



**CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

2013/14 SESSION

11 October 2013

Third Sitting of the Third Meeting

(Throne Speech and Budget Meeting)

(pages 135–180)

**Hon Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MLA
Speaker**

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PRESENT WERE:

SPEAKER

Hon. Juliana Y O'Connor-Connolly, JP

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA	<i>The Premier</i> , Minister of Home and Community Affairs
Hon Moses I Kirkconnell, JP, MLA	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of District Administration, Tourism and Transport
Hon D Kurt Tibbetts, OBE, JP, MLA	Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure
Hon Marco S Archer, MLA	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon Osbourne V Bodden, MLA	Minister of Health, Sports, Youth and Culture
Hon G Wayne Panton, MLA	Financial Services, Commerce and Environment
Hon Tara A Rivers, MLA	Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon Franz I Manderson, Cert. Hon, JP	Deputy Governor, ex officio Member responsible for the Civil Service
Hon Samuel Bulgin, QC	Attorney General, ex officio Member responsible for Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Mr Winston C Connolly, Jr, MLA	Fifth Elected Member for George Town
Mr Joseph X Hew, MLA	Sixth Elected Member for George Town
Mr Alva H Suckoo, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, OBE, JP, MLA	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , First Elected Member for West Bay
Mr Bernie A Bush, MLA	Third Elected Member for West Bay
Capt A Eugene Ebanks, JP, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for West Bay

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Mr D Ezzard Miller, JP, MLA	Elected Member for North Side
Mr V Arden McLean, JP, MLA	Elected Member for East End

APOLOGIES

Mr Roy McTaggart, MLA	Second Elected Member for George Town
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
THIRD MEETING 2013/14 SESSION
FRIDAY
11 OCTOBER 2013
10.43AM
Third Sitting**

[Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: I will invite the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to grace us with prayers.

PRAYERS

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, it is very appropriate this morning to say from the Bible [Proverbs 15]:

A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived: We beseech Thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of the Legislative Assembly now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.

Bless our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II; Philip, Duke of Edinburgh; Charles, Prince of Wales; and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Governor of our Islands, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Official Members and Ministers of Cabinet and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that we may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

Let us say the Lord's Prayer together: *Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us peace, now and always. Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated. The House is now resumed.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

APOLOGIES

The Speaker: I have received no notices for new announcements. We still have apologies from the Honourable Roy McTaggart, due to a death in his immediate family.

SPEAKER'S RULES

The Speaker: I promised yesterday that I would present the Rules made by the Speaker under section 14 of the Legislative Assembly (Immunities, Powers and Privilege) Law (1999 Revision), Notice of Orders:

By virtue of section 14(2) copies of orders made by the Speaker shall be duly authenticated by the Clerk and exhibited in a conspicuous position in the precincts of the Assembly to which they relate; and such copies, when so authenticated and exhibited, shall be sufficient notice to all persons affected thereby. In accordance with section 14(1) of the Legislative Assembly (Immunities, Powers and Privileges) Law (1999 Revision), the Speaker is authorised to issue such orders as he deems necessary for the regulation of the admittance of strangers to the precincts of the Assembly.

Section 2 provides that "stranger" means any person other than a Member or Officer of the Assembly.

"Officer of the Assembly" means a person appointed to the staff of the Assembly whether permanently or temporarily and includes the Clerk and the Serjeant-at-Arms on duty within the precincts of the Assembly.

Section 13 states that, "No stranger shall be entitled, as of right, to enter or to remain within the precincts of the Assembly."

Section 17 provides that, "Whoever -

- (a) being a stranger, enters or attempts to enter the precincts of the Assembly in contravention of any order of the Speaker;
- (b) being a stranger, fails or refuses to withdraw from the precincts of the Assembly when ordered to withdraw therefrom by the Speaker;
- (c) being a stranger, contravenes any rule made by the Speaker under the Standing Orders; or
- (d) attends any sitting of the Assembly as the representative of any journal after the general permission granted under Standing Orders to the representative or representatives of that journal has been revoked, is guilty of an offence and liable to summary conviction to a fine of fifty dollars and to imprisonment for three months."

Therefore, in accordance with section 14 of the Legislative Assembly (Immunities, Powers and Privileges) Law (1999 Revision), the following orders are issued in regard to the regulation of the admittance of strangers to the precincts of the Assembly.

Strangers may be present in the galleries of the Legislative Assembly but not in those sections of the precinct that are set apart for the use of the Members while the House is Sitting, subject to the following Rules which are to govern their conduct -

1. No person shall be admitted to the Public Gallery at any time earlier than 30 minutes before the time fixed for the Sitting of the Legislative Assembly, unless permission of the Clerk of the legislative Assembly has first been obtained.

2. No drinking or eating shall take place in the public gallery.

3. The following persons are authorized to use the Distinguished Strangers Gallery so far as limited accommodation allows:

- (a) The Governor
- (b) Members of the Judiciary
- (c) Justices of the Peace
- (d) Associate and visiting Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
- (e) Spouses and close relatives of Members of the legislative Assembly
- (f) Ministers of Religion
- (g) Visiting Parliamentarians, Consular Officers or overseas dignitaries.

Seating inside the Chamber is reserved only for Associated Members of the local Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA] and persons invited to the Chamber.

4. Bowing to the Speaker: As a mark of respect to the Chair, strangers shall bow to the Chair (the Speaker) when entering or leaving the public gallery and the Chamber.

5. Strangers shall not enter into parts of the House appropriated to Members, unless with the express invitation of the Speaker and Members of the legislative Assembly or as so directed by the Clerk.

Parts of the House appropriated to Members are:

- The Speaker's Chambers
- The Ante Room leading into the Chamber
- The Chamber
- The Common Room
- The Committee Rooms
- The Dining Room
- Members' Meeting Room
- All other Rooms beyond the Members' lobby
- All offices of the Department

6. Strangers entering and leaving the building shall use the front entrance of the building only, pass through security, and shall then be directed by an Officer of the Assembly under the instructions of the Clerk.

7. Persons who have been summoned to the legislative Assembly by the Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members of Cabinet and/or the Chairman of any Committee of the House, shall seek assistance from an Officer of the Department and shall not, without permission, enter into any part of the House appropriated to Members.

8. When summoned to House proceedings by the Speaker, or the Chairman of any Committee of the House, persons shall be seated in designated seats behind Honourable Ministers and Official Members.

9. Members should not bring other persons into the Chamber while the House is sitting, except where the person is acting as an advisor to the Minister or Member in charge of the business before the House.

10. If Committee meetings are held within the Chamber, persons invited/summoned shall be seated at a table provided in front of the bar in the Chamber and not in Members' seats. They shall not be permitted to enter into any part of the House appropriated to Members.

11. Dress Code: Appropriate attire is to be observed by Strangers in the House. If the Serjeant observes any inappropriate dress he shall disallow any visitor access to the public gallery. Jackets or suits shall be worn in the Chamber (with the exception of Committee meetings in the Chamber).

12. Press Dress Code: Any member of the press covering proceedings in the public gallery are required to wear appropriate business attire and appropriate shoes whether the member is male or female.

13. Documents or papers to be circulated to Members during any House Sitting or Committee Meeting shall be addressed to the Clerk for distribution.

14. Standing Order 84(2) provides that any representative of any journal or newspaper when attending meetings of the House shall sit in the area allotted for the press and shall under no conditions engage any Member in conversation during such sittings.

15. Under the Register of Interests law 1996, any person having received permission to attend a meeting of the Legislative Assembly, or a meeting of its committees, for the purpose of reporting in any newspaper or periodical, or in any radio or television broadcast, the meeting or any matter related to the meeting - is required to register their interests in accordance with the form provided in Schedule 3 of the Law.

16. A Press Pass shall be issued by the Clerk to a journalist whose registration form has been received by the Registrar of Interests. Once a registration form has been received a Press Pass will be issued within 24 hours from the Office of the Clerk. All journalists, so registered, shall be required to wear a Press Pass whilst attending a meeting of the legislative Assembly.

17. If any journalist fails to register in compliance with the law, they shall not be permitted to enter the Press Boxes to cover proceedings.

18. The press are subject to the Rules of the House issued by the Speaker and shall be subject to the relevant provision of The Legislative Assembly (Immunities, Powers and Privileges) Law (1999 Revision) and Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders (2006 Revision) and to any direction given by the Speaker, the Clerks, the Serjeant-at-Arms and Security Officers.

19. Permission is granted to any representative of the press who is approved under the Register of Interests Law 1996 (Declaration of Press Interests), to prepare transcripts of the Legislative Assembly proceedings through the use of laptop computers, iPads or any other silent touch-typing device so long as it does not interrupt the business of the House. However, other electronic recording device, photography or television is forbidden, without the express permission of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

20. If any member of the Press has failed to register in compliance with the Register of Interests Law 1996, they shall not be permitted to enter the Press Boxes to cover proceedings. When a declaration has been completed and received by the Clerk, a press badge will be issued and at such time admission to the Press Boxes will be permitted.

21. The reading of books or papers (other than Order Papers) in the Public and Distinguished Strangers Galleries is not permitted.

22. It is considered disorderly for any clapping, talking, gesture, nod or any other communication between Members and persons in the public gallery or press boxes.

23. The Legislative Assembly is regarded as the only place of its kind and one in which the Speaker has exclusive jurisdiction. Thus, in the Legislative Assembly, the police are subject to the authority of the Speaker. And Members have parliamentary privilege. Police have no power to enter the Legislative Assembly in the ordinary course of their duties without the consent of the Speaker. They have no routine security role within the building or precincts, unless specifically requested by the Serjeant at Arms or requested by the Speaker.

They are signed as required by the Clerk and the Speaker, and copies will be distributed to all honourable Members of the House. We ask that you ensure that relevant persons called for evidence are cognisant of it and they will also be posted in accordance with convention at the front of the building. Extra copies are also available at the reception desk for members of the press. And now that I have concluded, it will go online.

Thank you for your indulgence and attention.

I should also indicate that I urge Members to set aside the relevant time as the Premier directs in his leadership for the amendment of the Standing Orders and the conduct of the proceedings as they are much in need of urgent modernisation.

Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: I have given approval to the Honourable Minister responsible for Education to deliver a statement this morning.

PRIVATE SECTOR PENSIONS UPDATE

Hon. Tara A. Rivers, Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence in this regard.

Madam Speaker, I would like to address and update the topic of Private Sector Pensions, and the nature of the work that has been undertaken in recent years to tackle long-standing backlog deficiencies in the private sector pension regime, including those identified in the Own Motion Investigation Report of the Complaints Commissioner of which a press release was issued by the Office of the Complaints Commissioner and reported in the press yesterday, and again today.

Madam Speaker, the report by the Complaints Commissioner in September 2010, was produced

within a context of much-needed reform of the pensions' regime. There has been no major revision enacted to the National Pensions Law since 1998. Long-standing concerns included:

- a culture of non-compliance;
- a long-standing significant backlog of complaints; and
- limited attention to regulation of pension plans and plan providers.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members of this House are aware that the Department of Labour and Pensions was established in early 2012, and is an amalgamation of the Labour Investigations, Inspections, and Occupational Safety Units of the old Department of Employment Relations, along with the former National Pensions Office.

The Department of Labour and Pensions now administers the Labour Law and the National Pensions Law. Matters relating to Work Readiness and Training, and employment placement services are now handled by the National Workforce Development Agency.

On 22 May of this year, having been sworn in as a Member of this honourable House and as a Member of Cabinet, the Department of Labour and Pensions became part of my responsibility as the Minister for Employment. But, Madam Speaker, it is important to note and for the record to reflect, that this problem of pensions delinquency didn't start with my tenure as Minister of Employment.

On 29 January 2010, the Office of the Complaints Commissioner (OCC) launched an Own Motion Investigation (OMI) into the ability of the National Pensions Office to effectively investigate, charge, and convict companies who are non-compliant with pension contributions as mandated under the National Pensions Law. In September 2010 the Report, styled "Penny Pinching Pensions", was published.

Since the publication of the Report, I have been informed that the Ministry (and, by extension, the National Pensions Board and the National Pensions Office) provided regular updates on the status of the outstanding recommendations to the Office of the Complaints Commissioner, the last formal update given just this week on Monday, 7 October, 2013.

The Commissioner has confirmed that the Ministry and Department of Labour and Pensions are in compliance with 10 of the 21 recommendations in her report. Of the remaining 7 of the 11 recommendations yet to be complied with, 7 of them will be cured by a revised National Pensions Bill.

Madam Speaker, the National Pensions Bill 2012 was issued for public consultation. I have been told by my chief officer that extensive feedback had been received from the public consultation that took place previously, and that some areas of the Bill have been amended since it was initially gazetted as a re-

sult of the feedback received during the consultation period.

As the new Minister of Employment, I have already given instructions, in fact, having done so almost immediately upon taking up office, to revisit the National Pensions Bill and have provided initial guidance as to the policy considerations and amendments that need to be made to the Bill in order for me to bring it back to Cabinet and then to this honourable House for approval.

Whereas the Bill contains provisions to redress the concerns identified in the 7 recommendations which the Complaints Commissioner identifies as being addressed in the Bill, of which we intend to retain, the current Bill also contains provisions which are inadequate or not in keeping with the policy direction of this Government.

Thus, the Government is committed to bringing forward major legislative changes through a revised National Pensions Bill which addresses the Commissioner's concerns and reflects our policy position as it relates to the private pensions regime.

Madam Speaker, it appears that the Complaints Commissioner has taken umbrage to the fact that the National Pensions Bill 2012 was not passed by the previous administration and is still not yet passed. I agree, Madam Speaker, it is indeed unfortunate that the revision to the National Pensions Law has taken such a long time to enact, since the initial OCC report of 2010.

Clearly, legislative enhancements to strengthen the pensions' compliance regime are obviously much needed. But, Madam Speaker, I cannot accept responsibility for the previous UDP Government's actions, or inaction, in relation to advancing the draft legislation beyond the stage that it is at. I will, however, make a commitment that this Government will look to bring amending legislation this fiscal year which addresses some of the concerns identified by the Complaints Commissioner, among other critical areas of concern for this Government.

As the new Minister, I believe that some of the changes proposed in the 2012 Bill are critical to protect and educate pension plan members and the general public as a whole, and to modernise our pension regime. However, it is only reasonable to recognise and expect that this draft legislation will need to be scrutinised and amended to ensure that it reflects the policies and priorities of this new Government.

The issue of severity of non-compliance will be addressed in their legislation by differentiated penalties in the proposed legislation.

Madam Speaker, there is a clear commitment by the current Government to advance the legislation and the pension regime. I look forward to laying on the Table of this Honourable House the first set of amendments to this key legislation within the current financial year.

Madam Speaker, it is also important to note that what is missing from the Complaints Commissioners' release is the acknowledgment of the hard working and diligent efforts of the lean staff complement of the Department of Labour, the volunteer National Pensions Board and the Ministry of Employment to positively address a significant number of pension complaints to date. It is important, Madam Speaker, to put the numbers issued in the Commissioner's release into context of the working reality.

Madam Speaker, please allow me to speak briefly to this honourable House concerning a few key statistics in relation to delinquencies. For six (6) months covering the period November 2012 to May 2013, the Department of Labour and Pensions (DLP) (of which the National Pensions Office is a unit) was able to hire temporary staff that focused on addressing the backlog of pension issues, to work alongside of the existing NPO staff. The following statistics are worthy of note:

- In February of 2013, the NPO reported that 1,108 employers/companies were delinquent in their pension contributions, i.e. they were in arrears for 45 days or more.
- As a result of a robust delinquency special projects exercise, letters were sent in relation to all 1,108 delinquencies.
- As of June 28 2013, 562 companies were removed from the delinquencies list, and CI\$1.5 million paid into the employees pensions accounts. This was made possible through the efforts of the hard-working staff of the NPO, which included numerous telephone conversations, personal visits and inspections of workplaces, and meetings with delinquent employers where necessary and possible.
- As at June 30 2013, the NPO statistics reveal that there were 1,144 delinquent employers/companies, as well as 167 companies on payment plans with their Administrators.
- Despite the resolution of 562 delinquencies, as previously indicated between February and June 2013, there has been an increase of 598 new delinquencies, these new delinquencies represent those that are delinquent for a shorter period (average of 45 to 60 days) and who traditionally regularise themselves on a short-term cyclical basis.

Madam Speaker, subject to the approval of Finance Committee, the Labour and Pensions Department hopes to increase its staff complement in this fiscal year in an effort to supplement the resources to ensure its effectiveness. The Department has managed to secure funding for an additional senior pensions officer in the 2013/14 budget and will be making steps to recruit to this post.

The filling of this post will help to ensure that the Department is able to continue efforts to address the backlogged items as well as deal with any new pension related items as they occur. In addition, the Department has secured funding for an Assistant Director - Labour and Pensions, which will allow for existing Pensions staff to not be involved in administrative processes outside of those directly related to investigations/inspections. In this way, even more time will be available to deal with pension matters.

Some notable improvements have already been made since I took office, Madam Speaker, which should be shared with the Members of this honourable House and the public:

- A new Inspections Unit has been established at the DLP. After an internal recruitment process, the Head of Inspections has now been identified.
- The unit is developing formal Standard Operating Procedures and expects to roll-out a new pro-active inspections regime to include Pensions inspections by January 2014. In addition to the Head of Inspections, the unit is also staffed with two officers in Grand Cayman and one officer in Cayman Brac.
- The work of the new Inspections Unit will augment the work of the existing Labour investigations and compliance unit and the Pensions investigations and compliance unit.
- The new unit will undertake onsite and offsite inspections of workplaces, covering both labour and pensions laws and regulations (and best practices) testing, audits, and remediation, for the 3 Cayman Islands.
- There is now a formalised expectation and agreement regarding training for Pensions Officers and inspectors. As part of the 2013 performance management process, the performance agreement for each employee of the DLP houses requirements for programs such as the certified fraud examiner course, forensic accounting, and conduct of investigations.
- In addition to this the Department will be developing a training plan for all employees during this financial [year].

I would also add that there has been formalised relationship between the Department of Public Prosecution (DPP) and the Department of Labour with respect to the enforcement regime for pension complaints and delinquencies.

Other Recommendations Deemed Outstanding: Madam Speaker, it should be further noted that the implementation of the remaining four recommendations of the Commissioner's Report are largely outside the immediate control of the Ministry and the DLP.

Specifically, Madam Speaker, Recommendation 2 of the Complaints Commissioner's report (Power to enter private residences used for business) requires consideration and confirmation from the Attorney General's Chambers in light of any privacy rights or issues given the Bill of Rights, and also requires the cooperation of the Trade and Business Licensing Unit.

The Ministry is awaiting the formal view from the Attorney General's Chambers. The Ministry of Employment, the DLP, Ministry of Financial Services and Trade and Business Licensing Unit have agreed to work cooperatively in a coordinated effort to address this issue. The Ministry intends to use this positive working relationship to fuel a restructure of the business regulatory function, and, through the DLP, has joined an inter-agency working group in order to do so.

The group consists of the Immigration Department, the National Workforce Development Agency, the Trade and Business Licensing Unit, and the Health Insurance Commission. While the sharing of information and work to create a culture of compliance in the Cayman Islands has been ad-hoc so far, it has taken positive strides. This year, Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Employment will push to ensure that the group is formally established and structured.

Madam Speaker, the implementation of Recommendation 14 which speaks to Reclassification of pensions non-compliance into negligent versus deliberate categories, poses some practical challenges. In the 7 October 2013 update submitted to the Office of the Complaints Commissioner (OCC) by the Ministry, the DLP has given a commitment to amend its Standard Operating Procedures to allow for the classification of pensions non-compliance into negligent versus deliberate categories, as recommended, for work prioritisation to take the classification into consideration, and for the use of stronger interventions when dealing with an intentionally non-compliant employer.

However, Madam Speaker, it is important for this House to note that, as has been explained to the Complaints Commissioner on a number of occasions, the difficulty with this recommended approach is the ability to prove intentional non-compliance versus negligence, and in many cases this is only borne out by completing an already in-progress investigation, so the classification exercise can only take place after the fact.

As has been advised to the Complaints Commissioner, Madam Speaker, the difficulty with implementing Recommendation 15 (Tracking of non-compliant employers who continue opening new businesses) is that the persons who engage in this type of activity are usually knowledgeable about how to avoid being caught via registration of the offending company under a new partner's name not listed in the previous Trade and Business Licence of the previous company.

As previously indicated by the Ministry, it is our view that this would be best achieved under the Trade and Business Licensing Law, as opposed to the National Pensions Law. In our discussions with the Trade and Business Licensing unit, the point was made that the system currently in use does not allow for tracking of shareholders of companies, only directors, and that any move towards accomplishing this would require fundamental changes, changes to the way their system works and improvements in technology.

Therefore, the agreed interim practical suggestion and solution was that this could be achieved through cooperation between the two departments, with the Department of Labour and Pensions providing regular updates to the Trade and Business Licensing unit on companies that offend the Pensions Law. It should be noted that at present there is a staff shortage in the Trade and Business Licensing unit that would limit the extent of cross-referencing at least in the short-term.

Given the Trade and Business Licensing unit response, our view is that the best approach would be for the Department of Labour and Pensions to provide regular reporting for its own purposes, and to the Trade and Business Licensing unit for its purposes, on non-compliant companies, including known shareholder names, and have the Trade and Business Licensing unit cross-reference with new Trade and Business Licence applications, with the understanding that efficiencies in this exchange likely will not occur until the unit is sufficiently staffed.

In line with our commitment to an inter-agency working relationship the Department currently regularly shares the list of delinquencies for the 6 Multi-Employer Pensions Plans with the Trade and Business Licensing unit, the Immigration Department and the Health Insurance Commission.

The Ministry has therefore investigated the implementation of this recommendation. However, the ability to implement the recommended change does not lie squarely within the remit of the Ministry and will require interagency cooperation which this Government is committed to achieving.

The Department of Labour and Pensions will continue to jointly develop relevant policy and procedure documents with the Trade and Business Licensing unit via the inter-agency working group.

Madam Speaker, the Complaints Commissioner was advised that the implementation of Recommendation 20 (Compliance with the National Pensions Law as a prerequisite for award of Government contracts) is beyond the scope of the National Pensions Law, but, rather, is a matter of central policy for the Government as a whole, and likely best placed in the procurement section of the Public Management and Finance Law. As indicated during the February 2013 update provided by the Ministry, this matter was

subsequently raised at the Deputy Governor's meeting with Chief Officers in order to make them aware of the need for such a centralised policy. Madam Speaker, the Government has committed to reviewing the Public Management and Finance Law, and this recommendation will be considered as part of that review.

In the interim, the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs is currently working on a formal policy to ensure compliance with all labour related laws as part of its own tender processes and has instituted the requirement for compliance during its most recent round of tenders with values greater than the CI\$50,000 threshold established in the Public Management and Finance Law.

The Ministry understands that one of the concerns of the Complaints Commission is the ability for persons to 'plan-jump' from a plan in which they are non-compliant to a new plan shortly before submitting a tender for award of a government contract. As a matter of industry best-practice, when pension plan administrators receive requests for opening of new plans they should enquire with other administrators to ensure that the requesting company is in good standing. This type of collaboration and information sharing is therefore most effective when taking place between the plan administrators themselves, and not necessarily between administrators and the Department of Labour and Pensions.

While the current National Pensions Law (NPL) does not specifically require this collaboration between pension plan administrators, the duty of care requirements placed on plan administrators applies and would allow the Department of Labour and Pensions to address any departure from this type of due diligence.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members, the subject of national pensions is one which I, as Minister of Employment, and this Government places great importance and attention, as it is the basis for long-term sustainability through income replacement of hard-working employees who hope to be healthy and sufficiently self-reliant retirees well into their golden years. Effective regulatory oversight and supervision is therefore important to achieve this national objective, and a robust and efficient regulatory framework, which leverages technology and other innovations, is crucial.

This is especially critical when considering and examining the total number of employees enrolled in the 16 registered pensions plans in these Islands, representing single employer and multi-employer plans; a total figure of 50,888 employees as reported to myself, Madam Speaker (including retired and inactive members), as at 31 March 2013, not to mention the 100s of Millions of dollars in value of the assets under management of the various pension plans.

It is therefore incumbent on the Ministry, the National Pensions Office, the National Pensions Board, and all stakeholders to continue making progress, to listen to constructive criticism, to build relationships to share knowledge and intelligence, and to work diligently to build the confidence in the marketplace and the industry, while adamantly protecting the rights of all parties.

Madam Speaker, it is therefore fitting to reflect on the words of Rudyard Kipling in *The Elephants Child*, when he said:

**"I keep six honest-serving men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where, and Who".**

In regard to Pensions in the Cayman Islands, these 6 principles may be described, at a time such as this, as:

What—to repair the delinquencies and improve members' pensions security;

Why—to ensure that there is vigorously protection and sufficient money for pensioners;

When—always;

How—by agreeing to a clear roadmap to minimise risk, detect fraud, and discern unethical practices;

Where—locally or globally, always remain alert, visionary, and vigilant; and

Who—all stakeholders, team members, and constituents.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members, I thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your support in the future in approving needed amendments to the National Pensions Law once presented to this House—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Tara A. Rivers:—and your support in approving the regulatory and compliance resources requested in this Appropriation Bill before the House in order to achieve our common goals of protecting our workers and ensuring a strong socio-economic future for generations to come.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Jr.: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of a number of people who have participated—

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller, Member for North Side: Listen, I have questions to ask first.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Yeah.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: You have to allow questions on the personal statement before you can—

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Jr.: Madam Speaker, I rose at your recognition. I am not sure what the problem of the Member for North side is.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier, I recognised you because I did not see anyone else at that time. If you would allow the Member to—

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Jr.: Of course.

The Speaker: —I will allow short questions under Standing Order 30(2).

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Jr.: I am happy to, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: I am much obliged.
Honourable Member for North Side?

SHORT QUESTIONS [Standing Order 30(2)]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In accordance with Standing Order 30(2), I wish to ask the Minister responsible for Pensions a couple of questions.

The first question is: Is the chief officer in the Ministry taking any disciplinary action against the civil servants who were charged with the responsibility to prevent this fiasco of pensions to occur, and who, through their incompetence [by] doing nothing, have gotten us into this situation? Is the chief officer in the Ministry taking any disciplinary actions against the civil servants responsible for this?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you Member for North Side for that question.

As I outlined in my statement, I think it is very hard to point any particular finger at any particular person, given that this situation has happened over a number of years, over a number of administrations, and over a number of chief officers.

So what we are trying to do is to deal with the issue that we have inherited as a Government, and that I have inherited as the Minister of Employment.

We will be looking into the procedures that were or were not followed, and we will be bringing forward legislation to address the issues that should have been brought for a long time now and that were laid on the Table of the House in the last administration but never carried through.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Madam Speaker, through you to the Minister.

If my recollection of the Pension legislation serves me right, there are specific persons who were charged as either investigators or in the Pension unit to perform this function. And while I will agree that it has allowed itself to occur, I still have difficulty that people can perform so incompetently on the job and be rewarded by continued employment.

I would ask that the Minister give this House an undertaking that those civil servants and those board members and members of the Pension Administration Unit who were specifically hired, specifically paid and specifically charged to prevent this exact thing from happening be terminated and disciplined accordingly.

The Speaker: Member for North Side, I am sure you will appreciate that by virtue of section 55 of the Constitution, those responsibilities for the hiring, disciplining or dismissal of civil servants falls within the ambit of Her Excellency the Governor. I will allow the Minister to respond if she so desires, but under that section she does not have the *locus standi* to give such an undertaking.

Honourable Minister?

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I understand, my role and responsibility as Minister is to ensure that the policies and direction for the pension regime, speaking specifically to pensions, is given in consultation with other Members of Government. The actual disciplinary actions to be taken, as you have pointed out, without giving any statement about whether or not I agree or disagree with you at this stage, I do understand that there may have been procedures that may not have been followed. And I have given direction to see that we look to improving the system.

Now, with respect to the actual disciplinary actions that you are requesting, that does not fall within my remit, Madam Speaker, and I would not want to overstep my boundaries.

The Speaker: I recognise the Member for North Side.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Madam Speaker, the Deputy Governor is here. Although he's not allowed to vote, I believe the purpose that he is here is so that he can give us some commitments on this specific matter. And while, Madam Speaker, I believe that the 2009

Constitution gives the Elected Ministers certain administrative authority and responsibility over their portfolio, if he is willing, I would ask the Deputy Governor to give this House the assurance that something is going to be done about this kind of incompetence which allows this to happen.

The Pension Law is very specific and it charges specific people, and people are paid to do certain jobs, and we need to make sure they are doing their jobs. Otherwise, regardless of what the Minister does, I don't think we are going to be able to fix our situation.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think I will slightly disagree with the Member for North Side in that civil servants have done a tremendous amount of work in this area, which was acknowledged by the Minister.

If you look on page 6 of her statement, it outlines some of the work that has been done by civil servants in terms of contacting the employers—over 1100. So, I don't think it is fair to say that nothing has been done. In fact, the Minister has also stated that the vast majority of the recommendations made by the Complaints Commissioner have been acted upon.

But, in saying that, I have tried my very best to drive accountability across the civil service to improve performance. I certainly will be speaking with the chief officer responsible for this. And where it is found that work has not been done and civil servants have not been performing their duties in the way that we would expect, action will be taken.

Thank you.

The Speaker: If there are no other questions, then I will recognise at this time the Honourable Premier.

PROTESTERS TO GOVERNMENT'S PLANNED CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION LAW AND POLICY WELCOMED TO LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Jr.: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I simply wanted to rise to acknowledge the presence in the [Gallery] of a number of people who participated in a march this morning, and to welcome them to the [Gallery] and to say that the Government is fully aware that not everyone in the country is supportive of the proposed changes to the Immigration Law.

We have been holding meetings. We held one in West Bay on Tuesday. And we held one in George Town last night. We have meetings proposed for East End, North Side and Bodden Town on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. We also have

spent a considerable amount of time on the radio talk shows and on the television explaining what the changes are and its impact.

Notwithstanding that, Madam Speaker, we know that, particularly given the present circumstances with unemployment with the state of the economy, there remain concerns by many people about the impact of this proposed legislation. We are taking on board those concerns. We are hoping to bring the Bill to the House, not next week, but the following. And we are still receiving feedback from the community as we hold these meetings, as we go on the talk shows. Indeed, I wish to assure those in the Gallery that if they have their concerns reduced to writing, if there is a petition, for instance, I am more than happy to receive it. And the Government will continue to take on board the points and concerns of everyone in this community.

This is an important piece of legislation. We know there are concerns about it, as I have said. And the Government is not turning a blind eye or a deaf ear to those concerns. We are taking all of them on board. There are still opportunities at the committee stage of the proceedings in this House for the Government to make amendments, adjustments, to what is being proposed.

So, today what we have seen and are seeing is a demonstration of democracy. The Government acknowledges that, respects that and welcomes everyone who is here.

I thank you for taking the time and making the effort in the sun to make your point.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Before you move, Madam Speaker, as—

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: —as the Premier has spoken in regard to the Immigration matter which is to come before the House, or to be debated by the House, can he say from his soundings whether there will be any amendments to the Bill? There are several areas, but the one that deals with specialist caregivers which are for the elderly in the country, [can he say] whether, in fact, he has gotten to the point where he is reconsidering that clause in the proposed legislation.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Jr.: Madam Speaker, I am reluctant to engage in a debate about what the proposed changes are. But I can say to the Leader of the Opposition that we have received representations with respect to those provisions and we are taking them under consideration. I am happy to speak

to him one-on-one about those concerns and to hear what his views are, if he wishes me to do that.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILL

SECOND READING

APPROPRIATION (JULY 2013 TO JUNE 2014) BILL, 2013

DEBATE ON THE BUDGET ADDRESS AND THE THRONE SPEECH TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT

[Continuation thereon]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the honourable Member for the district of East End.

Mr. V. Arden McLean, Elected Member for East End: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, so much has happened here this morning that I don't know where to start! Much has transpired this morning, Madam Speaker. And I know I have a limited time, because I only have an hour and a half—

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: —because I had to give up a half hour to my colleague from North Side. So I am going to have to cram it in, but certainly I need to touch on some of the things that have happened here this morning.

Let me start by talking briefly about your Rules. Madam Speaker, as you well know, that is only the beginning of what needs to be done in this honourable House. There is much to be done to ensure that Members of this House are able to do their jobs efficiently.

I noted that Rule 23 of your Rules says, “**The Legislative Assembly is regarded as the only place of its kind and one in which the Speaker has exclusive jurisdiction.**” Madam Speaker, I am prepared to make that become a total reality, and that is one of the things that we need to do. That is, separation of powers.

Madam Speaker, I then listened to the Minister of Education talk about . . . I think the OCC [Office of the Complaints Commission] described it yesterday

as a ‘national crisis,’ and the Minister responded this morning with a very lengthy statement. Madam Speaker, I hear the Minister. I give her the benefit of not having been there during much of this. I would tell her that this is what happens. We can legislate here as much as we want, whether the [laws] are right, wrong or indifferent. But at the end of the day, the implementation of those laws is heavily dependent upon the civil service. In that vein, I should say that we are not unique with the problems between parliament and the implementation of what we hope will be in the best interests of the people we represent. England is in no better [of a] position than we are.

Madam Speaker, I say that because I was recently there and went to visit some of our counterparts in parliament. While [their] Parliament was on recess I met some of the Members. They recommended a book to me, entitled *Conundrum*. That is where we are at. We are in one serious conundrum in this country. It is a book worth reading. It is by a ranking member of the Public Accounts Committee in Parliament right now, [Richard] Bacon, [and Christopher Hope], and it is about the mistakes governments make and what we can do about it.

It is going to be quite interesting for us all to read that. And I recommend that we read it, because it tells us how the waste goes on and there are no consequences as a result—like Mr. Miller asked for. Madam Speaker, we need to recognise that it is not unique to us. We need to try as much as possible to prevent as much of it as possible.

Then I heard the Premier welcoming and recognising the people in the Gallery, those who participated in a protest this morning. Madam Speaker, let me also welcome and recognise and congratulate them for exercising their democratic right. Whether it is 1, 2, 10, 100, 200, each and every one of us, as residents of this country, has a right.

I recently watched a documentary about a gentleman in England who opposed the first Iraq War. And his protest was staged on the lawn in front of Parliament, in front of all of the flags of Parliament in England for 12 years. He alone sat there for 12 years and they couldn't move him. He recently passed and there is a documentary on his stance for what he believed was right. One man can stand and make his voice heard. Likewise, I encourage Caymanians to stand and let their voices be heard. The fact that they elect 18 people every four years to represent them, their representation should not stop there; their voices should not stop there. Their voices must be carried on by them and hold those who they elect accountable at all times, lest we go astray. Be careful with it.

They must always remember that the power of the pencil is mightier than any policy that can be made in here. Albeit, only being able to exercise it once every four years, that pencil mark is extremely powerful. I learned a long time ago in this thing called

“politics” that people elect individuals; they do not elect Governments. But they remove Governments. That is the nature of politics. They do not elect Governments; they elect individuals. Hopefully, soon we will have that as individuals in each constituency. People remove Governments. They don’t remove the individuals, they remove the Governments. You never hear people anywhere in the world saying that they are removing the individuals. It is the Government that was formed by electing the individuals that are not meeting what they consider to be their wishes, and they remove Governments.

Madam Speaker, let me now move on with my limited time. I have much to cram into this hour and a half—or less now, an hour and twenty minutes. I wonder if the Premier is so mindful.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, let me start by congratulating Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Kilpatrick, and the Minister of Finance on their deliveries, their very first delivery of any substance involving their responsibilities in this honourable House, on October 7.

I know (and if we ask our good friend from West Bay) there is nothing more intimidating than one’s first delivery with an entire country watching you. That is seriously intimidating. And it can get to you sometimes. I know the knees of my good friend from West Bay were knocking yesterday when he stood up, or when he finished (the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay). But he nevertheless did a very good job. And I know my good friend from Bodden Town as well was a little nervous. Nevertheless, I would like to congratulate them on a job well done.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance told us how the PPM is proceeding to fulfil one of their campaign promises, and that was to reform government finances. I must say that I congratulate the Minister on some of the changes he is bringing, such as removing duties, one department paying the core government for duties. I wondered about that when I was in Cabinet as well. All you are doing is robbing Peter to pay Paul and taking it back from Paul—revenue neutral. Nevertheless, core government is then required to raise taxes on its people to pay its department when they bring in duties. It just doesn’t make sense. I have always wondered about that and questioned it as well.

As a result of these many changes that he has initiated, he also proudly announced that the Government is going to have a \$100 million deficit . . . oh, surplus.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I hope not, because . . . Madam Speaker . . . let me stop there.

I had to call the Minister after he delivered that to send me a copy of his speech by computer. Why, Madam Speaker? He is so conservative and made that so fine that you can’t see it; so that he can save on paper.

[Laughter]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Double sided too!

Mr. V. Arden McLean: And doubled sided.

On Tuesday, I said that he is so cheap he would skin a flea to save the flea’s hide. And that’s true. But I am glad that some of us are like that, especially him in the position he is in.

Madam Speaker, during the election we all promised the public that we would be ever vigilant on government finances because the Miller/Shaw Report said that it wasn’t about capital projects, it was about expenditures incurred by government. And this Minister has taken the bold step . . . I can’t say the previous Minister of Finance took any bold steps to curtail those, other than to say that England wanted him to cut 500 civil servants. Well, there are ways and means of reducing civil service personnel, which I see the Government is now doing (which is giving them a package a few years from retirement). That is the practice that we use. And in the short term it may seem like we are spending too much money, but in the long term it assists us. Madam Speaker, the Minister is trying to fulfil some of these promises.

Madam Speaker, then the Governor gave us a glimpse into what can be described as trimming the fat from government. She sent a message that we must spend our resources wisely to maintain a world class reputation as a centre of financial services and tourism. She made it clear, and I quote: “**The budget that is being presented to you today proposes to fund intelligence-gathering, planning, consultation, standard-setting, international collaboration, monitoring and evaluation, as well as stricter enforcement.**”

Madam Speaker, she went on to tell us of the far-reaching impact of the work that the Government has and how we “**must all do our duty to help Caymanians and residents to meet the challenges of everyday life.**”

Madam Speaker, I can assure her, and I can assure this honourable House that we all know about the challenges our people are experiencing. We, every one of us, witness it on a daily basis and do our part to try to help. We witness it. We are currently witnessing it this morning with our Gallery almost full of people who are concerned about that. Every day we have people who we need to help. We understand.

Madam Speaker, the theme of the Government's finance reform continued with the Premier's statement, with this coming as somewhat of a surprise because of the position he took in the wake of the general election. It was reported by the press that he was against austerity measures. To be correct, the headlines quoted the Premier as saying, and I quote: ¹"[Austerity doesn't work.](#)"

Well, it doesn't work when we have so many people unemployed. I totally agree. Government has a responsibility to stimulate the economy that has been in the doldrums since 2008. And that stimulation can come through direct injections or through robustly pursuing investors.

He was also quoted in June as saying, "**Prudence is one thing, but look at what austerity has done to economies in Europe.**" Madam Speaker, it doesn't seem like the Premier and I agree on much nowadays, but that one I agree with him on. Totally agree with him. In many respects he was correct. The economy will never recover quickly enough by just reforming government's finances and building reserves.

I know that the current Minister of Finance talked about the three things that could happen once they do . . . you have fiscal prudence and how it can positively impact the economy. Let me just read the first one he said: "**First, by stemming the growth of government expenditure, a prudent fiscal policy can minimize excessive demand in the economy and reduce inflationary pressures. In this way, households and private businesses alike can benefit from the low inflation, encouraging consumption and investments and ultimately, employment growth.**"

In the ideal world that is true. But we are not operating in an ideal world right now. We are not. Madam Speaker, I want the Minister of Finance to understand that while it may seem critical, these are facts. We have a number of things going on in our lives as Members of Parliament. On the one hand we need to ensure the people who we represent are taken care of, not by virtue of hand-downs, but by virtue of providing the environment where they can prosper, they can feel like there is something in it for them.

I know I have said this many times and repeated it many times. Politics to every resident of any country can be defined by three words: tangibility, measurability and visibility. If the residents, the electors of any country, can personally define those and see them as part of their lives, then politics is working for them. That is our job to do.

Part of that is that they expect us to manage the government resources properly. But they also have an expectation that when the Government can

brag of \$100 million, but, more importantly, it is shaved off and under the FFR to ensure that it is realistic so we reduce the expectation, so it might be \$150 million. They also expect that when Government can brag of that, that they should be able to put food on their table too. Because it is the same people who cannot feed their children who have to go to Government and "embarrass" themselves to beg of the Social Services that we are asking to pay the taxes to ensure Government gets \$100 million, \$150 million surplus, so we can manage there the services that we provide to them.

Madam Speaker, this is not an economic or financial speech. That's left to the Minister of Finance. This is a Representative who needs the services, the Government, to assist with ensuring that there are jobs, that there is employment. The Minister spoke of the other areas of his responsibility to practice practical prudence. And that's all well and good. But that is only one side of this equation.

Now, the Minister of Tourism got up and talked about some of the projects they hope to get on line. Many of those are just proposals. And I hope they come to fruition, because that is what is needed. You can't tell our people . . . I think, quoting that philosopher . . . he talked about . . . what did he say? "**People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance.**" I totally agree. But where are they working? Where is the work for them to do? That's all I am asking.

Madam Speaker, we just learned . . . let me just say, Madam Speaker, before going there. I need to warn the Government that the population listens to these deliveries with bated breath, to hear if there is hope in them. But their interest lies in how speeches will better their lives. Certainly, they are concerned about how the country is managed and how the money is managed. We have heard that before, about whether we travel or what have you. That is concern about management of the money. But it is important that we show these people how those speeches and the management of that money is going to enhance their lives in the short term and the plans for the long term, especially for the future of their children. And we are going to get to that.

Madam Speaker, we just heard also in those deliveries: "**The Economics and Statistics Office has also reported the largest increase in the cost of living since the start of the global economic recession in 2008.**" Therein lies our problem. If we don't somehow find some way to offset that for the little man on the street we are going to have problems in our community. You think that immigration protest that was done and completed this morning . . . it will pale in comparison to what is going to happen in our country.

Madam Speaker, somewhere imbedded in these speeches is the true story, the other side of that

¹ *Cayman News Service*, 6 October 2013

equation. Cost of living increasing and Government projecting \$100 million in surplus off the backs of the very people that seem to have no end in sight to the suffering they have endured since 2008. Somewhere in there lies the other side of the equation. Opposition will have its say; Government must have its way. The Opposition does not, nor do the Independent Members, run this country. That responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the Government, and the Government must prove to the people who elected them that their lives are going to be better.

Madam Speaker, unemployment is at an all-time high. The Minister says it is 6.1 per cent. I would encourage the Minister to get the ESO [Economic and Statistics Office] to double check that, because I see more than that on a daily basis. There are many people who are unemployed. It is a problem! You talk about the pensions being a national crisis? We have had this national crisis now since 2008, just after the PPM left office, or right around the time they were leaving office. And forget about UDP. Very little! Every minute there were announcements that this was happening, and that. That's why I told my good friend, the Minister of Tourism, to be careful how he announces these things—because many of them will never materialise.

The Leader of the Opposition knows what that is about. He spent four years being like a pincushion every time somebody stuck him and left an impression on him, and nothing came to fruition.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, action, action, action. That is what people want.

I hear the Minister of Education keep saying that she is making strides, she is making changes. I applaud that. Words are good. They make us feel good. They make the population feel good. But they must translate into something. If they don't . . . people remove Governments.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance said it is 6.1 per cent, or thereabouts (I believe he said). Now, 6.1 reported, 10.9 or 10.5, whatever. I don't care where it is at. It's immaterial whether your information is correct or not, Minister. Madam Speaker, whether or not the Minister's information is correct, the fact is, what were we doing since 2008? You know what we were doing. Madam Speaker? N-O-T-H-I-N-G!

Now, it has taken this crisis and this proposal by the Government to change the Immigration Law, which I am going to talk about too, for the National (what is it?) Workforce Development Agency to come from behind their desks and try and help Caymanians get work.

Talk about pensions?

You really think that we are not in a conundrum? It is hitting us from all sides. Not us in here, the

people that we just went and sat down with in their homes and begged to vote for us. They are being pummelled from wherever they can. They don't trust the agency. They register and they re-register and they re-register and they re-register and nothing. Nada!

CITA (what is it?), Cayman Islands Tourism Association, had to go and get them to go out on the street to interview the people that they had registered. Now they are going to say that Arden only had two registered in East End. That is probably true, because East Enders do not trust it.

Madam Speaker, what was that nice country song? "Life turned us that way." Her, him, or whoever it is. That is what is happening. Our people do not trust the system. I tell *unna* to read that book and then we may get an understanding of why they don't trust the system.

The Minister of Education is trying to defend the Pensions Office. You see why our people do not trust the system? We need to develop a system that they trust, that they can hold on to, that they can rely on. They can get results. And when they start seeing the results . . . when Tim Adam called me about this thing in East End, I asked why it wasn't advertised. Well, they only had two people. I said, "You need to advertise it." And I was grateful that he called me. "We need people to be able to register." He said that he would encourage me to tell others to register, which I have been doing. But every time you ask them to go get registered they say that they already did that and nothing happened. And "I ain't going back." So then I am out job hunting for people.

And at the same time, those people, when they get a few dollars they go to the store and buy something. They are paying taxes so that these people can sit at a desk and not call them back. Is that fair? It is not fair! But nobody wants to talk about it! Everybody wants to brush it under the table and then they blame the politician! It's not my job! I was not hired to do that.

Madam Speaker, an immigration reform that will ensure that employers are punished for not hiring Caymanians. Where have we heard that before? I have heard that too. Who will police it? That is the question. Who is brave enough to put our people first? Forgive me, Madam Speaker, for being less than trusting, but I have been there before. In 13 years I have heard that sung many times. And it's scratched up now. It is over.

I am depending on the Government to take the bold steps to do something about it. We need to! But I don't know if the Government is going to be trusted either, because there are a number of mixed messages being sent from the Government on this same Immigration thing. We just heard one get up yesterday, the Member for Bodden Town, saying that all of those jobs have to be advertised. But

the amending Bill says they can apply for residency. Did I miss something?

The Government needs to explain how that is going to work. Where is the natural justice in allowing someone to apply, giving them the right to apply for residency and, at the same time, you are advertising their job? Suppose they get the residency? And you have just replaced them with 200, 300, 400 Caymanians. That means you have 400 residents who are unemployed still. That's what it says.

The messages are mixed. Something is wrong with it. What are you going to tell the people who applied for residency? *We are going to advertise your job, but in the meantime you can work in operation of law?* That doesn't make sense. Or, *In the meantime you have to stop working, and then if it takes two years you have to support yourself. You can't work anymore . . .* something is wrong. Somebody needs to explain it to me. And I ain't the sharpest tool in the shed, but I can see the practicalities—or the lack thereof—in this one.

New point system, they are proposing. And I am talking about all of these things because of the effect it is going to have on Caymanians—us! The point system that I see, which is published, Madam Speaker, in my view is going to prevent those at the bottom of the totem pole from qualifying. But it will enhance the chances of those at the top of the food chain. But, Madam Speaker, we are doing all of that while, at the same time, having 600-plus students on tertiary education. More than 600 students are currently pursuing higher education somewhere in the world—listen to this good, Madam Speaker and Members—and their visa, their right to stay in that country, will be revoked, or it will expire. Where are they going? More importantly, can they apply to extend their stay in those countries (to do what?) to work?

Where are they going? They are coming back to the streets of George Town. And what will they do? Nothing! Nothing! So, these kids will never, ever reach the top of that food chain (where?) in their own country. The proverbial glass ceiling is being thickened. Regardless of the prerequisite experience that is needed they will never, ever get there.

Madam Speaker, let me explain. Those professionals who qualify under this point system have their own children. They have a right, then, to apply for residency. We tax us, give all our children scholarships, and they come back and the provisions are made for their children. Our children, mine and yours and those who were marching against it, Madam Speaker, are done. They cannot . . . is it any wonder they tell you that you need the experience? You cannot get the experience without the opportunity. We are blocking the opportunity for our children! We need to stop it! We need to take the bold step and stop it.

America has M16 on their borders and we got nothing.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: And fence.

Madam Speaker, we need to be careful that the future does not embarrass us. We need to be very careful.

I may be wrong, and O Lord, I hope I am wrong. You see what they are trying to do with the Legal Practitioners Bill? It gets worse! I know I ain't going to have time, Madam Speaker, to do all of it, but I *ga* do what I can, *ya* hear?

Madam Speaker, I read in CNS [*Cayman News Service*], on the Opinion page, [an article written] by some expat, talking about how he or she was embarrassed that so many people were manipulating us and trying to demand that they stay here and claiming that they have done so much for this country, that they are entitled to some form of compensation. Madam Speaker, you know . . . let me just read. It was in [CNS](#), posted on Friday, 27 September. It's a viewpoint.

The Speaker: Member, you can read it. Do you have a copy for the Chair, please? If not, share it after you have read it.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Sure. Absolutely, Madam Speaker.

I will just read a couple of things out of it, Madam Speaker.

“When I worked in the USA (where, by the way, the company I worked for had to hire an immigration lawyer to get through the maze of the immigration laws), I always knew that my time in the USA may be limited, not by my own choice, but because of the immigration laws which were obviously subject to change. The renewal of my work permit was never guaranteed. It was a risk I was willing to take. Nobody forced me take up a job in the USA and I never claimed that the USA has become a better place because of me living there and contributing to their economy, nor did I carry the attitude that no American could be potentially better suited for the position I held. I did move to the USA for my own selfish reason and not because I wanted to make the USA a better place.

“Honestly, I can't believe the blatant lies of expats in Cayman when they claim that they came to Cayman to help build it back . . . The hypocritical attitude displayed by so many expats and work permit holders is mind boggling. Where they are here in Cayman and are demanding jobs and laws that suits their businesses, they are the same ones who are getting themselves in quite a rage when back in their home country if a Pakistani

gets a position over a Brit, or an Indian is hired as a CPA ahead of an American.”

Now, Madam Speaker, I said I was recently in the UK. Their party conferences . . . the three major parties had their conferences while . . . well, I missed the Conservative Conference. The Labour Party is promising the Brits, the electors, that if they elect them in the next two years, for every work permit issued the companies must find one Brit a job.

Bermuda has just said that for certain categories of employment they will not be issuing any more work permits until all Bermudians that can work in that category are working. And then they will issue after that when they can't find them.

Stop the slide. That's all I am asking. Everybody else is doing it. Let's not just talk about it, let us do it. We must stop taxing our people and bragging about the fiscal prudence of the Government. That's what needs to happen. We must help them.

Madam Speaker, these are the same people that are on the electors' register. These are the same people who, just prior to election, we spend countless nights, three, four o'clock in the morning with those rulers, seeing where they live and who is going to target that one and who is going to do that one. Why are we doing that? We are asking them to vote for us; have we forgotten that? That's our job. The same promises we [made] as we sat with them in the quiet of their homes, and in the public campaigns, and said, *We are going to get you jobs; we are going to be brave and we are going to do it!* The time has come! We all have to come to Jesus now. Let us do it. We need to take bold steps in our country.

I was reminding the Leader of the Opposition of what my father and many others did in the '60s when there were a number of establishments in this country who refused to serve Caymanians. Many who listen to me say this will be able to remember. He went around and he gave them a taste of what Cayman was like. Madam Speaker, I do not encourage that kind of behaviour. We can't be holding up expats and trying to murder them. We need them! But we need our people too. We are not legislating laws against expats. We need to incorporate them in our society. But we need to screen them. We see so many times fraud and the likes.

I read a book one time, *Creatures are human beings too*. And we have seen that come to fruition.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Don't tempt me, my good friend.

Madam Speaker, we need to take bold steps, make bold decisions. Stop worrying about what is going to be. Let's legislate for Caymanians. If anyone else comes in, that's fine, but we must be first. And this thing, first about amongst equals, is discrimina-

tion. That is what it is! First, only us; and if anyone else comes, then, of course, we welcome them.

Madam Speaker, I hear the Premier emphatically proclaim, and I quote, **“The UK was able to approve the Plan on its first submission; an historic occasion.”** Of course! Do you think they are worried up there? They don't care how we meet their targets. They have one of the highest tax regimes in the world. And they got more debt than anyone else. Read the book. You will see what caused the debt. Madam Speaker, they don't care. They don't have to face the realities of this country every day—it's us. It is we who have to go out there and face our people. Let the 18 of us work together and straighten that out. Stop this whole foolishness about inclusive and coalition Government. What is inclusive about that?

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: We must have one focus. Why we came here was to enhance the lives of our people through the highest office in the land. There is none.

Madam Speaker, you said this morning that it is a one-of-a-kind place. That's it. Why are we using up the privileges that were afforded us and we don't give it to others? We don't use it to enhance the lives of others.

Madam Speaker, I really need to get in some stuff about East End and that police force and crime.

The Speaker: Is this an appropriate time for the lunch break, or would you like to continue.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: That's fine, Madam Speaker. We can go for the lunch break.

The Speaker: The House will now be suspended for lunch. We will return to these Chambers at 2.15 pm.

Proceedings suspended at 12.30 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2.38 pm

The Speaker: Please be seated.

I recognise the honourable Member from the district of East End for the continuation of his debate.

Mr. V. Arden McLean, Member for East End: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When we took the luncheon break I was winding up on the issues of the Budget Address by the Honourable Minister and some issues on other areas that the Government says they are looking into. In the time I have left I would like to concentrate on issues relating to my constituency, but, certainly, how they are interwoven into policy decisions that are the remit of the Government.

Madam Speaker, I entered these hallowed halls in 2000. One of the concerns the people of East End had at the time was the ever-increasing crime rate in that constituency. I started requesting, along with the Member for North Side at that time (the late Speaker Moyle), trying to get the police department to assist and do something about the ever-growing crime in East End, North Side and Bodden Town, at the time, and along with the Member for Bodden Town (now the First Elected Member for Bodden Town). Madam Speaker, I set up meetings with them, and ever since I have been meeting with them, most times, on a bimonthly basis. History . . . it is well documented, my request to the Government concerning crime in my constituency.

In 2010, when I had the privilege of addressing Cabinet under the new Constitution, I then asked for additional police and an armed response team within the eastern districts to try and stem the proliferation of drugs and firearms entering our shores. Prior to that I was extremely instrumental in the provision of what we can almost call a coastguard in this country, where we bought a helicopter. I took my political licks for that, but I stood my ground along with the PPM at the time.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, they are glad now. But we had some vision then that we could at least assist and do something about it.

I visited with Cabinet again recently on the invitation of the current Premier. During that visit on 27th August, I said to the Premier and his Ministers (I believe two of them were absent) that if I left no other impression upon them that day I would hope that I had impressed upon them enough about the East End Primary School and the police that they would do something because all else in my constituency pales in comparison to those two things.

Madam Speaker, I believe that as a result of that the Police invited me to a meeting on the 12th day of September. I attended that meeting along with the Member for North Side.

Madam Speaker, I just want to read a section that I gave to this Government on policing. I said: **“I continue to witness, and receive complaints about the lack of policing in the district. The response from the organisation is always ‘staff shortage.’ While the Commissioner and the Chief Inspector in charge of the Eastern District are receptive to my concerns and complaints, the lack of police presence continues to be less than desirable. Many residents believe that the presence of police will result in the reduction of criminal activity in the community, especially during and after the closing of the local bars, when the deviant behaviour is more pronounced. A recent fatality” (which**

had happened just a week before that) “which occurred following the said vehicle ‘burning tires’ and speeding just prior to the accident, enforces the need for police presence in and around closing hours, especially on weekends.”

Madam Speaker, I know they have now given responsibility to the Premier for the financial aspect of the police force. But, Madam Speaker, over the last 13 years I have endeavoured to support the police. Every step along the way I have supported, giving them the tools necessary to police this country and give our people a sense of safety.

Now, I can tell you that just this past Wednesday I was sitting on the surfer’s wall, right in the district of East End. And at least five cars passed there. They weren’t doing anything under 50 miles per hour. I sat there for about three hours and there wasn’t a police officer that passed. I have had enough!

And this message is for the Commissioner of Police, and all those who manage him: The People of my constituency, rightly or wrongly, blame me. They elected me and they expect that I will represent them in this Parliament. I have done that to the best of my ability. The Commissioner of Police . . . and I have said this directly to him, and I am now saying it publicly. If I give you the tools and you don’t get the job done, you need to leave. You need to go. If you don’t get the tools, then we can’t blame you. In the 13 years I have been in this honourable House we have responded to every request being made.

Now, we are going to hear that there is more needed. My plea to the Premier is, let us know what else is needed. The Government has a responsibility; we all have a responsibility to do it. If it means we have to do an additional \$2 million, \$3 million, some of us will have to suffer. Our constituents will have to suffer on infrastructure development or whatever the case may be, for our borders to be patrolled constantly.

Madam Speaker, on the 12th day of September, I looked at the Commissioner of Police and asked him if he knew how to play chess. He said he did. I asked him if he knew who moved first. It’s the black man that moves first in chess, you know. I made my move. It is his turn now. Because with my next move I am going to call out “checkmate”! It is over now. The crime is increasing exponentially in this country and the methods of policing have not, since the ‘40s.

Madam Speaker, we 18 Members must sit down here and tax our people (like I said earlier in my contribution) to provide the services, get our surplus and they don’t want to go into their homes. They are afraid to even go to sleep at night. They are merely inspecting their eyelids. They don’t sleep, not sound, because of the lack of intervention into the crime wave that has hit this country. And it looks like it comes in cycles. Here we are a new Government and it’s here again on top of us.

September 2005 it was on top of us. We did what we had to do. We have a history of breaking contracts. I have been here where we got rid of one Attorney General, one Commissioner of Police, and Brian Gibbs. Remember that. And they were in the middle of their contracts. The Leader of the Opposition has got one up on me, he got rid of Stowers.

If we are not getting the job done to make our people safe the Commissioner needs to answer to this Parliament. We must be fed up with it now.

Madam Speaker, there is a police station in the district of East End and they only drive by there. They don't spend a lot of time there. The residents call the police and its days before they turn up. The police station in Bodden Town is not fit for purpose. Now, the Premier and the Government may want to respond to that and try and do something about it. If we believe that the plant is not there, then fine.

Madam Speaker, I don't know anything about policing, but I know when I feel safe. I know when residents, not only from East End . . . I met a very prominent lady recently. She and her husband are afraid of going out to their social engagements because of fear of coming home and somebody meeting them at their door. Do you think in a small island like this, we should live like that? And there are 400 police officers—400 hundred for 50,000 people. That's what I heard. And they are recruiting.

Madam Speaker, I don't know anything about policing and the management thereof. But I know when I feel safe. I know when the people of the country feel safe, and that must be the objective. And it's not being achieved. They tell us that, based on statistics, East End and North Side have the lowest crime rate. Well, Madam Speaker, statistics are all fine. Those are the ones that you know of. People are not reporting them! They have become disillusioned about the police force. The morale is at its lowest. And if the morale of East End was at its lowest, I pay the price. Well, someone else needs to pay the price now too. I think that's fair.

Why are we afraid of holding people accountable? We may never see that person again. We need to hold people accountable. We need to search until we find someone who is going to do the job and make this country feel safe. Madam Speaker, so much so that the Premier at the Chamber of Commerce Legislative luncheon was reported in the papers [27 September 2013 [Cayman News Service](#)]: **“Speaking at the Chamber of Commerce Legislative luncheon yesterday about the gun-related crime wave the premier said, ‘Although the use of guns to commit crimes is becoming far too common, I have told my friend, the Commissioner of Police, . . . that we cannot and must not concede that this is an inevitable by-product of progress in a growing nation. We must aim to stamp it out, do more to stem the inflow of unlicensed firearms to Cayman and cre-**

ate an environment in which all criminals believe that they will be caught if they commit offences and that they will be put away for a very long time. I am happy to say he agrees with me.”

Agreeing doesn't mean anything! Action! Let us do it.

It is important, Madam Speaker. I am talking specifically about my constituents of East End, a concern. They have forever been concerned and it gets worse. The criminals are becoming more sophisticated and we are policing in the same manner that Mr. Radley [PHONETIC] and Mr. Royal [PHONETIC] did 40 years ago where they knew everybody and . . . those were the days when everybody knew everybody and we had 7,000 people in this country. And Mr. Royal and Mr. Radley were going to beat one of us if they caught us riding our bicycle without a light. It is no longer like that. We need to address it.

Of course the Government or the Commissioner of Police will not support . . . Well, I saw someplace where the Government talked about doing something to assist business people and residents, in particular business people. But we are not going to arm them. They are going to say that that is too dangerous. Madam Speaker, the police need to get out on the beat. They need to understand who people are. They need to stop lying about making patrols when they don't. They need to stop it! And the Commissioner needs to be held responsible! Not me! Not any one of the 18 Members in here. We have done our duty to engage police officers.

You would tell me that out of 400 police officers we can't have 60 police officers in Bodden Town managing Bodden Town, East End and North Side? I just don't understand how that works. I may be wrong, Madam Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Now, you know that the police station in North Side is not occupied if someone is breaking into it.

Madam Speaker, when are we going to speak frankly about these things, and [not] allow people to pull the wool over our eyes? I don't feel safe. Unfortunately that is the case. I grew up in this country where . . . and we all did. And I am sure each of us can recall when we could leave our doors unlocked. Do we understand what direction this is going into?

Madam Speaker, somebody just sent me an email about a paper in Jamaica—the Manchester gun crime rate has gone down from 131 last year to somewhere like 20 this year. Now you tell me, Madam Speaker, is the Commissioner of Police, or his Deputy, going to come here and tell us that there is less crime? At Finance Committee that is what we are going to hear—less gun related crimes—when they are shooting up your house in broad daylight!

We can't just sit down and do nothing. There are more good citizens than bad. Madam Speaker, I shall wait for Finance Committee and I trust that everybody understands that there shall be robust questioning.

Let me turn now to education in East End because I noticed I ain't going to get too much in. But that is all right, I will do as much as I can.

Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate. Let me put a caveat on this. The Minister and the Councillor are both new. They are both new to this whole process, so they are going to get some [INAUDIBLE] in this. I can't really blame them for everything that has transpired, particularly recently. I can't. I refuse to do that. But, Madam Speaker—and I speak specifically of East End now, because it is said so often that East End is so far away—they ignore us. As a result of a letter (the same presentation I made to Cabinet) about the school in my constituency . . . I was quite lengthy, Madam Speaker, so I can't really read all that. As a result I got a lengthy response from the Ministry. It wasn't the Minister. Every excuse in this world was given!

Now, Madam Speaker, I am very passionate about this because you know that I am very close to that school. I am there at least once a week. So much so, that it was at the point where Mr. Roy Bodden tried to stop me from going there. I consider it a travesty that East End school has been left unattended by the Department of Education for so many years. So much so, that it took the parents to put chain and padlock on it to get attention!

The Speaker: Member, you have 10 minutes remaining.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, when that department heard of that, that morning . . . when I heard of it I was on Rooster. And I left. I called the Councillor. First I called the Minister. I didn't get her. I called the Councillor.

The Councillor called me back immediately and said that the Minister was on her way. He was just on the phone with her, or something like that. To this day no one else came to that school. In a crisis of that magnitude . . . and the Chief Education Officer did not come. What does it take to get them out of their office to come to East End school?

Do we really think that's fair? The Minister, as soon as she washed her face, drove to East End to meet with me and the principal. No one else came! Not even padlocks and chains can bring them out of their offices.

Madam Speaker, the people of East End pay the same taxes and expect the same results and respect as George Town schools, or Cayman Brac

schools for that matter. I want everybody to understand that. It is a downright disgrace that I, as a Representative, have to financially support that school. *Unna* think it is hard on *unna* and what *unna* have to give to support *unna* constituency? You should take a ride to East End.

Right now, Madam Speaker, there are three teachers that will be missing from that school. The Minister says she is addressing it. Okay. The manner in which they are being treated matters not to me anymore. If I continue to cover it up the people of East End will continue to be disrespected, and the children. The after school programme . . . they say that we refused what they wanted to do. Madam Speaker, I wasn't part of that. I did not document a refusal on that. But if I had been part of the meeting that I was invited to I would have refused it too.

We today have an after school programme for every child in that school. Now, in the last two years, look at the success of it. Someone needs to look at the success. I am just sorry I didn't bring the report for March of this year. That is what somebody needs to look at. That is success, true success in that primary school.

More importantly, last year we sent to the Clifton Hunter School a child [who is] top of math in this country; number one. But nobody visits the school! The principal up there is showing people how to cut grass and all that kind of stuff. Do you think that's fair? *Unna* think it's fair? Madam Speaker, Somebody needs to do something about it. I am giving the Minister and the Councillor their opportunity. There will be plenty of time for blame. I ain't blaming them now. I expect that they will put provisions in place to ensure the children of East End are treated equally with those throughout this country. It's a downright disgrace.

I recently asked a teacher when last she saw the Chief Immigration Officer. She started thinking.

The Speaker: Education Officer.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: What did I say?

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Chief Education Officer. And she started thinking, because it had been so long she hadn't seen her. I don't think the Chief Education Officer needs to visit the schools every week. Absolutely not! But don't tell me that it took an immigration matter after that for the Chief Education Officer to go visit the school. Or the little leaving ceremonies are when they come, once a year. That's not right!

And here we are trying to give the children of East End an opportunity and we are cementing up the ceiling on them. No possibility of success in their own country. And the parents have to take it into their own

hands. Madam Speaker, the parents are fed up with it, and so am I.

So am I, Minister. I must tell you, it's bad! And it has taken a lot from me to publicly say all these things because it is not fair to publicly make these statements unless they are factual. They have to be!

I am responding to the Ministry on the letter that they sent me with the rubbish they had in it. I am responding to it. I have a whole ream of paper where I printed off the evidence. It is not right. I am waiting, and I am sure the parents of [the students at] East End School are also waiting.

Madam Speaker, I just get so frustrated with having to do the job that others are being paid for. For once in a while we now have a principal that is very good and shows a lot of interest in the children. Very assertive! You know what? Now because Arden gets up here and speaks, they are going to move her! I bet you they will move her or they will try to move her. I ain't going to tell you I am going to lock the school down, but I am going to lay down in front of the first car that comes up there!

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, I like laying down—so be it—in defence of those children. About 119, I believe.

One of the things the current Premier and I argued about during the 2005 to 2009 administration was that he proposed that we amalgamate the East End and North Side schools. I objected to it. I just wrote to the Minister and told [her] maybe it's time to start looking at it because we may get some benefit then.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes. You know, anybody can change their mind. Maybe it is necessary to get it close to the Clifton Hunter School so that we get all the benefits.

The children in North Side are kicking out their toenails on the rocks in the playing field. Mine too. They can't kick the ball unless it goes on the road. Maybe we need now to start moving ahead and getting all of our children together. Even that I have conceded.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: That's primary school. You stay out of this.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, the Minister asked if she can quote me on that.

Now, you know anything that I say, you can quote me on. I don't . . . that's my position.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: You know, maybe it will take eight, nine years, but we need to start looking at this now.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Maybe it will be over two administrations. I don't know. I don't know how long these things are going to take.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: You hear the Government say they have \$100 million projected but they can't spend it?

Madam Speaker, the people of East End . . . someone would have to visit that school to see the after school programme. I know the Minister and the Councillor have been busy, but I am inviting them to come and visit the school, which I expect they will. They said they were going to do some scheduling regarding the after school programme. And they are telling us that for the after school programme we need to check and see if the volunteers who are helping with the children have a police record, and we need to do this and we need to do that.

The Speaker: Honourable Member, your time is up, if you could conclude your final thought.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, there is much more for me to talk about. I appreciate that the Premier doesn't want to give me a little time, but that's all right. I don't know, I would have asked him, but I ain't going to do that. I will try to conclude. I mean, right is right and wrong is wrong. He is wrong and I am right. But that's all right.

Madam Speaker, I want to impress upon this new Government . . . and Madam Speaker, how much do we have? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven new ones over there, and they are new. They are just getting the point of their toes in the water now. But they will reach the point where their whole foot is in it and then they will start walking a little deeper out into it. But there are some veterans there too, and they understand what I am talking about. They understand. They know. They have been here with me on this journey from the beginning and they know that I have begged, I have borrowed, I have cajoled, I have . . . I don't know what else I have done. I can't find the adjectives for it anymore. I have pleaded. I have done

everything for the Government, not so much the Government, the departments, to pay attention.

The school is a good school. There is nothing wrong with my children in East End, except the lack of attention by the powers that be. That's all it is. If I can produce the top math student in this country, you think I can't produce others too? It just needs attention. That's all it needs.

Policing: Mr. Premier, tell us what it takes. Mr. Premier constantly rides in East End. He knows that the cars drive through there doing one billion miles per hour, like shuttles, almost knocking him down. Ask him when has he last seen a police officer pass him. That's what needs to happen. He knows it!

Madam Speaker, this Finance Committee . . . I warn the Finance Minister . . . three years and seven months ago my warning to him is this Finance Committee we are going to find out who is responsible for it all, because too much blame is being placed upon me, or requesting me to have results.

Madam Speaker, I don't know if this is conciliatory (that's what they said you did), or what, but there is a need, the Government needs a chance. Every Government deserves a first year chance. And I am prepared to do that. But, we need to see boots on the ground.

Madam Speaker, I will leave you with this. Remember in the '80s there was a little commercial for Burger King, McDonald's, the two old ladies . . . Wendy's—"where is the beef?"

Madam Speaker, those same little white-haired women are asking the same question. But it just so happens they are ours now. "Where is the beef?"

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Last call, does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Financial Services.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton, Minister of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment: Thank you, very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I obviously support the Budget as brought by the Honourable Minister. I would also congratulate Her Excellency on the good Throne Speech, the Premier, on his Policy Statement, "Getting Back on Course," all of which I endorse. I think it would be remiss of me if I didn't also congratulate the staff of the Ministry of Finance, including the Financial Secretary and others involved in doing a great job with the Budget.

Madam Speaker, I should also say that the budget process was something that, being here for the first time, I wasn't sure exactly what to expect. You hear a lot of stories when you are outside of Govern-

ment, some of which are not particularly complimentary. But I will say that I have been very impressed, and I think the level of cooperation that the Government Bench and the Ministers demonstrated in allowing a rapid, early approval of the Budget to get it down to this House in good time is something that they should all be commended for.

Madam Speaker, I do not think the Policy Statement and the Throne Speech were intended to be exhaustive in any way. It was intended to deal with the highlights and the broad policy issues and priorities which this Government is undertaking. So, there are, certainly, items which remain on the Government's agenda and I can tell the Member for North Side that the Legal Practitioner's Bill which he referred to as being a hot potato, is not one that I am afraid of handling because it is definitely on my agenda, and it is one which I will be addressing in the coming months.

I think there are other pieces of legislation that we are clearly committed to, as well, including single-member constituencies and amendments to the law dealing with district councils, specifically relating to the appointment of those. So, Madam Speaker, our legislative agenda is certainly more ambitious than may have been perceived. What was delivered was merely highlights. I wanted to mention that. I didn't want to disappoint the Member for North Side, in particular, in relation to the Legal Practitioner's Bill.

Madam Speaker, the Premier delivered and articulated a very clear set of policies and priorities for the Government. And it is my pleasure and privilege in relation to my Ministry to provide some additional context to what both he and Her Excellency the Governor dealt with. Before I go into the details, I think this honourable House and the public will find it useful to know the overarching philosophy that has guided the Ministry's approach to this Budget. And I would like to take a minute or two to describe that.

As Members know, the Ministry is a new ministry, one of the new Cabinet seats created by the 2009 Constitution. It was formally established in June of this year with the allocation of the portfolio of responsibilities by the Governor, at the request of the Premier. As such, Madam Speaker, it reflects recognition of the importance of the financial services industry and the business environment; in general, to the economy of our country, and, equally, a commitment by this Government ensuring that an appropriate level of support and attention is provided to ensure their continued success and growth.

Madam Speaker, I can't say that in the past I would think that was the case. For too much of our history I think that the financial services industry has not had the focus and attention it deserves. It hasn't had the dedication it deserves. For clarity, Madam Speaker, although the Ministry was only created a few months ago, responsibility for Financial Services has

in the past (as you and other Members will know), been under other ministerial configurations, either as a portfolio or some other form of add-on, without a properly organised ministry with a clear focus.

Madam Speaker, credit for beginning the organisational job for the Ministry must be attributed to those with responsibility for financial services and commerce under the previous ministerial configuration, because they began in 2011 to identify how best to approach these subject areas in particular. Madam Speaker, much progress has been made.

I would like to outline five of the Ministry's goals for this financial year and into the future.

- The first is the goal to have an internationally competitive financial centre or services industry.
- Second is having a business climate which is conducive to local commerce.
- Next, a jurisdictional reputation of the highest order that attracts appropriate business and investment.
- Fourth, a robust, efficient regime for the registration of corporate and vital information and the licensing of businesses.
- And last, but by no means least, a goal of fair competition in domestic commercial activity.

Madam Speaker, these goals underpin and form the basis of projects that will be undertaken by my Ministry and they provide the core rationale for our funding requests in this Budget. I will start by speaking about financial services, commerce in more detail. Then I will turn to a discussion on the statutory authorities which fall under the Ministry.

Madam Speaker, financial services is, indeed, the primary driver of Cayman's economy. You have heard that the direct contribution of this industry is 49 per cent of the annual gross domestic product of the country. As large and significant as this number is, it doesn't reflect the indirect contribution which is also significant. And this is through, for example, ancillary businesses that support industry and economic contributions through spending by industry employees and their families in the local economy.

To further frame the significance in terms of direct contribution to government, the industry contributes 55 per cent of government's revenue. That is somewhere in the region of \$300-plus-million. Our current GDP values are in the region of just around or just over \$2 billion. Therefore, that puts the contribution of the financial services industry to our economy at around a billion dollars. So, that clearly outlines the significance. Without question, the financial services industry is essential to Cayman's healthy economy. But to maintain and grow that, we must successfully position Cayman to compete in a rapidly changing global marketplace.

The landscape that we face today in financial services is an aggregate of global initiatives that started in or around 1999. Since then, successive Government administrations, including this one, have, with some exceptions, been wise enough to steadily increase the level of dialogue in a positive way with local industry, foreign governments and international organisations, as these initiatives have evolved. Madam Speaker, this Government is committed to engaging at the highest levels of industry and national and supranational levels that is not to the exclusion of anyone from the local perspective where we will be open to engagement on all levels.

During this fiscal year, Madam Speaker, the Ministry's budget request includes funds that will allow government to continue engaging on a global level on matters including US and UK FATCA [Foreign Account Tax Compliant Act], the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and the G5 Multilateral Pilot. The Ministry has indicated in recent press releases that the timing anticipated in the signing of the US and UK FATCA was fairly imminent and, in fact, there was, or is, a plan to do that around the end of this month or early beginning next month. I see today that the first of the Crown Dependencies, the Isle of Man, has signed the first of the UK FATCAs. So we are pursuing that.

The Ministry also intends to continue our well-respected presence on the OECD Global Forum on Transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes. Madam Speaker, these activities are in line with the goals to develop an internationally competitive industry and to develop a jurisdictional reputation that attracts business, appropriate business, and investment; one that is second to none. We are in an enviable position of being a global player with a great deal of success. But the level of competition today has become superheated. That now characterises the global nature of this industry.

We cannot afford to lose our place and, therefore, we must accept that with that enviable position, there comes a heavy responsibility. Notwithstanding the fact that it is a heavy responsibility, there are other countries that would love to bear the burden of that. They would do so in a heartbeat. And gratefully such are the benefits that flow from our position. We must therefore continue to make our presence known in the international arenas and continue to contribute to the international debates.

Major economies are moving towards the automatic exchange of information thereby ensuring that this will be the new globally accepted standard for tax transparency. This is something that we have to be prepared for, and prepared we will be. You may recall, Madam Speaker, that, some months ago I mentioned in this honourable House that there was anecdotal evidence appearing, that the attitudes were changing to the Cayman Islands internationally. I am

happy to report that our continued engagement has resulted in positive statements in the media in the past few months. Because these endorsements have come from independent assessment bodies, they enhance our reputation amongst investors and those global players in the industry. It solidifies our credibility with other governments and it allows us to attract the best business and the best talent to our shores. Of course, it would be an oversight not to mention the extremely positive statements coming from the political level from none other than Mr. Cameron himself, as we are no doubt, all aware.

Madam Speaker, there is a Latin writer called Publilius Syrus who is credited with a quote, which I am sure Members of this House will agree that our mothers and fathers drilled into our hearts and souls. And that is, **“A good reputation is more valuable than money.”** And in our case, that good reputation which we have built, which we seek to continue to build on will allow us to continue to have a vibrant and successful financial services industry.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned that Cayman must be prepared to handle the rapid global changes in financial services and central to this preparedness is restructuring, which we are also doing with certain components of the Ministry, including the Tax Information Authority and the Financial Services Secretariat. We are doing this in order to better reflect the focus needed on domestic and international issues. It will allow us to meet the remits of developing policies and legislation in responding to multilateral automatic exchange of information. There is a clear need to increase human resource capacity as well and I am happy to say that we have accomplished that as needed in this budget.

Turning to financial services legislation, the Ministry expects to handle a number of significant new laws and amendments during this fiscal year in order to ensure that there are growth opportunities for our industry. Of course, we are not just simply taking about growth of businesses, growth of their bottom line; we are talking about growth of opportunities for our people, for Caymanians to get jobs for our way of life and quality of life to be improved. That is one of the huge benefits of this industry. There are thousands of people in our workforce who are Caymanians working in the financial services industry in one component or another.

So, Madam Speaker, two major pieces of legislation that I intend to bring to the House are an amendment to the Exempted Limited Partnership Law, and the introduction of an entirely new Limited Liability Companies Law. These will also be followed by other important pieces, which include Third Party Rights Law and, as I mentioned earlier, the very important amendment to the Legal Practitioners Law which has been a political football for far too long in this country.

Much effort has gone into the development of this legislation and I am grateful, extremely grateful, for the support of the private sector, principally such groups as the Financial Services Legislative Committee [FSLC] in bringing us to this advanced stage in the process. While I am mentioning the FSLC, I would like to specifically commend the individuals from the private sector of that committee who have contributed their valuable time and knowledge. And to give credit where credit is due, Madam Speaker, this is one of the creations and one of the steps that was taken by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Premier over the last four years, which I think was a good move to solidify the cooperation and the contribution, the ability of the private sector to contribute to developing financial products in our industry to move us forward, to give them some additional stuff to market.

We have been extremely successful. But, Madam Speaker, there is a big bull's eye on anyone who is very successful. And you have to keep moving, and you have to stay ahead of it. That is exactly where we need to be. And that is where we are going.

Madam Speaker, there have also been some proposals to enhance the oversight of directors in the Cayman Islands. The former Cabinet had established a working group to review these proposals. While a lot of work had been done, there were several delays to its implementation. That working group has continued to function and has developed a white paper to address several key issues underlying the establishment of a new corporate governance regime. The working group is composed of representatives from industry: the Cayman Islands Directors' Associations, the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority, and members of the Ministry of Financial Services. It has met several times and they have come up with 10 key recommendations. They have paid careful consideration to the current regulatory environment and regimes in other jurisdictions.

Madam Speaker, once the budget process is completed, Cabinet will be reviewing these options. My colleagues and I are committed to putting the new regime in place by year end and CIMA has been tasked to lead the process to its conclusion. I emphasise that this new regime is not intended simply as a revenue measure. It is to address a regulatory need that is reflected by investors' concerns. So, it is to enhance the oversight of directors and ensure that Cayman continues to uphold the high standards that will continue to attract good business to our jurisdiction and to meet the expectations of investors in Cayman Islands products.

The revenue component of this measure is, nevertheless, very important as it will serve to offset the operational cost of the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority for introducing it. It will reduce CIMA's reliance on government's contributions in relation to their operational expenses. So we hope to have the draft

legislation ready in the coming few weeks and implement this legislation before year end, following consultation.

Madam Speaker, in support of the Ministry's goals to develop a robust efficient regime for the registration of corporate information, we have moved towards an online register which has been a part of the Registry's (that is, the Companies Registry) agenda for some time now. I am pleased to support this ongoing push through the Cayman Online Registry Services, or CORS. The industry has experienced far better service, greater accessibility and faster response. I am confident that the dedicated staff will continue to deliver and make this happen with further improvements planned down the road.

Madam Speaker, several times I have mentioned our financial services industry. Our continued recognition as a jurisdiction, our ability to develop effective legislation and the vital feedback that allows us to further improve business processes is based on a strong public/private partnership. So, I would like to recognise again—and I can't stress it enough—the importance of the relationship and the partnership between the Government and industry. For this reason, I have taken steps to ensure that our consultation process allows effective and transparent dialogue on significant matters.

My Ministry recognises that the availability of views from the broadest possible representation of industry associations and firms achieves a more balanced dialogue on the growth and diversification of our product and service offerings, and ultimately offer better results. In furtherance of this, Madam Speaker, the Ministry is building a renewed and re-invigorated partnership with Cayman Finance, as well as closer ties with the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority.

Madam Speaker, the broad consultation that I outlined is also vital for the same reasons in relation to commerce. The stakeholder engagement is just as important. And that is occurring through the Department of Commerce and Investment under the Ministry. As an example, I can point to the involvement of the Chamber of Commerce and the Cayman Islands Tourism Association who have already engaged in reviews of key business licensing legislation. I am confident that with their support we can bring much needed changes to this legislation forward through the development of the underlying policy and legislation and regulation as a result of the consultation. That will improve our competitive environment.

An urgent improvement is in the registration and licensing of local businesses which underpin local commercial activity. I am pleased to have the support of my Cabinet colleagues as we move towards greater centralisation of licensing functions. We have reviewed . . . well, I think Members have in the last two days noted that we have been reviewing the Trade and Business Licensing Law on and off for the past

number of years. And there have been significant comments and complaints in relation to that, which we are amalgamating into a new Bill to deal with those issues.

A number of these issues relate to concerns from small businesses. I know the public is aware of a number of these. We have also had another example in relation to the liquor licensing process, a much more recent example. Currently the law that governs liquor licensing provides full authority to the board of directors and, in some cases, the chairman. Those things need to be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness and support of local commerce.

As part of the centralisation of the licensing functions which I spoke about, the Department of Commerce and Investment became responsible for the Liquor Licensing Board in July of this year. It has quickly formed a public/private committee to review the operational issues as well as the legal issues and structures of the board. That committee had its first meeting on 28 August and has continued to meet. I expect to receive final comments and recommendations from them shortly. Not to the exclusion of public feedback and the deadline in relation to that is, I think, 18 October. So, I would like to remind the public that that is fast approaching and we look forward to getting any comments in relation to that, which will only help produce a better Bill.

Because of the magnitude of the issues, the Department of Commerce and Investment is moving swiftly. But I would ask the public and the licensees to realise that as much as they would like to rectify the problems immediately, it takes some time, and due process must be followed.

I would just like to clarify one particular recent point that was made in an article in the local media which suggested that the Minister (which would be me) had directed the chairman of the board to make certain approvals. I can be very clear in saying that that is absolutely not what occurred. The chairman was merely encouraged to address the issues in the absence of a particular policy which seemed to be outdated.

There is also a matter of illegal vending on the public beach. Earlier this year the Department of Commerce and Investment spearheaded discussions with government departments, including the Department of Tourism, and the RCIPS, as well as with industry associations, on the problems associated with that. It affected the tranquillity and reputation of one of Cayman's greatest assets.

Madam Speaker, without this intervention these problems get worse and we are fooling ourselves if we think that it is only the recreational pursuits of our residents that are affected. It is also the valuable experience of our visitors. There are also reports, unfortunately, that those who are involved in these incidents are, perhaps, engaging in other types

of unfortunate activity, which is one of the reasons the RCIPS has been involved.

Now, some people would take this activity as Government's efforts to clamp down on people trying to get by. They will take it as anti-small business. Far be it from the truth. We are not anti-small business. But we have to have small business regulated properly so that we have fair competition across the board.

And we have to have a business climate which is conducive to local commerce. In fact, the re-vamp of the Trade and Business Licensing Law is intended to contribute to Government's overall solution for issues such as these. You heard the Minister of Employment and Labour and Pensions talking earlier about the need for cooperation between the department dealing with Trade and Business Licensing and the Pensions Department. I think that is a clear understanding of the level of cooperation that needs to occur so that we can successfully address a number of these issues.

Now, because the Law is so comprehensive, it is going to entirely repeal and replace the existing Trade and Business Licensing legislation. It will have a definition in there for "small businesses" and "micro-businesses". So, that will assist us in developing and extending potential incentives and concessions to such businesses to provide growth opportunities.

Continuing with the Department of Commerce and Investment, further support to small businesses and entrepreneurs will come through DCI's continued provision of technical assistance in the form of one-on-one business counselling and regularly scheduled workshops. New and current small business owners as well as their employees can benefit from the unit's training programme which enhances skills in such areas as human resource, accounting, marketing, and business continuity planning. The workshop facilitators are volunteers from the public and private sectors with real world experience, and there are plans to repeat last year's small business conference, which was very successful.

Madam Speaker, I acknowledge that our current budget situation only allows a certain amount of our priorities in this area to be addressed. And I acknowledge that more needs to be done to support small business development. But we have had to prioritise and I think we are going to achieve a lot in this fiscal plan in addressing some of the issues. But I think we have much more to accomplish. And greater feedback is needed to design new programmes that account for the current business climate.

To this end, I am going to establish a working group to review existing programmes to solicit input from business owners themselves to explain the issues they have, the problems they encounter, and the factors that affect their business. And there will be consultation with other stakeholder associations as well so that we can properly create a support system

and programmes which will only enhance the opportunity for success for small businesses in this country.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, regarding commerce, I am sure honourable Members of this House are aware that small business development is one of DCI's four areas. The department also handles business licensing, special economic zone licensing, via the Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA) and investment promotion.

And while I am mentioning the Special Economic Zone, I am very mindful of the comments by the Member for North Side on the issue in which he was commenting about the cost of the Special Economic Zone to Government. I think I just want to quickly mention, to be fair, that while there is some truth that there hasn't been the kind of performance which was projected, it is also true that the businesses and individuals that have come here as a result of that, would not have been here otherwise. And I think that is the point of the Special Economic Zone. It is designed to attract businesses to the country that otherwise would not necessarily have a reason to be set up here.

So, the opportunity cost is not a true opportunity cost. You cannot simply say that \$300,000 (for example) of revenue has been lost on work permits.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: So, I think the point is, Madam Speaker, that there is a net gain in revenue and there is a net contribution to the economy.

I will say that the law is another one of those things that has been in place for a while and it is the subject of current review by the Ministry and we will continue to review it and assess exactly if and where changes need to be made in order to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

Madam Speaker, earlier this year Cayman placed first in the category of economic potential and fourth in the overall country category in the *Foreign Direct Investment* magazine's August 2013/14 Caribbean and Latin American Countries of the Future rankings. Cayman has also placed in the top 10 in the Labour Environment, Business Friendliness, and Foreign Direct Investment Strategy categories. Madam Speaker, that suggests that we are viewed as having a continued level of opportunity in this country to grow our economy to attract foreign direct investment.

This ranking has helped us to identify areas that we must focus on. And I trust that the initiatives that we have identified above, and I know will help the Ministry accomplish ministerial goals that underpin the Department of Commerce and Investment activities of developing a business climate which is conducive to local commerce and foster a jurisdictional reputation that attracts the kind of business that we are looking for and one which ensures fair competition in domestic commercial activity.

Now, Madam Speaker, I turn to my Ministry's responsibility for the environment. As the Premier indicated in his Policy Statement, this Government acknowledges that we have an obligation and a duty to protect and conserve the natural environment and resources of this country. Not only for the wellbeing of present citizens and residents, but also for that of generations of Caymanians to come. It is also an absolutely important critical, valuable asset to the other significant leg of our economy, which is the tourism industry.

Historically, the matter of environmental protection has been treated, in some ways similar to (ironically as well) financial services, as simply an add on. And, in addition, the whole issue is usually only considered after major development and business decisions have been taken. Madam Speaker, there is a growing catalogue of examples from around the globe, and right here at home, which provides compelling evidence that we must take steps to protect and conserve our environment.

It is far more beneficial and cost effective to do that and to make those considerations at the outset of our decision making, rather than at the end in terms of some degree of mitigation. So, with this in mind and in an effort to begin to redress the lack of appropriate emphasis on the protection of our unique flora and fauna, and the fragile habitats on which they depend, there are a number of initiatives the Ministry has identified.

Chief among these is the passage of the long-awaited National Conservation Law. This essential piece of legislation has been languishing for more than a decade and I am committed, and my colleagues are equally committed, to seeing it enacted before the end of this year. I can give an undertaking to the Member for North Side that he will get to see the draft Bill before it gets brought to the House, and any other Member of this honourable House who would like to see it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: I think you are included as "any other Member."

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Now, Madam Speaker, clearly it is critical that we plan and implement our infrastructure and physical development in ways that respect the natural environment, to preserve the integrity of natural ecosystems that sustain us and to address threats to those systems. Those threats are serious and growing. So there is no time to lose in taking an appropriate approach to the decision-making process.

Now while the National Conservation Law is not the panacea for all of our environmental ills, it will require that the environmental consequences of all national plans, policies and projects, and all development proposals, are fully considered before any decisions or actions are taken or implemented. In order to support these broad areas, funding has been provided to the budget of the Department of Environment to enable them to replace one research officer in the terrestrial resources unit, and one in the department's sustainable development unit.

The Premier's Policy Statement outlined that the Bill is based on the 2009 version prepared by the former People's Progressive Movement Administration of 2005 to 2009. That has been the subject of extensive consultation, since then, and amendments which include the comments/views of everyone across this Island (I think), any stakeholder, anyone who has had any interest. I plan to table the draft Bill to satisfy any concerns of the Member for North Side on the constitutional requirement of the 21-day notice and to give additional time for review as well.

Madam Speaker, another area of priority is our proposal in respect of enhancing the current system of marine parks. I am committed to the ongoing consultation on these proposals which is going to be held in some districts and with additional stakeholders in order to arrive at an agreed approach which addresses their concerns. We all know, it is a part of our heritage growing up on an island, the inextricable link between the marine environment and our lives. And, as I said before, it is extremely important in the context of our tourism industry.

Over the past three years, under the auspices of a UK funded Darwin Initiative Grant, the DoE, together with the project partners from Bangor University in the UK, and the Nature Conservancy, have been undertaking a comprehensive assessment on the current status of marine resources and the effectiveness of our existing marine parks. This is being based on a lot of work, a lot of research, a lot of empirical assessment of the current status of our marine resources and the effectiveness of our existing marine parks.

The results have been combined with recommended international best practices in respect of marine protected areas, and carefully integrated into the design of an enhanced system of marine parks. The goal is a system of protected areas that will help us to achieve sustainability of our fisheries and provide an adequate degree of resilience for our vulnerable marine eco systems.

Madam Speaker, while the research and empirical evidence of the Department of the Environment shows clearly that there are significant and considerable benefits from the marine parks, it also shows very clearly that they are no longer going to address the issues that we need to address and they are no

longer going to counter the growing number of threats faced by our marine environment, including over fishing, coastal development, invasive species, such as the lion fish, disease of coral and other marine organisms. And the impact of climate change, as well as the doubling of our population has, in addition to the four-fold increase in the number of visitors, brought even more pressure.

Madam Speaker, more than 25 years ago our marine park system was put in place. At the time there was a tremendous amount of opposition to that. And I think today many of the opponents from that time of that proposal will now willingly acknowledge the fact that were it not for the foresight involved in taking that bold step, our fisheries would be depleted. Our coral reefs and marine resources would be in far worse condition than they are presently. As it stands, we lost approximately 70 per cent of our reef-building coral since the 1970s. The physical structure of the reef is literally eroding and our fish stock has been seriously in decline. The whole marine ecosystem is now imbalanced in favour of smaller fish and algae, reef smothering algae.

Madam Speaker, if one looked at pictures taken in the '70s, '80s, early 2000s and in the present, you would see drastic changes occurring.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: What colour should I give you, red or purple?

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, in his Policy Statement the Premier acknowledged that in light of this sobering message of the recently published report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, this Government recognises the pressing need to address the potential impact of climate change on our small low-lying Islands.

That report makes it very clear that there is now a high degree of confidence in the scientific evidence that climate change is real. While Cayman can hardly be accused of being a major contributor, we do rank 34th out of 217 countries in terms of our carbon footprint per capita. Whether or not you believe in climate change, there are proposals which will address those, as well as deal with situations which we are faced with every year as small islands in the hurricane belt.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, there was a draft Climate Change Policy produced in 2011 by a multi-disciplinary public/private sector initiative led by the Department of Environment and funded by the UK Government which would make good sense to implement on the basis that even if you don't believe that climate change is real, or that significant, it can have significant benefits for us because of our position in

the hurricane path every year. So, we will be considering this policy to see to what extent we can successfully implement that. But it will require participation across government and the private sector.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the initiatives I have outlined will go a long way to helping us meet our obligations under a number of multilateral environmental agreements, particularly the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), the [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance](#), the [Bonn Convention on Migratory Species](#), and the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#).

I have also committed to taking the necessary steps to bring into force updated local implementing legislation for the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna, which is commonly referred to as [CITES](#). This Law, which is the Endangered Species Trade and Transport Law, was passed by this honourable House in 2004, but has not yet been brought into effect.

At present, the CITES Secretariat has judged our legislation as category 2, meaning that it is believed to generally not meet the requirements for the proper implementation of the Convention. So my Ministry and the Department of the Environment will, therefore, this year begin work alongside colleagues in the Ministry of Agriculture and Home Affairs to ensure that all necessary procedures and mechanisms are in place to make this legislation effective so that the country can be in full compliance with the provisions of the treaty by the end of next year.

Madam Speaker, much has been said about the actions that this Government will take to further enhance the reputation of the Islands in respect of financial services and commerce. I endorse these, support these and will push these. But I think that the initiatives I outlined in my environmental portfolio will do much, as well, to ensure the continued viability of our local economy and the preservation of our Caymanian way of life. It will also restore our reputation as a leader in responsible marine resource management, while enhancing the international reputation of the country in the eyes of potential investors and visitors.

Madam Speaker, my Ministry also has general oversight responsibility for a number of organisations, statutory authorities and government-owned companies, and I now turn to those. These include the National Trust, The Cayman Islands Monetary Authority, The Cayman Islands Development Bank, and The Cayman Islands Shipping Registry.

Beginning with the National Trust, the Trust complements the Department of Environment's vital work. And the funds received from Government this fiscal year will be used to run the Trust's environmental and historic programmes. This includes administrative costs for the Trust's 10 by 20 Challenge which aims to protect 10 per cent of the Cayman Islands' landmass by the year 2020.

A portion of the funding will also be used to cover some of the costs associated with managing and maintaining the Trust's existing nine nature reserves. Likewise, funds have been requested to cover the management and maintenance costs of the Trust's existing 11 historic sites. The Trust will also be able to increase school visits and educational events by employing an education officer, thereby ensuring that our children are learning about the importance of Cayman's unique natural and built environment and heritage.

The Trust will also seek to increase public awareness of its important work through engaging with the public stakeholders and membership through the distribution of educational publications.

Madam Speaker, the amount which has been included for the Trust for this fiscal year is double what was included last year. And you might think that's a lot, but when you know the amount, it was cut very, very significantly over the past three or four years. So the Trust has been operating in a very difficult financial situation and we have not been in a position to give them what they deemed would be most helpful. But they are going to be able to do a lot with what they have.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry has general oversight for the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority [CIMA]. Similar to the Department of Commerce and Investment and the General Registry, CIMA is pursuing several initiatives for IT enhancements this year, including the introduction of a facility to allow for online payments. It also plans to improve its regulatory reporting.

Madam Speaker, in terms of the Cayman Islands Development Bank's plans for the fiscal year, it will require a new strategic policy to address the consolidation of the Bank's debt due to the maturity of several bonds in 2015. The Cayman Islands Development Bank now has CI\$1 million in its pipeline to fund tertiary education loans both locally and internationally. The aggregate contribution in this Budget for the Bank has been CI\$1.5 million. That is a capital injection allocated. This will assist with funding this student loan programme. But it leaves very little to address other programmes such as housing and small business loans which the Bank has included in its remit.

Madam Speaker, the Cayman Islands Development Bank is in a poor state. In order to remain viable, the lack of capital and the reimplementing of vital programmes will need to be addressed under a new strategic policy. My Ministry is engaged at this point in putting a new board of directors in place and they will have to be actively involved in that strategic policy development.

I think I heard the Leader of the Opposition state yesterday that while he was the Premier, that he had given the Cayman Islands Development Bank

\$10 million in capital. If that is what he said, then I will be charitable and say that he is incorrect. Over the past four years, Madam Speaker, only CI\$1 million was injected as capital in the Cayman Islands Development Bank. That was in January 2013. So Members will know the implications of that. Suffice it to say it would not have involved the Leader of the Opposition.

During the period of the last four years, the Bank did borrow \$10 million at very expensive rates because of an already weak balance sheet. And those funds were utilised for the then Government's stimulus package on terms, Madam Speaker, which have resulted in default rates above 70 per cent, hence the reason for the very poor state of affairs for the Bank.

Madam Speaker, my colleague and Councillor, Mr. McTaggart, has been asked to utilise his not in-substantial experience as an accountant to assist in reviewing options for the Bank to try to ensure that it returns to a stable and viable financial state.

Now, Madam Speaker, in regard to the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry, which is a division of the Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands [MACI], one noteworthy thing for this year is that it is celebrating its 110th anniversary. Throughout its history the Shipping Registry has worked to develop the Cayman Islands as a preeminent shipping centre. And there are now more than 1,900 vessels proudly flying the Cayman flag. The popularity of Cayman as a registry domicile is not an accident. Ship owners seek out the Cayman Islands because of the high quality of service, and standards and qualities that are being recognised again this year by the International Chamber of Shipping, which has ranked the Cayman Islands as one of the top 13 flag states that stands us apart in terms of exemplary performance indicators.

This fiscal year the Shipping Registry will enhance its global presence as it restructures its Asian Office to provide registration services, crew documentation and survey scheduling from a new Southeast Asia Regional Office in Singapore, which is anticipated to be fully operational.

MOMENT OF INTERRUPTION—4.30 PM

The Speaker: We have reached the hour of interruption, Honourable Minister. May we have a motion for the adjournment from the Government Bench?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)

Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts: Madam Speaker, it is the Premier's wish that we continue just a while longer. I don't know for how long, but, to adhere to his wish, I would move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) so that we can continue after the hour, but hopefully not as long as we have been.

The Speaker: The motion is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to allow the business to continue beyond the hour of 5.00 with termination before 7.00.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.

Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Members will be very happy to know that I am only going to keep them a couple of extra minutes.

Madam Speaker, it is important for the Registry to be well represented in the key shipping markets around the world providing the quality assurances and the active promotion that the Cayman Islands deserves. The Registry intends to further build upon its successes and to continue to develop Cayman as an international maritime centre. This objective is not without its challenges, for we do face increasing competition from other jurisdictions. And it is our responsibility to continue to provide a highly efficient user experience for the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry clients.

To this end, Government is actively facilitating the development of an all-inclusive service for MACI (the Maritime Authority) to provide clients with related ship registration documentation from three locations, that is, Cayman, London (for the European market), and Singapore for southeast Asia. In addition to MACI's responsibility of issuing certificates of British registry and other related registration documents, this streamlined service would enable MACI to issue ship radio station licenses under delegated authority from the Information and Communications Technology Authority (ICTA), and also allow MACI to continue to issue certificates of good standing and related company documentation on behalf of the General Registry.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, the Ministry of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment, has carefully considered the projects for which it is requesting funding. We are mindful of Government's current fiscal situation and the necessity to restrain expenditure. But we have based these plans on clearly defined goals and a sound rationale. And we think that those goals can be achieved based on what we have included in the Budget.

Thank you, very much, Madam Speaker. I will take my seat, given the hour.

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Last call . . . I recognise the Sixth Elected Member for the district of George Town.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Sixth Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is my honour and privilege, which I haven't accepted with blithe regard (the responsibility) to stand here and contribute to the Throne and Budget debate as the Sixth Elected Member for George Town, and as a Councillor for the Ministry responsible for Tourism, Transport and District Administration.

Madam Speaker, the experiences gained and the opportunities afforded to me as a Councillor have allowed me to participate in a very useful and positive way. As a Councillor, I have had the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with the Minister addressing the many issues, challenges, and the opportunities that come before the Ministry. Although I have been involved in all aspects of the Ministry, I have focused my attention on the following: the Capital's development as a vibrant and dynamic place to visit for our tourists and locals alike; the development of our national craft and heritage markets; and public transportation.

Madam Speaker, as we advance with the airport expansion and the redevelopment of the cruise port, it is imperative that we address the physical and social needs of the residents and businesses of downtown George Town. To this [end] we have formed a steering committee to review and make recommendations on the revitalisation of downtown to go hand-in-hand, and perhaps for a change be a little proactive, with the development of the cruise berthing facilities.

The committee is comprised of a multi-agency team representing the Ministry of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure, the Department of Planning, the Ministry of Financial Services, National Roads Authority, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Tourism, Public Works Department, and the National Museum.

Madam Speaker, the Government is also entertaining ideas on creating an educational centre in the Capital. This would be focused on technology and it will certainly complement the existing Cayman Islands Law School and would add a new dynamic to our town's centre. The Government has also been considering the changing of certain zoning laws to allow specific development to include the concept of mixed-use buildings creating a work-and-live concept. Madam Speaker, this concept would add a much needed boost to the downtown area at nights and on the weekends.

Madam Speaker, you would have seen in the press that Cayman Enterprise City will be establishing offices or a zone on the waterfront. I dare say we are excited to welcome them to the downtown area and we hope that other businesses will follow.

Madam Speaker, as the number of tourism arrivals are poised to increase by as much as 50 per

cent over the next three years, we have begun a proactive approach to transportation. Reviews and preparations are being made to address the future demand for public transport. The new board has been appointed and they have broken in (I just had an update yesterday) to subcommittees and have been meeting weekly to be deal with the backlogs and to review and make recommendations on the future of public transport.

Madam Speaker, there has been much said (and not always positive) about the public transport operators. Whilst the industry is currently struggling due to the lack of numbers from cruise visitors, we believe that the future is bright for this sector with a scheduled increase in visitors to be over half a million more in the next two years. Madam Speaker, on a high note, once per year, PRIDE, through the Department of Tourism, conducts a mystery shopping survey on the tourism sector using key performance indicators to measure the customer service standards.

The result for 2012 highlights that the public transport industry achieved positive results, including an A+ for positive attitude and willingness to meet customers' requests; an A for Caymanian cultural experience and rate quoting; a B for physical presentation, safety and courtesy towards customers. So, I congratulate those in that sector as the marks being just two or three short years ago were not as, should I say, complimentary as these reported for 2012.

Madam Speaker, the Cayman Islands Tourism Industry continues to do well from the arrival standpoint. However, there remains a gap from a Caymanian participation perspective, which means that Caymanians are not directly benefitting from the industry as much as we would like. This will be resolved over time through the provisions of education and training, and by working closely with the private sector to close the loop on employment opportunities to ensure Caymanians are rightfully given every opportunity to be successful.

Madam Speaker, as we see an increase in our tourism numbers, as projected by the Honourable Minister yesterday the Government has been focusing on preparing our people to take advantage of the supplementary industries. This will, of course, take time. However, we have been working together with the private sector and there are several initiatives in the works to try and employ as many Caymanians as possible within the industry. In fact, this morning I received an update from the chairman, Mr. Tim Adam, of the CITA [Cayman Islands Tourism Association] drive that is currently happening throughout the districts. He reported that in the East End/North Side drive they had eight candidates that made appointments, six showed up, they had two no-shows, and five of the six were referred to companies and matched for interviews.

In Bodden Town they had a total of 41 candidates that got appointments. Thirty-four showed up. There were 7 no-shows, and 27 of those 34 were referred to companies for interviews. This will continue into George Town and West Bay and not only will they be referred for interviews, but they will be followed up for the responses of the interviews.

If the candidates are not successful in being hired, then they will work with those candidates on the points and reasons why they were not hired to get them up to speed so that they can be placed. We are not simply going to say they were not hired and now they are off on their own. This is a continuous thing and I may be naïve, Madam Speaker, however, the private sector has been more than accommodating in assisting us to try and hire as many as we can within the industry.

The Government will continue to train and offer opportunities for those interested in the industry. But we will also be addressing the interests of those who would like to sell local art, crafts and treats. A vendor policy committee has been formed and it will make recommendations for the development, licensing and regulations of the expansion of the current Craft Market, and the future development of new craft markets in each of the districts so that the industry can grow and Caymanian artisans and vendors can make an honest living.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned yesterday that vendors selling water and coconuts had been removed from the Royal Watler Terminal. Madam Speaker, it is not our intent to put persons out of business, or to take away anyone's opportunity to make a living. However, there must be a clear policy for vendors so that it is fair, equitable and removes the possibility for political interference. It is my understanding that a few vendors who were operating at the terminal by the leisure of the Government vacated the terminal after the elections. Those who possessed a licence, or those who had previously applied for a licence to operate in the terminal, but were not in compliance with the requirements, were, where possible, assisted in becoming compliant—and several of them by me personally, as referred to by the honourable Leader of the Opposition yesterday.

Madam Speaker, the situation is far from perfect, but the Port Authority Board is now in the process of creating a formal policy on vending at the Port that we hope will allow the ability for persons to trade or to vend at or around the Port much more of an open, transparent and fair process.

Madam Speaker, we have recognised that we can no longer continue to rely on the two traditional pillars of our economy, namely, tourism in its most basic form, and the financial services. It is also evident that our young people are no longer willing to restrict themselves to these two industries. So,

Madam Speaker, I have begun discussions towards the rejuvenation of the Cayman Islands Film Commission. And I am also at this time very pleased to announce that plans are well underway to the Cayman Islands hosting its first film festival in 2015.

We have, Madam Speaker, talented and qualified Caymanians who have to live and work overseas, or who are unemployed, because we aren't doing enough to support the film, music and arts industries. This is a perfect opportunity for us to embrace our young people and provide them with further avenues to earn a living and, at the same time, create a new industry that the country can rely on when things are not going so well just to our north.

Madam Speaker, as a representative for the district of George Town I continue to hold weekly council hours where I hear the concerns of my constituents. Unemployment, crime and the cost of living continue to plague our people. Most of the unemployed can be contributed to the recession and the lack of development within the construction industry. However, several from our middle class are finding themselves near to the retirement age and unemployed because of companies relocating to other jurisdictions. All efforts are being made to help place our unemployed into jobs, but equally important, we have got to continue the progress made in restoring the confidence by investors into our Island and continue to offer opportunities for sustainable development. We have got to embrace businesses that will take a physical presence, rent spaces and put bodies in chairs behind desks.

Madam Speaker, whilst it offers little comfort to those who are in need at this time, I am pleased that the proper process is well underway and within the guidelines of the Framework of Fiscal Responsibility towards the start of the much-needed capital projects, such as the airport and the cruise terminal. These projects and the trickle-down effect will provide employment and financial independence for hundreds of Caymanians affording them the ability to afford and enjoy even the most basic needs for life.

Madam Speaker, I have also made it a point to attend all of the police community meetings throughout my district. I have heard all of the issues of burglaries and the lack of resident beat officers. While it is not perfect, I am happy to say that this Government is providing the police with whatever resources they may need to protect and serve our communities. When we took office a couple of months ago, we were told that there were no beat officers within the district of George Town, and, if there were, they were shared between three or four communities. At this time, I am happy to say that we have managed to identify a couple of beat officers. Whilst they are still sharing a couple of the communities, at least they are all within one condensed area and not throughout the district.

I would like to publicly thank Chief Inspector Howell for all of her work in this area. I completely understand and sympathise with my colleagues from North Side and East End

An Hon. Member: And Bodden Town too.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: and Bodden Town, as I understand the situation with our constituents and their displeasure towards the level of service they feel they are getting.

Madam Speaker, in these difficult times we cannot and we should not allow our citizens to fear taking a walk down the street at night, or to leave a window open to allow a little breeze into their homes. I will continue to work towards building back our communities and allowing our people to feel safe in their homes and as they move around in the evenings, to church or out to the supermarket, without fear of being robbed or attacked.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that this Government is on track with rebuilding our economy. And I would say to my fellow Caymanians, please use this time, as hard as it may be, to take advantage of the many opportunities (that I am sure the Honourable Minister of Education will cover) to receive further training so that when we do begin to see the return of tourists and development in this country that the Caymanian people will be the ones staged, ready and capable to benefit from this.

Madam Speaker, I remain committed and open to working with all honourable Members of this House towards the betterment of the people of the Cayman Islands. It does not matter what ministry, what area, or what district. If there is a programme that I feel will benefit our people, I am more than happy to work with any Member of this honourable House and throughout the private sector to carry out these programmes so that we can ensure that our people are properly trained and willing and ready to reap the benefits of any successes that we may have.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would just like to reflect a little on my short time in this honourable House. I am convinced that if not all of us, then most of us, are here because we care about our country and its people. I am heartened to hear the many invitations to work together and to help each other return and navigate this good ship the Cayman Islands to calmer waters.

It is well known that children do not always listen to their elders. But they almost never fail to emulate us. If we are to expect our young people to strive towards being proud, honest and respectful, then we must first display those same characteristics here in this honourable House and, indeed, in our personal lives.

Madam Speaker, again, it gives me tremendous pride to be here representing the district of

George Town and, indeed, the entire Cayman Islands, and to be here to offer a voice for all of our residents and all of our citizens, especially in George Town, and certainly throughout the district. It is no secret that I am a bit of a mixed bag with my mother coming from Cayman Brac, my father from Jamaica, and I was born in West Bay. That is what the Member for East End talked about, a conundrum!

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: And your grandfather is a Chinese.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: And, my grandfather made his way from China. That is the truth.

So, Madam Speaker, again, I am here to represent the people of this country to the best of my ability regardless of where they are from, or who they support, as we certainly cannot choose who we want to represent and who we don't want to represent. The people chose us to represent them.

Madam Speaker, I see that I have made it to the five o'clock hour. I will wind up and say thank you, Madam Speaker; thank you, honourable Members of this House and God bless these, our Cayman Islands.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I will suspend the House for 15 minutes.

PROCEEDINGS SUSPENDED AT 5.00 PM

PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 5.21 PM

The Speaker: Please be seated. Proceedings are now resumed.

Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Sports.

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden, Minister of Health, Sports, Youth and Culture: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's late in the day, but we must press on.

I would like to start off offering my congratulations to our new Finance Minister, Mr. Archer; our Premier and Her Excellency Mrs. Kilpatrick, who all delivered very good statements here on the start of the Budget Session. I would also extend that to the finance team of the civil service who I can attest to the hard work and late and long hours that were put in to get a Budget that we could be compliant with the FFR requirements and get approval from the UK, bringing us to this point. I also want to thank my own heads of departments who had to suffer through the slashes and cuts that were made and continued to grin, and be asked to do more with less. And, of course, I would also like to thank the staff of my Ministry, the finance

team who worked extremely hard as well and diligently to make this all happen.

I also want to offer congratulations to the new class, as it were, of the Legislative Assembly. A lot of our rookies have already debated and equipped themselves quite well. I think that the country can be justly proud of the team that we have in the Legislative Assembly and that matters of the House will be handled in a fair and equitable manner with decorum. Madam Speaker, lastly, but not least, I would like to congratulate you on being back in the Chair and handling yourself in the professional manner that you do.

It is certainly my pleasure to return here on behalf of the district of Bodden Town, this time as the Minister in charge of Health, Sports, Youth and Culture. I would now like to turn my attention to all of the chapters under my Ministry and to outline some of the plans that we have that this Budget underpins.

I will start off with the Department of Environmental Health. Currently, we are having some issues with collections. I think it is no secret that we have a lot of problems with very old trucks. We have a backlog. And I think that today or tomorrow (tomorrow for sure) we should be back up to some level of decent service. I know it was getting to the point where complaints have started to come in. Sadly, we have reached this state because capital was not expended and the trucks are all worn to the point where we are suffering from diminishing returns on them.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: Yes. This has been a problem for some time.

There is some light at the end of the tunnel. We have three new garbage trucks about to arrive towards the end of November and we have budgeted in this Budget for two more to get, hopefully early in the New Year. With salvaging four or five from the existing fleet, we should be up to a point where we will be able to return to twice weekly collections and keep the Island in a sanitary condition.

The Department will continue to work hard at the facilitation and negotiation for a suitable, comprehensive, integrated solid waste disposal management and waste to energy facility for waste management in the Cayman Islands, including private financing, construction and long term operation by the selected company. As we all know, Mt. Trashmore (as it has been labelled) has been a sore point for a long time. We have been unable to find the proper solution, to date, or the right process or the right people. Certainly, it is foremost on my agenda and this Government's policy is to deal once and for all, at least get it started, and it will continue. Hopefully, in the end we will arrive at a solution that takes care of what we have there.

We will be working hard at putting out an RFP [Request for Proposal] that we can get our tenders going and get a company that is prepared to work with us for the long term because we are looking at 15 to 20 years. Whoever comes in is going to be looking for that time for return on their investment. This is not something that the Government can afford to do. It has to be a private/public partnership. And we have to work also within the remit of the FFR.

We have to talk to the Water Authority because some of these processes may involve water as well. In fact, their facility is next door. We will also have to talk to CUC because we have to ensure that we have a market available for the energy that is produced. So, there is a lot of work to be done. We have met with the Dart Group on this and we have explained what our plans are. They are satisfied to work along with that and to assist us in any way that they can. So, I think there is some light at the end of the tunnel and I am going to drive this process extremely hard to make sure that it's up and going, hopefully by this time next year, or at least early in the following year.

We will be expanding environmental health educational and promotional programmes for students and the public to enable them to do their part in controlling and eliminating environmental health nuisances, risks and diseases through behaviour modification and civic pride. We will reorganise and improve the solid waste management operations in the three Islands to improve efficiency and reduce risk as it currently stands.

I would like to touch on health regulatory services. This area deals with the inspection and certification of health care facilities to ensure that they are in compliance with health practice legislation. The Health Insurance Commission continues to receive and investigate an increasing number of complaints relating to termination of health insurance contracts, illegal deductions of monies from employee salaries and other violations under the Health Insurance legislation. The Department is vigilant in its effort to pursue, investigate and resolve complaints, including the prosecution of offenders where necessary. As a result, the number of letters/notices issued to respondents increased by approximately 7 per cent.

The Commission will continue to collect the contribution for the Segregated Insurance Fund in accordance with the legislation. It is anticipated that approximately \$5 million will be collected.

The Health Insurance Law is a public education campaign with the amendments for the Health Insurance Law, the Health Insurance Regulations, and revision of the Health Insurance Commission Law. It will be necessary to provide the general public and other stakeholders with information on the changes to the legislation. I know the Member for North Side was referring to the Insurance Law and how he felt that it

was one of the drivers behind the high overseas health costs that we have. Some of his points may have been valid, but we have recognised some of the weaknesses of the legislation and certainly some of the malpractices of some of the insurance companies as well. And this is being addressed with these amendments. It is expected that more investigations and enforcement will be necessary by the Department to ensure full compliance with the legislation.

Madam Speaker, we have constituted a new Medical and Dental Council, under the chairmanship of Dr. Solomon. This will be involved along with the Department in the registration of health care practitioners. As we know, we have the Shetty Hospital coming on line and this is going to see a lot of new doctors on Island in order for this to open in February of next year. Therefore, there is going to be a surge of activity in registration in the near future.

Of course, there are other medical tourism activities taking place on Island. There are a lot of things going on in the medical field right now in Cayman. It is quite exciting times. Clinics are being improved and we have also the advent of clinical trials taking place in the Cayman Islands. So, all of this involves registration of nurses and doctors. This will be an area that is going to be extremely busy in the coming months and years.

In addition, a change in the registration process for health care practitioners under the legislation will result in an increase in the number of certificates issued during the financial year, all of which should increase the revenues by approximately 10 per cent.

Due to the recent amendments and enactment of the Health Insurance and Health Practice legislation it is expected that the Department will need to refine systems, processes, procedures and policies. Reports and recommendations to the Ministry from the Councils, the boards and departments will likely increase.

Another function of the Department is onsite inspections. Annual inspections are carried out on all approved insurers by the Health Insurance inspectors to ensure that the health insurance companies are operating within the standards and criteria established by the Commission. Employers' health insurance records are also subject to inspections.

With the Health Practice Commission dealing with the amendments to the Health Practice Law, and the Health Practice Registration Regulations as well, again we will have a need for a public education campaign to provide the general public and other stakeholders with information on the changes to the legislation.

Due to the significant additional functions and responsibilities assigned to the Department resulting from the amendments to the Health Insurance legislation and the Health Practice legislation, the Department requires the reinstatement of the Assistant

Health Inspector post to help cope with the investigative and enforcement initiatives. So this has been budgeted for.

A request was also made to provide funding for certain statutory requirements including the audit services for the Segregated Insurance Fund, professional fees for the actuarial update of the Standard Health Insurance Fees, inter-island travel for the Health Care Facilities Inspector to conduct inspections of health care facilities on the Sister Islands.

I mentioned earlier that there is health research and clinical trials going on, on the Island. There are two active, in fact, and a number of them pending registration. The Ministry and the Health Practice Commission will be forming a task force to make recommendations on appropriate policies and procedures to facilitate the development of this emerging area while ensuring that appropriate research standards and patient safety guidelines are being adhered to.

Madam Speaker, just to expand a bit on that area, these clinical trials are medical practices that are basically not FDA approved, not sanctioned to be carried out in the US. Therefore, we are seeing where a number of different groups of doctors and medical teams are looking to come to the Cayman Islands to carry out such services and to be well rewarded for them, to basically high net-worth individuals. It is an area that can certainly bring in a fair amount of revenue to Government. At the moment the fees are minimal but we are looking to increase that significantly. It is an area too that carries with it a certain amount of risk and we have to be cognisant of that. That's why we have to make sure the regulations are there so that at the end of the day the Cayman Islands do not end up with a black eye or a huge law suit or something worse.

We have much to protect on our reputation which has been built here over many years. We cannot afford, just for the sake of money, to lose that reputation. So we have to look carefully. My team knows that we have to walk, as my colleague from Bodden Town likes to say, on glass bottles with this one.

The complete implementation of enhanced benefits under the Standard Health Insurance Contract for all insured persons is another new programme that is being implemented.

Now I would like to turn my attention to the Health Services Authority. I am excited that we have a new board in place, a very competent board. The previous board also had a lot of good people on it and did some good work. We are looking to continue and enhance what was being done. Some strides have been made. Although we often hear negative about the HSA, the truth is that there is a lot of good that goes on at the hospital and a lot of people that work hard. We are not here to turn things upside down, but I have

managed to get a very, very good board under the able chairmanship of Mr. Albert Anderson. He and his team are already hard at work having regular meetings with the management team at the hospital and other stakeholders to basically carry out the vision that I have for health care in these Islands. And that is one where we seek to partner with a large US institution that will offer us not just improved services, but will offer us better customer service, better skills.

We will be looking to have people trained on island and off island. We will be looking at the benefits of getting cheaper medication, cheaper equipment through this partnership. Contrary to what the Member for North Side said, we do have a number, in fact we have too many (if I may say) looking to do this with us. He was saying that he didn't think anyone would be willing to partner with the hospital these days. But they are very willing. It is our job to find the right one and do it in a transparent process that we can have a team to work with. We will be able to cut expenses because we will not have to go overseas for everything. A lot of our treatments can take place here in the comfort of home.

Anyone who has had to travel with family or for themselves for overseas medical knows it is not the most pleasant experience. No matter where you are going, the fact is you are leaving home. When you can do it at home and know that the level of care is to the level of accreditation . . . one of the things we will be looking to do is seek accreditation, although that is an expensive process. Again, there are ways of doing that. And with the right team, with the right partner, it is very doable.

These days telemedicine . . . we have the robot [Sally](#) donated to the hospital by the Seafarers, a \$250,000 robot, about a month or two ago. This is being used to a limited extent at the moment, but something like that will provide invaluable service. In this day of technology and information technology there is no reason why we have to always travel. We can do a lot of things through technology on site.

I just want to say that that is the vision. A lot of people have heard that that is the vision, and we have a health care conference starting next week. That runs from Thursday through Saturday. I encourage Members to come to the opening on Thursday. That will be an exciting time. We have a lot of registrants. I think there are somewhere near 500 attendees at the moment. So it is growing bigger and bigger. This year's theme is about Wellness in the Workplace. We are looking forward to that. A lot of these providers from the US will be in attendance. Some of them sponsored the conference and we thank them for that.

It is a very exciting time for us in health care. Although we have seen the escalating cost of health care—and it has been dramatic—CINICO is taking its share of criticism. But the truth is, a lot of good work is

going on at CINICO as well. They are working hard there to cap losses, to get the right agreements in place with the right partners, and I think it will take time, but in the end we will see the health care become . . . the graft will take change from an upward slide to hopefully a downward one.

When the FCO rep, Mr. Homewood [PHONETIC] was on the Island recently, he also said to me that one of the things that the UK offers to its overseas territories is basically free healthcare. Of course, the UK is 6,000 miles away. So it wouldn't be suitable for emergencies. But it is something that, again, hopefully some assistance can be had in that area. He also offered medical supplies, which are largely discounted from what we currently pay for them. So that is something that we have to explore more as we go forward.

The HSA will be holding district meetings to obtain feedback from patients and relatives on services provided in an effort to improve the patient experience. They will be seeking accreditation of the pathology lab. The DNA and toxicology lab are already accredited. Accreditation is a way of ensuring our customers that our services meet international standards. We already have some accreditation going on at the hospital in terms of the overall facility. We are on our way.

Continued implementation of evidence-based guidelines while measuring clinical quality outcomes, implementation of pharmacy software that will improve inventory controls and customer service to monitor and direct the development of the Caymanian workforce through recruitment and succession planning.

We often hear of not enough Caymanians working in the health care. One thing that I would like to say here in this forum is that we . . . I guess it's kind of a pity, but some of us who consider ourselves native Caymanian are reluctant to accept that who we have accepted as Caymanians are changing. So they will see people working and immediately because they originally came from somewhere else they will say, *Oh, that's a non-Caymanian working there*. But the truth is that the person probably has status or residency. Before they jump to conclusions, they need to sometimes stop and think and check. It is not that the HSA doesn't have a lot of Caymanians working; it's just that they are not what we would traditionally call Caymanian.

Cayman is changing. And if we are going to grow, we are going to have to grow with people from other countries. And that is the reality of it, Madam Speaker.

We will be improving security and parking. Land has been purchased. As we all know, parking is very tight at the compound. The property coming into the entrance of the hospital on the left side (I think) has been purchased. Enhanced parking will take place, hopefully in the coming year.

We will be installing an MRI unit. Those of you may know that there was an MRI unit on site in a trailer or container, a mobile one. Now we have a new one that has come to the Island. That will be installed into the hospital itself.

We will seek to improve revenue capture and reconciliation, seek approval to increase the HSA fees in areas where the cost of providing the services are significantly less than the current gazetted fees. Not across the board, but there are some areas where fees are definitely low and they will be looking to at least get them up to a break even, or to a point where they make a bit on that service.

Refine efforts to improve collections. The bad debt situation at the HSA is quite bad. We are running like \$12 million to \$15 million in bad debt. That is totally unacceptable. That is an area that we have to find a way of collecting monies better at the facility.

Continue engagement of all employees to ensure that a positive and productive mood in the workplace is maintained. That is to build morale amongst staff and get them delivering the best patient care, as I referred to earlier—the best customer service that you can get. When it comes to healthcare, Madam Speaker, those people have to be special people. You can't be dealing with a sick patient and operating in a miserable and grumpy mood. You need people there that are going to make you feel that you have a chance and that you are going to get better, no matter, even if you are terminally ill.

I can tell you firsthand, and I have gotten a lot of compliments lately about some of the care. Some of the care is excellent. Yet, at the same time, we know that we have the odd one that spoils the whole batch and gives us a black eye. But we have had a lot of patients, since I have been Minister, who has said to me, *Wow! I don't know what they are talking about, but the service was first class*. So, that's encouraging and I have told the CEO the same, and congratulated her on her continued efforts to make the HSA up to the level where we want it to be.

One of the things we were very proud to do recently was open new facilities to provide dialysis patients with new state of the art facilities with the addition of ambulatory dialysis; that is, the patient can actually stay at home and administer the fluids into themselves without having to come into the hospital. So that is an area that is quite new. We are very excited about that. The HSA plans to focus on the facilities. Again, we heard the Member for North Side talking about the state of the building, as it were, getting dirty and looking a bit tarnished. One of the things we are going to be doing is to effect aesthetic improvements so we should see that happening in the near future.

We will be installing generators at both the main hospital and at district clinics. That's very important because in the event of a loss of power the hospi-

tal is the last place you can afford not to have power, whether it is because of a hurricane or some other disruption of service.

We will have a patient portal to allow patients access to their medical records to obtain their results remotely. Again, this is using technology for patients to have access to their information without coming into the facility.

We will be employing a medical social worker and patient services representative to improve discharge planning and navigate through the services, improve patient experience, increase satisfaction, and access to services. This person will basically oversee and make sure that what I am talking about here in terms of improved service is actually taking place. So you will have someone that is coordinating that.

Those of us who have been to the US health-care institutions know that when you get there someone ensures that you have the very best service throughout your entire stay. Therefore, we are looking to have that type of person involved here.

Expansion of surgical services in various areas, including bariatric and urology: We would also like to procure a digital imaging system for the medical records department to reduce paper records and the necessity for storage. We will be looking to implement an automated inventory management system to improve operational efficiencies and effective financial controls of inventory.

Madam Speaker, the Pharmacy [Law] and the Cancer Registration Law (in fact, there was reference in the paper today concerning the Cancer Registration Law) will be drafted and brought here to this honourable House. It is important. Although the editorial today was not very flattering of what we were trying to do, it is supported by the Cancer Society. It is very important that we have a proper list of cancer records and cases. Oftentimes we hear in the community that we have all this cancer and something is causing it, but we don't know what it is. The better our records, the more we can look at trends and see exactly and pinpoint and try and find out what really is going on; whether it is an abnormal thing that's happening in Cayman, or if it is purely normal, but due to our size it seems to be that much bigger a problem.

In my opinion, the Cancer Registry Law is an important piece of draft legislation that will be brought here shortly. And the Pharmacy Law is very old and needs to be updated. That is one of the priorities.

The Ministry will commence work on the implementation of the National Health Policy through collaboration with the many stakeholders. The Ministry and the Department of Health and Regulatory Services will provide Cabinet with the necessary policy advice to commence the designation of medical tourism providers and medical tourism facilities, as required under the updated Health Practice Law.

As we know, we are seeing more and more medical tourism. The clinical trials and the Dr. Shetty Hospital, along with other clinical improvements which are gearing up towards medical tourism, I think it's very important that we have these facilities designated and properly regulated.

The implementation of the updated Mental Health Law, including the appointment of the new Mental Health Commission will be undertaken as well, Madam Speaker. One of the things that . . . well, there may not be anything in particular in the Budget for this but I think it's worth mentioning. One of my goals is to create proper mental health facilities in these Islands. When I was a Member of Parliament in the last administration, the PPM, one of my first Private Member's Motions² was for this very reason. Of course, it was accepted, but nothing has really been done.

Since I have been a Minister, I have been in talks with Dr. Lockhart. And he shares the view that this is a very, very essential need for us in Cayman. Again, we will probably be looking at a private/public partnership with something like this where Government could provide the land and we could have someone build a purpose-built facility and have it properly managed and run in some sort of a joint fashion or whatever the arrangement may be.

We look around our Island today and see the number of our people who are walking the street. That really doesn't put us in good stead as a top finance and tourism destination when we see our own people in this state in our own town. Then they have to be pulled off the street and taken into temporary facilities at the HSA, which is really only for short term, released again only to, either put families in jeopardy or to put themselves in jeopardy. Failing that, they are then sent overseas to mental institutions, removed from family once again. Certainly that's far from ideal.

So, Madam Speaker, I think anyone who looks at this situation and takes the time to really understand it will understand the importance of us having our own tailor-made mental healthcare facility for our own people in their own country.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to turn my attention to Sports. This is an area that I have a great passion for. We have been making a lot of good strides. We have a lot of exciting things going on with sports in Cayman. We have some wonderful athletes for three small islands. I think we have shown that we can produce athletes of a very high calibre. We only have to look at Kareem Streete[Thompson] and Cydonie [Mothersill] and Kemar Hyman and the many others in track.

We look at the success of our Under-15 football team in the recent [CONCACAF](#) [Confederation of

² Mental Health, long-term facility—PMM 8/2007-08

North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football] Tournament. We look at our basket-ballers who are going all over the world to play. I was able to assist a couple of young men to go to England to play professionally recently, and some are playing in the US. We have also grant-funded a few of our very talented footballers who are in the UK with professional teams. So Cayman, small as it is, is producing some world class athletes. Look at swimming, the Frasers. We look at the netball [team that] just came back from the Scottish Championships. Although they didn't have a lot of success that was certainly an eye opener and an area that I think we really need to put some more effort and energy in to.

Madam Speaker, at the John Gray High School site we want to get the auditorium completed. Although we cannot afford to do the whole school sadly at this time, but if we can get the auditorium and some of the ancillary facilities completed there on that site, it will be home for basketball and netball and indoor volleyball and all of that. We are looking to get that done in the coming year. That will allow us to not only have a home for our national teams, but an area, a venue that will create an outlet for sports tourism for us.

We have been working very closely with the Department and Ministry of Tourism. In sports tourism there is so much going on in that area and it is very exciting. We have seen the success of our athletes at the Island Games recently (since I have taken office), and I think that with the overall level of sports we have a number of exciting things going on with CONCACAF [Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football]. The President of CONCACAF is our own Caymanian, Jeff Webb. Jeff is producing a lot of things on island here for us. Of course, we just had the World Cup Trophy pass through this week. That was exciting! A few of us were invited and got to see it up close. Everything is serving as a motivation for our youngsters.

Coming up later this month we have CONCACAF and FIFA [*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*] event. We have a Sports Minister's Summit and a FIFA meeting with [Joseph] Sepp Blatter, the head of FIFA who is on Island, as well as Mr. Webb, President of CONCACAF. So, we have a lot of dignitaries here for days of meetings which, again, are going to produce some good revenue for the hotel and various ancillary services that these people are going to be using.

There is a lot going on, Madam Speaker. In January we are working hard in preparing my staff, along with the department, for the Under 20 World Cup female tournament. There is a lot to be done. The facilities have to be upgraded because this is not like the last tournament. This one is at even a higher level; this is World Cup that we're talking about, Under 20. Therefore, FIFA mandates even higher requirements.

CONCACAF is working with us to get all of the branding and sponsorship going to make this a reality. We have to upgrade our lights to a certain standard because of the television network requirements.

The film crews, the news and sports people are coming in. I think from the US alone there are about 16 different crews. So you can imagine the amount of press that is going to be on island. We have to ensure that we don't just have our facilities ready, but we have the Island ready. When you have the US media anywhere, you are certainly under the microscope and we don't want to have any negative occurrences while a tournament like this is taking place in our country. So we will be working with all of the officials, the police, customs, airport people, hotels, taxis and, of course, we will be asking our people to be on their best behaviour to display the type of hospitality that we are known for during this particular time because this is big time and we are looking to do many more of these types of events.

I know one of the things that Mr. Webb sees in the future for us is beach football and hopefully hosting a World Cup beach football tournament. We know the success the Island has had with the NORCECA [North, Central America and Caribbean Volleyball Federation] tournaments for volleyball. We have beautiful beaches, we have beautiful scenery and there is no reason why something like beach soccer cannot be a really big hit in Cayman and be hosted by us in the future. So we are working closely with him to make that a reality, but I guess we'll start off with tournaments and then hopefully build up to where we will actually have the ultimate here.

Madam Speaker, exciting times for us! We have some wonderful athletes on the world stage that are training hard for various tournaments. We have seen the success of young Pascal in the javelin. In his last four meets he achieved three gold [medals] and one silver [medal]. He is now at the University of Missouri and he continues to train. In his age group he is one of the top athletes in the world in that event and we expect him to be a future Olympic medallist.

Madam Speaker, we also have been seeing a lot of development in our boxing, the good use of the Dalmain Ebanks Boxing Gym. We have a lot of interaction with Cuban boxers and Cuban coaches. The Boxing Association under the leadership of Terrence Spencer, the President, has been doing a lot and Coach Norman [Wilson], Coach [Nayon] Donie, Tommy Ebanks and others who are working very hard at promoting boxing on-island and getting our young boxers up to par. We have a real young protégé in the name of young Tafari Ebanks and others like Kendall Ebanks and those that are really doing well.

The Cuban coaches have said to us that it is a good chance that if they are exposed to the right training, because right now it has all been done locally, pretty much, with a few bouts here and there, but they

feel that if these young men were put into a programme in Cuba, for instance, under proper coaching that they could certainly be Olympic medallists.

So again, we are using what resources we have. And although limited, we are using it to the best of our ability to extract and get the best from our young people and not just make them top athletes, but make them better human beings.

Along with some of the upgrades that I mentioned, we will be doing other improvements of the complex: change rooms, ancillary rooms; media, press conference, VIP rooms. We will be looking at improvements to the Secretariat office and also we will be looking at additional changing rooms at the Annex, including improved lighting there as well and other ancillary facilities.

We are looking at the feasibility and costs to the Haig Bodden field in Bodden Town because that field has had a lot of usage and is showing the wear and tear. I have the maintenance team working on that right now to try and get that back to some level of operation. But I think long term we may be looking at making that into a turf pitch that we can have that and the Annex and West Bay as turf pitches. It will be costly in the beginning, but, if properly cared for, can work out to be less maintenance. There is a lot less water in, although you do some wetting, but there is a lot less watering and maintenance of the field, herbicides and all that stuff. That all costs, and we have to employ a firm that does that for us at this moment.

One of the things that I am investigating, and the Third Elected Member for West Bay, Mr. Bernie Bush, as a member of the Athletic Association, approached me recently with the idea of building on the current site at the complex a centre of excellence for our young people. This would be not just for one particular sport, but would cover a wide range of all of the outdoor sports that we play where you have a proper facility built and it would allow you to have those young people sequestered, as it were, before a tournament where they could be properly monitored, properly fed and properly trained under one roof.

This is also a centre of excellence, where you identify your high quality athletes from a young age and you start to push them in a direction to get the very best out of them. This is something that has been talked about for some time and has not become a reality, but I think it can be done for a minimal cost. We are not buying land (it's on the current site), and we would simply be erecting or enhancing a building that is already on site. I think creating something like this will stand us in good stead as we move forward hoping to build better and better sporting facilities for our young people.

I think sports tourism has been given a real boost since we have been in office. We have been working hard together as two ministries (Sports and Tourism). The Minister of Tourism and I continue to

share resources to make this a reality. We are seeing more and more events. We have upcoming shortly, the Rugby 7's. We have a new sport on the Island, which is Kiteboarding. There is a team behind the local operations called TRIO [The Rock International Open], and they are busy setting up facilities here to have visiting professional kiteboarders come to the Island. More sport tourism, Madam Speaker!

All you need for that . . . no facility needs to be built; you just need the sand, sun and water—and we have those in abundance. That is an exciting sport. It's a world class sport and we expect that to be quite a hit when it really takes off in full force. We have some young Caymanians that are very much into it already. The folks who are behind this are training people all the time in this area.

Madam Speaker, we have our focus sports and we will continue to put a lot of effort behind those. We have football, basketball, netball, cricket, swimming, rugby and, of course, track. We have our sports policy that has been drafted. We will be looking to implement as much of that policy as we can as we move forward. We will certainly identify the various key criteria in that policy and move forward to achieve the national vision of improving the lives of all through sport.

Finally under sport, Madam Speaker, one of the things that I wish to see (and this is in partnership with the Education Ministry) is to bring back interscholastic sports meets between secondary schools. For some reason this was discontinued. We have primary, we have the inter-primaries, but we don't have inter-secondary. This is something that we have to make sure we don't lose the kids' interest in the various age groups as they come up to maturity.

This is a very important thing and we have already started to meet on this with the coaches and the various stakeholders and representatives from both ministries. So, this is something that moving forward we are excited to get going again and will only enhance our young people and allow them to have the camaraderie through sports that we all deserve. There is nothing like sports to build good, stable bodies and minds.

I would like to move on now to talk about the Youth area of the Ministry. We have our Youth Services Unit which is based in Bodden Town at the Bodden Town Civic Centre. They are doing a lot of good work up there. They will work to continue on monitoring the Youth Service providers' progress in implementing the National Youth Policy, because the National Youth Policy has been around now for some time. I think one of the architects of that policy (if I am not mistaken) is our own Minister of Education, and she certainly is not going to let me go without making sure that's implemented.

Every time I forget one little bit, she will say "Don't forget. You have to make sure." And "I'm here to help." We work as a team, Madam Speaker, to

make sure . . . there is nothing more important than our youth. With all of the issues we have in Cayman right now, we know that a lot of youth are related. So we have to make sure that we work hard in this area.

It includes reports of weekly visits to Youth Service providers, vetting and making recommendations on requests made by service providers for annual funding for the Ministry, in addition to the number of life skills sessions delivered to service providers.

The Youth Leadership programmes and governance, we have two new projects that have been added. One is "My Fan Club", financial literacy for youth at Clifton Hunter High School; and the other is the "Cayman Islands Scouts Training Session" for young adults and trainers. These have information-sharing and gathering mechanisms were added to the Cayman Islands Youth Assembly. This was done with district dialogue.

This consists of six dialogues, one in each district, for the promotion of Youth Assembly's existing work with peers as a forum to listen to issues relating to the youth as a way for the Youth Assembly to ascertain meaningful research topics for inclusion in the national agenda. One of the things they looked at (just to show the usefulness of this) was the whole aspect of bullying in schools. We know this is something that is becoming more and more of a problem, not just the physical bullying, but also something known as cyber bullying where the stuff ends up on the Internet and can drive young kids to despair. In fact, it can result in very tragic outcomes. So, the Youth Assembly's young people did a lot of work on that, and they have submitted a report on bullying and some suggestions for curbing that despicable behaviour.

On the Cadet Corps, Madam Speaker, these are also based at the Bodden Town Civic Centre. The Department will continue with the delivery of the programme. They have the Cadet Corps Training Programme and the Cade Corps BTECH [British Technical Education Council] Vocational Qualification Programme. These are held six to seven times weekly for seven detachments. Additionally, the agents will continue to provide vocational and technical training programmes.

Finally under Youth, I would like to mention the campaign that we have just closed, the "Proud of Them" campaign. The Ministry will continue this programme recognising youth between the ages of 10 and 25 as defined in the National Youth Policy, for their achievements in the areas of academics, sports, community service, career, culture and business. The recent public nomination process resulted in a total of 77 nominations, of which 12 will be selected by the Proud of Them committee for recognition. The new honourees will be announced on 1 November.

Madam Speaker, this is a very positive initiative that allows young people role models to be identified and give themselves and others a sense of pride

when they see their pictures up on the roadside. We will see the boards that are up, very colourful. This year we also added to that a stipend for the winners. So, each of the 12 winners will receive \$500 as an appreciation and as a gesture of good will for the good work that they have been doing and for winning the title of one of the "Proud of Them" nominees.

There is an inter-ministerial committee on Youth Affairs. As part of the continued implementation of the National Youth Policy, the ministry will work with the other ministries to monitor and report on the status of various action steps under the National Youth Policy. This was what I was alluding to earlier with respect to the Minister of Education and others who will work together in this area.

Moving on to the area of Culture: One of the things that we just got through funding, and the Minister of Tourism, the Deputy Premier, in his debate alluded to was the fact that they brought on board the Cayman Traditional Craft that have partnered with us to continue their initiative in the school system. This is throughout the Island. They have actually become a part of the syllabus in teaching our young people all about things Caymanian.

Madam Speaker, I think this is something very important because we often talk about losing our culture and our heritage. When you have a group, such as what Chris Christian heads up, going to the schools along with the other volunteer workers and work closely with these kids and show them what a gig is and what a kite is, what a *calavan* is and all those good things that we grew up with (that they only hear about) and they actually get a chance to touch, make, feel and operate under this programme, I think it is money well spent. So, we have partnered with the Education Ministry and the Tourism Ministry to make this a reality. They have been up and going since August, and we are very excited about that.

We have our National Gallery, Madam Speaker. There are a lot of good things going on at the Gallery. They suffered from a number of budget cutbacks, but they are not being deterred by that. They are planning to raise funds as well as they can from the private sector. They have an education and outreach programme there and free education programmes, so they will be looking at some private funding to meet the budget target.

The new schools' programme, Active Learning Sessions, designed to enhance curriculum based learning through visits to the national collection will officially launch in October 2013 (this month). They also will be looking at smaller scale fine arts fair which will be hosted on site at the Gallery facility in 2014 with reduced associated costs and potentially in conjunction with Red Sky at Night. Those of us who went to Red Sky at Night this year will know that that was a wonderful event held on the grounds of the Harquail Theatre. That adjoins the property of the National Gal-

lery so they are looking at doing that. The Art@Governor's will be retired and not be held in 2013/14.

The National Gallery has not had the time or the resources to develop publications or catalogues relating to their exhibitions and collections or the wider history of art of the Cayman Islands. Opportunities for recording cultural heritage and contributing to Caymanian scholarships have been lost as a result. This is, sadly, one of the things lost through budget cuts. Certainly, going forward, it will be important to allocate resources, staffing and financial, to this area of the National Gallery. The resulting scholarships, research and publications would greatly enhance the educational component of the National Gallery—a central part of their mandate—provide new contributions to Caymanian knowledge and academia, increase institutional reputation at home and abroad and create new revenue streams.

Some areas of improvement at the Gallery include an internal review and strategic planning exercise, which is ongoing. Their estimated completion date is December. They continued focus on increasing audience diversity. In 2013/14 the National Gallery will focus on continuing to diversify its traffic by instigating expanding specialised programming in the following areas, in addition to 25 other monthly programmes:

1. Stay over tourism packages: Several cultural tourism packages are under development to make the National Gallery and Cayman's unique culture more accessible to tourists. New relationships between National Gallery and DoT and CITA, and local concierges and tour companies are also under development to support this area.
2. Expansion of senior programming in Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac, kick-starting in October with the Island-wide Seniors' Month with the already established "Meet Me" and elderly artists programme, in Cayman Brac, will be accessible to a wider number of seniors across the Cayman Islands with social programmes and specialised art activities.

The year 2013/14 will also see a major focus on collections growth and interpretation with formalisation of an art fund to help secure important works. It has come to the attention of the Gallery that there are a lot of private holdings of some very important pieces. Where they can procure them, they are looking to do so.

They also have some new programmes. They have a new active learning session school programme. This is a new programme that uses the National Gallery's permanent collection to help teach key

aspects of the Cayman Islands school curriculum. These sessions are designed to be enjoyable and educational, thereby providing unique learning opportunities and increasing familiarity with the National Gallery and the art and heritage of Cayman.

Over the past six months, five sessions were developed in consultation with Government Curriculum Development Policy staff to support curriculum for key stages one and two, primary; and key stages four and five, secondary. For younger pupils the experience includes elements of literacy, math, science, history and nation building. For older pupils, the sessions increase knowledge and understanding required for qualification in art and design.

Finally, the creative Caymanians' programme which formalises career guidance for young Caymanians seeking to continue to study and gain work experience in the creative industries. The National Gallery is working simultaneously to track all current and past Caymanian students that have studied a creative degree, along with more established Caymanians who are working in this field. The report will eventually provide a comprehensive review of the various creative industries that are currently active in Cayman and help identify areas for growth and skill development.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to move on to the Museum. We have a new Board in place under the able chairmanship of Mr. Alfonso Wright, former MLA. We are excited about the Board and what we plan to do with the Museum. We feel that it has been underutilised at this point in time and they are hoping to boost the programmes:

- provide four to six exciting changing exhibitions and displays, including special events in the evenings;
- develop cooperative programmes with UCCI and ICCI, in addition to our tours and ongoing programmes with the primary, secondary and high schools;
- continue the development of our speakers' series for the public;
- relaunch with our partners the land-based, maritime heritage trail, repair the signage, revitalise and relaunch the programme in cooperation with our partners' development of environment, National Archive and National Trust;
- develop one or two shipwreck preserves as museums in the sea for the aquatic public.

One of the things the Museum is in need of is a purpose built facility for the number of artefacts they have. This has been budgeted for. The artefacts are currently stored in inappropriate conditions. This has been needed for some time and we have put some funds in the Budget to get this done. They are quite excited that that is on board.

There have been a few staff changes at the Museum. The hiring has included some young talent, young qualified Caymanians and all in all I think that we will have a bright future. The Museum is a wonderful place to visit. I encourage our people to go and visit the Museum (who haven't been) and we hope to see more activity coming from the Museum.

Finally, Madam Speaker, in terms of subjects under my Ministry, I would like to talk about the Cayman National Cultural Foundation. We have some new programmes. One of them is Mind's Eye school tours programme. CNCF has established an aid to implement a programme designed specifically for schools. Students will be able to access the cultural site during school hours and participate in life enriching activities. The purpose of Mind's Eye and realisation of a school tour programme is to provide a quality cultural educational product to inspire future generations to share cultural traditions to celebrate Caymanian heritage, to reconnect local residents with Cayman's arts and cultural past and future, and to encourage community involvement in arts and culture.

Mind's Eye is Miss Lassie's property (as it is known by Caymanians) in South Sound. This is something that the CNCF is looking to really get going in conjunction with the schools and students. Students and teachers will learn valuable lessons about Caymanian architecture, shipbuilding in the community, daily life in a Caymanian household, traditional life in the South Sound community, activities of a seafaring family, pivotal moments in Cayman's history, such as the 1932 hurricane, Miss Lassie's inspiration and evolution as an artist, religious and secular themes in Miss Lassie's paintings, art as a medium for self-expression and national identity.

Lastly under Culture, I would like to mention the National Heroes Day for next year. We have just closed the nominations on this. We had a wonderful response from the public, over 140 nominations were received. The theme for this cultural day is going to be Celebrating our Heroes and Cultural Heritage. Nominations were received for persons in the categories of early pioneer, pioneer, emerging pioneer, long-service award and memorial scroll.

The National Heroes Day 2014 Committee is currently reviewing the nominations received and will be submitting the names of the honourees to the Protocol Office in early November. The honourees will be announced and celebrated over Heroes Day weekend, culminating with a ceremony on Monday, 27 January.

The Ministry will embark on a visioning process for the National Cultural Policy in the second half of 2013/14 and this will be a multi-sector stakeholder process that will result in a policy that captures the national vision for culture in the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, I have one more subject that I did not speak on, and that is the MRCU [Mosquito

Research Control Unit], which is a new one to our Ministry. They will continue their efforts to combat both the biting and disease vector mosquitoes, continue their daily monitoring of mosquito populations across the Islands. MRCU will continue their operations to target and reduce mosquito numbers.

Control efforts include aerial applications, use of fogging trucks, area larviciding to target the larval mosquitos to help reduce numbers emerging; yard-to-yard survey work to identify and treat breeding sites of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, the local dengue fever vector; physical control efforts to deplete the egg bank hatch and strand.

The MRCU has recently moved into their new purpose built hangar which will greatly enhance the aerial operations section efficiency. The new hangar site incorporates a number of innovative features embracing best practices in pesticide storage and handling, as well as aircraft operations. It will provide for the first time secure storage for the airplanes during a storm event, providing much needed protection to the department's aircraft and allowing them to become operational very quickly in the immediate aftermath of a storm event.

On the research side, MRCU is continuing their research into the most effective method of control for the dengue fever mosquito, the *Aedes Aegypti*. Continuing monitoring of insecticide effectiveness will help prevent resistance in the mosquito population and the feasibility of expanding the Oxitec trials whereby genetically modified sterile males are released to help reduce the *Aedes Aegypti* population will also be pursued.

MRCU will also continue its public educational programmes to encourage the public to help them in their fight against mosquitoes, particularly the disease vector species, like the *Aedes Aegypti*. Everyone can play an important role in helping MRCU with their mosquito control efforts by keeping their yards free from debris and they can collect water and report any mosquito population to the MRCU. When you see MRCU survey crew coming to your home, please allow them into the yard so that they can inspect, identify and treat any potential breeding areas. This is a key piece of our dengue fever prevention efforts.

So, Madam Speaker, that is a thorough review of the plans and initiatives under the departments under the Ministry.

Now I would like to turn my attention to some national issues that concern all of us and, of course, are affected by whatever budget is brought to this honourable House.

The need for jobs for many of our people: We saw the peaceful protestors here today that marched this morning from the Government Admin Building down here. We commend them for taking a stand and letting their voices be heard in what they feel is not necessarily the best move by us as a Government.

But, Madam Speaker, we have looked and we have analysed, and we have a good team. We have spoken to many stakeholders.

We know the hardship of our people because we deal with it on a daily basis firsthand. There is no doubt that we have genuine unemployment in this country for the very first time, in my memory anyway. We have good people that simply cannot find work. Up to today I was dealing with a number of issues while here. People that have served for long periods of time in jobs are suddenly out of a job because of redundancy or some other reason and it is very difficult to get back in to a job.

Our Immigration amendments are being seen by some as a move to hinder, as it were. We heard the Member for East End today refer to the fact that the glass ceiling has gotten that much tougher with the efforts we are making. But I beg everyone who thinks like that to carefully analyse what it is that we are doing. Of course, this will be debated when the Bill comes to this honourable House, but that would be the last thing, and I certainly would not be a part of a Government that was looking to hurt its own people.

We have thought long and hard and we have looked at this from every angle. Certainly, we have to also understand that without businesses there are no jobs. We have to shore up and ensure that the business community gains confidence in the Government and is willing to work with the Government and not expect that every day they are going to wake up to some breaking news in a nervous environment.

That's one thing that this new Government has brought, Madam Speaker. It has brought a breath of fresh air to the country. Up to the other day I was at a real estate office and a gentleman came up to me and said (I didn't know he knew me), "Mr. Bodden, you guys are doing a fantastic job. Thanks so much. It's a breath of fresh air on this end."

When you hear comments like that you know that suddenly there is a new dawn in the country. There's a new mood in the country. Yes, we have people who are hurting. We have our people who are really hurting. And we have to find a way to put them into jobs. We have to create the situation that makes it easier for them to find a job. The Minister of Labour and Education and her team, her Councillor, Mr. Connolly, have been working extremely hard in this regard. So we are not just looking at Immigration reform on one end and not thinking about our people on the other. This is all being done in various stages. But certainly, the need to procure employment for our people is being done in tandem with the review process.

The National Work Development Agency (NWDA) is working and has been boosted by seconded staff to it to clear through the backlog and to become really what it should be, a genuine placement agency that looks and matches up workers with jobs. I

think for too long people lost faith in many of our agencies like this. You ask for potential workers and what they send to you is someone you really cannot use in your business, and you wonder just how in God's name someone could think that that person could really do the job when it's obvious from their track record and everything else, that that person is not really a stable person to employ, or they don't suit the job at all.

As someone who has been in business for some time, I can tell you that I have had my share of experiences with the Labour Office, and not very pleasant ones. That is an image that we have to change. We have to make sure that when we send people and tell people to sign up with one of our agencies, that that agency delivers properly, and that we are matching the right people with the right jobs.

At the same time, our people have to understand too that it is no longer business as usual, where they can just simply walk out of one job today and walk into another tomorrow. That is just not happening any more. It is tight out there. The effects of the recession are still upon us. Although things are improving and since we have been in Government the amount of investment opportunities that are showing up on our doorstep shows that there is an upsurge and that the economy will be getting better, it is not an overnight fix. So, people have to curb their habits, they have to watch . . . they have to look at their own financial planning. They have to look at the way they conduct themselves and look at what would normally be a luxury. Some of those things have to be cut to make sure that we are living within our means.

It is a responsibility on each and every one of us as Caymanians to make sure that when we get a job that we perform at the very highest standard, that we don't give the people an opportunity to say, *Oh, Caymanians are lazy; Caymanians don't want to work. Caymanians won't show up and they don't show up on time and they are not reliable.* We don't need that. We know that we have some of the very best and most talented workers. We have role models. Many of our older people are still working and want to work. Our young people need to take a page out of their book and realise that it's time to step up to the plate.

Where it does hurt in particular, Madam Speaker, is when we have qualified Caymanians coming back from college who have been overseas busting their chops for the last four or five, six years, and they cannot find employment back in their own country. To me, that is just the result of poor planning, because when you offer scholarships and you send your young people overseas, you have to be planning at the same time for their return. This is an area that we have failed in. I am sure that we, as a Government, this Progressive Administration, will be making sure that this type of mistake does not continue into the future.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that we have been importing (as my mom used to call it) poverty into this country for far too long. Now we have the criticism that the new PR guidelines, as proposed, are going to make it too difficult to get PR and that you are going to eliminate one sector, or one income class of people getting PR. But, at the same time, Madam Speaker, we cannot continue the way we are going. We have to make sure that people that we embrace and are going to go on to become Caymanian, are people that the Government is not going to have to do for them and their kids. We have to ensure that, yes, they may be seen to some as blocks in the labour force, but at the same time we are working to create jobs, you are working to enhance the economy. So, there should be sufficient jobs to go around.

We have 20,000 permits still in this country, Madam Speaker. So, I do not see where a few foreigners getting PR here and there is going to be that much of a stumbling block for our own people as long as our people are prepared and ready to take their rightful place.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to address that issue. There will be a lot more debate on that when the Immigration Bill is debated here. But I just wanted to make my views known on that. We have not been reckless with this at all. We have had to bring the legislation in a timely manner because of the October 28th deadline. But I think that in the end people will see that this was a good move for the country. It certainly has given the confidence to the business sector. We went to a Chamber luncheon recently and we had a packed room. I mean, the room at the Ritz was . . . I don't know how many people were there, but there weren't any empty seats. The Premier gave his address and went through some of this stuff and there were no large scale objections. In fact, there were very few questions, so it shows that there are people who have taken the time to understand what we are doing and are quite pleased with it.

But I can tell anyone who is listening out there, Madam Speaker, rest assured that this Government is not—far be it—an anti-Caymanian one. Everything that we do is from a pro-Caymanian standpoint. We are putting our people and we are putting our country first.

Madam Speaker, a lot has been said today about the situation with crime and policing in the country. Suffice it to say that we are less than pleased with the current performance of the Police Service. In terms of ratio, we have over 400 police to 50,000 to 55,000 people; one of the highest ratios in the world, Madam Speaker.

We keep hearing that we don't have enough police for this or that. I have been involved, just like the Members for East End and North Side, from the Bodden Town perspective, with policing in the eastern districts. We are tired of seeing a lack of policing in

that area of the Island. Of course criminals, those who want to get up to their antics know—just like we know!—therefore, when you look you see this one, or that one who you are not used to seeing. When things get hot in the west, they move east. If the police are not keeping up with them then that's where they will hang out and conduct their affairs there the same way.

We had a police meeting on Wednesday night at the Savannah Primary [school]. There were about 40 residents at that meeting. I wasn't feeling well, I didn't make the meeting. But my colleague, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town [Mr. Alva Suckoo] was in attendance and he told us that there was a lot of discontent, a lot of rage at that meeting by the residents. And rightly so, because we are seeing crime take on a new face and become very bold.

As I said to my friend, the Commissioner, I think it is because his officers, for some reason . . . Don't get me wrong, we have some good police. But there are a lot of officers who simply do not command the respect of an officer. And for whatever reason, whether their hands are tied, or whether it is their demeanour or the way they are taught, I don't know. But I have never seen police who are so widely disrespected by these so-called little bad guys. I mean, a policeman comes to make an arrest and the way that they are talked to, the way that they are spat on, they are cursed at, the police stands there as if he is impotent, there's nothing he/she can do.

Therefore, there is no fear of the law. There is no respect for the police officer, Madam Speaker. We have to find a way of bringing this back. We have to know that when you are up to no good and the police come, you have to behave yourself. You have to get yourself . . . otherwise you are going to pay the price. It's the only country in the world that I know of where the police are so highly disrespected. It's for many reasons. They have lost the confidence of the public and they have lost the respect of the people who are doing as they please. So, we have to find a way of improving our policing.

I think when Finance Committee comes around you are going to be hearing a lot more from the Members on this area. Suffice it to say that all Members are perturbed. No one is happy with the state of affairs, the amount of petty crime which cannot be over looked, because petty crime graduates into more serious crime. We don't want to end up in a state of lawlessness. We cannot afford that. None of us wants to live like that. And our visitors to these shores . . . we are a tourism destination, a financial centre. We cannot afford for the wrong message to be sent. The day that happens, we can pack it up.

So, all that we are doing and all that I have just got through talking about, the initiatives from the various ministries and the Government, will be all for naught if we do not get crime under control and put it

back where it is at a minimal level. It is one of the trademarks of the Cayman Islands, a crime-free society. That is something that we have always hung our hats on. We cannot afford to lose that.

Whatever the police have to do, and the public has to support, and as a Government we have to support, we have to get it done. At the end of the day, let's face it, these days you have a football team or you have a basketball team and they go on a losing run, well, the person that loses his job the quickest is not the player, it's the manager. So, I won't say any more on that, but we have to be serious about this country. We have to make sure that we are getting the right results for the money that we are spending.

Madam Speaker, an area near and dear to me is the beautification. And again this goes hand in hand with . . . Cleanliness is next to godliness. I find that we are certainly just accepting more and more . . . we are just not doing enough in this area. We are allowing our Island to get in a state where there is too much dereliction of buildings of cars of general untidiness, of garbage littering.

As a Government one of the things we want to bring back is the National Beautification Committee to work in conjunction with the other units we have, such as the NRA [National Roads Authority] and the park unit, so we can keep the place looking good and put some teeth into the regulations to make sure that Environmental Health, which falls under me, can, when they say to move or do something, that there is not just a plea and something that has to be protracted, but something gets done. So we are looking to beautify the place. We have already started on a small scale, but we are looking to do a lot more in that area.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that will be coming down here that I am proud to be a part of, will be that, finally, we are bringing the Standards in Public Life Bill to the Legislative Assembly. This is something that is taking the accountability of Members . . . and not just Members, the public service in general, to the right level where people have to be held accountable and disclose any conflicts of interest and ensure that we all conduct ourselves in a proper manner.

In the last administration we saw the many effects of conflicts of interest and the various anti-corruption measures that were taken. We don't need that, Madam Speaker. We need to know that our country is run properly by people who are ethical. This Government is an ethical one. And I dare say that there are many of us in here, the majority of us, would not put a finger wrong. But we have to protect and guard against those that will. When you have measures like this being brought, it sends the clear message that we are not going to tolerate people operating over and above the law. You have to abide and conduct yourself in a proper manner when you hold high office. And this goes to the Civil Service as well as Members of Parliament.

Madam Speaker, a few other things that I would like to see (not necessarily in this year, but this one actually I would like to see in this year) is our promise to institute one man, one vote; single-member constituencies. I think we have said clearly to the public that we will be initiating one man, one vote. That is true democracy. That is the way to go. It will cost a few dollars to get it done, but at the end of the day the people deserve to know that they are on an even keel when it comes to supporting the people who run for office in this country.

I think it is a bit unfair for someone living in George Town to have six votes, someone living in Bodden Town to have four, and West Bay four, and then East End and North Side to have one. It cannot be true democracy when you look at it like that. Madam Speaker, I am looking forward to the day when we implement that. I think the country will be better off for it.

Another thing I would like to see is an increase in the retirement age. That is something that we have said we will do. I would like to see that done sooner than later, because we have so many people who have reached the age of 60 who are very, very able. Of course, with healthcare being what it is, improving all the time, people are living longer and stronger.

We have people reaching the age of 60 who do not have many resources because pension legislation in this country is relatively new. They may not have been working at a high-earning job all their life and they are reaching the age of 60 and throwing their hands up in the air saying, *What can I do? Someone help me.* It's sad.

We need to look seriously at that, Madam Speaker, because we have too many people that that has happened to and who are now suddenly having to depend on Government for a handout, proud Caymanian people who have so much to offer and still in very good shape. In fact, I think there are countries that have raised it as high as 70. We can't jump 10 years, but I think we can certainly jump to 65. So, I would be very much in support of that.

One other thing that I would like to see done . . . and I think the plan is for it to eventually happen, but sooner than later I would like to see the rollover system brought into the Civil Service. I do not think that we can have one rule for Government and one rule for the private sector. We have to have that across the board.

Madam Speaker, I would like to turn my attention to my own district of Bodden Town and speak to some of the things that are planned and some of the things that are happening there in Bodden Town. Everybody knows that the graveyard is quite full and that we have been out of cemetery space for some time and have been talking about it. The land was procured by the last administration and we have now started to

work on those new vaults in the Bodden Town area. I think 12 are being built now. More will be built in the future. So that is one more crisis averted.

We also have the affordable homes, the 20-odd homes that have been built in Bodden Town. These homes are completed, most of them. And we have a new Housing Development Board that has been constituted by us, under the chairmanship of Mr. George Anthony Powell (Tony Powell, many people know him as). The board was set back because of Mr. Powell's injury due to the attempted robbery. But he is going again, thank God, and he will be having meetings next week. Sooner than later we will have the policies in place and the way forward for us to move Caymanians into those homes.

There are a lot of people who need those homes, but it has to be done properly. I think the previous administration was looking at leasing the homes, but we prefer to move to a lease-purchase arrangement where eventually you own the home. That's the way to go, Madam Speaker. So, that is something that we are excited about. That will be quite a few people moving into new homes in the near future.

We have done a lot of road patching in the Bodden Town area. We had a lot of pot holes on various roads, out in the Belford area, in particular, and Will T [Drive], and other areas that needed repairs. The NRA [National Roads Authority] has worked on that for us. There is an area on Anton Bodden Drive that is in a serious state of disrepair. It has been patched so many times that when you drive on it now, you feel like you are on a rollercoaster.

So the NRA has taken it as one of their priority jobs to rip that piece of road (it is about 300 yards or so) and resurface that. That road was meant to eventually be paved and when funds allow we will get to that. At this point in time it will be chip and spray. But at least it will be a fresh surface. The residents in that area of Anton Bodden Drive and those people who come through the district can look forward to that being improved in the near future.

Something that we are working on and are very excited about, especially with the upcoming Pirates Week (Bodden Town day is November 17th, I think), is creating an access into the Nurse Josie Senior Home area and the Harry McCoy Park and the Mission House. As you know, the only access to that is from the Gun Square, Cumber Avenue area. One of the things we are looking at is the property behind that, between that an Anton Bodden Drive, which is government owned. The NRA is just about ready to roll. We have a meeting Saturday on site and we are looking to create an access from the Anton Bodden Drive side, with parking. That is going to open up that area, not only for Pirate's Week, but for tourism.

There a lot of tour operators who are saying they just can't get their buses into that area, it's so

narrow, and people want to see the wonderful facility that we have there. The Nurse Josie Senior Home Centre is a wonderful museum that is well looked after by a dynamic team of ladies that we have in Bodden Town. That is something that everybody who is in Cayman, residents and tourists, deserves to see because it takes you back in time. Those ladies put on a great reception. They cook some of the best food in the world. And you just have to see it.

This is part of our Go East Initiative, the Peace Initiative, whatever we want to call it, but bringing tourists up to the east, displaying some of our history and some of our talent that we have in the Bodden Town district. So, I am very excited that it looks as if we are going to get this done in time for Pirates Week. It will certainly give us the success that we didn't have last year with the Pirates Week Heritage Day, because we will be able to go into the night. We have lighting in the park and we will have our local Bodden Town guys playing music. I think it is very exciting for the committee that's working now. So, I am looking forward to that. Hopefully with the support of the NRA team and the various units of Government, we will get that done.

As Representatives we have been putting in a lot of street lights. We have a lot of requests for street lights in the Bodden Town area. We have gotten a lot of them done. We have also been sponsoring the clean-up activities of a group that I want to pay particular kudos to under the leadership of Renard Powell. They have taken it upon their own as a district group to actually clean up the district of central Bodden Town. They have been doing this for about eight Saturdays straight now, he and a team of, predominately, ladies (sadly). There are a couple of guys. It would be good to have more of our guys out there. But these folks have taken up cleaning and cutting and painting and all this stuff. We, as the Bodden Town Representatives, have been sponsoring refreshments and whatever equipment and paint and all that stuff that they need.

I just want to say that this is such a good example of how people don't just sit and complain, but take it upon themselves, without even prompting from us. They took the initiative on their own and we were happy to support them. So, I am very proud of that group. I want to pay tribute to Renard, George, and all the crew that are out there working every Saturday. I say well done! I hope others will join you and follow your example, not just in Bodden Town, but Island wide.

MOMENT OF INTERRUPTION—7.00 PM

The Speaker: Honourable Minister, we have reached the hour of seven o'clock. According to my estimation you have twenty minutes remaining. Do you wish to take those 20 minutes?

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: No, I was going to wrap up just shortly, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: Okay.

The last thing I wanted to mention about Bodden Town was the Coe-Wood Public Beach. People will see those funny looking little huts that the last Government built. They look like something from a comic book, to be quite honest. I don't know whether to open them or knock them down. But they are really not the most appealing. Whoever the architect was, I hope he paid the price.

Those things are still locked up and people are asking why in the world were these things built and locked up. Well, the first thing was that they were apparently built without Planning permission. When that was found out then the next thing was to find a policy for them to be operated properly from. So the Government . . . it's not just the Coe-Wood Beach, but there are other areas that Government is working hard to come up with policies by which to operate these public facilities. So that is the reason for the delay in opening them.

I am hoping, God willing, that the people working on this will get cracking and get it done as soon as possible and we can get them open and being used for the benefit of the district. But the whole idea for them was to have craft and what-not, local and whatever being sold there for tourists and residents alike. I hate the fact that they are there under lock and key and probably getting into a state of disrepair. Someone had broken the locks off and various things like that. We are hoping to get that sorted out and get them opened up in the near future as well.

So, Madam Speaker, I think my throat is getting kind of dry. I think I have exhausted most of what I had to say. I just want to say what a pleasure it is to be back here. In some ways it feels like I haven't left, like I took a little vacation. It's good to come back fresh. It's a pleasure to be here working with a ministry and a chief officer like Ms. Jennifer Ahearn and her team who really do a dynamic job. We have a very small Ministry. We have a lot of departments under the Ministry, but they do a very able job and I have a very committed team. Without them, I wouldn't be able to deliver on my policies and the Government's policies.

So, again, I thank them and say that we look forward to the next three and a half years to really producing and delivering on all the things that we have looked at as a Government, and, at least where affordable, we are going to continue to do more with less.

Madam Speaker, with those few words I end my debate. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier for the motion for the adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Jr.: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I wish to thank you and all Members of the House for working late this Friday evening. I know everybody is tired. It's been a long, difficult few weeks getting to the Budget Session. But it was important and it is important that we press on so that we can get through the debate, get through Finance Committee and then move on to deal with the other business of the House.

I think we all prefer to work a bit later in the evenings than having to go into midnight, as has been the case in the past on some of these occasions. That's why we pressed on until seven. We may have to do the same on Monday. I caution Members.

So, Madam Speaker, before I move the adjournment of this honourable House, I just wish everyone a pleasant weekend. For those who have not yet spoken you have another two days to prepare. I move the adjournment of this honourable House until 10.00 am on Monday.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House be adjourned until 10.00 am Monday.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

AT 7.07 PM THE HOUSE STOOD ADJOURNED UNTIL 10.00 AM, MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2013.

