



**CAYMAN ISLANDS  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

**2013/14 SESSION**

**14 October 2013**

*Fourth Sitting of the Third Meeting*  
(Throne Speech and Budget Meeting)

*(pages 181–216)*

**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 Roy McTaggart, MLA	Second Elected Member for George Town
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. McKeeva 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

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
THRONE SPEECH AND BUDGET MEETING  
THIRD MEETING 2013/14 SESSION  
MONDAY  
14 OCTOBER 2013  
11.15 AM  
Fourth Sitting**

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

**The Speaker:** I will invite the Honourable Deputy Governor to grace us with prayers.

### PRAYERS

**The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:** Good morning, Madam Speaker. 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 resumed.

### READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### APOLOGIES

**The Speaker:** apologies for the late arrival of the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay, Capt. Eugene Ebanks.

### STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

**The Speaker:** I have not received any notice of statements for this morning.

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### BILLS

#### SECOND READING

#### APPROPRIATION (JULY 2013 TO JUNE 2014) BILL, 2013

#### DEBATE ON THE BUDGET ADDRESS AND THRONE SPEECH TOGETHER WITH THE GOV- ERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT

*[Continuation of debate thereon]*

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

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Education.

**Hon. Tara A. Rivers, Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs, Second Elected Member for West Bay:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to begin by also extending my thanks and gratitude to Her Excellency, Mrs. Helen Kilpatrick, for the Throne Speech delivered to us a week ago in this honourable House.

I would also like to thank the Honourable Premier for the delivery of the Policy Statement which sets out the broad framework for this Government's focus for the coming year and administration.

I would also like to give my thanks to the Honourable Minister of Finance for his astute delivery of the Budget Address which talked about some of the

challenges we face as a new Government to try to achieve the Budget outcomes, but to also highlight the priorities in the Budget. Many of those include areas that I am responsible for as Minister of Education and Employment.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Third Elected Member for the district of West Bay for his very gracious words of acknowledgement in congratulating you and I as being the two female representatives for the districts of Cayman Brac and West Bay. I think it is very humbling to know that the Elected Member and, I am sure many other Members in this House, recognise the important contribution that women in politics play, in particular the strong Caymanian women's heritage that we come from. So I say again, thank you, to the honourable Third Elected Member for West Bay.

I would also like to echo the sentiments expressed by that same Member with respect to working together in this honourable House. I think it is important that we have a spirit of cooperation regardless of what side of the aisle we are on, especially when we are talking about issues of national importance. Madam Speaker, it is important for me to point out that as independently elected Member I was elected to do just that. I was given a mandate to be the bridge to basically bridge the gap with respect to political philosophies and ideologies. I hope to be able to continue to do that during my tenure in this honourable House.

Madam Speaker, I am here as a tribute and I give thanks to the many strong women who have gone before me and served in this honourable House, or its predecessor. Women, such as Ms. Evelyn Wood, Ms. Annie Huldah Bodden, Ms. Esther Ebanks, Ms. Daphne Orrett, the Hon. Edna Moyle, Ms. Berna Thompson Cummings, Ms. Heather Bodden, Ms. Lucille Seymour and you, Madam Speaker.

I am here as a product of a long, long line of strong Caymanian women. And I am here as a testament to what it means to be a strong Caymanian woman, representing strong Caymanian women and men from the district of West Bay and this country as a whole. But I know and acknowledge that my strength comes not from me alone, but it comes from Almighty God and the many angels, including those here on earth watching and praying over me.

Madam Speaker, by the grace of God I was elected the Second Elected Member for the district of West Bay, elected against all odds, or so some people thought. But God has a plan. In spite of the odds, His will, will be done. In all circumstances, what God has for you, no man can take from you. Whereas, I sit on the Government bench as the lone representative from the district of West Bay, I am not alone. I am here with a mandate from the people and when asked, they sent me a clear unanimous message that they wanted me to be here as a Cabinet Minister.

I am here because the Premier and the rest of the PPM party saw fit to invite me to become an independent member of Cabinet. I again say thank you to the Premier for giving me the opportunity to serve the people of our beloved country in this capacity. And, Madam Speaker, I am here because the people of West Bay from all walks of life, from all political persuasions, be it PPM, UDP, PNA, and independents believe that I should be here and elected me to represent them. It is a privilege and an honour to serve the people of West Bay and the people of this country in this manner.

As the Member for East End said earlier, people elect individuals. This was evident for the first time in decades in West Bay politics when they decided they wanted an independent voice in the House representing them. So, Madam Speaker, when I was asked by the Honourable Premier to become a Minister of Cabinet and, in essence, given the choice of portfolios to choose from, I chose to take on the enormous task of the portfolio of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs, subject areas representing some of, if not the, toughest challenges facing this country today in one of the toughest economies we have ever experienced.

Whereas the challenges are great and many, the personal and societal rewards for making a positive contribution in these areas are and will be great. There is no greater satisfaction than knowing that you are actually a part of and have contributed to the positive revolutionary, not just evolutionary, change in our children's and our people's lives as it relates to education, employment and gender affairs.

Now, Madam Speaker, I would like to turn my attention to the various subject areas for which I am responsible, taking each in turn.

During this administration's tenure we will continue to drive towards creating a world class education system. We are committed to continuing to raise the bar in terms of the expectations we set for our students and the quality of education service. At the same time we are equally committed to matching these high expectations with a high level of support for our principals and teachers so they can, in turn, deliver the best quality experiences for our students.

Madam Speaker, student outcomes are critical and a key measure to the success of any education system. I am therefore pleased to report to this honourable House that yet for another year, external examination results for the Year 12 students have reached a new national high. At our Teachers Welcome event on 26 August this year, I provided provisional results. I have been informed by the Ministry that final results have now been received and verified by the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education staff.

The statistics provided by the Chief Education Officer shows that in 2013 the results far outstripped even last year's record results. Of the Year 12 stu-

dents leaving the government system, 69.5 per cent attained five or more Level 2 or high level passes. That is the equivalent of O Level at A-star to C, a GCSE, IGCSE, or 1 to 3 at CXC [Caribbean Examinations Council]. Last year, 49 per cent of the Year 12 students achieved this standard, and just five years ago it was 29 per cent of the Year 12 students achieving the same standards. In other words, Madam Speaker, student results have more than doubled in just five years, as I have been told by the Department of Education.

CXC English results have continued to improve. More than 67 per cent of the full cohort of students achieved a Level 2 or high level pass compared to 57 per cent of entries regionally. Math results have also improved. This is still an area of concern and a focus for improvement by the Ministry and Department of Education through the various math and numeracy programmes that we sponsor and promote in the schools. In the area of mathematics, 37.5 per cent achieved a high level pass, compared to 26 per cent last year.

Madam Speaker, it is important for me to note and recognise that the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre [CIFEC] made a tremendous contribution to these results fulfilling an important part of its remit which is to provide second chances for success for some of our students. For example, 119 students earned a Level 2 qualification in math and English at CIFEC. Other notable contributions to CIFEC include the fact that 200 students also earned internationally recognised Level 2 qualifications in a technical and vocational subject area. All students undertook a formal study of employability skills to help prepare them for transitions to the world of work.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank the hard work of our principals and teachers throughout the school system. There is no doubt that the hard work and dedication in our public education system by principals and teachers was the major contributing factor to these results. They have delivered and continue to deliver under very challenging circumstances at times.

Madam Speaker, I again would like to acknowledge the appreciation that we have for our teachers and to say that their efforts have not been in vain as we continue to see the results of our students improving strength over strength, year over year. I would also like to thank the Chief Education Officer for her hard work, as well as the Chief Officer, the staff of the Ministry and Department of Education. They have worked hard to drive an agenda to reform, which focuses on improving the outcomes and life chances for all of our children under our care. And yes, there is still much work to be done, and there is still much hard work expected of the staff of the Ministry and Department of Education and the schools. But it is also very important that we take the time to recognise the work that has been done up until this point.

Madam Speaker, while progress has been made, there is much work to do. In the 2014 financial year and beyond, our work will be guided by the priorities established by the Cayman Islands Strategic Plan for Education 2012 to 2017. As I said when I first got elected, it's not about tearing down what has gone before us, but it's about building upon and augmenting and enhancing to ensure that our education system meets the needs and focuses on ensuring that the best interests of our children are catered to. So, to that end I recognise, as Minister of Education, that education is a process that will support the work being done by our educators at all levels within the system. And it is a process that will enable us to build on the strides to improve our education system which began under the previous PPM Administration and has continued over the past four years and which we will continue to work towards during this administration.

While I am committed to the phased implementation of the Strategic Plan for Education, I am also aware of the need to augment and improve upon that plan through further consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders, including a wider cross-section of teachers and students in areas where deficiencies have been recognised. Some of these areas include the need to develop and implement a crime reduction strategy and a curriculum in the schools starting from primary school level on up. There is a need to deliver conflict resolution training to both the teachers and the students so that they are able to resolve conflicts in an amicable and personal way, as opposed to resorting to violence which often carries on into the wider community.

Madam Speaker, there is a need to provide improved provisions for special education needs which actually includes provision for gifted and talented students as well. We need to make sure that our education system is addressing the needs of all of our children at whatever end of the spectrum they may be in their educational attainment and achievement.

The education system and, therefore, the National Education Strategic Plan, need to ensure that it addresses certain gender specific issues in education. These include, in particular, the issue of our underperforming boys at the high school level as it was seen with respect of the results. There are other gender specific issues as well. So, as Minister of Gender [Affairs] I have tasked my technical team to take a look at finding strategies that will help to address some of these concerns that we know are specific to our young men and our young women throughout the education system.

Madam Speaker, there is also a need to support and enhance implementation of the Primary Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate (IB). We have gone down this route of having now three schools that are PYP accredited. Before we continue to roll out in the rest of the schools, we need to make sure that the schools that have this accredita-

tion that have gone down this route are delivering the curriculum in the most effective way. So, we are looking to ensure that the actual implementation at the schools that we have now are actually meeting the targets and the goals for them to move on to become fully accredited. At that point we will be able to learn from those experiences to then determine whether or not the complete rollout should take place and when it would be appropriate to do so.

Madam Speaker, we also need to facilitate opportunities for international comparison with educational achievement and results. There is also the need to implement the national standards for graduation and to focus efforts on ICT integration and projects.

Throughout our respective campaigns both the Councillor for the Ministry of Education and I spoke about many of these issues on numerous occasions. And education featured prominently in the national priority plans of the independent candidates. The Councillor for the Ministry of Education will provide more information with respect to the augmentation and implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Education, and our overall vision of how we intend to move the public education system one step closer to becoming a world class system that we both aspire to achieve for the benefit of our children and the country as a whole.

He will also speak about the vital work of the Library service in being a partner in our educational system and helping the Ministry to achieve the goal of promoting the concept of lifelong learning amongst the young and the old in our society.

Madam Speaker, I would like to focus my attention on a few additional areas as it relates to education before turning my attention to Employment and Gender Affairs. As honourable Members will see; this year's budget and my Ministry places significant emphasis on early childhood care and education. You may ask why this is important. Because research indicates that the first eight years and, in particular, the first three years of a child's life are the most important with respect to determining educational achievement in the future.

More responsibility is being put on the early childhood practitioners to ensure that children receive well balanced experience while in their care. This is especially important as it is becoming more commonplace now for the early childhood centres to supplement the roll of family to give our children opportunities to explore, develop relationships, learn and have healthy meals as society is changing and family dynamics are affected by the economy and certain social factors. The improvements in the provision that we are beginning to see in some of our early childhood centres, Madam Speaker, will yield positive results in the upcoming years as we watch our young children grow and develop to become resilient, caring, informed, well adjusted adults who can take the helm and lead our country forward in years to come.

Early Childhood Care and Education Unit will continue working towards standardizing early childhood provisions throughout the country so every child can have access to a good, solid start for their lifelong journey of learning. Some key developments and initiatives that I should highlight at this point are that the reception programme which was re-established in September 2012 has continued grow this academic year. There are now four classes at the Sir John A. Cumber Primary School, and two classes at the Bodden Town Primary School, in addition to classes at every other government school, with the exception of Red Bay Primary. And we have put mechanisms in place to ensure that all students that fall within the Red Bay Primary catchment area have access to private early childhood education care should they so desire.

Reception staff plan and facilitate programmes using the draft Cayman Islands Early Years Curriculum framework which is at the final stage of editing before printing. The final printed version of this document is anticipated to be available and brought to the Education Council in the early weeks of 2014. The Education Council has approved the Education Council Guidelines for the Early Childhood Care and Education Centres. These guidelines are an important tool in equalizing provision in all early childhood centres in the country. They encompass the previous regulatory work of persons like the late Mrs. Marjorie Beckles, who was instrumental in the development of early childhood education in the Cayman Islands and should always be remembered for such.

They also include the CARICOM Guidelines and International Best Practice in the area of early childhood education. It also calls for the registration and re-registration processes of the early childhood centres. This process draws on various government agencies successfully working together, such as the Department of Environmental Health, the Public Health Department, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Fire Services. The perspective of multiple agencies is particularly important to ensure that the children's health and safety and emotional wellbeing are safeguarded while they are at the early childhood centres.

The Education Council will register and re-register such early childhood centres on an annual basis and early childhood provision being offered by private and government schools using this policy document.

The Early Childhood Care and Education Unit will begin using the Education Council Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education Centres to do the first annual set of registrations in this coming year, as well as continuing to work closely with those professionals who offer early childhood care and education to address training and development needs that they may have.

This year's Early Childhood Care and Education Unit will liaise with the Department of Education Services to offer the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses in early childhood education at CIFEC to have a pathway to qualification for adults who want to pursue a career in early childhood education.

Madam Speaker, the Inclusion Unit within the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs is continuing to deliver strategic objectives as described in the Cayman Islands Strategic Plan, in particular goal 4 which is aimed at building safer schools and to promote inclusion. An important element in achieving successful inclusion and strengthening school based responses for at risk students is the collaboration with key partners.

In the 2013/14 Budget, the Ministry will continue to support the Best Behaviour and Education Support Team (the BEST model, that is now a regular activity in all of the schools) to deliver the youth crime awareness and prevention days for high school students led by the Youth Anti-crime Trust Youth Act in partnership with the Department of Education Services, the Police and the Prison Services. The Ministry will continue its partnership with the Family Resource Centre to create an anti-bullying programme which is being trialed this year in several of the primary schools and has recently been launched with the advent of the Chrissie movie which we partnered with the council from Barbados to bring down here to show to our Year 5 or 6 primary students.

These initiatives are aimed towards assuring that our young people do not just learn the hard skills of reading, writing and arithmetic; but they also learn to be able to interact and have the social skills necessary in order to become effective adults to be able to deal with the challenges that life brings at school in the environment, at home, in the community, and in the workplace. Other key initiatives include collaboration with the Department of Education to establish a model of professional practice for delivery of specialist support.

Madam Speaker, we have many specialists in the system, including occupational therapists, speech therapists, educational psychologist and the like. However, we found over the years that the delivery of these services was not as effective as it could have been, so part of the mandate that I brought to the Ministry was to look at how we actually could restructure this programme. I am happy to say that this year we will be offering a student services centre type model where we will be able to track and monitor the activities of these professionals and whether or not they are actually getting the service to the students that need it most and it improved recordkeeping, et cetera.

So the various professionals in the schools, including the teachers and principals, will have a better understanding of what issues students are facing

and how the recommendations to address those can be done within the school setting itself.

Madam Speaker, we have also established a unit for pregnant and parenting students at the CIFEC. We continue to identify and support students who are pregnant or parenting to ensure continued access to appropriate education services and to coordinate other services and support that such students may need. It's important we recognise that all young people be given an opportunity to further their education and their skills training irrespective of the personal circumstances they may be facing at the time. The Special Education Needs Code of Practice will be extended to include a code of practice for gifted and talented students. The Department of Education will be working to develop and pilot some new services in this area this year.

I turn my attention to the University College of the Cayman Islands: The University College of the Cayman Islands will continue to provide quality education programmes and learning opportunities, the development and implementation of a five-year strategic plan (which is to be tabled to the Board in short order) which establishes a framework that will guide the further development of the Government's National Tertiary Institution and ensure that its standards and programmes and services are responsive to the social and economic needs and priorities of the country.

The College will work to raise the profile of the College through the following strategic collaborations, including membership in the International Association of College Business Education, the Lampton College, which involves a CARICOM scholarship for UCCI students; Nursing Council of Jamaica for Indexing of Nursing Students; New England Institute of Technology for programmes in Engineering and Nursing; Carlton University, Canada; and Coventry University, United Kingdom.

This academic year, September 2013, saw the launch of several programmes at UCCI aimed at encouraging and facilitating more Caymanians to enter the field of nursing and teaching—two areas that we recognise as critical for our wellbeing and also will provide growing opportunities in years to come given the advent of Health City.

The new Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing and the new associate, bachelor and post graduate certification in education which was developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, both streams were introduced in this year's educational calendar. So we look to monitor the implementation and the success of these programmes in years to come.

There is also in the works a development for new programmes and courses, including the Associates of Arts in Legal Studies in collaboration with CILEx [Chartered Institute of Legal Executives], and Executive Certificate in Global Leadership in collaboration with the University of Texas.

Madam Speaker, the UCCI intends to continue to host top-class lecture series and workshops featuring international and local expertise on a variety of relevant subjects. I would just like to take this opportunity to advise this honourable House of the STEM Conference which is being hosted at UCCI in very short order. I encourage all Members to attend where possible or to have students that you may know who are interested in science and technology to attend.

Before I leave the topic of education it would be remiss of me not to address some of the concerns raised by the Member for East End concerning the perceived neglect of the eastern district schools by the Education Department. I want to start by saying that I accept the Member's point regarding the need for visibility and regular periodic visits by the Chief Education Officer at each school. This sentiment has also been echoed recently by many of the principals throughout the schools. I am now aware that this will work in that the Ministry and the Chief Education Officer have been charged with devising a plan to ensure that such periodic visits are put in place in order to facilitate the kind of visibility and interaction that the Chief Education Officer should be building with each of the schools in order to anticipate and hopefully deal with some of the challenges that come up as they come up.

Whereas I understand and appreciate and applaud the passion of the Member for East End and his commitment to the East End Primary School, I believe that to go as far as saying that the East End Primary School is being neglected is an unfair characterisation of what is happening in the system. As I indicated earlier, Madam Speaker, in the education system, as we know it, there are many challenges. There are many challenges on the staffing front, on the capacity front. There are a number of challenges which the Ministry and the Education Department have to deal with and are trying to do so in an equitable and proportionate manner.

Madam Speaker, as you know, we have been tasked this year to do more with less, because of budget constraints. But I am happy to say that this Government has indicated, not just in words but by action, allocated the vast majority of resources that we have asked for from the Ministry of Education. And, Madam Speaker, saying that, we still, as all ministries, had to make certain cuts in order to balance and present the Budget as we have done to this point. So I say that to say that we know that there is lots of work to be done. We are working very diligently to do this. And we are looking to develop partnerships with the private sectors, partnerships with interested persons in the community, and partnerships with the PTA in order to meet some of the needs that may exist that may not necessarily be available from the Government Budget directly.

But I am very enthusiastic about the prospect of continuing to do this because we now have an Ed-

ucation Council which is represented. We have private sector members represented there, and we have many former and current educators represented as well. So, to be able to build these types of relationships we can continue to work through the work of the Education Council in order to do so.

At this stage I also want to take the opportunity to thank very much for the hard work of the outgoing Education Council who I know from just my short time in office. I had the opportunity to work with them for the past couple of months, and they were extremely diligent and focused on delivering the service that they were asked to do, which was to deal with the scholarships. Again, the Councillor of the Ministry of Education will give us a bit more information with respect to the scholarship process and our plans for the coming year.

Madam Speaker, some of the ways we plan to address some of these shortcomings is by considering ways on how to structure the model of education delivery as a whole, and to create those opportunities for private sector involvement. Also to deal with chronic staffing issues as it relates to the schools by looking to align the human resource aspect of teacher and other support aide recruitment to be more in line with the realities of the recruitment and work cycle of the education system. To that end we have already started to have conversations with the Deputy Governor to ensure that we are able to create a model of education that is fit for purpose or more fit for purpose. That should hopefully deal with some of the staffing issues which seem to plague the education system on a periodic basis.

We have also stressed the need for the implementation of succession planning for Caymanian educators and looking to find ways to redress the salary disparity that exists among some of the long-serving teachers as compared to some of the more recent hires.

Madam Speaker, we recognised just in these few short months, having taken a very critical look at education and the delivery of education and the challenges we face in education, a lot of it has to do with systemic problems (as I like to say) and so even though we don't have the magic bullet or the quick fix, we are looking to put things in place which deal with some of these systemic problems such as the hiring practices as well as the issue of the salary disparity which we know exists.

Madam Speaker, this year we also introduced the concept of a pastoral care worker in the schools. This really is twofold in that the goal of the pastoral care worker is to provide that nurturing environment that we know we need to provide, not just in the classrooms but in the child's experience as they walk the halls, as they play on the playground. The pastoral care worker is also there to try to address some of the growing unemployment amongst some of our retirees who we know may have passion, experience and the



ability to continue working with the children. They may have done so through vacation bible schools, Sunday school, some of them are even past educators. So we are looking for a way to tap into that human capital we have here that may have reached its golden age (which I will talk about a little later when I talk about the issue of labour), and may be formally retired but not yet ready or able to not work to some degree.

We want to harness that pastoral care environment in the schools, so we are piloting this programme with a handful of persons who have been identified in the budget to be able to fulfill that role. But we are actually looking to do it through a non-governmental organisation, or a non-profit organisation, so it does not have the impact on the challenges that I know the Deputy Government faces with respect to the headcount and increasing actual government staff, per se.

We are looking at getting creative, Madam Speaker, and we have been creative. We have managed to do much of what we are hoping to do without increasing our headcount and without increasing substantially the budget we have been given. So, it's about finding those innovative solutions to deal with the real problems. The Councillor for Education and I have been working very diligently to do just that.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to turn my attention to the issue of employment. As we know, there are many challenges in this particular economy with respect to employment. Employment features on everybody's mind, conversations, daydreams, nightmares, et cetera. So, Madam Speaker, the challenges are great, but the political will is equally as great amongst this Government—and especially me as Minister of Employment.

We know that the Caymanian population, as it stands right now, is not able to meet the entire existing labour demand. When we take into account the anticipated growth of the local population in relation to the anticipated growth of the local economy, it is very unlikely that the local population will ever meet the local labour demand. We also know that there are insufficient quantities of both high-skilled qualified and low-skilled Caymanians in the workforce to meet the specific demands of the financial services, tourism and construction industries.

Local employers have expressed that they often find it difficult to promote internally, as sometimes the local employees, the Caymanian employees, have lacked the skills, knowledge base and experience to move beyond a certain point in their career. But, that does not mean that local companies don't have the continued obligation to try. And that is what we are trying to promote, Madam Speaker. We are trying to promote a culture where we develop continuous lifelong learning amongst the Caymanian workforce. This will require a certain mindset and a certain mind shift for many of our local Caymanian employees. But it also will require a mind set and a

mind shift for many of our companies that have the obligation to try to provide relevant and adequate training opportunities on the job, supplemented where necessary by formal training and educational opportunities that may be required.

The Labour Force Survey of fall 2012 estimates that the local labour force of the Cayman Islands was approximately 39,000 people. Of that, 47.5 per cent were Caymanians, and 52.5 per cent were non-Caymanians. In that same survey it was estimated that approximately 2,000 Caymanians in the labour force were unemployed and actively seeking employment as at November 2012. Of the total unemployed Caymanians in the workforce, approximately 1,500 were registered with the NWDA as seeking work as of 26 July 2013. Madam Speaker, there is an estimate of 500 unemployed Caymanians that are actively seeking employment who are not registered with the NWDA.

However, this number may be significantly more, or it may be significantly less, as there is no national system in place to track in real time the total number of unemployed. Admittedly, the database housed at the National Workforce Development Agency was not up to date and has since been scrubbed for accuracy. But I would just like to state at this point that the challenge with respect to maintaining any accurate database is that it is up to those persons who were unemployed and who have subsequently found employment to keep their information up to date. The challenge with any registration system is that the participants need to stay active in informing the NWDA as to the change in their status, be it they continue to be unemployed, or that they have found employment, or that they are once again unemployed, depending on their circumstances.

To address the challenges, an investment in the social and human capital is needed, and an increased participation in lifelong learning needs to be encouraged.

Madam Speaker, the First Elected Member for West Bay spoke about the need to have a human development strategy. He will be very pleased to hear that this is currently underway. I have already been speaking with my technocrats and I have given them the task—long before coming to this House to debate this Budget—about the need to develop an overarching human and social capital development strategy. This is a medium-term solution that we look to bring all of the various initiatives under the umbrella of one guiding strategy.

This is to be articulated in a framework for employment-related efforts. It will draw on existing policies, such as the National Strategic Plan for Education, so as to not reinvent the wheel. It is about finding efficiencies in the system and it is about making sure that we put together a plan of action that has a rational, solid basis for why it is being done.

Madam Speaker, the NWDA is a valued partner and facilitator in the training and development and employment of Caymanians. In addition to this human and social capital development strategy which we at the Ministry are in the process of developing, we are also delivering programmes and solutions to deal with the immediate and short-term needs of an unemployed society today. And this goes to the fact that you need to be able to multi-task in order to deal with the different types of unemployment, the different levels of unemployment, and the different causes of unemployment. And the NWDA is a major partner in this process.

It will support the work readiness of Caymanians through skills and assessments and the range of education, training, and development opportunities. The NWDA aims to align Caymanians actively seeking employment or career progression with the needs of employers and enhance a national workforce development and training agenda informed by relevant, meaningful research and data.

We also aim to encourage a culture of lifelong learning as it provides opportunities for knowledge and skills acquisition at all levels and at all stages of professional growth. I think it's important, when we talk about unemployment, that we actually look at different types of unemployment. As I said, there is no quick fix, or no one-size-fits-all type model to deal with the area of unemployment. Research has shown that there are four different categories of unemployment. That is: frictional unemployment; structural unemployment; cyclical unemployment; and seasonal unemployment. I will briefly speak to each of these and then talk about some of the strategies which we look to employ through the National Workforce Development Agency, primarily, and some of the other private sector and other government agencies.

Frictional unemployment deals with transitional unemployment due to people moving between jobs. It also includes people joining the labour force for the first time, such as high school leavers, or university graduates and mothers who may have taken a career break to raise their children, et cetera, returning to the labour market.

Structural unemployment is a more permanent level of unemployment resulting from skill levels of job seekers not meeting the skill requirements of jobs available or the mismatch between the skills that the workers are supplying versus the skills the employers require.

Cyclical unemployment is the result of an imbalance between a number of job seekers and the number of jobs available due to a recession or downturn in the economy. Cyclical unemployment is often a major challenge for policymakers everywhere, Madam Speaker, not just here in the Cayman Islands.

Seasonal unemployment arises due to the close of a business season. This is most relevant in

our area of the tourism industry here in the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, we have a number of programmes through the NWDA that seek to address these various types of unemployment exhibited by our various clients of the agency. To categorise the work of the NWDA, it really encompasses doing four phases. The first phase is a needs assessment phase. It is very important for the agency to determine what the needs of the particular individual are. During this phase the unemployed skills deficits or skill attributes are identified. The training phase helps to provide unemployed persons with the relevant skills by providing training opportunities either dealt with at the NWDA or in partnership with many of the community partners that have come forward.

There is also a job assessment phase, which looks to match the jobs available with the unemployed persons and this also goes on to job placement. During this phase the unemployed are matched with job openings.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of specific programmes that I would now like to talk about which deal with the issue of unemployment in the short term, as well as in the long term, by providing the foundation, training, skills that many of our unemployed persons need in order to be successful in their transition from unemployed to employed status.

There is a basic computer literacy course being offered through the library services, known as Tech Byte. It is an eight week course which deals with giving the participants the understanding of how to operate computers from a very basic level. It is geared towards middle-aged persons who have mostly expressed a concern about not being comfortable dealing with technology and computers. So, it was important for us to target a programme (which helps to ease that transition for a generation of persons who did not grow up with an iPad in their hands) by offering this in the communities.

We have one programme currently ongoing at the West Bay Library that started in mid-September. We have another one starting this week at the George Town Library. There are plans to get a programme through the Bodden Town Library as well in the near future. These are eight-week courses with a nominal cost of \$10, just to cover the cost of supplies. It is open to the public and open to anybody who has an interest and a desire. They do fill up quickly, so I would encourage any Member in here who knows a person that might benefit from such a programme to get in touch with them so as to get in touch with their local library (at least the libraries I just announced).

Depending on the success of those, we will look to take it to the outer libraries as well, depending on interest and resource availability.

Madam Speaker, there is a programme offered through the NWDA known as "Career Ready 101." It is an assessment tool that identifies skills and

knowledge deficits. This training for those persons that have the requisite level of familiarity with computers are able to be delivered online either through the NWDA or, once you register, you can access this through the comfort of your own home (or at the libraries) to do your online training to enhance whatever skill sets this assessment tool has identified.

It is specifically targeted and tailored for persons who may have indicated an interest in working in profession X. It gives you an indication as to what your skills should be and where you are actually at. From that you can do a targeted programme of skills training which will help to get you where you need to be in order to function effectively in that particular chosen career.

This is part of the NWDA's broader training programme. As you have seen in the papers and on the news there are a number of training courses that are being offered through the NWDA and it started from last month. But the latest series to be rolled out this month is the food and beverage course which is being launched. These courses are free for the participants at the agency. It means you have to register with the NWDA in order to access these resources.

These courses are often delivered by many private sector partners on a voluntary basis to deliver some of the workshops. Again, it is not about Government trying to provide all things to all people; but it is about trying to create the environment to have the kind of collaboration and cooperation between private and public sectors in developing the training programme that exists.

Madam Speaker, you heard a lot recently about the NWDA online registration system. It is something that I campaigned on very heavily. The idea was to create a database, a clearing house of information, where at any given point in time people in the community will know what jobs are available and will know how to go about accessing those jobs in terms of applying for them.

Madam Speaker, we have a long way to go. But I am happy to say that we are making progress. We have now gone through an exercise at the NWDA—and thanks to countless volunteers being co-opted from within the government service, but also from within the private sector. They have gone through and contacted persons that are currently registered to scrub the database to make sure that we have a more accurate view as what the actual unemployed persons registered and what their status is today.

We are looking to computerise this system to the point where we no longer have to have the manual inputting of the Employment Services officers. That is the big source of frustration by many of the users of the system, because the system is still a manual system and it needs to be an automated system. I recognise that, Madam Speaker. We are in an age of tech-

nology and we need to move to a system that is more conducive to ease of business activity.

Cabinet has convened a task force to look at the operations of the National Workforce Development Agency. And as the Councillor for e-business mentioned in his delivery, he has been charged with the responsibility and has gladly accepted the role of chair of the NWDA task force to look at that particular issue, and one of those issues being how we can actually improve upon the registration and the database programme which we know has great potential to do what it was intended to do.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of adult education opportunities being coordinated through the NWDA and a partnership with the Department of Education Services. As I said when I started this section on employment, it is vital that we get and create a culture amongst our people that learning is for life. And where you have known deficits there is no shame in acknowledging and trying to improve yourself in order to advance yourself in your chosen career—whatever skills are required for whatever career choice you have made.

Through the Department of Education Services and the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre (CIFEC), with the support of the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs, there will be a facilitation of twilight and evening courses to offer adult literacy and numeracy programmes which includes CXC math for those persons who may not have passed it the first time around, but actually want some form of qualification in hand. These provisions are also being explored to be delivered in West Bay and the eastern districts if there is demand for them. So again, if any Member here knows of persons who would benefit from these types of adult education programmes, I would encourage you to have them get in touch with the Department of Education and registration information will be forthcoming in the near future as to how to sign up.

Again, depending on if there is a need to move into the eastern districts and West Bay, then we will look at actually running programmes there. It depends on the demand generated through the efforts. But we will be offering them centrally in George Town at CIFEC. If the demand requires, we will look to move it into the eastern districts as well. And I am happy to work with any of the Representatives in those districts to see that happen, if they so desire.

Madam Speaker, we continue to roll out a national employment programme to help vulnerable groups overcome their specific barriers to employment. We have the Passport2Success, which is one example of such a national employment programme already underway and has shown much success. The Ministry of Education and Employment has given a commitment to continue to support this worthy cause because we are seeing the results. We are in the 12<sup>th</sup> cohort of the programme, and we have results of 60

per cent of the graduates of this programme securing employment within 12 months of graduation.

Madam Speaker, in this coming financial year there will be three cohorts of Passport2Success programme executed. There will be two cohorts targeting unemployed Caymanians between the ages of 17 and 21, and one targeting unemployed single mothers. We know that unemployment amongst Caymanians is high. But it is even higher amongst our young people between the ages of 18 to 25. We thought it absolutely vital that we have these national employment programmes targeting young persons who have not quite made the transition from being students to being employed adults.

The Passport2Success programme facilitates the opportunity to increase work readiness by providing training in the area of soft skills and the opportunity to have therapeutic interventions that may not have been received in school. We know that often people are their own barriers to employment; people with a poor work ethic, people that have an inability to deal with emotional issues that may manifest themselves at work. The Passport2Success programme is unique in that it not only looks at dealing with a person's ability to learn the requisite skills of the jobs they are interested in getting, but it also looks at helping people overcome these emotional barriers, the psychological barriers that are often the main barriers to people achieving success in any work endeavour.

So, Madam Speaker, I am happy to continue to support this programme. I see the effect on the lives of the young people before they start the programme, and I see them at the end of the programme when I actually go to the graduation ceremony. I have had the privilege of doing that once already since taking office. It is a tremendous experience to see these young persons blossom during the 12 weeks that this programme provides. The programme also provides them a stipend so that they are able to afford to be in this training. But they also learn about budgeting and managing money and how to manage themselves as adults, which often they don't get while they are in school.

Madam Speaker, we continue to support and partner with private sector enterprises to offer technical and vocational training opportunities which actually lead to practical skills and accredited certification. The Ministry of Employment will continue to support the Superior Auto Training School which prepares young people to become up to level 2 certified mechanics on-Island. And it allows them to further their education and training should they decide to do so, or to work independently at any of the numerous auto mechanic shops on the Island.

Madam Speaker, you heard a lot of talk for a number of years about the need for a technical and vocational training school. Many people feel that they should be purpose built. But, Madam Speaker, this Government believes that working with private enter-

prise, such as Superior Auto, and actually identifying other private initiatives, is the way to go. The facilities are there and they have a captive audience.

Government is, in essence, enabling the training of our students as opposed to taking on the responsibility in a vacuum. It is about trying to be as efficient and as effective as possible, and we have identified certain programmes, such as the Superior Auto Programme. We have seen the results. We know the programme is effective and we will continue to support it as needed.

We are also working along with the Community Vocational Training School to attain certification and to offer a number of courses designed to provide practical skills and learning, at least at the basic level of competence, in a number of trades. Earlier this week I had a conversation with someone looking to do a beauty school. So there are other programmes coming on line and other programmes which we are hoping to be able to encourage and develop during the year as well, because it is about working with private sector. It not only creates employment opportunities in the environment, but it also helps to get us going without having to find funds that we know we don't have in order to create a purpose built building that may not necessarily reach the actual needs of the community by having them transition into work directly.

So, by working through established companies is one way. It is one strategy that I think is worth pursuing, and I will continue to do that in tandem with building out a more formal certification programme through CIFEC.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry intends to continue partnership with the private sector to deliver targeted career placement and support services for Caymanians. Some of these programmes are already in the works and have already been rolled out. I speak specifically about the re-start programme, which is a partnership with a local recruitment agency targeting over 20 participants (I have been told) in order to help them to transition and be placed in jobs that are in the various sectors, from the financial services sector, tourism sector, administration . . . it covers a broad cross-section of jobs, as well as a broad cross-section of sectors. That particular programme is a 13-week programme that is paid for by the employers participating in the programme with the intention that those persons would continue on in the employment and that they would have support for six months following the programme.

This programme is similar to the Passport2Success in that it is a structured, monitored programme for the participants. It is targeting persons who may already have career experience and, for whatever reason, find themselves unemployed and looking to get back into the world of work. [It is] also [targeting] those persons who are ready to work, who

have the requisite skills and just need a little help to transition into the world of work.

Madam Speaker, you have also seen in the news the tourism employment drive which started earlier this month. The Ministry of Employment, the NWDA and the private sector tourism entities have teamed up in order to help find jobs for around 200 persons in the market who have expressed an interest in working in tourism.

CITA [Cayman Islands Tourism Association] has already started to take to the road to interview persons in this programme. They previously approached the Ministry and the NWDA in order to work with the unemployed persons registered with the NWDA and to determine exactly who had expressed an interest in tourism. As part of that scrubbing exercise I spoke of earlier with respect to the database, the CITA representative was very instrumental in helping to identify over 150 persons (after they did the final count) who were still unemployed and had an interest in working in tourism.

Each and every one of those persons was contacted and interviews were set up with the various persons in the various districts. As part of that employment drive, any persons determined to be lacking skills in a certain area they are interested in, or [for] a job that is available, sufficient training will be provided. Part of that programme is the food and beverage training programme being offered by the NWDA starting very shortly. That feeds into the programmes that the NWDA will develop, which is to actually deal with the identified needs of the community as and when they are identified by the employers.

Madam Speaker, they have been working diligently for the past several months to create the most effective way to match jobs and applicants in the tourism industry. I have been told that the Cayman Islands Tourism Association has created a master database of jobs that will be available before the high season from both member and non-member businesses. This database also includes jobs that would be vacated by the term limit exemption work permit holders as well as other work permit holders that would have been up for renewal.

Madam Speaker, this is a laudable example of public/private partnership. We want to encourage our employers to take an active role in employing, identifying and securing jobs for the Caymanian population. On the other hand, and in addition, we want our Caymanian job-seekers to also take an active role in seeking those jobs, but to also look to address whatever skills deficits they may have with respect to the jobs that they are interested in taking. It is that type of partnership that we are trying to provide.

It is not Government's job to create or to provide the jobs. It is the Government's job to provide the environment where jobs can be created and where the economy flourishes. In that respect we are trying to fulfill the mandate of being able to create the oppor-

tunities for persons to take advantage of the job opportunities in the market. That includes taking advantage of educational and training opportunities that may be needed in order for them to do just that. We are also looking to bridge whatever communication barriers may have existed previously with the business community to say, *You have an obligation, you have a responsibility to do your part in ensuring that Caymanians are given a real opportunity to access the real jobs in this market.*

Madam Speaker, the NWDA serves as a vehicle for preparing Caymanians to participate and partake in current and future economic opportunities. As several of the Members expressed earlier in their contributions, the NWDA has yet to be fully staffed. This has been a big part of the reason why there is a lot of frustration and delay with respect to the functionality of that agency. I am happy to report, Madam Speaker, that Cabinet has approved the recommendation to reinstate the new post of Director, Training and Development Manager; an additional employment services officer; and, very importantly, a receptionist for the NWDA, together with the requisite funding to provide the agency with a minimum staff complement necessary in order to carry out the duties it was set up to do.

I ask Members of this honourable House, when it comes to voting on the Appropriation Bill, that they also support the funding needed for these particular posts. Many of you have recognised, when you go to the agency, that the functions of that agency are critically dependent on having these basic minimum posts filled in order to support the work they are trying to do.

Madam Speaker, before I move on to the next topic, I just want to reiterate that through the NWDA, and through the efforts of the Ministry in terms of developing the overall holistic strategy guiding human and social capital development, we are trying to address the issue of unemployment in a holistic fashion. This includes putting in place the requisite legislation, the development of the overarching strategy, as well as putting in place the system of training, support and infrastructure needed to create the kind of positive change, and to make an impact by lowering the level of unemployment amongst Caymanians. But it would be remiss of me not to mention a very important segment of our society that also has particular and peculiar employment needs. And that is of our disabled community.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to continue to support the vocational training programme run through the Sunrise Adult Training Centre in collaboration with the NWDA. It focuses on providing vocational training and support services for our adults with disabilities. These programmes include, but are not limited to: utilising appropriate assessment tools to identify work readiness skills and needed support for suitable job placement; continued partnership with the

community and the Government to increase training and placement opportunities; and, developing partnerships with the NWDA to increase private sector placements of that community.

Madam Speaker, turning now to Labour and Pensions: Some of the major initiatives this year will include the activation of a new Inspections Unit with the Department of Labour and Pensions to allow for proactive inspections and audits of workplaces in accordance with the Labour and Pensions Laws. Madam Speaker, I spoke at length yesterday with respect to the issues regarding pension reform, so I won't spend that much time today. But I just wanted to reiterate the point that we do now have an inspections unit that complements the occupational health and safety inspections, as well as the labour and compliance investigations and the pension investigations and compliance units. So we know that the enforcement will be beefed up as a result of the Inspections Unit making sure that the entities that will be reviewed will be reviewed based on their compliance with the various labour and pensions laws.

As a companion to the core work of this unit, the department is also establishing relationships and networks with stakeholders, particularly from relevant industry associations and also providing training and awareness as a preventative maintenance outreach in order to prevent breaches of the law or unfavourable workplace practices.

Another initiative was the implementation of major legislative changes through a revised National Pensions Law, and amendments to the Labour Law (which I spoke to at length yesterday). During this term we will see extensive review and revision of both laws as we recognise there are many areas in the laws that need to be amended to keep pace with the current environment we live in. In the interim, and during this year, the Government will bring important and time-sensitive amendments to the House for approval. Again, many of them deal with the pension issues that I spoke of in my statement yesterday.

Madam Speaker, another important change to the law, which we all agree in Government needs to be made and that will be reflected in the relevant legislation, is the amendment to the retirement age. We are living longer and we are healthier. And that's a good thing. But we need to have a labour environment that reflects this. The fact is, many of us cannot afford to, are not able to, and are not willing to stop working at the age of 60. We should have a legislative framework which allows people to continue working for a longer time if they are healthy, able and willing to do so. So, Madam Speaker, we will be bringing changes to the House to reflect this in the very near future.

The Department of Labour and Pensions recognises that there needs to be a culture of compliance, an adherence to the labour and business related laws through an integrated work approach of the key government and non-governmental organisations.

Again, the Department of Labour and Pensions has been working to strengthen the relationships and the working relationships between the counterpart regulatory agencies in the Islands, including the NWDA, the Immigration Department, the Health Insurance Commission, the Trade and Business Licensing Unit, the General Registry, and the RCIPS. Additionally, other stakeholder relationships have been enhanced, including industry, as well as the office of the Public Prosecutor, and the Attorney General's Chambers.

The Department of Labour and Pensions is working on establishing protocols for a regular, robust formal and informal sharing of intelligence, statistics and operational initiatives with its counterpart regulatory agencies. Again, it is moving us from a position of having the laws on our books, but actually enforcing those laws in a rational and holistic fashion. We are trying to create those relationships with the relevant government agencies in order to effectively implement and enforce the laws that we have governing our labour relations.

Madam Speaker, I would like to move to the area of Gender Affairs. Over the last three years two important pieces of legislation were passed, significant milestones in the area of Gender Affairs. The Gender Equality Law, 2012, seeks to protect women and men from discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy or gender in employment related matters. It provides for protection of equal pay for work of equal value. It prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace. And, to date, the Gender Equality Tribunal established under the Law has met to hear a number of discrimination cases brought before it.

The Protection from Domestic Violence Law, 2010, replaced the 18-year old Summary Jurisdiction Domestic Violence Law. Madam Speaker, the Law expands the definition of what is considered domestic violence, as well as the types of persons entitled to protection and the court orders available to victims of domestic violence.

These are two monumental pieces of legislation that look to deal with some of the gender-specific issues that we face in the community. The Ministry intends to build on this foundation by pursuing a number of initiatives in the coming year. The Minister responsible for Gender Affairs will look to provide a 10-year review and update of the Cayman Islands National Policy on Gender Equity and Equality. Through the Gender Affairs Unit the Ministry will continue to promote gender equality and provide awareness of the Gender Equality Law.

Madam Speaker, this year the Ministry will continue to take the necessary steps in order to enable the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (commonly known as CEDAW) to be extended to the Cayman Islands through the United Kingdom. I think it's important to note that the cornerstone of CEDAW is the principle of equality between men and women and

the prohibition of discrimination of the rights of men and women. CEDAW provides a framework to identify what constitutes discrimination and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. It is the only core human rights treaty that the Cayman Islands Government has yet to sign onto, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, becoming a signatory would provide the Government with the opportunity to create a basis for a more equal future for our sons and daughters, promote a culture of human rights, and improve our international image. Following consultations with relevant stakeholders, which will take place over the course of the year with the public, coupled with a public education campaign, the goal is to have CEDAW extended to the Cayman Islands by March 8, 2014, which is International Women's Day.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister, is this a convenient time for the luncheon break? Or are you almost finished?

**Hon. Tara A. Rivers:** I am almost finished, Madam Speaker. But, yes, I am just wrapping up now. I have another 10 minutes to go.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Hon. Tara A. Rivers:** Thank you.

Madam Speaker, the important role of women in politics has been underscored recently by a political commentator in a special to CNN. On speaking about the partial shutdown of the US Government, the commentator states: **"This has not been a shining week for patriarchy. The men in suits dither, posture, plan negotiation sessions and then cancel them, and employ copious military metaphors—'wage battle,' 'refuse to surrender'—to no effect."**

The commentator goes on to say: **"Competence, meanwhile belongs to the women, particularly in the usually macho world of global finance. Over in Europe, [Chancellor Angela] Merkel was re-elected on the basis of her deft handling of the eurozone crisis, and in the United States, monetary policy was entrusted to [Janet] Yellen."**

**"And this moment of female triumph extends beyond mere competence to unfathomable bravery. The hero of the moment -- the person who has been shot at, nearly killed and is still not afraid to talk—is a heroine: 16-year-old Malala Yousafzai, who was nominated for a Nobel Prize and who told Jon Stewart this week that if she were faced with a Taliban gunman such as the one who shot her last year she would, once again, explain to him how important education is for girls."**

The political commentator went on to say, **"Perhaps this will be remembered as the week when everything shifted, when we realized that leaving groups of men in charge of global deci-**

**sions and of facing down terrorists is not a good idea, and we'd better calmly hand the reins over to the women."**

And I would like to say, at least include us at the table when making that decision!

**"It happened in Iceland. . . . After the economy crashed, 'the banks, the funds, the government -- everything was taken over by women,'"** said Christine Lagarde, Chief of the International Monetary Fund, to the Wall Street Journal.

**"So when it's messy, you get the women in. But when the mess is sorted,' she added, 'keep the women.'"**

Madam Speaker, I say that to say that this Government recognises the importance of the participation of women. I thank the Government for taking that bold step for inviting me as the female Member of the district of West Bay to be part of the Government and to be part of the process that actually determines policy for the Government going forward.

On 23 May the people of this country, and in particular the people of West Bay, sent a clear and unequivocal message: it was time—and it is time—for a new generation of leaders. My victory as an independent Elected Member marked the end of an era, an era which spanned some three decades. It also marked the end of an era spanning some 20-plus years where the district of West Bay was without female representation in the House.

Madam Speaker, the significance of that feat does not escape me, nor does the challenge that comes with being an independent Member, a woman Member in the PPM-led Cabinet, and being from the district with three other UDP Opposition Members. But, Madam Speaker, I am up to the challenge.

As indicated earlier, I represent a voting base that includes persons from every political spectrum. I was elected to bridge the gap. I have developed a good and mutually respectful working relationship with my fellow Members of Cabinet and Government and I look forward to working in a mutually respectful manner with my fellow Members from the district of West Bay. And even though we may not always see eye-to-eye, we are always, and will hopefully continue to be, respectful of each other's positions and committed to working together for the greater good of the country and the Cayman Islands and the people of these Islands as a whole.

I also have good working relationships with some other Members of the Opposition as well, and I look forward to continuing that. Madam Speaker, issues of national importance must transcend political party lines. I look forward to being the catalyst that might just do that, being the consensus builder that you, Madam Speaker, as a woman in this House, know that we are often meant and led to be.

Madam Speaker, you, of all people, know that the resilience and strength of a woman knows no bounds, as long as you have God and justice on your

side. What God has for you, I say again, no man can take from you—no matter how hard they try, no matter how many times they try. I would just like to paraphrase a song that popped into my head when I was preparing this delivery today, by the late Robert Nesta Marley. It goes something like this: **“You a-go tired ‘fe see me face; Can’t get me out of the race . . .”**

I take this awesome responsibility that has been bestowed upon me, a responsibility I freely and willingly took on, a responsibility that from the very beginning I have sought the input and direction of the people of West Bay who I was elected to serve, and whose interests I advocate on behalf of every day as an independent Member of the PPM coalition-led Government. Though the challenges are great, the Caymanian people are worth fighting for. The future of our children and grandchildren depends on it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** We will now take the luncheon break and reconvene at 2.30 pm.

#### PROCEEDINGS SUSPENDED AT 12:45 PM

#### PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 2:43 PM

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

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

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

*[continuation of debate thereon]*

**Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks, Fourth Elected Member for West Bay:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

First, let me congratulate Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Helen Kilpatrick, on her first Throne Speech; and the Honourable Alden McLaughlin, on his Policy Statement, as Premier; and the Honourable Marco Archer on his first Budget Address as Minister for Finance and Economic Development.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the newly elected Members to this honourable Legislative Assembly. As you well know, Madam Speaker, I am not known for my long speeches. So in my normal style this, too, will be a brief-and-to-the-point contribution. But for those who think that I don’t say enough, I would like to say that my energies are better spent helping my constituents than beating up my gums for hours and getting nothing done!

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks:** Madam Speaker, I would like to speak briefly on a few subjects that are very near and dear to me.

The Honourable Premier spoke of the many other initiatives to help get Caymanians a job. I sincerely hope that many jobs will be forthcoming in the near future. It is a proven fact that unemployment, robberies, purse-snatching, home invasions, burglaries and such crimes are closely linked. But, more importantly, is the safety of all Caymanians and visitors alike. Madam Speaker, the day we can’t walk down the street, or sit on the beach, or go home after dark without the fear of being mugged, is the day we have lost it all. We have to remain a safe destination to attract our visitors and to make Cayman the best place in the world to live.

Violent crime is on the rise. Only this past Friday night there was another murder. I would like to take this opportunity to express heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

I see that the Commissioner of Police is advertising for new recruits. That’s all well and good. But what the police really need to do to solve some of these crimes is regain the confidence of the public. There are many people out there who have information but are afraid to say anything for fear they will become the next victim. Whatever it takes we must put an end to this crime spree and bring law and order back to these beloved Islands. I will say again, the day we are no longer a safe destination will be an extremely sad day for these Cayman Islands.

**Mental health:** Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Health spoke about providing a mental health facility in his contribution. I sincerely hope he is successful in keeping that promise. Before I came to this honourable House 13 years ago, a mental health facility was talked about and promised. Ever since I have been here it has been talked about and promised. Meanwhile, our loved ones are being sent to institutions overseas where their families seldom get to visit them. Unfortunately, many of them never return home alive. I know this aspect very well since a very close relative of mine passed away in Jamaica just two weeks ago. She will be laid to rest this afternoon.

A mental health facility has been needed in these Islands for many years. I think it is high time that we got a good one. I want to assure the Minister of Health that he has my full support in making this become a reality.

**Marine Parks:** Madam Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Environment spoke of the new draft regulations and the Darwin Initiative for the Marine Parks. I know of the Darwin Initiative as well. I want the Minister to know that I support conservation. I have served on the Marine Conservation Board and I have made amendments in this honourable House to the Marine Conservation Law to further protect our marine environment. However, it is a very delicate



balance. These proposals have to be looked at closely. All stakeholders involved have to be considered.

The marine parks in the North Sound have performed exceptionally well, remarkably well, when there was proper enforcement. Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, that is not the case today. There are those who take our marine life—conch, fish, and anything else they can get—365 days a year. And the enforcement officers know who they are but they are seldom or never caught because there is no enforcement. If they do get caught, they get a slap on the wrist and then they go back and steal more marine life to sell to pay for their court charges. It is a vicious cycle, and it's not getting anywhere. Until there is some real enforcement it will never become any better.

Madam Speaker, we, the Members of this honourable House, can sit here and legislate, and legislate, and legislate until the chickens come to roost. But it will do absolutely no good without proper enforcement. I just want to remind the honourable Minister that he will have my full support if these regulations are reasonable.

Sports tourism: Madam Speaker, even though sports tourism is relatively new to these Islands, we have seen the positive impact that the Flowers Sea Swim, Beach Volleyball and, most recently, the Under-15 Soccer Championships have had to the economy of these Islands. Those took place at a time when the hotels and car rental operators were all predicting an extremely slow summer.

As a matter of fact, when the Under-15 Soccer Championships games came to Cayman, all the hotels, condos, car rental, tour operators were sold out for two to three weeks. That is a very positive impact on our economy at such a slow time. I want to encourage the Minister of Sports to embrace every good opportunity in the tourism sector.

Education: Her Excellency the Governor spoke of a code of practice for gifted and talented students, and to expand vocational programmes in high school and beyond. I want to implore the Honourable Minister of Education to give serious consideration to expanding the vocational programmes. There are so many of our young people coming out of high school who are not prepared to enter the workforce, but who could become productive citizens with the assistance of vocational training.

Here again, Madam Speaker, vocational training has been talked about for many years now. So, I think it is high time that a proper vocational school be established to service the three Cayman Islands.

The cruise berthing [facility]: Madam Speaker, cruise berthing has been talked about for at least 20 years now—or more!—and still nothing has been done. Yet, every other cruise destination in the Caribbean has at least one cruise port (some have two or three). Here we are, Madam Speaker, the most preferred cruise destination in the Caribbean, being

passed up by the mega ships because we don't have berthing facilities. Meanwhile, our cruise visitors keep decreasing.

Cruise berthing has been a political football ever since I have been here for these 13 years. Unless we get our act together and get a berthing facility, we will lose the little bit of the cruise tourism that we have left. Madam Speaker, I have told the Honourable Minister of Tourism that he has my full support to establish a berthing facility in order to improve our cruise arrivals and our tourism product.

The Sixth Elected Member for George Town, who is also the Councillor of Tourism, spoke in his contribution about the vendors on the dock. He did not say it in so many words, but he inferred that there was some political interference. I just want to assure the Member that those vendors were licensed by the TAB [Tourism Attraction Board], and they have an arrangement to introduce and enforce all the agreements. They have a Code of Ethics and Conduct and a disciplinary grievance procedure, and to ensure that the quality of service and goods that the vendors are offering are all established standards of quality which condition must be incorporated into the licence agreement. So, I just want to assure the Member that the licenses were granted by the TAB and not the politicians.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for this—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks:** Yes, the Port Authority . . . well, some of these . . . the Port Authority Board, that's correct. And the TAB.

I just want to thank you for this opportunity, Madam Speaker, and I will take my seat. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating Her Excellency, the Premier and the Minister of Finance for their address and statements to the House over a week ago.

I want to also apologise for not being here at that particular time. I was away attending the Deputy Governor's Conference held in London where I got to share experiences and learn new ideas from my colleague Deputy Governors across the Overseas Territories. We also had representatives there from some of the Crown Dependencies, Gibraltar, Ascension and the Falklands.

Madam Speaker, I would like to start off by recording my sincere thanks to everyone who was

involved in the Budget process for their diligence and hard work. I can attest to the many long hours that ministers and civil servants worked to produce what I believe is a very credible and sustainable Budget. However, the Budget is not without challenges. Members would have observed that personnel costs are some \$13 million less than the Budget last year. This means that the Civil Service on a whole must do more with less, without compromising the delivery of services or meeting the projects of the elected Government. But the Civil Service is resilient and will once again rise to the challenge.

Madam Speaker, over the past seven years the Civil Service has adopted a number of austerity measures, including a pay freeze within grade increments since 2007, a moratorium on recruitment (which occurred around the same time). More recently, we have put in place a travel policy, and a voluntary separation policy has been introduced, with the latter realising almost immediate savings in travel cost.

However, as I have said before, all of these measures have taken a toll on civil servants and have resulted in inequities relating to pay for persons with the same skill set who joined the Service after 2007 earning more than persons who joined before 2007. This is a serious issue. It affects teachers (I heard the Minister of Education relate to that this morning) and other key posts in the Service. But I want to assure Ministers that I will be looking at ways in which we can address this over the next coming months and present a plan to the Government.

Madam Speaker, it is obvious that these austerity measures cannot continue much longer without impacting the quality of service that we provide. In order to rectify this the Government has agreed to look at other ways in which we can reduce costs in a sustainable way without affecting the services that we provide, in terms of looking at the structure of the Civil Service, to determine what services can be discontinued, amalgamated, or privatised.

I will be working with Chief Officers and hopefully will gain some expertise from the UK to help us with putting together a plan that Ministers who are our policymakers can make those decisions. We want to do that in advance of the Budget next year.

We will also seek to increase the retirement age (I know Members have voiced that concern here during this Budget Session) from 60 to 65. I think there has been broad agreement with Ministers that we should be looking to explore that. In doing so we must be flexible and consider the wishes of persons who are near retirement age. We must also be careful as to whether this will affect succession planning.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the procurement system, which has been recently approved in Cabinet and will be coming to this House shortly, is a giant step in the direction of reducing the cost of the Civil Service. For far too long the Auditor General has

been critical of the ways in which the Civil Service was procuring goods and services. I wish to record my thanks to the Cabinet for approving a new way forward which will address the Auditor General's concerns.

Madam Speaker, we have also heard concerns mentioned in terms of the Civil Service being more accountable for their actions and performance. I wholeheartedly agree with those sentiments, and I have made performance and accountability one of the top priorities for chief officers. This year I expect that all civil servants will have a performance agreement, compared to 97 per cent last year. This is a significant achievement, given that just two years ago approximately 10 per cent of the Service had a performance agreement. So, in over two years we will have gone from 10 per cent to 100 per cent.

Performance assessment, which is a key component to accountability, for the last financial year is now being completed in record time. I have insisted that managers be truthful in their assessments. Madam Speaker, while this is, I guess, obvious, it is important that managers be truthful when doing their assessments for civil servants. Unless we are truthful and let them know what areas they are not performing in, or if they are doing a good job in other areas, there will be no improvement. And I will be doing an audit of the assessments to see for myself that we are being truthful and that we are holding staff accountable for their performance.

This will take some time for us to improve accountability across the Civil Service, but I am confident that we are on the right track and that we will get there in the not-too-distant future.

Madam Speaker, much has been said about the police over the past few days—and rightly so, with a murder just happening this weekend. That means we have had three murders in just over a month. This is unacceptable. We must all join forces to stop this ruthless behaviour. I am confident that the brave men and women of the RCIP will once again solve these crimes and quell the rise in serious crime.

However, we cannot arrest ourselves out of this problem, as new criminals are emerging. We must support the various programmes designed to stop the feeding of the criminal justice system. The Minister of Education set out a number of those programmes earlier today. I think if we support and put a lot of effort into those programmes we will begin to see over the years a reduction in serious crime.

As we know, crime is everyone's problem—it is not just a police problem—and we must act that way. I challenge everyone to get involved, to be a mentor, engage our youth, report criminal behaviour, and be part of the solution.

Finally, Madam Speaker, it would be remiss of me as Head of the Civil Service if I did not raise the issue of remuneration of civil servants. Given that the Government will have more than a healthy surplus at

the end of the next financial year, I will encourage the Government to reward the strong performance and sacrifice of civil servants by, at the very least, reinstating the 3.2 per cent reduction in salary that was done.

It has been said that Government should be run like a business. I think those people who are saying that will agree that any public sector company that has \$100 million surplus would certainly reward their employees who gained that surplus. I think that is only fair, Madam Speaker, and it is something that I would ask the Government to give serious consideration to at the end of the financial year.

You must remember that it is civil servants who are going to deliver a significant portion of this Budget. Certainly it will be civil servants who get blamed if we don't; they will say that we are spending too much money. So, I think it is very important that we look to reward good performance when it happens.

In closing, I again thank civil servants for their hard work. I challenge them to continue to work hard, to exceed the expectations of our customers and to do everything they can to support the Government of the day.

Madam Speaker, I will close with one of my favourite quotes on public service: **“My creed is that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, that honor is to be earned, not bought.”**

Madam Speaker, I thank you.

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

I recognise the Fifth Elected Member for George Town.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr., Fifth Elected Member for George Town, Councillor of Education:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the people of George Town for allowing me to be their representative. It is with their mandate that I am primarily authorised to act, and I will always be mindful of such. I also have a responsibility for all Caymanians, including my immediate family, a point that will be foremost in my deliberations in these four years.

It is with that hat, Madam Speaker, in which I act as a proud Caymanian, a pro-Caymanian, a husband and a father. I want the best for all Caymanians. I include my wife in that number, as a Caymanian woman, and my son as a Caymanian child in that cohort. It is their future that I hold in my hands and that I strive to enhance daily. I will not always be successful,

but I will always endeavour to do my best for these people in the Cayman Islands.

I will work hard to try and fulfill my promises to work in the best interests of my fellow Caymanians, no matter where they originally came from, whether or not they are in a party, rich or poor. We are all Caymanians. And that means new Caymanians as well as indigenous Caymanians. We all have to pull together for the betterment of these wonderful Islands.

I want to express my congratulations to Her Excellency the Governor for an excellent Throne Speech, which was delivered with the right tone and very succinctly. I also want to thank the Minister of Finance and his team of civil servants for producing a sound Budget giving the country a good financial road map for the foreseeable future. Having been accepted by the UK without challenge is, I think, a feather in this country's cap, and a step in the right direction to get us back to economic recovery through fiscal prudence.

I would also like to publicly support Government's Policy Statement as delivered by the Honourable Premier. I would also like to thank the Honourable Premier for the opportunity to be a part of this Government. It was a very self-less, but very shrewd, move on his part to enhance the Government and to give people the hope they so desperately crave—an honest Government that will be able to tackle a number of issues left by the previous administration.

It shows me that he is the right man for the job of Premier, and that he has accepted his role to heal the political divide that the country overwhelmingly rejected at the last election. I will strive to contribute to the best of my ability, but remain objective at all times, and to put country first. So far, he has been a man of his word. And in many instances we have been on the same page in terms of all the major issues which affect the country that we all love.

Madam Speaker, it would be remiss of me to not also publically express my gratitude to the Second Elected Member for West Bay for appointing me as her Councillor. We ran together in the last election and share many similar views. It amazes me, sometimes, that childhood friends can now take on these roles and work for the betterment of the country.

I am also proud of this Government. I look over and see the Deputy Governor, who is one of my lost school mates. In fact, in this honourable House we have so many women participating. It is truly a time for pause in the history of these Islands. And it's topped by the fact that we have our first female Governor. This is truly an example of the change which has occurred in this country. And I dare say a change for the better.

Madam Speaker, as a Councillor my role is advisory in nature. As an MLA I still answer to and will always look out for the best interests of the people of George Town, primarily, but also for the people of these Islands; all of the people of these Islands. I

agree with the honourable Member for North Side that we should look to formalise the role in the Constitution of Councillors. But until that happens, I am content with the status quo. I do not see where there is a conflict in my role as an Independent and objective MLA working alongside the Progressives, because we are all working hard for this country and for the people of these Islands.

Madam Speaker, I work at the Government Administration Building during the week with my colleagues, some days for 14 or 15 hours. I also try when Cabinet is in session to hold constituent days, although on a few Tuesdays I have been more than busy with the current work of the Government to make that an all day session. It is my view that this is the most effective way to work for my country, which allows me to have a say in what and where my country is going. As it stands, I have no time for other activities, only the role I was elected to perform.

The Civil Service is the backbone of this country. I have seen them work hard and tirelessly. They have to work, Madam Speaker, with the Government of the day, though, to ensure proper dialogue and interaction between the two bodies exist. Everyone in this honourable House will have to do their part no matter what side of the fence they are on or what their political differences are. We are all in this good ship Cayman together and we have to come together, especially at this time in our history to try and get the best for the people of these Islands. There is no room for half speed or a reluctance to act. Everyone has to be part of the solution, or they need to get off the bus.

That being said, we need to always be cognisant of the morale of the Civil Service and look to enhance their work experience as best we can, because many of them are working hard and go the extra mile.

My role is primarily in education. I campaigned on that platform and it is my passion. I know where I would be without my education. I remain committed to tireless work to help improve and advance our education system with the Second Elected Member for West Bay. To this end, I have met with teachers and families and have given them my word that I will air their concerns and address them.

Madam Speaker, My mother, Tania Connolly, was a teacher. Her aunt, Miss Gleeda Forbes was a teacher. Teachers have shaped my life in so many immeasurable ways. I fondly recall teachers, like Mrs. Clarke, Mrs. Bromfield, and others who took an interest in me, and now it is my time to try and pay that forward.

We, as a society, owe them a huge debt. I would like to take this opportunity to assure these special people that I will always fight for their best interests. I will be the voice for those who feel they cannot speak out and that if they do they will be victimised. I will ensure that they will be treated fairly and I will strive to get them appropriate resources and assistance where possible.

They are the people that we give our children to, Madam Speaker. We should try to give them all the tools we possibly can to ensure that our children have the best opportunity to go out into the world and be ambassadors for our educational system.

It is essential that we better our educational products to enable our future generations to benefit from employment opportunities that exist in these Islands so they can reach their full potential. Caymanians must be equipped to access employment and business opportunities. If not, why are we building this? Who are we building this for? This, in my humble opinion, starts with a great education. I am not only talking about academic education. And I have heard other speakers in this honourable House talk about vocational training and that this debate has gone on for some time.

Madam Speaker, if there is one thing that I will passionately fight for in this next four years, it is that we bring a balance to our educational system. That we not only look at those who are academically inclined, but that we try to ensure that every single Caymanian coming through the school system has the best chance at succeeding in life, to hone that raw talent and give them some business skills to allow them to achieve that. I think, I hope and I know that the Minister of Education has that same passion.

We must strive to have a centre of excellence in education in these Islands. We spend far too much money not to have that. We are small enough to change that. In my short time in politics I have seen a country which was broken start to heal. In order to expedite the people's work we need not oppose for the sake of opposition. We need to leave the bickering at the door when we enter this honourable House and work together for the people of this country. Madam Speaker, it is what we were elected to do; it is what we are paid to do. I, for one, will seek to earn my money for these people of the Cayman Islands who have elected me to this high post.

But, Madam Speaker, as some of the other Members of this honourable House have said before, it does not start and end in the political arena. Every single person living in the Cayman Islands—Caymanian or not—needs to start by asking the question, *What can I do for this country that has given me so much?*

Companies have to have a social contract with the people of the Cayman Islands and with the Government of the country. We need to have proper diversification in the workplace. We need to have Caymanians taking up the ranks at the top of some of these companies. Caymanians need to be hired. They need to be given an opportunity. They need to be promoted, they need to advance.

In some instances our own Caymanians may perpetuate the problems that add to criticism. We need to work with this small number of people in order to get them on the same page as the vast majority of

Caymanians. Like I said, Madam Speaker, I am a proud Caymanian. I am a product of the public school system. I am the recipient of government scholarships, private scholarships. But the one thing that I had was an opportunity. And I knew that that opportunity was mine. I knew that if I worked hard I would succeed.

I think somewhere along the line this has been lost. Depending on who that young Caymanian child is, I think they might not know what opportunities lie before them. This is all our responsibility. For those who see it happening we need to: a) ensure that that opportunity exists; b) that those Caymanian children know what those opportunities are; and c) that we fight to ensure that the opportunities remain there for them now and in the future. Madam Speaker, in this honourable House we need to all stand up and do our part. Let's get the issues right on crime, education and unemployment.

It was not very long ago, during the campaign trail, that we all had those three topics on the tips of our tongues. We recited them, we said them and we have to show the people that elected us that we don't have short memories and that we are here to do a job. And, in some instances, that is to ensure that they have a job and that they get advanced up that ladder.

Madam Speaker, I guess I am an eternal optimist. I believe we can move this country forward, or I would not have given up my career to be here. Our country can be a great country again and we can turn this good ship Cayman around. We can become great again. But we have to tackle the issues. We have to tackle them head on, and we can't sweep things under the carpet waiting for the next group to come along to fix them.

Madam Speaker, this reform has to be holistic. It was just this weekend in the killing at Mango Tree that highlighted to me that this problem is of epidemic proportions. We are at a crisis point, Madam Speaker. The Government met this morning and invited the Opposition to hear firsthand what went on this weekend and what the police are doing about it. It is a time that everyone needs to come forward. Yes, people have given their input in times past, but we still need to flog that horse, because the situation hasn't gotten any better. We need to be vigilant. We need to keep fighting the fight. If not, we are going to lose and have evil overcome good because we became apathetic.

I know I speak for all Members of this honourable House when I say that we will address crime with the efficacy and urgency which the situation requires, and the public will know that these steps are coming in short order. We should not and will not tolerate these actions by a small number of our citizens and will move quickly to ensure that peace and harmony is reasserted along with the reputation of these peaceful Islands.

Again, Madam Speaker, this is not to do with politics. This is everyone's problem. We need everyone on deck—parents, ministers, service clubs, teachers, police, Members of Parliament, and the list goes on. We need every hand on deck.

Coupled with this is unemployment. Although I am in the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs, my focus, my mandate from the Minister is education. But that does not mean that I didn't campaign on unemployment. That does not mean that the Members of Government have not put it as *the* priority in this new administration. As a country I think we have to accept that rising unemployment goes hand in hand with the high levels of criminal activity.

All of us in this honourable House campaigned on a holistic approach from cradle to grave. I, for one, will fully support the Minister in her efforts on unemployment, and the Government for its overall approach, the end goal being that every Caymanian, no matter their formal education, be fully equipped to take up a meaningful role and be employed to their full potential on a livable wage in the Caymanian society.

Madam Speaker, I want to say publically as well that I support the Immigration Bill that has been presented by the Government. It had input from all, both Cabinet and Backbench, both Progressive and Independent. It is not complete, though, without public input. And that is why I am very proud of the activities that we have embarked on to try to gain that input. It is with that input that we can have a better law. What has been presented is only open for discussion. All residents should and must have their say on this important matter to ensure that we have a balanced law which covers all stakeholders, but ensures at all times that Caymanians come first.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs, the Second Elected Member for West Bay, has highlighted this year's results. These are improving, but not yet where we would like them to be. Numeracy and literacy levels, though higher than in past years, need to be put in context. In fact, we are not alone in this. In the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper in the UK on 9 October 2013, it was reported that school leavers in England have lower levels of literacy and numeracy than their grandparents. That article suggested an alarming decline in education standards. We have similar issues. But, as that paper recognised, school leavers are entering a more demanding labour market and must be better equipped than previous generations.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education recognises this and has, with the backing of the full Government, taken steps to get our children on the right path to be trained to take on their rightful role in this Caymanian society. For those of us Caymanians who need to be retrained or retooled, there are going to be opportunities in adult learning, in afterschool programmes, in technical and vocational fields, in order to ensure that no one gets behind.

Our stakeholders, including the private sector that gives money, time and effort, need to see tangible results and proof that their time and money has been spent wisely. But, most importantly, parents of our Caymanian children need to know that they are in safe hands, that they are going to get a world class education and that someone has control of the reins.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education spoke about the National Strategic Plan for Education. While progress has been made there is much work left to be done. She spoke about not reinventing the wheel, to support work done by our educators previously and to enable us to build on the strides to improve our education system that was begun in previous administrations. But this has to also be an inclusive plan. We have a broad framework. We have to ensure constant movement in the right direction. People will only support it if they buy into it. And I think that is one of the tasks for this new administration in general and for the Ministry of Education in particular. It has to have buy-in. We have to build the leaders of tomorrow. We have to build up the national capacity.

Madam Speaker, this lifelong approach to learning and improvement has to be bought by each and every Caymanian. I want to say that in this short time in Government I have seen great strides in education. But we have a long way to go. We have to move now into the implementation stage of that strategic plan to further develop the programmes and initiatives identified therein. We have to look at issues strategically, and we have to look at them from a human perspective.

I mentioned teachers before. But the most important component in education is our children. Every single decision that we make should have a human face, a child's face. We have to ensure that they access the future, that anything and everything that they want to achieve is possible.

Over the coming months the Ministry will be focusing on increasing stakeholder engagement and participation in monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan. I am proud to say that the already established teacher forum was the first of several groups that met to discuss areas of the plan that impact them and their ability to function within the system. I am also happy to say that in that forum there was healthy, robust discussion in which some of the participants mentioned was the first time in a long time that they felt free to really speak their minds.

Madam Speaker, to me, that is a sign of progress. And it is by looking at the real picture, and not at some glossy report, by listening to the real stakeholders, and not some expert, that we are going to get to the bottom of this situation and move forward in a positive manner. Similar forums will be established for students and parents, and this is going to happen for each strategic goal. These forums will allow the Ministry to capture feedback and ensure communication is

ongoing between the community and education agents.

Madam Speaker, I think that we are on the right track because you have to recognise where you are coming from before you can get to your destination. We can also not forget where we came from because it is on the backs of many educators and many politicians and many students that we are catapulting into the future.

The Ministry and the Department of Education Services will implement other critical capacity building initiatives under the guidance of the Minister, including continuing the Leaders in Technology and Math workshop series, and training staff members from the extended afterschool programme to deliver parenting programmes. This goes hand in hand with those holistic solutions to the problem because education, unemployment and crime—let us not fool ourselves—are critically linked together.

Madam Speaker, we have to listen to Members from various districts that are in close contact with the schools. They have a voice and they often speak for those people who cannot speak for themselves. I know that this Government and the Minister of Education have committed to doing so. Many hands make light work, and that is what we should strive to do in these early days of this administration.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education set out a number of initiatives that I will not go into at this stage, but I did want to touch on the libraries. We might think that we are in the technological age where libraries are something of the past. But, Madam Speaker, our public libraries must be responsive to changing trends within our society. Among the many strategic developments at the library are programmes and initiatives that will provide additional opportunities in the areas of unemployment, including the strengthening of reading comprehension and numeracy skills.

Some of these programmes that are ongoing are the computer assisted literacy and numeracy courses, basic Excel training programmes, homework help programming at our North Side and Bodden Town branches, and website design workshops. Some of these programmes have started; some will start. Also, Madam Speaker, to support early literacy there is a wide array of family-friendly early literacy programmes which include story-time programmes at the library branches, story-time outreach in schools and daycare centres, and read-play-learn programmes.

We are developing strong connections through presentations to various community groups to develop various cultural and community service programmes. These include women's safety workshops in partnership with the Royal Cayman Islands Police, and Cayman Association School of Karate; a 10-step guide to help young persons decide what college to attend. This is under development and we hope that it is rolled out in short order.

We also want to highlight those things that are good in Cayman. So, a number of Cayman authors and Cayman subject awareness programmes were started in September of this year and will be continuing. Also, at our public libraries there will be a Stand-up to Bullying conference in partnership with the Family Resource Centre, including movies, speakers and workshops. Health and wellbeing programmes will also be a focus.

We want our communities to think of the libraries first when they are in need of information. Our national Library has purchased a national licence for the SIRS [SIRS® Discoverer WebFind] database which will allow students and teachers free online access to scholarly peer-reviewed articles. Twenty training sessions with various groups are planned to help schools students, primary school teachers and college librarians learn how to access and fully utilise these materials to support learning.

Madam Speaker, in addition to these initiatives, and those the Minister of Education spoke of earlier, there are scholarship opportunities for our Caymanian children. Currently, there are several avenues to obtain scholarships. As we speak, these are being amalgamated into one scholarship secretariat so that we can have a better understanding of the scholarship opportunities that exist both at the public and private sectors, and also overseas scholarships that are available because we are in the Commonwealth or some other affiliation with the UK.

Madam Speaker, I would like to just speak about the current budget for overseas scholarships for 2013/14. We have some 1,216 students on scholarships, at a total cost to government of \$10.7 million per year. Again, I say that we have resources available for our students. We have to ensure, though, that these resources are spent wisely, that the deserving do access them, that the needy get priority. But, at the same time, Madam Speaker, we have to stress that being a Caymanian does not mean that you are entitled to a scholarship if you have not done your part.

Madam Speaker, I am going to diverge a bit and speak about the Young Nation Builders Scholarship Fund. As I said, in my role in the Ministry I have been tasked by the Minister to concentrate on education matters. It is not without some controversy in our first few months in Government that this scholarship has created. We currently have 116 students under the Young National Builders Scholarship programme. They range from high schools students all the way to post graduate degree programmes. I spoke about amalgamating all the scholarships because upon a review of some of the scholarships we found some alarming situations which we have moved to correct.

There were people on academic probation who had not been followed up on for some years. There were people that obtained scholarships with a failing GPA in high school. In some instances, due to (in my opinion from the findings) their position with

political parties, some students were receiving up to three times the scholarship amount stated in the criteria. These are the things that, as a country, as a responsible Government, we need to address. I believe in opportunities for Caymanians. But those opportunities need to be earned.

These opportunities need to be transparent, they need to be accessible, and they need to be applied consistently. We cannot, as a Government, as a country, allow cherry-picking of persons based on political affiliation. We cannot continue a regime where people in high school on certain scholarships are making three times, or more, than our brightest students who have shown themselves through-in and throughout and have gone to higher—and the highest—educational institutions.

What is the message we are sending our society if we allow that to continue? That it is not what you know but who you know! I do not condone that and I will not be a part of that! And I know that this Government has taken great strides to correct that.

Madam Speaker, just for the record, and to be clear, I will state this again: I am pro-Caymanian. I will fight for any Caymanian that is disenfranchised. But, at the same time, when you see wrong, you have to call it out. In the long run, Madam Speaker, the people that are going to fail are those people that we set up on false foundations. It is those same people that will have an expectation that with a third-class degree they should be at the top of any institution in Cayman. We cannot allow this to continue.

That is why the Minister of Education and this Government will look to consistently apply the rules and regulations and the policies set out so that every single Caymanian who meets the criteria will get an opportunity. For those who do not, we have to find the best possible way to get them to be productive members of this society.

Madam Speaker, there is no shame in any job. Every job has merit. People who know that they have done all the proper steps can then set foot in those businesses on Island and know what to demand because they have earned it, because it is their right once they have earned it. And no one should be allowed—not unscrupulous businessmen, not our own Caymanians, not even people who believe they are doing the right thing by cutting the corners for those Caymanians—no one should be allowed to continue that. Because the only people that we are selling short are our own Caymanians.

Madam Speaker, although we carry a great burden in that, we have to set policies and laws to enforce rules and to ensure that our people are treated fairly. Our people also have to do their part. Because of the circumstances we find ourselves in we will always have to import labour. As a Government we have to look at what that labour is and ensure that our people are properly prepared to meet those requirements head to head. This is not going to happen

overnight, Madam Speaker. But it starts by doing it the right way. It starts by taking away any entitlement mentality that our people may have and ensuring that everything coming forward is done on merit and is done honestly.

Madam Speaker, when we looked into certain matters of the Young National Builders Scholarship Fund, there were examples of nepotism, cronyism, and unmerited awards being made with no checks and balances. These lessons that we are teaching our children, if not corrected, will cause generational damage. The Ministry of Education, along with stakeholders, along with the Members of this honourable House, will look at the scholarship criteria, will raise the bar, and will equip our young people to leap over them.

Madam Speaker, whilst I have no direct decision-making role in Government, whilst I cannot always guarantee results, I am happy that I have been invited to share my views, to give my two cents and to continue to try and stamp out some of this behaviour.

I am happy to be a part of a Government that is setting transparent and fair guidelines to try to stop this and other similar activity. We realise that we cannot do it alone, that we are going to have to rely on partnerships with the private sector. We are going to have to engage all stakeholders. If not, we will be here in three and a half years having this same conversation. We need a plan to last through administrations. We need buy-in from everyone to take this forward. If not, we are going to lose a generation of Caymanians.

Madam Speaker, we have to engage in committees. We have to do work; but it has to be efficient and productive work. A lot of the answers are right here in our Islands. I am happy to note that the Minister has publicly said that she is not going outside to find these answers when they are right here on our shores. We have some of the most capable people in the world if given a voice and given an opportunity. This also includes men and women of the soil, people that have vocational and technical skills.

Madam Speaker, we have to be vigilant as a Government and Members of this honourable House to ensure that the policies of the day get carried out and that no one usurps that role. Madam Speaker, like I said, I may not always be successful, but I will die trying, because that is what I have been elected to do.

Moving to another area that is very important and near and dear to me, and I am happy that one of my colleagues and the Government have accepted that this is an issue and will be bringing forward motions, I believe, in due course to address this. We need to protect our women and children. We need to ensure that lives are not damaged and that the perpetrators who cause these damages do not get [in]appropriate sentences.

As legislators, as the majority of the people in the House are men, we need to work to protect our women and our children. No [violation] of a child's or

woman's innocence should go unpunished. No perpetrator should be put in prison without having to do rehabilitative work.

Madam Speaker, our crime strategy has to be inclusive. It has to be fair. And it also has to take the pulse of the people, and the people are calling out for no more. Representations have been made to most, if not all, of us that sentencing in these areas are far too light. I won't go further, but I know that every Member of this honourable House is in unity in that respect. We have to put stronger legislation in place and let the punishment [fit] the crime.

Madam Speaker, we also need to progress as a society. We need to tackle some of the 800-pound gorillas in the room, including recycling and waste management. I think and I know that my colleagues in Government are making strides toward this. But as we look to replenish, to recycle, to reuse, we also need to support, Madam Speaker, because whilst the Cayman Islands that we know should try to remain as pristine as possible we are only as strong as our people.

A number of us campaigned on small business support. We need to ensure that the entrepreneurs amongst us, the mom and pop shops, the lifeblood of this economy, get support. It is not enough to get people a job; we have to help them sustain this. We have to give them proper guidance and proper support in order to push them away from the shore and sail free.

Madam Speaker, this Government is committed to giving the support and, as said before, it is committed to vocational training. I think the Caymanian population remembers what each and every one of us campaigned on and they will hold us to task. If we are going to be holistic we have to commit to the inclusion of all people living here. But, Madam Speaker, we should not get caught in the trap that I think we have in years past where we bend over backwards and we pay the price. Everyone here has to do their part.

Madam Speaker, we have to learn to utilise the resources we have on-Island even when it is not Caymanian grown. But, at the same time, for that luxury of being in the Cayman Islands, residents have to also seek inclusion. We have great expertise here in these Islands that we should tap into but there are good and bad people everywhere. We need to acknowledge that. We need to be able to mend some of those bridges. But just like the Caymanians who came before us that extended olive branches, people that come here and enjoy what the Islands have to offer must be held accountable. If they don't then they must be punished appropriately.

Not everyone who comes here is about take, take, take. Just like there are Caymanians who would sell their birthright (or their child's birthright) for a few dollars, these are the people that we need to stamp out on both ends in order for the vast majority of all the people who want to be inclusive, who want to par-



ticipate in the betterment of this country to succeed. We have to start working together.

Those who are here because of greed, racism or other reasons and are not contributing to the betterment of these Islands need to be shown that their behaviour is unacceptable and intolerable. Let's reward those who do the right thing and penalise those who do not. It is my humble opinion that the vast majority of people who come here are hard-working, but we all know it takes just a few bad apples to spoil it for the rest of us.

Madam Speaker, when I was preparing for today I came across a verse which said:

**"First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a communist;**

**"Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist;**

**"Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist; . . .**

**"Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak out for me."**

Madam Speaker, each Member of this honourable House was put here to speak and act for the people that we have been elected by. Let us never forget this, Madam Speaker. Let us leave some of the bickering aside. Let us keep foremost in our minds every time we enter this honourable House, what we are here to do and who elected us to do so.

As a Government, as a House, before we can preach to others we need to live what we preach. Government has to be the first to follow the same laws that we try to push down our people's throats. I want to challenge all Members of this honourable House to work together, to pick our battles carefully, and not to fight just because we are on the opposite political sides. We have to become part of the solution. The people of the Cayman Islands are watching us. And they will be the ultimate judge of how effective we are. History will also judge us.

Madam Speaker, my name is the only thing I came into this House with. It is the only thing I intend to take away from it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[Applause]

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

I recognise the First Elected Member for the district of Bodden Town.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden, First Elected Member for Bodden Town:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What an act to follow. I think I am going to ask for Standing Orders to be changed so that we down the ladder do not have to follow behind such a great presentation.

I must say, well done.

I have seen, Madam Speaker, the wonderful job all of those other speakers who have come, especially the freshman class of 2013 to 2017 have done so far.

Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate Her Excellency [the Governor], Mrs. Helen Kilpatrick, CB, on the Throne Speech she delivered. I would also like to pay tribute to the Honourable Premier on his Policy Statement "Getting Back on Course." Last, but not the least, [I congratulate] our new dynamic Minister of Finance, on his concise and well delivered Budget Address. I think you have brought much hope to our people. Good job sir, keep it up.

Madam Speaker, for the record, and for those not in the Gallery or watching on television, last Monday on the delivery of the Throne Speech and Budget Address, despite not being listed on the pretty Order Paper, I was present—as I have been for the past 20 years—in this honourable House. And I know it was an oversight, so I am not really complaining.

Madam Speaker, I come to you this evening an angry person, angry because most of us had meetings and heard about another tragedy which took place this weekend—the third killing in 30 days, more or less. Madam Speaker, figures revealed at a public meeting in my district in Bodden Town indicate that since the 1<sup>st</sup> of this year there have been 106 burglaries and 153 thefts. Madam Speaker, that is in one district, Bodden Town. As I said, there have been three gang-style murders in the last month or so.

Madam Speaker, enough is enough, as I told the powers that be this morning. I think, Madam Speaker, these crimes have become a national emergency and serious action must now be taken, even if after Finance Committee we delay the amendment to the Immigration Bill, because these actions on other laws will be useless—useless!—if we do not urgently deal with crime. Nothing else really matters, Madam Speaker, if we continue in this apparent lawless society that we are living in.

Madam Speaker, two recent editorials in the *Caymanian Compass* have been very timely. At times I do not support the paper and its comments when they try to beat up on us as legislators, but I support some of these, and I would like to read with your permission, Madam Speaker, a couple of them.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The first one I will read was on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September: "[Getting Serious about Serious Crime](#)".

**"We are getting weary of publishing—and we're certain you're getting weary of reading—crime stories that chronicle the growing threat to our sense of security, tranquility and quality of life in these once-peaceful Islands.**

**“For years Cayman has funded and fortified the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service, swelling its forces to more than 400 and spending tens of millions of dollars on physical equipment, including supercharged cars and an expensive network of CCTV cameras and even a police helicopter.”**

Madam Speaker, I am proud to say that my Government was able to bring that, despite the licks that we have taken. And that really doesn't matter, Madam Speaker. It's about our people and trying to help and protect them.

**“We would suggest to the RCIPS that ‘media relations’ and ‘public relations’ are very different things.”** So true! **“Media relations are meant to meaningfully inform, and public relations are designed to disseminate “good news” (such as “we caught another crook”).** Certainly bromidic press releases advising the public to **“remain vigilant”** are of no value whatsoever. In any event, real media relations are nearly nonexistent and in need of reevaluation and repair.

**“We would hope that our new governor, whose scope of responsibilities includes the safety and security of these islands, along with the National Security Council, would examine carefully our current so-called ‘British model’ of policing and the protection of our citizenry.”**

Hear, hear, I must say to this one, Madam Speaker.

**“The council needs to reconsider the policy of police officers not being allowed to carry guns, homeowners not being allowed any means to protect themselves”** (not even a little can of mace for the young ladies, Madam Speaker) **“and their families, and women not being allowed to carry even pepper spray”** (as I alluded earlier) **“to deter an assailant.”**

**“The first job of law enforcement is to protect the people and their property. If it cannot, then we must have an open and vigorous debate on changing our current policy to allow the public to protect itself.”**

The next one I want to touch on briefly, Madam Speaker, was [Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> October](#). Did some comparisons, Madam Speaker, of then and now—scary. And this I will expand on later.

**“In under three hours one day in February 2010, approximately 400 vehicles were pulled over by the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service . . .”** And, as an aside, Madam Speaker, I think it is time we drop “Service” and “Police Force”).

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure:** Yes!

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Who are we serving?

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** Yes!

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** The People are not looking at the “service,” Madam Speaker. It is time we act with force. This is the only language some people understand.

*[Applause]*

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** I hear ya, Tony.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** “. . . during an island-wide coordinated crackdown on traffic offenses.

**“Of those 400 vehicles, 88 motorists were given a choice: Strip the tinting from their windows or face prosecution. According to a police report, all of them agreed to remove the tint on the spot.”**

As Indicated: **“That was just a few hours in one day.**

**“In one entire year—2012—the total number of tickets issued by the RCIPS for window tinting was 89.”** Eighty-nine! From 400 to 89! **“Even though the enforcement mechanisms were slightly different in 2010, can anyone reconcile these disparate numbers?”**

And this is the thing that I agree with them on: **“While window tinting may appear to be ‘small ball’ in the current context of serious crime these islands are experiencing, it raises two very different but especially troubling issues:**

**“First is the issue of arbitrary enforcement of statutes in the Cayman Islands’ Legal Codes. There is great danger to a society that passes laws and then ignores them or, worse, enforces them inconsistently or arbitrarily.”**

Continuing, Madam Speaker: **“But we still have the question of how hundreds, more likely thousands, of vehicles are on our streets with illegally tinted windows”** (and especially if you just look out and walk up and down, Madam Speaker, they are all over the place) **“illegal headlights, broken windshields, and other obvious infractions. How are these vehicles passing their annual inspections?”**

#### **MOMENT OF INTERRUPTION—4.30 PM**

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member we have reached the hour of interruption.

I recognise the Honourable Premier.

#### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)**

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

I move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) in order that the business of the House may continue beyond the hour of interruption, indeed, Madam Speaker, until 6.30 pm.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Premier.

The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to allow the House to continue business until 6.30 pm.

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

**Ayes and one audible No** [*Mr. D. Ezzard Miller*]

**The Speaker:** I believe the Ayes have it.

**Agreed: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.**

**The Speaker:** First Elected Member for Bodden Town, please continue with your debate.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think you will get the thrust of where I am coming from and what I shared with the powers that be this morning.

Madam Speaker, I have grave concern about the reduction and disbandment of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service Traffic Department.

Madam Speaker, speeders pass me while I am travelling at 40 miles per hour like I am standing still. If violators were prosecuted it would go a long way. I believe in funding the police budget.

I would like to bring to the attention of the traffic department that hardly anyone pays any attention to the stop sign coming out from Newlands by Country Side. It is just a matter of time before a serious accident, if not a fatality, happens there.

Continuing with the same area of the traffic situation, not to mention the abuse of cell phones while driving—

[*Inaudible interjection*]

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** [*replying to inaudible interjection*]. Yes they do.

There is total disregard, Madam Speaker, for speeders and other traffic violations. Some of those with criminal tendencies will feel that if they can get away with minor traffic violations they can now move up to more serious crimes. I hope I am wrong with this, Madam Speaker. I really do. But I pointed out to the powers that be this morning, when you get away with small infractions, without even as much as a slap on the wrist, it grows.

One of my constituents shared with me the concern in regard to the annual inspection, of how some of these vehicles get passed with no lights on one side or the other, no traffic indicators, and so many other violations. One of the concerns this friend of mine spoke about was in regard to the vehicle registration and the fees. He felt that maybe it had to do with the fees on some of the vehicles as to why they do not go and do their inspection. But whatever the

law is we have to deal with it accordingly until it can be changed.

Madam Speaker, as I said this morning, I now call on the Honourable Premier and the Honourable Deputy Governor to discuss with Her Excellency the way forward in policing these Islands. We cannot continue what we have been doing in the last three to five years. It has been said that it has to be a unique person (some people call them idiots) that does the same thing over and over and expects a different result.

[*Inaudible Interjection*]

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Wake up colleagues! Cayman is in big trouble.

We must change—and bring in help if necessary—as the present modus operandi is not working! That is the English and the UK style of policing. And I should not have to be saying this over and over because I can't go back as far as when Jesus was on Riviera Beach! [SOUNDS LIKE]

[*Laughter*]

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** But it almost seems that long. The same thing over and over when something happens.

They drag us into the Committee room . . . and I appreciate when they do take that time. But that is not solving the problems that we have out there. When they catch these people they send them to Northward and some of them never had it so good like when they get there and they go back again. Someone has said that to me! They will tell you, *I will kill you and go Northward*. So, don't come and tell me now about Human Rights, which I will talk about later.

[*Inaudible interjection*]

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Madam Speaker, the focus that our Honourable Minister of Finance has planned for these Islands and the foundation that he is setting up for us, the guidelines, there is hope in what is there. And we can have hope, but if we do not set a foundation for the investors and others who come here, they are not going to come.

Madam Speaker, you, along with the rest of us, will remember what we (as the PPM Government) inherited in 2005. Things were bad. Everybody was scared, Madam Speaker. Everywhere we turned people had security around them; the Ministers. I would not make security come around me, and I would not make them put anything into my house. I think I had one, one night, and my wife saw him up into the tree or something. But we do not want to get back to those days, Madam Speaker.

What did we do when we got in there? We told the Governor we wanted a police commissioner that could do things, could get things done. We ended

up paying off the contract. I know some of my colleagues in here are not going to agree with me but I am telling you, Madam Speaker, when Commissioner Kernohan came here, it was in less than six weeks that everything just went back to normal.

We as a PPM Government at that time spent over \$60 million on boats, a helicopter. It took a while to get the helicopter here, as my colleague for East End remembers. Look at the dividends it is paying now, Madam Speaker. Just over North Side alone literally within minutes after a robbery, with the aid of that helicopter the people were picked up and arrested.

What is the value of money if we continue to lose our Islands?

The other thing I am going to suggest here, Madam Speaker, is that we are going to have to increase the penalty for persons found with firearms from the minimum penalty of 10 years (which you were a part of) to 15 to 20 years. If you play with these things, and you get caught, then you get burnt! That is the only language that some people understand.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Madam Speaker, as alluded to by my friend, the previous speaker, some of the heinous crime being committed in Cayman against our children, especially the young and innocent ones, is a disgrace! When we look at some of the sentences being passed out, it is a slap on the wrist with socks!

Madam Speaker, toward that end I will be moving a motion in this honourable House. And with your permission I would just like to read the resolution to put some of our people at some degree of comfort. And it is the penalty for the offence of indecent assault on a woman.

**The Speaker:** Member you can proceed with reading the resolution, but, as I am sure you will appreciate, you will not discuss the merits or demerits.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Absolutely, Madam Speaker, I have made a note of that.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** "BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that Government considers amending the Penal Code (2010 Revision) as follows: Introduce a mandatory minimum sentence of five years for persons convicted of the offence of indecent assault on a female under the age of 12 years; and increase the maximum penalty for the offence of indecent assault on a female from 10 years to 20 years."

Madam Speaker, this drove me when I saw in the papers and I am sure all of us as legislators and residents saw a sentence passed down for even less.

It must have been a silk stocking that they used to punish that one with.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** I don't remember which . . . it was the one where—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Six months? I think it was 30 days.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Whatever!  
Ridiculous, Madam Speaker.

What kind of message we are sending to these people when you can do this to the . . . and that child, Madam Speaker, is going to be ruined, more than likely, for life. The person is lucky that it was not me involved in that.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Betsy would know exactly what to do.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Madam Speaker, we must now stop this Sunday-School or Sabbath-School approach to crime in Cayman. And I hope they do not tell me about Human Rights when so many lives are being destroyed and the law-abiding citizens' rights are being abused.

Madam Speaker, I could go on all night about this but I know the time is passing. The next area I want to touch on briefly is the Public Management and Finance Law.

Madam Speaker, not since the 1932 Hurricane or Hurricane Ivan has anything had such a detrimental effect in Cayman as this piece of legislation. Just look at that stack of paper out there—2,661 pages. Just multiply that by a minimum of 30 sets (which is 18 of us, one for you, Madam Speaker, two for the Official Members, their permanent secretaries), almost 80,000 pages! Probably close 100,000 when you take up the rest that goes into the ministries and departments and whatever.

Come, come, come, come. There has to be a more simple way, Madam Speaker, to set a Budget out than this approach.

I remember when the Member for North Side and I moved a motion in the last Government, the UDP Government (almost three years ago, he reminded me this morning) asking that amendments be made, especially in HR and finance sections. That's where the problem is. There is some wonderful stuff in

that law; it provides accountability. But, my God, we must be able to provide accountability without this enormous expenditure.

It does not need a nuclear scientist to tell us that when we increase the Civil Service by over 1,000 to manage this monster, why it is so difficult to balance the Budget. Honourable Finance Minister, I am looking forward to you bringing whatever necessary amendments. And it can't happen in a hurry. And I am not talking about the laying off of Caymanians. It has to be done in a gradual manner.

Not to mention, Madam Speaker, the millions that we spent. One gentleman, it seemed like every other weekend he was coming up and down, whether it was from New Zealand or wherever, trying to tell us how to implement it! Yow! I preached against it from inception and I told them that we would curse the day and damn the hour when this type of financial management was brought to fruition.

If you doubt me, Madam Speaker, ask my colleague, Mr. George McCarthy. I think it was first started by the Honourable (blessed memory), Mr. Jefferson. And where is my friend the Deputy Financial Secretary, Mrs. Sonya? Mr. Nixon sat down several times with our present Financial Secretary. *We got to do something about this! We cannot continue . . .* I mean it is simple mathematics. I can barely get one and one together to see if it can make two or what it makes. But I do know what I saw when it was coming—those two specific components. As I said, the rest of the Bill is fine, Madam Speaker. The rest is history.

I am hearing (but I don't know how true it is) that New Zealand has gotten rid of it.

Honourable Minister of Finance, see if you can clean it up and make it functional as I know and feel you can.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** I will shift gears, Madam Speaker, to get over some of the bad taste in everybody's mouth.

In our Premier's "Getting Back on Course" he talked about cultural nominations for National Heroes and the definition: "**Cultural Heritage is fundamental to a people's memories, identity, and creativity, and adds to the richness of cultures. It is the legacy of tangible physical artifacts and the intangible attributes of a people that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the national identity, and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.**"

"It is sometimes said that our society is judged by how we treat our most vulnerable, including our intellectually or physically challenged."

When I go to the supermarkets and see the abuse of handicapped parking . . . and I know we

have passed legislation to the effect that this be dealt with. I am just looking forward to enforcement.

Back to our heritage, Madam Speaker: In Bodden Town behind Cumber [Avenue] next to the Mission House, we have one of the greatest displays, if not the greatest displays, of culture and heritage in these Cayman Islands. I want, through this opportunity, to thank my colleague, the Minister of Health and Culture and all of his colleagues, for recognising. And he was out there on Saturday with some of my other colleagues, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, spending time . . . it was just a handful of our senior citizens who form part of our senior citizens group and our heritage committee on how we can make that place one of the greatest attractions for the Deputy Premier and his plans as we go forward with tourism.

There's some wonderful stuff there. And I want to personally thank all of those ladies who deal with it trying day in and day out and in the night with some ungodly hours they put in there. And I want to also thank the Minister for Works who plans to get some help for us so that we can have an access road for through-traffic from out on the main road coming through by Cumber and Gun Square so that the traffic can flow.

This is one of the things that is almost impossible to negotiate and get down in there for the tourists and people who have the vans.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Yes.

I want to thank Renard Powell and his group who are transforming the area in Central Bodden Town, Cumber and Guard House. Really making a transformation and I know once again my other three Bodden Town colleagues are guiding and assisting in getting them food and drink and I really appreciate that.

I would like to leave with this mention about the Savannah Gulley. When the Member for East End was there [as Minister] we had some plans. And we cannot forget, Madam Speaker, what happens when the wind pulls up to the southeast and the water starts rolling in over that gulley. It cuts the Island in two. And I know we do not have the funds at this time to deal with it, but when the opportunity presents I just wanted to remind us to do something about it.

Others have already spoken about one person, one vote. Once we get everything sorted out I want to see that legislation brought here so that it can be implemented.

I was also reminded of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Law, which I am made to understand is drafted and should be coming here.

I hope I don't get licked down for this one, Madam Speaker: Cell phones. I've suggested to my colleagues that it is time we put a tax on them. And I

would rather that we consider a tax on cell phones and take that amount, Madam Speaker, off of the fuel tax. We would have a greater effect on the cost of living on gasoline and diesel because when you look around every soul has at least two or three of them. I got one and I can barely dial on that myself.

To me, it is a convenience. But it is time we look at lowering the fuel tax and passing that on. Because everything in Cayman, CUC, the trucks, you name it, would have a multiplier effect, Madam Speaker, in bringing down the cost of living.

Pensions: I was pleased to hear and know that we now have a lady there who is going to deal with this. It is a bloody national disgrace when you read in the paper what is happening. These poor people out there who are. . . I understand some of them have given the money in and this money has not gone into their fund. And it takes the system whatever it may be, wherever, three to five years.

What are they going to do when they retire? You think Children and Family Services is in problems now? You wait until this generation retires and find out that they do not have any money into their pension fund. That is too close to criminalistic. As the paper indicated; 1,108 cases at February 13<sup>th</sup>. As I said, I know that our new labour Minister will deal with this and get it sorted out.

Madam Speaker, once again I am not anticipating legislation, but I just wanted to share with this Parliament in regard to the immigration legislation. There are some very good changes being proposed, but through you to the Premier, as I have told you and the caucus, I will not support the section dealing with permanent residency and eventually status.

Madam Speaker, after 2003 when the then UDP Government gave out possibly over 3,000 of these status grants, we as a PPM Government coming into office in 2005 said this would never happen again. I can remember the First Elected Member for George Town, the Honourable present Premier, myself, and the honourable Member for East End were Cabinet Ministers. And some of our earliest legislation was brought to make sure that could not happen again. I think that legislation indicated that no more than six persons per year—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Four—thank you.

Madam Speaker, it was wrong then, and it is wrong now, under whatever guise we give some of these people PR and then status.

The numbers I am not sure, Madam Speaker; the TLEPS or tulips whatever it is.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Fifteen hundred.

There's a multiplier effect, Madam Speaker. I know we forget these multiplier effects of families—children and dependents. But I will not go into any details; I will express my feelings on that. And I am sure this will be more than four or ten people who will qualify for this.

This, Madam Speaker, is a section that really upsets the public and anything that could affect the future of our children and grandchildren. But I know under Standing Orders I must not anticipate legislation. Interestingly enough, I got a call over the weekend from an 85-year-old gentleman in West Bay, Madam Speaker, begging. And I remember I had to do it once before. He is blind and he has a caregiver. Whoever deals with this legislation, I hope can make an exception for a person like that. He is blind.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Well, I'm glad to hear that. I will share that with him.

But these are things that I see that, you know . . . But like I said there are some good things in that. It tightens up, and just makes sure we get the enforcement to make sure everything goes right.

Madam Speaker, I was very pleased with the how the Honourable Premier responded to the demonstrators here on Friday last week. He indicated that amendments could still be brought at the committee stage.

Madam Speaker, as I come to a close, I just want to remind this House and the people who live in Cayman of the dire straits that the great United States is in. They have literally thrown God out of everything. Their national debt is incomprehensible and a portion of it—17 trillion dollars—is about to go into default if the lawmakers do not pass necessary legislation. It has been estimated, Madam Speaker, that every living soul, including children, in the United States would have to pay over \$500,000 (that's half of a million dollars) to try to pay down that debt. Of course, the national debt overall is closer to \$75 trillion (or I think it is \$80 trillion). There's not enough space in Cayman to put those zeros!

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** And if they live as long as Methuselah's ram cat they couldn't pay it off.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** This is serious, Madam Speaker! They are our neighbours. We go there. We go Wal-Mart, we go Target. They are going down the tube, Madam Speaker, if they do not get their act together.

They are going down the tube! They have become too wicked. Madam Speaker, America is head-

ing the same direction as Babylon of old did. And my Heavenly Father will deal with them as He has done with other corrupt and immoral nations in history.

As I said, Madam Speaker: Beware Cayman; because if the United States sneezes, Cayman will catch a cold.

As I have always traditionally done for my 20 years, I want to briefly talk to the families. Please watch your children and take care of them. Watch what they are watching on the television and the Internet. Know their whereabouts, who they are keeping company with. I know many of us jump on this bandwagon about the neighbourhood raising the child. Be careful! Some of those neighbours will give them drugs, Madam Speaker, so you better bloody well make sure of who they are keeping that company with.

Spend important time with your young ones. Correct them and discipline them with love and understanding. This is their formative stage. We will not change them when they get over age 10 or probably less.

We can make a difference here in these Islands, Madam Speaker. It is going to take sacrifice, but the future of these Islands is here.

I was touched this morning by the Acting Commissioner when he said (and I've preached it from a long time) that it is about the families; it is not about the police. Yes, we need them for positive reinforcement, but if we do not deal with the breakdown of the family, Madam Speaker, you cannot blame the teachers. They have the children five or six hours a day. Those children go home and they are acting out what they see around the home.

Let us take care of these children, discipline them. Don't worry about what they tell you about carrying you to court. My poor old father used to lick me, and if I cry he would say, *You want something to cry for?* And if I would cry he would beat me for crying.

[Laughter]

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** No, I don't advocate that now, Madam Speaker. There are other ways that we can do that in this new style way of doing things.

Madam Speaker, I will close as the hour draws to the end.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** I will come back to that next week.

Our Deputy Premier's wife is a wonderful lady. And I am sure I have permission to tell him I was going to read . . . she sent this book to my wife and I think she sent it to a number of other people—it's [entitled] *Jesus calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence*. I just want to leave a short paragraph with all of us. And you see what colour it is? I think it is really supposed

to be for women, but I thoroughly enjoy . . . every day of recent times I've read the little thing because it is divided up into the days as a daily reading.

This was for 1<sup>st</sup> September. As I said, this is about Jesus and it says: "**SEEK ME with your whole being. I desire to be found by you, and I orchestrate the events of your life with that purpose in mind. When things go well and you are blessed, you can feel Me smiling on you. When you encounter rough patches along your life-journey, trust that My Light is still shining upon you. My reasons for allowing these adversities may be shrouded in mystery, but My continual Presence with you is an absolute promise. Seek Me in good times, seek Me in hard times, you will find Me watching over you all the time.**"

May God bless us all and give us health and our families. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The House will be suspended for ten minutes.

#### PROCEEDINGS SUSPENDED AT 5.02 PM

#### PROCEEDINGS RESUMED AT 5.25 PM

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

Proceedings are resumed. Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Second Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Second Elected Member for George Town:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good afternoon to all of my colleagues here in this honourable House.

Madam Speaker, I have to begin by saying that your suspension of the proceedings was very timely, because I have to say that the First Elected Member for Bodden Town is a very tough act to follow! I was taken to the heights of anger, the heights of happiness; to feeling somber, angry, and at times wanting to clap and say, *Yes! Let's move ahead; let's do it.* And I thank him for it.

It would be remiss of me if I did not extend my thanks and appreciation to all Members of this House for the kind messages and words of condolences they expressed to me and my family on the recent passing of my niece. It was a very difficult time for me last week. But one good and positive thing I can say in situations like this is that my niece, Lindsay [DeMone], is in a better place and she is free from the pain and suffering I know she endured. So I would like to acknowledge that, and thank Members for those kind words of condolences.

Like everyone else who has gone before me, Madam Speaker, I must give my acknowledgement to the Throne Speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Helen Kilpatrick, and the Policy

Statement delivered by our Premier, the Hon. Alden McLaughlin, and the Budget Address given by the Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Marco Archer, last week, Monday.

Monday was a day of firsts. And that did not go unnoticed. I appreciate the detail they provided us within the Throne Speech and Policy Statement. We learned a lot about what our Government's plans are for the coming year and the policies and programmes they wish to pursue. We learned a little bit too in the Budget Address about how we are going to pay for all of these things.

Madam Speaker, in May I was elected to this honourable House for the first time on an Independent ticket. I have to say that my candidacy was well received by the population and voters here in George Town, and I am deeply indebted to them for the confidence that they placed in me. The day after the election when I realised and understood that the Progressives would make and form the next Government, on the Swearing in Ceremony (the week after) I dutifully took up my place as a member of the Opposition in the southwest corner with my colleagues from East End and North Side. But—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Southeast. I thought I said southeast. Southeast!

In any event, it was a few days after that the Premier invited me to cross the aisle to join the Government as a Councillor. I have to be honest. I did take a bit of time to consider it. A lot of thought, a lot of prayer and consultation with those who were my supporters and advisors throughout the campaign. But I was truly honoured to be invited to take up that position and the overwhelming advice was to get involved and do what I can to help the country.

Madam Speaker, I can't help but believe that my 30 years of experience in the financial services industry were a huge influence upon my success at the polls because so many hundreds of people came up to me (even to this day) and thanked me for taking that brave step to embrace public service and give back to our community.

I am delighted to be a part of the Government, delighted to be here as a Councillor. I remind the Caymanian population that in my role as a councillor, I am here primarily as an advisor to the Minister of Finance and to the Minister of Financial Services. A somewhat unusual position in that in a very real way I am serving two masters! Nevertheless, I have to say from the very outset that that relationship works just fine. I am delighted to work with two of the finest gentlemen that I know. For me it is truly a joy to be there each day to interact with them and provide the advice as and when they need it.

Madam Speaker, it should come as no surprise, therefore, to Members this afternoon that my

contribution to this debate will focus almost exclusively on the Budget that was delivered last week, Monday, by the Minister of Finance.

In his Address, he entitled it "Economic Growth through Fiscal Prudence." Our Budget for 2013/14 is underpinned by a medium-term fiscal plan that was submitted to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in August, and approved very quickly by them (within a week). That fiscal plan for the next three years has a very strong focus on debt reduction, continuing reductions in government expenditure, ensuring value for money and improved accountability in government's financial and fiscal affairs.

For example, in terms of our focus on debt reduction, debt as a percentage of GDP is scheduled to go from 25.6 per cent down to 17.1 per cent by 2017. In addition, there is also the whole issue that remains to be resolved regarding the very significant debt that matures in the coming years. But I am happy to note that already steps are being taken to focus on this and to develop a strategy for Government to deal with the maturing of its debt from 2015 onwards.

I am confident that, together, we will be able to find the right answers and that we will be able to develop the right strategy that will result in the best outcome for the Government and the people of the Cayman Islands.

I spent some time last week perusing the Budget and the Government's fiscal plan. Undoubtedly they are conservative in their approach and in their forecasts, and the approach to the Budget. In my mind, the conservative approach that has been adopted by Government leaves us with the very real potential that as things unfold in the coming year, as we suspect they will, there will be a very strong possibility of a very good surprise for us in terms of government's overall fiscal performance. What I am saying is that, to me, there is a real possibility that the performance could be better than planned.

In my mind, the fiscal plan and the Budget will give the private sector the renewed confidence. I am not saying . . . let me take that back. I say it has given them the renewed confidence in Government's ability to manage its financial and fiscal affairs in a mature and effective way that will allow the private sector to invest in confidence. Everywhere I go in speaking with colleagues and former colleagues in the private sector, the word is consistent: We have hope again! We like what we see. We believe that Government is acting responsibly. And that is what the private sector is asking for.

The tax-and-spend mentality that existed for so many years is no longer the order of the day. And the private sector, I know, appreciates that. We have heard the very common theme stressed throughout several of our colleagues' debates that we must do more with less resources. I am convinced that this can be achieved, that we can be successful if we will simply all work together to achieve the results that



have been set out and laid out for us. We can accomplish this. But we all must work together, and we all must cooperate with each other.

It doesn't mean that we won't disagree. It doesn't mean that we won't have healthy debate. But at the end of the day my plea, and this is my commitment, is that any decision we make must be for the best interests of this country. If we do that, and put our country first, then I think we are well on the way to achieving great results for this country.

The one thing the private sector requires and needs in terms of their ability to function effectively is certainty and clarity in order to thrive. I believe our Budget provides that certainty and clarity in that it contains, first of all, no new tax surprises. The one new revenue measure being proposed is something that has been on the table and discussed for well over a year now. So, there are no surprises here for the private sector.

Secondly, it demonstrates, I believe very clearly (let's make no bones about it), that Government is serious about cost containment and cutting costs. But we must also realise that our Budgets, and not just this one, but for years to come, is very much driven by the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility (FFR). Government must now operate within very strict parameters and constraints. Now many will probably say, *Well that's good, given the experience of the last three to four years*. But what the public and what our constituents must realise is that our ability to deliver and to drive and to provide what they require is very much constrained and we may not be able to deliver everything they want because of those constraints.

I would like for us at this point to really abandon talk about the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility, Madam Speaker, because it is no longer a framework. We must all now realise that since 2012 it is the law of the land. We don't have a choice! We must comply. All the efforts . . . and I know that the Budget that we have proposed is the first step in the right direction to bring us into compliance under the terms of the Public Management and Finance Law by 2016. And I am confident that we will do everything in our power, and the Government will, in order to achieve that.

I was particularly heartened when (I think it was) the Foreign Office's economic advisor who was here to discuss the Budget made a comment while here that he was not interested in the details and in micromanaging our Budget process. To me, Madam Speaker, that was a huge change from what we had seen in previous Budgets where it took three or four attempts (the year before) before the Government of the day could obtain an approval from the Foreign Office to proceed with a Budget. All that has happened this year has been accomplished from the very get-go first attempt.

The Minister and the rest of this Cabinet must truly be commended for their efforts and for the way they have approached this whole process in this fiscal year. It has brought revised confidence and it is very much noted, I know, by our private sector that depends so much on that clarity and certainty that it brings. So, I am always a believer that you must give credit where credit is due. And credit must be given to our Government.

The Minister of Finance also mentioned in his Budget Address the measures to deal with revenue management with the aim of trying to maximise government's revenue. He talked about improving the collection of revenues from existing measures by closing loopholes and limiting the grant of waivers and concessions. Madam Speaker, when I learned last week that within, at least the Immigration, there is some \$2.3 million in fees due to the Treasury for the granting of permanent residency and status, and the difficulties that they have in collecting these revenues, I think this is a matter that must be addressed quite urgently.

But I don't want it to end right there in just trying to close the loopholes and limiting the granting of waivers and concessions. What I would really like to encourage our Government to also do is look at other taxes on the books and make sure that they are being actively collected and pursued. For example, boat taxes (I used this in the campaign). It is already on the books. But as far as I am aware, there are no active efforts to pursue the collection of that revenue due to the government.

I believe there is strong anecdotal evidence before us that there is revenue leakage to government. In my mind, Madam Speaker, this is the real low-hanging fruit that we can deal with that could have a very significant, positive impact on Government's financial performance. Close the loopholes and collect what is dutifully owed to us. We will be able to see those results. It is quite easy to do with a little bit of effort.

In terms of cost containment, I have been truly impressed by the leadership provided by the Minister of Finance in controlling expenditures. I have to say to the Cabinet as well. They are not afraid to say "No". And he already has a very strong reputation for fiscal prudence and strict cost control. Madam Speaker, you are not getting a dollar out of the man! Unless there is a true need to it.

I am reminded of a phrase my father often used when it came to saving and conserving money back in the days when we operated under the Sterling system of Pound, Shilling and Pence. The Shilling always had a lion on it. And for a man who was fiscally prudent and conservative, they said he would squeeze a Shilling until the lion bawled! I hope you won't be that bad, Minister! But the point I want to make is that the Ministry is doing the right thing. They are making the right choices and pursuing the right

strategies to bring fiscal prudence and conservatism back into Government's finances.

One thing I would like to see and recommend to the Government going forward (and that I believe wholeheartedly) is that Government undertakes a comprehensive review of the services provided to this community. I have discussed this with a number of people both inside and outside. Almost the first reaction I get is, *Well, that means we are going to cut the Civil Service*. That is not what I am speaking about, Madam Speaker.

Government has significant demands in terms of services that the public wants and needs. We have limited resources. What I am saying is that we need to evaluate and make sure that we are getting the best value for money. Evaluate our services to make sure that: 1) they are still relevant and required; and 2) to see how we can maybe do them a little differently, more efficiently, and thereby result in some cost savings to Government that could be re-deployed and reallocated to other needy areas. It would be a relatively simple task, one that would require some resources, but I think it would be justified in terms of the potential savings that could be had and allow the Government to be more efficient.

Let me talk next about the efforts being made by Government to manage its cash resources. A number of efforts have been put into effect since July 1 in terms of managing Government's cash resources. In particular, there were two mentioned by the Minister of Finance regarding the management of CI and US dollar receipts and payments, and also the statutory authorities and government companies are now required to deposit excess funds with the Treasury thereby allowing Government to manage its cash resources on a comprehensive basis.

I have to say, Madam Speaker, that when I learned that we were doing this I was shocked that it had not been done before, because if there is one thing I know from experience, certainly when times are lean, particularly, but that in all operations, whether a company or Government, in times like this the management of your cash resources is absolutely number one priority. The fact that we waited so late to deal with it and to try to manage it centrally is, I think . . . has harmed us, I believe, in that we have probably wasted resources in terms of overdraft interest charges that did not need to be incurred as a result of it.

Pardon sir?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Absolutely! And foreign exchange losses as well.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Absolutely.

My recommendation, my belief is that, going forward, this needs to be a permanent part of Government's financial management process and a part of their strategy. This can no longer be something that is just a one-off; it has to be dealt with on a central basis.

I have been impressed, so far, in that while we have achieved, what, a \$40-odd-million overdraft approval from the Foreign Office that, to my knowledge, up to the end of September, we have not had to tap into that resource. That tells me one of two things: the central management of our cash resources is paying dividends and potentially (time will tell), that government's revenue performance through September, probably exceeding budget and plan.

The next item I would like to deal with is that archenemy that my colleague from Bodden Town talked so ably about, and that is the Public Management and Finance Law (PMFL). He dealt with it so admirably that I am going to deal reduce my comments in terms of the law. But simply for me to state that it is not working to the benefit of the people of the Cayman Islands. It has not worked properly from day one. It is time we simply recognised that, call it what it is, let's get it straightened out and put things right on track.

A comprehensive review of this law is urgently required. I recognise it will take a while to do, but we have to get started and we have to get started fairly quickly. My understanding is that a committee is to be put together to review the legislation and make recommendations. I would love to see it happen as quickly as we can get it going, because for too long it has hampered Government's ability to be accountable to the people of this country. It has hampered Government's ability to make decisions with full knowledge of financial implications or what the financial resources are. And we need to address this.

A law such as the Public Management and Finance Law must be such that it meets the needs of the country, not for us to adjust ourselves to its requirements. It must be practical in its approach, realistic in its requirements, it must be cost effective—there is that value for money—and it cannot be over burdensome on the resources of the Government.

Next, I would like to briefly touch on the Cayman Islands Development Bank (CIDB). The Minister of Financial Services has asked me and has tasked me with an undertaking and review of the operations, and making of recommendations to the Minister of Financial Services on the Cayman Islands Development Bank. It should come as no surprise to Members of this honourable House that over the last three to four years the Development Bank has lost considerable sums of money. So much so, that the current level of operations is unsustainable without significant restructuring and refinancing of this entity, notwithstanding the fact that significant efforts have been made by

management to deal with the downturn they have experienced.

The primary issue with this entity has arisen over the past four years as loan delinquencies have skyrocketed at this institution.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** The situation we have right now with this entity is that the level of delinquencies on a whole is probably over 50 per cent of a loan portfolio. That is disastrous. And, to be quite honest, the Development Bank cannot sustain its operations at the current level. So, significant decisions will have to be made by Government on the operating model and the strategy for the bank in the next 12 to 18 months.

But I am satisfied, certainly from the limited work I have undertaken so far . . . because one of my concerns was that with the current cash burn rate there was a possibility that they could run out of cash. But that certainly does not appear to me to be a significant risk, certainly within this financial year that we are in. But is one that will certainly affect future budgets as we look to restructure and really develop a strategy and determine what the future is of what the operating model and strategy for the Development Bank should be going forward.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I just want to touch briefly on some of the infrastructure needs of this country.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** I see that, Minister, but I am trying to stretch it so you don't have to speak. I don't know if I can do it!

*[Inaudible interjection and laughter]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** I have to say that I am truly heartened by the approach that I have seen taken by the Government in terms of ensuring that due process, openness and transparency, the key principles and ingredients that we have all talked about and preached for so long, are going to be followed in these efforts. I am speaking specifically of big projects like the port, the airport redevelopment, and the extension of the bypass road all the way up to the eastern districts. All are huge projects that are truly needed for the future development of this country.

I am heartened by the process that is being followed because it does conform to best practice and good governance. It is open and it will be a transparent process. We have been talking about and planning to build a port for well over a decade. As a member of the private sector in public accounting, I remember being at meetings, going back to 2002–2003, where plans were developed. And here we are 10 years later having to essentially restart the process by

doing it right. When, if we had done it right in the first place, we certainly would have had our port and our airport developed by now.

Madam Speaker, I am truly confident that they will be accomplished during this administration. There is that commitment. I am looking forward . . . I truly believe that they will, once they are completed and accomplished, provide the impetus for economic development in the future. They will provide significant employment opportunities when they get going, not just in the construction phase, but in the years after that, they will provide increased employment. Those are some of the key ingredients that this country needs right now.

So, in concluding my contribution to this debate today I will simply say that there is renewed optimism. There is renewed hope. There is a renewed sense that the future is far brighter than it was a few short months ago, where there was much uncertainty and doubt. And I have no doubt that this is evidenced by the strong interest that we are hearing and seeing with the private sector plans for development and strong investment in Cayman. That truly is what is needed, Madam Speaker, in order for us to get this economy kick-started.

We must remember that it is the private sector that fuels economic growth. Not government spending. Government spending does contribute, but the real fuel for our economy is generated by a vibrant private sector that has the freedom to invest and is not overburdened with taxation to the point that it becomes a deterrent. And Governments can fall afoul by continuing to tax and thinking that whatever they want to spend on whatever projects they want they can just tax the private sector and it will be okay. It just doesn't work.

There is always that danger of going over that cliff where companies in the private sector no longer find it advantageous and profitable to work and do business in Cayman. God forbid, Madam Speaker, that we ever get to that point in our country's history. Because once that happens we lose it all. And every one of us here will be losers in the end.

I want to see a vibrant Cayman again. I believe we can accomplish it. And I truly believe that we can bring Cayman back and make our economy and our people prosper once again.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I recognise the First Elected Member for George Town . . . sorry, the Honourable Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure:** Either one is fine, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, at this late hour in the evening, and just before we close off for the day, there are a few issues that I would like to speak on and then I can resume on Wednesday morning and complete my contribution with regard to subjects for which I hold responsibility.

Madam Speaker, first of all let me say, as I have listened to the various contributions to the Throne Speech, the Premier's Policy Statement and the Budget Address, and from both sides of the floor, I easily recognise that there is, right now, in this honourable Legislative Assembly a certain level of representation that perhaps has not been here for quite some time.

Madam Speaker, I was just thinking back to the 18<sup>th</sup> day of November 1992 when I was first elected. The First Elected Member for Bodden Town always laughs at me because we got sworn in at the same time, but he got elected before I did because his election in Bodden Town was shorter than mine in George Town. Nevertheless, Madam Speaker, thinking back to then and thinking and, thank God, living now, Madam Speaker (and I mean this from the bottom of my heart), there is in my being renewed hope.

Madam Speaker, in these past nearly 21 years with me being a Representative and serving in various capacities in this Legislative Assembly and in the Government, I want to make, in my view, a very safe comment to say that this is the best class of Representatives that I have ever been a part of.

Madam Speaker, for the last several years I have been doing what the old people call really fretting because I kept wondering where the next class of Representatives were coming from. Let us look at the makeup that we have today, Madam Speaker. We have one Representative who is in his eighth term. He is the Father of the House, among other things.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** That's the Leader of the Opposition, Madam Speaker.

And then we have two of us who are in our sixth term. That is the First Elected Member for Bodden Town and me. Then we have your good self, in your fifth term. And then we have, if I count correctly, five Representatives who are in their fourth term. And, Madam Speaker, we have one Representative . . . sorry.

Yes, Madam Speaker, we have four in their fourth term; that is the Premier, the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay, the Member for East End and the Member for North Side. Then we have the Deputy Premier, who is in his third term. And back again, saying we have the Minister of Health who is in his second term. Then, Madam Speaker, there are 8 out of 18 Representatives who are in their very first term.

So, my good friend, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town is reminding me that they are

freshmen. But, Madam Speaker, what a set of freshmen they are!

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** No, you certainly would not think so.

Madam Speaker, you know me well enough to know that it is not my style to speak long and blow people's heads up with stuff. But I want to say this today because I want this country to understand that this elected class is an elected class that they can depend on.

Madam Speaker, when I mentioned a bit earlier that I was fretting and worrying where the next class was coming from, that was genuine. I certainly didn't know what the end result of the elections was going to be. I believe I had a pretty fair idea. I am never quite right on the button, but I am always pretty close. While I really couldn't be sure of a few things, I was confident there would be some new infusion of not only enthusiasm and intellect and drive and everything else, but I was very pleasantly surprised at the net end result that we have been able to accomplish.

Mention was made of the Premier's stance of inclusion. Madam Speaker, it is good to hear my colleagues speak to that because the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we are already seeing it. The nature of our politics is such that there is a certain level of adversarial politics in the Westminster system. But as I have heard the cries from many Members as they have spoken in their contributions to this debate, while by nature there is a certain level of that, the fact is that we are much more productive with the time that we spend looking for commonality, looking for consensus and setting realistic objectives which can be achieved by way of that commonality and the consensus. And I am witness today to say that that is what is happening in this Government.

So, while we really worry about our big brothers and sisters to the north, Madam Speaker, and the First Elected Member for Bodden Town mentioned in his own inimitable style about the debt in the United States and the trillions that probably none of us . . . I shouldn't say that. I say that in jest. But it would be difficult for us to remember how to write them down.

Madam Speaker, what he said . . . I really don't know if it really hit home to us what the Member meant when he said that it would take the United States longer than Methuselah's ram cat to pay off the debt. Madam Speaker, Google tells me that he lived to be 969 years. And I also heard that the cat was with him from the day he was born until he died. And if a cat has nine lives then that cat would live to be 8,721 years old. And, Madam Speaker, if it really takes that long, all of us are in plenty trouble!

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** And that was his point; which, for most of us, would mean forever.

Madam Speaker, having said all of that as an introduction, let me say that I want to commend Her Excellency, our new Governor. This is her . . . she is a freshman also. London had the confidence to send our first lady Governor out on her first foreign assignment, and her first job as a Governor, to a new Government. But, because we know them so well, like they know us, they knew all about this new Government before we even took office. And they had confidence and they put her there so that we could take care of her during her first term. And she's doing very well. She is doing exceptionally well.

Sometimes she doesn't have as much patience as we would like for her to have with us. But, Madam Speaker, I know the reason for that is because some of us—not excluding myself—take too long and talk too long. And she is all about business. So she keeps us on our toes.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Madam Speaker, tomorrow, not today.

Madam Speaker, on a serious note I wish to commend the Minister of Finance on his first delivery of a Budget Address. He has a wealth of experience in other positions which involve dealing with budgets, but certainly this is his first outing as a Minister of Finance. And, Madam Speaker, I am very happy that he is my Minister of Finance. As he told me today, I don't have to agree with him all the time. And he doesn't have to agree with me all the time. But after we hear everybody's story and everybody's opinion we usually do the right thing all the time. Which is fine, and exactly how it should work.

Before I go into the subjects for which I hold responsibility (and I will), I sought the permission of the Education Minister to speak about a topic that is near and dear to many of us, and that the Government is turning its attention to through the Minister and her Councillor. But I am not so sure that amidst all of the other matters which are in the minds of most of the country, that we remember challenged children. And those that I speak of are from all different walks and of all different ages.

Madam Speaker, what we have existing today is a situation where there are not enough resources. In fact, perhaps a better way to put it is the fact that, I think, most people believe that these children are few and far apart. It would shock us to know in our society, in all corners, the real numbers of challenged children. The challenges I speak to are a myriad of challenges, not just autism.

There are many other challenges. But what is happening to us is, not only are we without the resources and ability to deal with these children one on one, but every day that goes by we find that at a cer-

tain age they are either on the borderline and with a wing and a prayer they are put into our system where everybody else goes to school. Or, if it is a bit too obvious they are sent off to the Lighthouse School.

By now, Madam Speaker, we have them in the crib, we have them in mothers' arms, we have them in the preschools, we have them in kindergarten, we have them at primary level and then we have them at secondary level. Our entire public education system now has these children and they are multiplying all over. So here is what the multiplier effect does for that.

By the time they get to primary school and not enough resources are available to have anywhere near one on one encounters to assist them, to help them grow, they become part of a class of 25, or sometimes 30 children. And one or two of them causes the teacher to have to spend so much time on them, with that teacher not being trained properly, but making every attempt possible, that the entire remainder of the class loses out by year end and the curriculum is nowhere near finished. So the whole world suffers.

You cannot point fingers at these kids and say it is their fault. You get them halfway there with that happening. The teacher says, *Well, you can't really put that one up into the next year.* So, they stay behind and do it to the class coming in. And when I say "do it," the same thing happens. I am not going to expand any further, but that goes on and on into high school.

Madam Speaker, I say all of that to simply say that I want the Minister of Education and the rest of the Government to know that I believe that while I know when we took office and what was possible and what was not possible, and I know that the Minister is very concerned, I believe that it should become a priority for us regardless of all the other challenges that we have to be able to . . . and not necessarily with our own resources. But to find the help that I know is out there with resources and everything else, financial and otherwise, to be able so that when this tour of duty is over, even for those of us who will be seeking another tour of duty, that we can look back over this term and say we have made meaningful strides in this area.

Madam Speaker, I am not going to belabour the point, but just to say for those who may not realise the magnitude of what I am speaking about, in our system (and I am only using estimates here) . . . our public system may have 6,000 or 7,000 children? Somewhere around there. It could easily be (with varying degrees of these challenges that I speak of) that 20 per cent of our kids have varying levels, some more obvious than others. But given the proper, or anywhere near the proper assistance from their very formative years, of that 20 per cent, 80 per cent of that 20 per cent could leave secondary education and be a

normal person in society. That is what the statistics tell us.

But when you leave them alone and they multiply, there we go again. Just like proper dental hygiene. How long you keep your own teeth depends on how well you do.

Madam Speaker, having said that, let me begin. First of all, I want to thank my colleague, the Second Elected Member for George Town, who spoke just before I did, about the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility, explaining the fact that this is the regime under which we are by way of law. So we have to either be compliant or become compliant within a fixed period of time.

Then he mentioned the Public Management and Finance Law. Between him and the First Elected Member for Bodden Town they have spoken to this about the review and changes that are totally necessary. I could not agree more. I have said this on the Floor of this House on umpteen occasions, but the biggest mistake the country made with the Public Management and Finance Law was when we brought the law in and the Public Service Management Law wasn't brought in as companion legislation. That's what happened.

And the powers that be in those days in the very late 1990s and early 2000s just would have none of it because it simply called for accountability and they either weren't used to it, or they didn't want to have it. In a nutshell, that's what happened.

But, Madam Speaker, it has now shown us that there are costs which are recurrent, which are attached to the way it operates now, which is what the Second Elected Member for George Town spoke to, that we need to address. It should not be costing the country as much as it does to operate the system just because we had to move from a cash-based system to an accrual system.

Madam Speaker, I have every confidence in all of my colleagues, because I know that the Second Elected Member for George Town has the wealth of experience that he referred to and the qualifications that I know he does have. And I am not joking, this is not to be said in jest, but I really am going to recommend to the Minister of Finance that he have the Second Elected Member for George Town, his Councillor head up the committee to review the PMFL with a defined timeline to report back to you, sir, with recommendations to look very carefully at, for us to implement.

**An hon. Member:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** I believe that that is something that should be done and that that Member could easily chair.

**The Speaker:** Is this a convenient time, honourable Minister?

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Absolutely, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Premier.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

I move the adjournment of this honourable House until Wednesday at 10.00 am.

**The Speaker:** The question is that this honourable House be adjournment until Wednesday at 10.00 am.

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

**Ayes.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.

**AT 6.27 PM THE HOUSE STOOD ADJOURNED UNTIL 10.00 AM, WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2013.**