, MP.

I am grateful for your leadership on this very important board.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Richardson. I believe you have a second Statement. You can proceed with that.

### **TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS BOARD REPORT 2018–2019**

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

I rise this morning to introduce to the Legislature the Report of the [Treatment of Offenders Board for 2018/19](#). This report is in accordance with section 8(1) of the Treatment of Offenders Board Act 1979, and Rule 170 of the Correctional Rules 1980 as per the 1989 Revision. The Treatment of Offenders Board is governed by the Prison Rules 1980, the Prisons Act 1979, the Prisons Amendment Act 2013 and the Treatment of Offenders [Board] Act 1979. Senators will be aware that the Treatment of Offenders Board was created to ensure the rights of inmates while incarcerated and that fair and adequate treatment is upheld within all corrections facilities.

Madam President, the responsibilities of the board include being available to inmates who wish to discuss any ongoing concerns, and it is the board's duty to ensure guidance to inmates on how best to move forward with any processes that they may seek advice on. The board is also responsible for conducting adjudications regarding inmates who may [contravene] the prison rules which are guided by the Prisons Act 1979, and to hand down disciplinary sanctions on offending inmates.

Madam President, the board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at the Westgate Correctional Facility and on the third Wednesday of each month at the Co-Ed Correctional Facility, which includes the Farm Facility Right Living House.

Madam President, throughout 2018, there were many breaches of the perimeters at the corrections facilities, including an escalation in both inmate and officer dissatisfaction with the overall operation and management of the facilities. The board continues to adjudicate inmates for various forms of contrabands

and have had to tighten awards in response to the escalations.

Madam President, please allow me to give the statistical breakdown of the adjudications and interviews for infractions against prison rules and general concerns of inmates, respectively. There were 54 adjudications at the Westgate Facility, 15 related to cell phone infractions, 17 instances of assault and 22 general infractions against prison rules. There were seven adjudications at the Farm Facility: two cell phone infractions and five general infractions against prison rules. There were no adjudications from the Co-Ed Facility.

Madam President, rota visits are conducted in teams of two or more members at each facility. They allow for on-location discussions and resolutions with both inmates and Corrections Department administration and officers of ongoing concern[s]. There was a total of six visits to the Westgate Correctional Facility. There was one visit to the Co-Ed Facility and five visits to the Farm Facility. During these visits, members spoke with inmates about the challenges at the facility and their overall well-being.

Madam President, the board would like to acknowledge the efforts of the inmates who have given back to society by speaking to selected groups and individuals and helping others to avoid the pits into which they fell. The board also wishes to acknowledge the results of the Right Living House programme. The inmates who were interviewed have shown a huge improvement as a result of being enrolled in the Right Living House. The success rate of that programme remains positive, and the board commends the Right Living House staff on a job well done.

Madam President, throughout 2019, various facility visits and interviews unveiled the harsh realities of life in prison. Inmates and administration both noted that the environment at the facilities began to be of grave concern—physical and otherwise. Levels of tension at Westgate continued to rise as the demographics of the inmate populace shifted. Westgate is home to younger men with long-term sentences.

Madam President, the physical condition of the facilities is understandably poor, given their age. Each facility continues to record its restorative needs with the Department of Works and Engineering. The 2019 hurricane season added to the deterioration and destruction of the facilities and the perimeters. Thus, security breaches are still of grave concern.

The board continues to adjudicate inmates for various forms of prison rule violations. The following is a statistical breakdown of adjudications and interviews for infractions against prison rules and general concerns of inmates, respectively:

Madam President, in total there were four adjudications at the Farm Facility. There were [54] adjudications at the Westgate Facility. The level of contention at the Westgate Facility worsened over the year as inmates struggled to conform to life at the facility.

Approximately 35 per cent of prison rule infractions involve mobile phones and related parts. The ever-increasing number of mobile phones and offenses is a battle for the Corrections Department team. They continue to combat this issue.

Madam President, the frequency of rota visits decreased during 2019 as security concerns arose for the members of the board, partly due to industrial action. The Correction Department's administration and the Treatment of Offenders Board worked together to ensure that confidence was restored. There was a total of two visits to the Westgate Correctional Facility and 23 inmate interviews. During these visits, members spoke with inmates about the challenges at the facility and their overall well-being.

*[Pause]*

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** (Pardon me.)

Madam President, there were three visits to the Co-Ed Facility, and one inmate was interviewed. The Right Living House programme shifted to the Co-Ed facility after the programme at the Farm closed due to the building being deemed uninhabitable. The programme itself continues to benefit inmates immensely. The success rate remains positive, and the board commends the inmates and staff on a job well done. Overall, Madam President, the main issues expressed by inmates at the Co-Ed are relative to the overall physical state of the facility.

Madam President, I wish to thank the hard work and dedication of the Treatment of Offenders Board members. The work they provide and the commitment to our corrections community are paramount. I also wish to thank all other agencies involved who work together to ensure that the board is able to carry out its mandate safely and effectively. Our co-operation and collaboration will ensure that we conduct the work of the Government together and strive to improve the health and well-being of the corrections community. Only together can we succeed.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Richardson.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**The President:** There are none.

## FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

**The President:** There are none.

## FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

**The President:** There are none.

## QUESTION PERIOD

**The President:** We will first entertain questions on the first Statement which was given by Senator Richardson, and that is on the Parole Board Report 2017–2020.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on this report?

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

**The President:** Good morning, Senator Ben Smith. You have the floor.

### QUESTION 1: PAROLE BOARD REPORT 2017–2020

**Sen. Ben Smith:** Madam President, I just note that the report is from 2017 to 2020. I wonder if the Junior Minister can let us know why it is 2017 to 2020 instead of each individual year, and why the reports were late.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** Madam President.

**The President:** Yes.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** I could defer to give that answer in greater detail at the next sitting.

**The President:** Thank you.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** And when Senate meets. Actually, I may even prior to that send a response to Senator Smith by email.

**The President:** Yes. I was going to suggest that rather than wait until the next meeting, you can respond in that manner. So thank you.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** Yes. Yes.

**The President:** Would any other Senator care to ask questions?

Or, Senator Smith, do you have a follow-up question, supplementary question or a second question?

**Sen. Ben Smith:** No. That is okay, Madam President.

**The President:** That is all right.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on this report?

Hearing none, then we will move on to the second Statement, which was the Treatment of Offenders Board Report 2018/19.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on this report?

## QUESTION 1: TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS BOARD REPORT 2018/19

**Sen. Ben Smith:** Yes, Madam President. I would just like to ask the same question I asked before because the report should be annual. And with the detail that is in these reports and what can be done with the information, it would be important we have them in a timely manner. So if the Junior Minister can undertake to just give us the information on why they are late and how we are going to fix that going forward? Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Ben Smith.

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

Senator Michelle Simmons, you have the floor.

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Thanks, Madam President.

I would like to ask about a statement in the report which indicates that “the physical condition of the facilities—and that is plural—is understandably poor, given their age.” I know that the facilities down here in the East (i.e., the Co-Ed Facility and the Prison Farm) are very old facilities. Westgate is a lot younger. I cannot remember the exact year when it opened, but my question is, What is being done about the physical condition of these facilities? And I am particularly concerned about Westgate, which is still a relatively new (in my eyes) facility. So the question is, What is being done to improve those physical conditions? Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons. Is that your only question? [Do you] have a supplementary?

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** No. I do not.

**The President:** Thank you.

Senator Richardson.

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

To Senator Smith's *[sic]* question . . . I am sorry. Who was it?

**The President:** Senator Michelle Simmons was the second one.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** Right. The first one was Senator Smith?

**The President:** Yes. Senator Ben Smith.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** I will also confirm . . . there may be a typographical error in the heading of this report for the Treatment of Offenders Board.

The statement that I read clarifies that it is from 2018/19. I will clear that up and get verification of that typographical error and to also answer your question as related to the length of time these reports come, by email.

Again, to the second question from Senator—

**The President:** Michelle Simmons.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** —Michelle Simmons, I will also, if you do not mind, get the answer to your question directly by email.

**The President:** Senator Michelle Simmons indicates that she would look forward to that.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on these Statements?

No. Then, Senator Richardson, I see that you have responded to the questions that were presented last week. Did you want to read those responses now? I think there were two Senators who had asked questions from last week. And one was Michelle Simmons, and her questions were in reference to the nursing care home beds.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** Thank you, Madam President. The answer to those questions will be forwarded to the respective [Senator] today.

**The President:** Thank you. And the other one, yes, was . . . So Senators will receive those responses today?

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** Correct. That is Senator Simmons and Senator Tucker as well—

**The President:** Tucker, yes. That is true.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** —had a series of questions.

**The President:** Yes.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** I have all replies. They will be sent out today.

**The President:** Thank you very much, Senator Richardson. It is greatly appreciated.

**Sen. Curtis Richardson:** I think Senator Wight had a question as well, and I will have responses [for] him.

**The President:** Thank you very much, Senator Curtis Richardson, for that response.

Minister Peets, I just want clarification on the Orders of the Day.

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

**The President:** Good morning again.

I just wanted to clarify with you whether or not all of the points 1 through 9 on the Orders of the Day, from 1 through 9 will be carried over as well as items number 10 and 11?

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets:** Yes, Madam President. I am seeking the gracious consideration to accept the recommendation to adjourn all of the business for Orders of the Day until January the 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**The President:** Thank you for that clarification, Minister Peets. In that case, we will move on to item number 14.

## MOTIONS

**The President:** And, Senator Michelle Simmons, I think you have a motion. You have the floor.

## MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNOR

### CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Thank you, Madam President.

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

“May it please Your Excellency:

“The Senate has the honour to present its compliments to Your Excellency and family and respectfully extends its greetings for a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.”

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons. And I am sure all Senators support that motion.

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Thank you.

**The President:** You have a second one?

## MESSAGE TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Yes, I do.

Madam President, I move that the following message be sent to His Honour the Speaker and the Honourable House of Assembly:

“To His Honour the Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:

"The Senate has much pleasure in extending to your Honourable House sincere greetings for a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year."

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Simmons.

Are there any objections to that motion and the earlier one being sent, from any of the Senators?

Hearing none, those two motions will be re-sent. Thank you, Senator Michelle Simmons.

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Thank you, Madam President.

## CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

**The President:** Would any Senator care to speak on these items?

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** Yes. I would, Madam President.

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

**Sen. Michelle Simmons:** I would like to extend congratulations to educational psychologist Dr. Kendra-Lee Pearman, who is the new Executive Director of the Reading Clinic. Dr. Pearman has quite a bit of experience working with children with exceptions. And I am sure that students and parents who seek the support of the Reading Clinic will appreciate her assistance.

I also would like to extend thanks to Dr. Glenn Faries (who is retiring as Executive Director of the Reading Clinic) for all that he has done to advance the work of that valuable institution in the community.

Madam President, I also would like to extend very hearty congratulations to the awardees who received recognition from the Bermuda Arts Council last evening at a very special ceremony in which our very own Minister Peets was involved. There were three very talented Bermudian artists who were recognised for their pioneering work. The first is singer Peter Nash, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award. The second is visual artist Sharon Muhammad, formerly Sharon Wilson, who received a Founders Award. And well-known musician Wendell "Shine" Hayward received a Founders Award. They are three well known, well respected artists here in Bermuda. And I send hearty congratulations to all of them. I am sure the Senate would like to join in those congratulatory remarks. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you very much, Senator Michelle Simmons. And I agree with you that all Senators would want to be associated.

But would any other Senator care to speak further on Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches?

Hearing none, I would like to specifically associate myself with the comments of Senator Michelle Simmons on the congratulations to Dr. Glenn Faries, whom I had the pleasure of liaising with while I was on the LCCA [Lady Cubitt Compassionate Association]. He did so much to help young students [whom] that association was helping. So, kudos to him.

## ADJOURNMENT

**The President:** Dr. Peets, Minister Peets, you have the floor.

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

I recommend that the Senate session be adjourned until January the 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

**The President:** Thank you, Minister Peets.

Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** I would, Madam President.

**The President:** Senator Simmons, Lindsay Simmons.

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Yes, yes.

**The President:** Senator Lindsay Simmons, you have the floor.

## MAIDEN SPEECH

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

Madam President, I would like to call this my official Maiden Speech in the Senate.

Madam President, currently I am President of the Foster Parents Association. And I would like to talk to you about foster care and what it means to me and what we do for the children in Bermuda.

Going back to when I was a little girl, I did not know anything about foster care. I just knew my mother and my father raised up four girls and we did not necessarily want for anything. We had a great life. And then I got into Berkeley, I realised that not everybody had the same opportunities that I was given. When I graduated from Berkeley, I was given the Gold Cup, the Community Service Cup for community service. My parents always instilled in us that need to give back. And that has been something that my family has always done.

My house's name is "Do-drop Inn"; anybody drops into our house. We were able to bring anybody home. Anybody needed a meal, we fed them. So as my parents instilled this in us . . . and at 24 I decided to follow my mother's footsteps and become a foster parent. And I got a four-year-old beautiful girl. She graduated from Berkeley last year. And it warmed my

heart to see her go through these stages and graduate. And she was given the Glenda Edwards [Scholarship] Fund that we started seven years ago.

I just want to say that the children in Bermuda who are in foster care are our children. They should not be children who are *left out*. They are children who need extra love. I could not imagine growing up and not being raised by my family. So imagine the only home you know or the only home you had ever been in is the home of a complete stranger. It gives me great honour and pride to know that so many people in community rally together around these children, whether it be to give money for scholarships . . .

And in December every year, November–December, we do an angel tree at Rosa’s Cantina. My boss is like, *Lindsay, you always want to do something*. So the angel tree is the most special incentive I do yearly. And this is our fifth year. So I do angels for every single child who is in foster care and children who are in the homes, Brangman Home and the Residential Treatment [Services] for the boys. Madam President, all of our angels were taken, and people brought back gifts.

I got a Facebook message a few minutes after I posted that we were doing the angel tree again this year—because we started a little late—from Celia Correia. She sent me a message: Do I have an eight-year-old boy who needs a gift? She said, *I have a son who is eight*. And she wanted him to know that there are children out there who do not experience Christmas how he experiences it. She came. She got the angel. She was the first one to bring back the gift, with her son. She did not just bring back the gift; she brought her son. And I had a conversation with him, and I let him know how fortunate he is every year and how he is going to make this eight-year-boy’s Christmas great.

On the angels we put what children want for Christmas. Now, they are just—you know, some children want iPads, laptops, MacBooks. And some children want underclothes. And when I see the ones with underclothes, it breaks my heart because they are asked, *What would you like for Christmas?* And for them to write that they want underclothes breaks my heart because they could ask anything. But, you know, she came. And she brought her son, brought the gifts. And I smiled.

I have a long-time friend whom I met five years ago, Denise Nanette, from RenRe [Renaissance Reinsurance]. She is a silent angel. She and her team at RenRe, they go out and they make sure these children have iPads, laptops. She will say, *Lindsay, what else do they need?* RenRe is a huge supporter of this, and they have been since we started—throughout the year Denise asks, *Does anybody need food during COVID-19?* She reached out to me, and we made sure single parents and the elderly had food during COVID-19. Denise does not like recognition, but she is one of those people who makes sure that

hundreds are fed and clothed, silently with no recognition.

We have Diane Steede, from Walkers Bermuda. Her team, this is their second year helping us. And they make sure, same thing, the children get the clothes they need, iPads, MacBooks and things that I might want too, but . . . No, but seriously, they make sure that they get gifts that children actually want. They make sure that they have a bright Christmas. And it warms my heart. And I am emotional about it because I see the children come and collect these gifts . . . and the pedal bikes. We also did gifts for Big Brothers and Big Sisters. And I take it to Patrina [O’Connor-Paynter] every year.

We had Mansfield from Port Royal Fire Service. He said, *Hey, Lindsay*. He came up to the job.

And I said, *Look. We have an angel tree!*

And he said, *My guys are going to donate one*. He took four angels himself. They donated money so that a child could get a laptop and other gifts. You have Inspector Tracy Burgess, who has always supported the Foster Parents Association. She and her team took 15 angels, the Gang Unit at the Bermuda Police Service. You have people who come together for these children. You have everyday people who make sure that these children have gifts for Christmas. And I know that there are a lot of things that are needed in Bermuda. But imagine waking up Christmas morning and not having a gift. They all have gifts, and we make sure of it.

Even I get people to donate gifts for families who are in need—grocery vouchers. BELCO every year comes through. They give us money to make sure that we could get gifts for the children. They give us \$1,000, for BELCO vouchers to give to families who are in need.

And then on Saturday we had a TV for the Boys Home. And then a gentleman, Raymond Rochester, he donated \$1,000 a few years back to get gifts. He said, *Lindsay, why you didn’t tell me about the angel tree?*

I said, *Raymond, you’re up here almost every day. You didn’t see the angel tree?*

He said, *You know, I go straight to the bar.*

So I said, *Well, you know what? I need a TV for the Girls Home*. So we joked around, and I said, *Look! Ms. Trew is here from Family Services. She just asked me for a TV*. So I said, *Take a picture, Raymond, with her. You’re going to give me money, right?*

He said, *You know I am going to give you money, Lindsay*. He went in his pocket and took out some money. And with him and Donnie [Correia] from Sound Decision . . . I sent Donnie a message that said, *Donnie, I need a TV*. He gave me a huge deal on it. And the money that Raymond donated would buy Brangman Home a TV, as they do not have one.

I am fortunate that the Premier appointed me as the Junior Minister of Social Development and Seniors, because these children mean a lot to me. I



see them. We have relationships with the foster families. And yearly we do a party for the children, Madam President. This year, unfortunately we could not do it. And that angel I spoke about earlier, Denise, she was going to throw a whole party for the foster children. But COVID-19 happened, so that got scratched. But as always, she made sure that all foster children got gifts.

So I just want to thank the public for supporting and rallying around these children to make Christmas that much better. Because this year has been one of the toughest years of my life, so I can only imagine people who are struggling.

And I just want to say a special shout-out to the foster parents. Because the foster parents whom we have in Bermuda are not rich. They are rich in love. But they are everyday hard-working individuals who go over and beyond, because the foster [stipend] that we receive are barely enough to feed them. You step in as a foster parent because you want to open your heart and your home to these children. So it is a commitment, and it is an everyday commitment. These children become your children, whether they leave your home or they stay.

I was fortunate enough six years ago to gather a little bundle of joy right out of the hospital. And I was able to adopt her. She is my daughter. And without being a foster parent, I would have never gotten this miracle. I mean, they say *nature versus nurture*. I am mixed, but I look white. (I will put that out there.) And my daughter is a beautiful brown-skinned baby. If I did not know any better, I would have thought I gave birth to her. She acts just like me, Madam President. It is scary.

But I just want to thank the community again for coming together and making sure that these children have a bright Christmas. And that I always in our parties, when we have our parties yearly, I let them know that the community bought these gifts. The community loves and cares about them, because at the end of the day these children are our future. And if we give them the tools and show them the love now, they will be positive, productive members of our society because they already come with baggage. And when we start peeling away the layers, they are just like us.

So, Madam President, I just want to put it out there that these are our children. And they should not be forgotten. If anybody wants to reach out and find out more about foster care, I would encourage this. There are tons of children who need love. And not just that you need to take them into your homes. You can even go to visit Patrina at Big Brothers and Big Sisters and sign up even if it is every weekend for a couple of hours. Not just children in foster care need help. There are children with single parents who might need a break or [there] is not a mother or a father to help these children. I just think that it is a lot of people who

do not know that we have children who could use your support.

So, Madam President, thank you for this time, and I hope that the community realises that these are the children who should not be forgotten, because they are a part of the thread of Bermuda.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

I am sure the entire Senate body was very moved by your comments. And we certainly note your commitment, your sincerity. You are where you are needed.

I personally want to congratulate you and to commend you for the work that you do. And I think sharing this information with us, the Senate body, as well as the general public who may not be aware of all that you do and the needs of children in Bermuda, I think you have certainly shared that. And as a result we were all more informed. So I thank you personally.

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

**Sen. Robin Tucker:** Madam President.

**The President:** Senator Robin Tucker, you have the floor.

**Sen. Robin Tucker:** I just wanted to ask if I can associate myself with your sentiments as well in congratulating Senator Simmons, because her commitment truly does come through.

And so, Senator Simmons, I just want to say thank you for what you do for Bermuda's children. It is absolutely well needed. So, thank you. Thank you for your commitment.

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Hearing none, then, Senators, the Senate will stand adjourned until January the 13<sup>th</sup>. Thank you all for your presence and commitment today.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Thank you, Madam President. Season's greetings.

*[Crosstalk and laughter]*

**The President:** Before I go, I will say . . . Minister Peets, you have the floor. You wanted to say . . . I had forgotten to give my comments as well. But, Minister Peets, you have the floor if you want to say something about greetings.

### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

**Sen. the Hon. Dr. Ernest Peets:** Sure. Thank you so much, Madam President.

I certainly want to wish all of my Senate colleagues a safe and blessed Christmas. And we certainly thank you for your deliberation and your consideration and the work that you do. Thank you so much.

### CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

**The President:** Thank you, Minister Peets.

And I would like to absolutely follow you and commend all Senators for the work that they have done in this last month or so that we have been meeting. And I want to wish each and every one of you a most blessed and enjoyable and *safe* Christmas, and also to advise and encourage all Bermudians to follow the COVID-19 restrictions to ensure that our Island remains safe. It is absolutely critical. The numbers are rising, and I think we need to encourage everyone to follow the restrictions, wear their masks, maintain social distance and be responsible when it comes to mixing households.

So with that, have a blessed Christmas, everyone. And we will see you in the New Year.

Thank you. Senate is adjourned.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Thank you, Madam President. Merry Christmas to all.

Merry Christmas! Have a Happy Christmas, everyone, and be safe.

*[At 10:58 am, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 13 January 2021.]*

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