



**CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

2014/15 SESSION

2 June 2014

Fourth Sitting of the First Meeting
Throne Speech and Budget Meeting

(pages 125–176)

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

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PRESENT WERE:

SPEAKER

Hon Juliana Y O'Connor- Connolly

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA	<i>The Premier</i> , Minister of Home and Community Affairs
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 W Bulgin, QC, JP	Attorney General, ex officio Member responsible for Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Hon Anthony S Eden, OBE, JP, MLA	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , First Elected Member for Bodden Town
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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Mr Bernie A Bush, MLA	Third Elected Member for West Bay
Capt A Eugene Ebanks, JP, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for West Bay

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

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

APOLOGIES

Hon Moses I Kirkconnell, JP, MLA	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of District Administration, Tourism and Transport
Hon. W. McKeever Bush, OBE, JP, MLA	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , First Elected Member for West Bay
Mr Alva H Suckoo, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
THRONE SPEECH AND BUDGET
2014/15 SESSION
MONDAY
2 JUNE 2014
10:21 AM
Fourth Sitting**

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

The Speaker: Good morning. I now call on Honourable Minister responsible for Education to grace us with prayers.

PRAYERS

Hon. Tara A. Rivers, Minister of Education, Employment, and Gender Affairs: 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.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

APOLOGIES

The Speaker: I have received apologies for absence from the following three Members: the Honourable Deputy Premier, attending the "Invest Now Caribbean 2014 Summit", the Caribbean Tourism Organization's Ministerial Meeting surrounding Caribbean Week in New York City, New York; the Honourable Leader of the Opposition; the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, and Councillor to the Ministry of Home and Community Affairs, who is ill.

Also at this juncture I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Honourable Deputy Speaker for the way in which he conducted the House. I got to watch quite a bit of the proceedings last night on the Government [TV] channel, and also to convey my hearty congratulations for the manner in which Members also were able to exercise their right of debate within this honourable Chamber.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

SECOND READING

APPROPRIATION (JULY 2014 TO JUNE, 2015) BILL, 2014

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

[Continuation thereof]

The Speaker: We are in the second reading of the Appropriation (July 2014 to June, 2015) Bill, 2014. We are continuing the debate on the Throne Speech and Budget Address together with the Government's Policy Statement.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:

Good morning, Madam Speaker. Thank you. We want to welcome you home. We are glad to have you back with us and hope that you had an enjoyable trip.

Madam Speaker, I too wish to congratulate Her Excellency the Governor, the Honourable Premier and Honourable Minister of Finance for their excellent speeches last Monday. I think they all did a fantastic job and made us very proud.

Madam Speaker, during this year's budget deliberations, the size and cost of the Civil Service has attracted considerable scrutiny. While this is expected, given the significant portion of the overall budget that is comprised of personnel cost, it would be overly simplistic to view the Civil Service only as a line item of expenditure.

Madam Speaker, the Premier recognised this fact in his Address on Monday, and I again wish to record my thanks to the Premier and his elected colleagues for the ex-gratia payment awarded to civil servants which is equivalent to 2.5 per cent of their annual salary. Madam Speaker, this payment not only rewards civil servants for their excellent performance during this financial year, but drives the right behaviour in terms of providing an incentive to keep the cost of the Service down.

Many civil servants have approached and asked me to pass on their thanks. Some of them wanted to write to the Premier and Minister of Finance and the elected Members personally, but they were a bit hesitant because of protocol. But again, I do wish to reiterate our thanks to our elected leaders.

Madam Speaker, the men and women who dedicate their careers to the Public Service do so amidst significant challenges. The volume, complexity and regulatory standards that must be met have been increasing at a rate faster than the public purse can keep pace with. As a result, many agencies are undercapitalised for the optimum delivery of services.

Notwithstanding these challenges, like other governments around the globe, the Cayman Islands Civil Service has responded to harsh economic realities. In 2008, during the global economic crisis, the Service adopted a recruitment moratorium to centralise the approvals of all hiring. Since that time, the Civil Service achieved a headcount reduction of more than 200 persons. This was achieved, Madam Speaker, even as service levels have increased in some areas, such as policing.

Madam Speaker, through the moratorium process, chief officers and managers across the Service has been required to realise HR savings. In addition to the recruitment moratorium, numerous austerity measures were adopted, including a freeze on all within grade increases, restrictions on the payment of acting, housing and settlement allowances, and an imposition of less favourable post retirement employment packages, to name just a few. These austerity

measures and efforts to defer, or avoid altogether, the filling of non-essential posts have correlated into significant financial savings. During the past financial year the total HR savings exceeded \$11 million when compared to the original appropriation that year. Similarly, this year HR costs are projected to fall well below budget.

As the Premier has previously discussed, this financial performance has come with sacrifice on the part of our staff and equally sometimes with added patience and goodwill on the part of our customers, and we all agree it is not sustainable.

The gradual headcount reductions have taken place through natural attrition, which is an effective but imprecise tool cutting into muscle as well as fat. We all recognise the need to better define core government services and to engage with the private sector for alternative service delivery of non-core services. With that in mind, Madam Speaker, I, along with a talented team of senior civil servants and elected Members of the Government, are leading the process to rationalise the Public Service. In plain language, this process is meant to give us a fresh look at what size the civil service should be in the future, after other opportunities for appropriate service delivery have been identified.

It is important to note that this process is structured and has certain guiding principles as its foundation. These principles are as follows:

1. To preserve or enhance service levels and standards.
2. To ensure fair and equitable treatment of existing employees.
3. To attract local participation to provide public services and/or ownership of government assets where a fair market exists.
4. To communicate with stakeholders throughout the process.
5. To maximise employment for Caymanians.
6. To promote fair competition in the market place.
7. To consider the economic financial and social implications of rationalisation.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition in his contribution mentioned the need for us to take staff welfare into consideration, and I wish to assure him and all Members of this House that we will.

Madam Speaker, many have questioned this project, in particular as to why this is different from past reviews and what guarantee there is that the recommendations will be implemented. Madam Speaker, the differences are many. Firstly, previous reviews focus on individual entities. This review encompasses the entire public sector.

Also, Madam Speaker, the key decision makers are different. There is a joined-up approach between the Civil Service and the elected Government. Both the Premier and I have committed to seeing this

project through and we have witnessed tremendous support from all of the elected Members of the Government and senior civil servants. Additionally, this joined-up approach includes for the first time an elected Member who is part of our Steering Committee. And, Madam Speaker, I wish to thank Councillor Connolly for agreeing to serve on the Steering Committee and for his drive and commitment to this project.

Madam Speaker, the consultants will also provide a road map for implementation, which has never been done in the past. Depending upon the recommendations which are ultimately made, the implementation process could span more than one budget year. As such, ensuring accountability continues to be important.

Madam Speaker, much has been said about the lack of accountability in the Civil Service. Just two years ago the Civil Service had a less than robust record of performance management. In 2011/12, HR audit reported only 17 per cent of staff had performance agreements. Under my directive the Portfolio of the Civil Service tackled this systematic failure by introducing an automated system at no additional cost and providing a central dashboard for managers to do their performance of their staff. Within one year, compliance levels improved dramatically, and for the past two years have been sustained at over 95 per cent.

Now, Madam Speaker, I am sure you will agree that 95 per cent is not 100. It is my goal to see hopefully within a year that I will be able to report to this House that we have 100 per cent compliance.

Work is now focused on improving the quality and relevance of performance matrix, but important strides have been made in changing the culture within the Service to focus more heavily on ensuring accountability at all levels.

Madam Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the initiatives taken by many staff to upskill themselves in order to help fill the gap left as other roles remain vacant. Through the Civil Service College and other training opportunities, many staff members have seized this opportunity to acquire new qualifications. However, due to current austerity measures, they are currently not rewarded. I am happy to report that the chief officers and I will review this issue during the next financial year with a view to properly incentivising and compensating staff who have acquired higher qualifications which are relevant to their current jobs.

I wish to thank both the Premier and the Minister of Education for their support of this initiative. We believe that encouraging our staff to further their education is important and we want to make sure that when they do so and it is relevant to their job, that they are rewarded.

Madam Speaker, the good news continues. The introduction of an Assessment Centre for the appointment of senior civil servants has paid huge dividends. No longer are appointments based on tenure,

but applicants for senior posts are required to go through vigorous testing to ensure that they have the right skillsets for the posts.

Madam Speaker, we now have a highly qualified Director of Prisons who is making significant progress in improving the performance of Northward Prison. We have a new Collector of Customs and a Deputy Collector of Customs whose appointments have triggered significant improvements in the performance of the Customs Department, in particular, the area of enforcement.

Over the next few months we will appoint a new Chief Fire Officer and a Director of our London Office using the Assessment Centre approach, and I am confident that we will reap the success of these appointments.

Madam Speaker, progress has been made in the quest to Caymanianise the Civil Service. I am pleased to say that the Service is now 73 per cent Caymanian. I wish to highlight two recent appointments which demonstrate our commitment to employing and promoting Caymanians.

In the past few months, Madam Speaker, we have promoted two young, but highly qualified Caymanians to the post of CFO [Chief Financial Officer], Ms. Neyka Webster and Ms. Nellie Pouchie.

Ms. Webster is the CFO in the Ministry of Tourism. She is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with certification from New Hampshire State Board of Accountancy. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Finance from the University of Lancaster, UK, and an Honours Degree in Accounting and Finance from the University of West England, Bristol, UK.

Ms. Pouchie is the CFO in the Ministry of Health. She is a Certified Public Accountant with certification from the California Board of Accounting. She also holds an Accounting Bachelors from the University of South Florida.

Both of these fine young ladies also benefitted from our internal secondment policy which allows civil servants to move around the Service in order to gain experience. Madam Speaker, both ladies are here with us in the Gallery, and I wish to recognise their excellent performance. I congratulate them on their promotions. Well done!

[Pounding on desks]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Madam Speaker, speaking of excellent performance I wish to recognise Police Officer, Mark Green and Immigration Officer, Darwin Bodden who are both here with us this morning, for their diligence and professional ability in rescuing a 17-year-old Caymanian boy who had not returned home from a vacation.

Madam Speaker, once Mr. Green and others were notified that this young boy had basically gone missing, they contacted Interpol. They did a lot of research over many weeks. Finally, the young man was

located in Mexico (of all places). As you know, Madam Speaker, Mexico has a reputation for violence, but despite all of this, these officers travelled to Mexico. They were aided by the British Embassy over there.

I want to thank our former Governor, Taylor, who was the Ambassador over there, for helping to make the officers' visit as beneficial as possible. But, Madam Speaker, these two officers travelled to a remote area in Mexico, at considerable risk to themselves. They found the young man who was living in unfavourable living conditions and brought him back to the Embassy and then later home.

These two officers, Madam Speaker, really demonstrates what is good in the Civil Service, in the Immigration Department and the Police, and that they risked their personal safety to rescue a young Caymanian boy. I am very proud of both officers and they should be recognised for their bravery. Thank you.

[Applause and pounding on desks]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Madam Speaker, the chief officers and I are working together to improve the working conditions of civil servants. We have committed to developing a five-year strategic plan for the Service and recently conducted a staff satisfaction survey to ensure that we understand what is good in the Service and what areas need to be addressed.

Madam Speaker, in that vein, I wish to congratulate the Ministry of Home Affairs for being recognised by the Society of Human Resource Professionals as a top employer. This is the very first time that a Civil Service entity has won such an award and I wish to congratulate Chief Officer, Eric Bush, and his team at the Ministry for their excellent submission and their performance. This award demonstrates that the Civil Service is a good place to work. And again, Madam Speaker, I want to recognise Mr. Bush and his team.

[Applause and desk pounding]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Madam Speaker, I would also like to share some of the good work occurring within some of the other agencies within my portfolio.

The Commission Secretariat: The most significant accomplishments of the Commission Secretariat during the 2013/14 budget year was, of course, the passing of the Standards in Public Life Law, which provides the CSPL [Commission for Standards in Public Life] with the legislative framework needed to fulfil its constitutional mandate. The Commission was also bolstered by appointments to the Anticorruption Commission, having dedicated investigators who receive, record, assess, and investigate allegation of suspected corruption; the obtaining of computer software and hardware which enables the securing of information related to each investigation, ensuring com-

plete confidentiality to witnesses and other parties; and opportunities to attend training for both the Commission and unit members, which includes specialised training and financial and computer related corruption techniques.

Moving forward, in the next budget year the Secretariat will continue to support all six commissions under its purview, but especially these commissions during the next phase of their work: the Commission for Standards in Public Life, in its collection, registration and management of the new declaration process (which we are all going to have to get used to); and the Anticorruption Commission in its independent and highly confidential investigations.

The Public Service Pensions Board continues to work closely with central government to maintain and further cultivate the Civil Service pension landscape. Its fundamental responsibilities to administer the public sector, pensions plan, manage the fund and deliver quality service to stakeholders have remained unchanged.

During the course of the 2013/14 fiscal year, the Public Service Pensions Board was able to complete, or make significant progress towards the completion of a number of important goals, including the commencement of a comprehensive review of the laws governing the pension plan under administration, as well as the investment of the fund in consultation with industry experts, my Office, and the Portfolio of the Civil Service.

Madam Speaker, I am most pleased to say that in 2013 the Public Service Pensions Board achieved an 11.66 per cent credited interest on behalf of individual pension accounts. That should make us all feel really good. In addition to this, the Public Service Pensions Board has not only successfully completed an IT security audit which will lead to the installation of a more efficient and functional secure IT infrastructure, but in the 2014/15 fiscal year, the Public Service Pensions Board will begin work on a number of key projects that will eventually lead to the launch of two new systems, namely a web access application, as well as an internal flow tracking system.

Once sourced through the appropriate procurement process, the web application will not only provide participants with automated access to their pension information, but will also create greater administration efficiencies by automating various clerical tasks.

Finally, the tri-annual actuarial funding evaluation, which will be used to stipulate pension contributions, as required by law, will be reviewed by the board of directors and presented to Cabinet early in the 2014/15 fiscal year for approval.

Madam Speaker, the National Archives continue to establish the records and information management infrastructure for the entire public sector in support of Government's strategy for improved performance and efficiency in the delivery of public ser-

vices. Its strategic priority for 2014/15 will be to expand the record and information management infrastructure across the public service to support government's overall initiative for enhanced performance and improved efficiency in the delivery of public services.

It will promote wider access to information and historical archives to foster community learning through the development of its website. It will expand the oral history programme in terms of preservation of historical information and development of outreach programmes for the schools to reinforce Cayman's history. It will review and promulgate the National Archive and Public Records (2010 Revision) and regulations to assist government agencies in effective management of government information assets.

Madam Speaker, the Civil Aviation Authority is a regulator of the aviation industry throughout the Cayman Islands, and for all aircrafts on the Cayman Islands Aircrafts Registry. The CAACI has maintained its status as fully designated regulator of the Cayman Islands aviation industry, as recommended by the Air Safety Support International, the UK agency that was established to ensure the UK Overseas Territories were in compliance with the standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

In essence, the CAACI has been evaluated to possess high calibre staff with appropriate qualifications and experience, procedures and processes to effectively regulate the aviation industry against established requirements.

The Cayman Islands Aircraft Registry has approximately 215 aircrafts globally, representing hundreds of millions of dollars in asset value. The registration process is of particular importance to the local economy as there are spillover effects of registering in the Cayman Islands, which includes company registration and other work that goes to the legal and financial industry, thereby making positive contribution to the growth of the local economy.

Looking to the future, CAACI has strategically positioned itself to continue the conservative growth of the Cayman Islands Aircraft Registry, while cognisant that with growth comes the responsibility for safety oversight. Therefore, a strategy for quality growth of the registry is targeted not simply by quantity. This has led to registrants being of the highest calibre that can be verified in accordance with financial regulations.

Global growth targets include emerging countries and jurisdictions in the Middle East and the Asia Pacific Rim, as well as maintaining market share in the European Market Place.

Other key strategic objectives for the 2014/15 year include continuing monitoring and regulation of the local industry to encourage and foster development of appropriate safety management systems and compliance with ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] requirements to ensure the safety of the

travelling public. This pertains both to airports, aerodromes and airline operators.

Madam Speaker, it should be noted that CAACI does not receive any form of government subsidy, waiver from fees or requirements, and, in fact, have made positive financial contributions to government revenue for the past 10 years since it was reorganised as the aviation regulator. More specifically, in the past five years between 2007/08 and 2012/13, revenue has grown by 24 per cent, a net income by 48 per cent. And in the past four years has contributed \$11 million to the Cayman Islands Government. In this regard, the CAACI undertakes to review policies and procedures in order to maintain its leadership position.

Finally, the CAACI strategically will seek to strengthen ties with the local government, its UK aviation partners to lead the oversight process and local and international legal and financial obligations and associations to ensure that heightened awareness and understanding of the reliable and sound regulatory regime and asset management offerings of the Cayman Islands Aircraft Registry are optimised internationally.

Madam Speaker, in terms of the Deputy Governor's Office, a high number of applications for naturalisation and registration as a British overseas territory citizen, continue to be processed with 636 applications being processed in 2012 and 586 in 2013. I am pleased to say that my team has reengineered the application process and has introduced a much more efficient service to the public. The old system involved a minimum of four visits to the government administration building. The new system will require only two visits—one to place the completed application in a drop box; and, if successful, one to take part in the pledge ceremony. In so doing, we have reduced the processing time by four months.

Madam Speaker, please permit me to respond briefly to some of the concerns raised by Members over the past few days. Councillor Connolly raised the importance of the Civil Service working for the priorities of the Government and not being an obstacle to progress. Madam Speaker, I share that concern with him, if that is happening, and I want to assure him and all Members of this House that I will ensure that civil servants work to the priorities of the Government. I have ensured that the priorities of all Ministers are reflected in the performance agreement for chief officers, and we speak regularly about that. And I am sure that that matter will be addressed. But I want to assure all of the Ministers, if they are having any such issues, to please bring them to my attention and I am sure that we will have the matter sorted in very short order.

Madam Speaker, the Member for East End raised the issue of a young man who got a scholarship and went off to become a helicopter pilot, and who has returned and has not been able to gain employment with the Royal Cayman Islands Police in

terms of working with the helicopter. And he did say that he believed the civil servants were not doing enough to support this young man.

Madam Speaker, I do not want to drag this out too much but I do want to say that I've given the matter a lot of thought, and asked myself exactly what we did wrong. If you look back at it, maybe where things went wrong was when we gave the young man a scholarship. Perhaps the first thing that should have been done was for the young man to have been sent over to the RCIPS to meet with the Commissioner of Police and say, *I want to be a helicopter pilot, what do I have to do?* If that had been done he would have been told what we are now telling him—that helicopter pilots are recruited from the armed forces, that the pilots we have engaged here have that background (they have, in some cases, thousands of hours of experience), and we would have set him on the right path. That did not happen, unfortunately.

I do want to say that Ministers have brought this matter to my attention; Minister Archer and Minister Bodden. I personally spoke with the Ministry of Defence from the UK. In doing one of their visits here we made exchanges and they were all happy to do whatever they could to ensure that the young man is given the necessary training and support to realise his dreams.

The Member for East End did say that he had applied to the UK armed forces and was waiting a response. But I do believe, Madam Speaker, we will get this right, we will support the young man and one day, God willing, we will go to the airport and watch this young man takeoff in the police helicopter. I don't think anything would make us less proud as we see so many of our young men who have been successful pilots on Cayman Airways. I am sure all of us are very proud when we get on Cayman Airways and see our young Caymanians flying the planes. And I think one day we will see a Caymanian flying our helicopter. But there is a process that must be followed. And I am sure that we will get that right at the end.

Madam Speaker, there has also been an issue on the Justices of the Peace training. Today is the first time I sort of got beat up for providing training. But this was not something that we decided to do overnight. The genesis of this was a court case where the Grand Court judge determined that a search warrant had not been properly signed by a JP, and there were claims of damages against the government. Now we could have done nothing and could have had further claims. We presented the matter to our elected leaders. We agreed on a way forward and decided to commence the training. I think the training has gone very well.

I just want to read an email I got from one of the participants. He said: "I feel compelled to let you know how pleased I was to have been able to participate in the above training which you arranged for all Justices of the Peace. Coming as it did in the wake of

the court case, it was most timely and I learned a great deal. You are also to be congratulated on your choice of the two trainers. Both of them did a first class job in making the material interesting and comprehensible. The handbook which we have all been given has a double merit of being full of helpful information and also for being user-friendly. All in all, the training was an outstanding success." [UNVERIFIED QUOTE].

Madam Speaker, the Members did have a point in terms of why are we training lawyers when we exempted lawyers from the Notary Public training requirement. That is a fair point. We have gotten other feedback as well and we will incorporate that into the regulations being drafted, which we will present to the Government.

In my opinion, it was a very successful training. I went through it and learned a great deal. The last time I had been trained was probably four years ago. So, I think we all benefit from time to time from refresher training.

Madam Speaker, I just want to spend a few minutes talking about good governance. We are very fortunate we do not really hear those words anymore because things are going quite well in that area. But, Madam Speaker, concerns have been raised about the process being used by the Government to deliver projects, such as the port development and the waste management facility.

It is really the first time that I have seen in a very long time where the Government is being criticised for following established best practice. People are saying that the Government should just get on with it. I don't agree with that, Madam Speaker. The Government is following a process, following what is set out in the FFR [Framework for Fiscal Responsibility]. Civil servants are working very closely with them. We have made significant progress in terms of developing the strategic outline cases for the airport, seaport and the waste management facility. It has been, in my view, a textbook example of civil servants and the elected leaders working together.

And yes, it is going to cost money but the money that we spend at the beginning of the process is going to save us spending it at the end if we get it wrong. Too often we have seen where things started off badly and, of course, ended badly.

The money you spend on developing plans for your home, getting a good architect, making sure the land is good for your home, will ensure that you will probably get a good home at the end. Or not probably, you will. So, I don't understand why the Government is being criticised for this. I think they are doing a fantastic job in that area and I want to encourage them to stick with the process, and civil servants will ensure that we work with you and the country will get an excellent product at the end.

Madam Speaker, before I wind up I just want to highlight our efforts to have a more-healthy Civil

Service. We have been working with the Ministry of Health. We attended their healthcare conference recently and we were all reminded of the importance of having a healthy workplace. I want to recognise the Chief Officer, Ms. Jennifer Ahearn for coming up with the idea of the Deputy Governor's 5-K challenge which we just recently completed. Madam Speaker, the response was overwhelming. We had well over 650 persons registered for the event. We had over 450 persons who participated.

I want to recognise the Chief Immigration Officer, Ms. Linda Evans, whose department had the greatest number of participants, close to 50; the National Archive Department had the highest percentage, which was 100 per cent; can't be beat. But what did we do? What did we accomplish? Madam Speaker, we got civil servants out along with our partners in the private sector. We all walked, got our heart rate up and became a bit more-healthy. But we also raised I believe over \$10,000 for the Hospice. That is a great achievement, Madam Speaker.

When was the last time or when did you ever hear about government raising money to give back to the community? That is something I feel very proud of and I cannot wait for next year. We are already planning our next event and I look forward to even greater participation. Madam Speaker, that is really a textbook example of what happens when the private and public sectors come together for a great cause; great things happen. And I am very proud of what happened.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, I am pleased with the performance of the Civil Service over the past year. I wish to record my thanks to chief officers and staff for their tremendous support over the past year. I am very blessed to have a talented team of senior staff who work very closely with, and support me. These things you cannot get done by yourself, and I am so very blessed to have a talented team of chief officers who work very closely with me.

I have highlighted some of the challenges that we will face this financial year. But these challenges are really opportunities for us to meet or exceed the expectations of our customers, to focus on becoming more digital as we work with Councillor Suckoo on the E-government project, to work to the priorities of our elected leaders and to make value for money a priority in everything we do.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the time.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Health.

Hon. Osbourne V. Boddin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to bid farewell to the visiting civil servants. Thank you all for coming.

Madam Speaker, first I would like to join the Deputy Governor in welcoming you back after a while away from our shores. I trust you had a productive and obviously safe travel. It's good to have you back. Your deputy made you proud.

I join my colleagues who have spoken before in this contribution to the Throne Speech and Budget Address given earlier by Her Excellency and by my colleague, the Minister of Finance, and the Premier in his Policy Statement. It gives me great pride being here over the past year knowing what we inherited and where we are today. It hasn't been easy. And I know, because you were Premier just before we took over, that you know the financial situation that these Islands were in, the relationship with the UK with an embattled former Premier, the strain that has been put upon us by the FFR [Framework for Fiscal Responsibility], which is certainly necessary, but brings its own hardship.

We have been asked, and it's not just the Members here, but the entire Civil Service, to do more with less. And that's not always easy when things have been, as it were, flowing and basically we were not under the pressures we are under with a very, very tight budget. So, the civil service team, along with the Minister of Finance, worked and worked and worked. Cabinet and elected Members in the Government worked side by side with them for long hours trying to come up with something that was palatable, something that would add value in the coming years to these Islands while working within the Framework of Fiscal Responsibility.

I want to pay great tribute to the Finance Minister's team. They are a bunch of able, hardworking individuals and they give unselfishly long hours away from home and family to provide and produce what we see here today in these booklets—large documents from what the budget used to be. I remember a little tiny annual plan and estimates and purchase agreements and everything else that are now produced. It's easy to criticise, but, Madam Speaker, a lot of work goes into preparing this. And those folks deserve recognition, ably led by the Finance Minister and the Financial Secretary.

Madam Speaker, as I said, it's only a year in office. It's been a year of sifting through, consolidating and finding a way forward to implement our policies. It's not easy. People think that you get elected and you basically come in and the country just continues and the plans and policies continue. Yes, you continue where you can; but at the same time, Madam Speaker, as you well know with your years of experience, it takes time for a new Government, especially a Government made up of some first-timers, a lot of rookies, to find their feet, to sift through what has been going on, what policies are in place in the various ministries and to say exactly how you implement the manifesto the people elected you on a year ago and how

you work in tandem with the Civil Service to get that done.

I am happy to hear the Deputy Governor commit his support, and that of the Civil Service. We have seen this. We have had some very good relationships formed in a short time. I think the relationship with the UK is as good as it has ever been right now. That is important, until the day we no longer sit in the position we sit in now as an Overseas Territory. And I don't think that will happen in my time here in the Legislative Assembly. That's for sure. So, for now, we have to work with what we have. And there's no sense being in an adversarial relationship for that period. You have to work together and find the best way forward to ensure that we all benefit from what we're trying to do.

Madam Speaker, this Government that I am part of is a very talented one. We have a lot of able individuals. We are ably led by a very committed and hardworking Premier. And we are a very honest Government. I am very proud that we have gotten this far in such a short time. In many ways, the time has flown by. But I think time flies when you are very busy. If you don't have anything to do, time drags on.

I would like to start by reviewing our Ministry's efforts in the past year. From there I would like to move forward with what we plan to do in the coming year, and then I will touch briefly on some of my district issues before I wrap up.

Madam Speaker, the Government's financial position can only be described as very serious, or dire. As I said, we face tremendous restrictions from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in terms of our expenditure targets—more than ever before. And Government has had to find a way to cope with this. This is not a new situation. The recent past has seen past Governments having to cut into expenditures that contributed to the provision of services. As I often say when we are sitting at the table, Madam Speaker, there is a limit. At some point you can't cut any more before services and morale and everything comes to a halt.

Many of the dedicated civil servants will tell you that we have already cut to the bone. Despite the challenge of limited resources, when I look back on the past year I see that my Ministry and the agencies under my Ministry have been working extremely hard to deliver our outputs with the resources allocated to us. Despite the restraints placed on them, I am pleased to be able to advise that the department and agency heads have been very diligent in their expenditure monitoring and have continued to find ways to ensure the usual outstanding level of delivery of service despite the financial constraints.

The Deputy Governor is often heard to express that his vision for the Civil Service is to exceed expectations. Madam Speaker, looking back over the past financial year, I want to take this opportunity to

thank my team at the Ministry and our agencies for their efforts in doing just that.

Madam Speaker, I would like to now turn my attention to the HSA and the health industry in these Islands. I would like to take some time to highlight some of the achievements from the Ministry side that I am so proud of. My Ministry spans a broad range of subject areas. I will take some time to address each area in turn, starting with the subject of health and our achievements this past year.

In the area of health regulation and policy my Ministry has made progress on several fronts. The Department of Health Regulatory Services managed the transition and implementation of the new Health Practice Law with the registration of over 1,000 healthcare practitioners under the new regulations and licensing system. The new provisions allow for the practitioners registration period to coincide with their birthdates and should help improve the efficiency of the registration renewal process going forward.

In total, the Medical and Dental Council heard 401 applications. The Council for Professions Allied with Medicine dealt with 257 applications. The Nursing and Midwifery Council had 328 registrants, and the Pharmacy Council had 60 to review. I would like to thank the hardworking staff at the Department of Health Regulatory Services, ably led by Mr. Mervyn Conolly, for the outstanding efforts in facilitating this transition, and the members of the various councils for the time they gave to help ensure the healthcare practitioners who deliver healthcare in the Cayman Islands are appropriately qualified and experienced.

The Department also continued its inspections of the healthcare facilities ensuring that all 108 licensed facilities met the necessary standards to maintain public and patient safety in these facilities.

The amendments to the Health Insurance Law and Regulations were fully enforced by March of this year. The department and the Health Insurance Commission have been working hard to facilitate these changes. Members may have had the opportunity to listen to the regular appearance on *Talk Today* by representatives of the Health Insurance Commission and the Health Insurance Standing Committee which have served to provide more public information on health insurance and help the public to better understand their insurance plans and their rights and obligations under the law.

Madam Speaker, mental health is an issue that I believe has touched every one of us here and, indeed, everyone in the Cayman Islands. Global statistics show that one in five people suffer with mental health issues and we in the Cayman Islands are no different.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Osbourne V. Boddén: Madam Speaker, the Member for East End says he is one of them, but I don't want to believe that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Osbourne V. Boddén: I am pleased to report that the inaugural Mental Health Commission was appointed this year and they have been meeting on a regular basis to address the many important issues around mental health in the Cayman Islands.

Established under the Mental Health Commission Law, 2013, the nine-member commission is chaired by Dr. Marc Lockhart and has a broad mandate regarding mental health in the Cayman Islands. I am confident that the work they do and the advice they give to my Ministry will help to improve all aspects of mental health in the Cayman Islands.

As Members will hopefully be aware, Madam Speaker, our national vision for health is Health and Wellbeing for all in the Cayman Islands. We recognise that everyone has a role in helping us to achieve this national vision. And one of the central themes is the importance of prevention and wellness and individual responsibility to make lifestyle changes to achieve optimal health and wellbeing.

A national healthcare conference in October focused on workplace wellness and identifying how each of the stakeholders might better facilitate their employees and their families embracing more active, healthier lifestyles. I am very pleased to report that we have seen some tangible outcomes from the conference where employers and employees have taken steps to get moving and improve their own health—some small steps that I am confident will result in big benefits down the road.

We just heard the Deputy Governor speak to the Deputy Governor's 5K recently held Sunday, gone a week. That certainly is something that we can all be proud of. There were some 500 attendees at that event. In the evenings at the government building there is a running and walking club that's been operational since this year and we have seen more and more people getting out and taking a more active interest in their health.

Madam Speaker, if we can do this, half the battle would have been won. And I think after the healthcare conference the challenge I laid down when I spoke was for us to take an active role in our own health. I myself have embarked on some weight loss. I was quite successful until Easter, and then it started backing up on me. But I intend to not give up. But it's important because we all know that many of the non-communicable diseases that we suffer from in these Islands are due to obesity and just poor habits. So if we can take personal responsibility . . . and the Civil Service being a large part of the workforce in these Islands—the largest employer—should lead by example if we are out there telling the country that they

should improve their health. I think it's admirable and I want to commend my Chief Officer, the Deputy Governor and others for agreeing to have his run. Hopefully it will become an annual event. It certainly was wonderful that we could support Hospice in their endeavour for a new facilities. All in all it was a win/win situation. I commend and urge them to continue efforts in this regard.

One of the greatest contributors to healthcare costs is the incidence of chronic non-communicable disease. We all know the big four. It is a global epidemic that I am certain has impacted the lives of everyone here—diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and cancer. The burden of these on our healthcare system cannot be understated. With every passing day it becomes clearer that the key to winning the war against non-communicable disease is prevention and education.

Any good strategist will tell you that the surest way to victory is to know your enemy. With this in mind, we have been working on drafting legislation to make it mandatory for cancer to be reported to the Cayman Islands Cancer Registry so that we can get some robust data regarding the incidence of cancer in the Cayman Islands.

We often hear the cry and the lament in the community over the amount of people . . . it is almost as if people feel the incidence of cancer in Cayman is too high, and there is something causing it. We have heard it for a long time. But we cannot determine if this is fact or perception until we do what we have to do to get the right information. Armed with this information we will be better able to target our resources to ensure that we are making the greatest impact in terms of prevention. The data will also help to guide us to make appropriate investments for treatment and care. I plan to bring this legislation to this honourable House in the near future, and that is only possible because of the work that has gone in this past year.

The Health Services Authority also had a very productive year in 2013/14. This past year saw the arrival of a new ambulance recently, the launch of an internship programme for newly trained physicians, staff training in the HSA's updated core values, and the launch of their very own 90-day workplace wellness challenge. So you see, Madam Speaker, it's catching on.

The HSA embarked on several capital improvements, some of which were completed in 2013/14. The new dialysis wing was opened, the new chemotherapy unit is being constructed in partnership with the Cayman Islands Cancer Society and is almost complete, and the renovations to the MRI wing will be completed in the next few weeks, at which time a 3.0 Tesla MRI will be available to the people of the Cayman Islands.

We know that for a long time the situation there has been a temporary one with an arrangement with Chrissie Tomlinson Hospital with the MRI being

housed outside in a trailer. That has served there for some time now. But hopefully the permanent MRI for the hospital will be in place soon and we can get rid of some of the complaints associated with not having our own. The DNA and toxicology lab at the HSA had a successful international assessment to retain its accreditation, and work on a replacement backup generator in George Town Hospital is nearing completion.

In addition to the Department of Health Regulatory Services and the Health Services Authority, my Ministry has two other health related agencies: the Department of Environmental Health and the Mosquito Research and Control Unit, better known as MRCU. In the 2013/14 financial year, the MRCU worked hard to continue to provide its usual outstanding level of service despite the resource constraints in terms of reduced staff and budget. They finally moved into their new purpose-built hangar where, for the first time, they are able to house both aircraft in a secure and protective environment.

This new facility also includes a pesticide storage facility and purpose-built workshops for maintenance of the aircraft. Having lost the original hangar after Hurricane Ivan, the MRCU aircraft section has been providing their critical service in less than ideal conditions for many years. I would like to applaud the dedicated staff of MRCU who did whatever it took to ensure that the necessary safety and maintenance standards were maintained despite the facility challenges they faced.

The Director, Mr. Bill Petrie, and his staff, work extremely hard there under sometimes difficult conditions to get us much needed data and information in treating and dealing with the pesky little creatures that are mosquitoes in these Islands. They should be commended because, while many of us sit in wonderful air-conditioned homes and offices, they are out there in the swamps getting bit, and in the dykes doing their work counting these mosquitoes that are caught in traps.

I think if anyone gets a chance to go and see what the lab people do at MRCU they should really take that opportunity to see the hard work that goes in by two ladies, in particular, who have been there for many, many years. Their job is to sit and extract the mosquitoes that have been caught in traps and not only count them, but sort them into the various types that exist for that sampling data to be used in the work that they do going forward. It is the most tedious and has to be, in my opinion, one of the most boring jobs. But these two ladies love it. It is their life. They give their all to it and they do one hell of a job for this country. Again, they need to be commended. I think people know who I am referring to.

Madam Speaker, as the name implies, the MRCU has a research function. This past year they undertook extensive aerial field trials employing a novel application technique and a new larvicide product to investigate its efficiency against dengue mos-

quito *Aedes aegypti*. This mosquito is also one of the primary vectors for the Chikungunya virus that is currently marching across the Caribbean region making these field trials even more important, not only for the Cayman Islands, but also for our neighbours in the region.

Just one moment, Madam Speaker.

[Short pause]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: Sorry, Madam Speaker, I was just conferring with my Chief Officer as to the names of those two ladies. I know one of them very well, she's family, but the other one alluded me. But the two ladies I was referring to who work at MRCU that I would like to name out are Mrs. Nellie McCoy and Mrs. Zoila Ebanks who, as I said, sit there day in and day out. And I don't even think they are wearing glasses yet! I don't know how they do it. They count and sort mosquitoes on a daily basis and they deserve a lot of praise, Madam Speaker. These people who work behind the scenes, that we don't often see or hear about, are conducting vital work in our Civil Service and in our agencies and departments.

Madam Speaker, previously it has not been possible to successfully treat *Aedes aegypti* by fixed wing aircraft using a liquid larvicide. So these preliminary results that we have had are very promising. In addition to the field trials, the MRCU successfully carried out three large scale aerial larviciding operations using traditional larvicide pellets covering some 40,000 acres. By treating major mosquito breeding sites on Grand Cayman as well as Cayman Brac and Little Cayman these larviciding treatments prevented mosquito emergent.

Madam Speaker, you know too well the beautiful facility that the MRCU operates out in the Brac. It's new. It was built in the past couple of years and it is wonderful to see the happy staff working there doing very good work as well in the Brac. We want to commend them for all they are doing on that end.

Madam Speaker, MRCU also utilises physical control in its efforts against mosquitoes. In 2013/14 they completed work on an upgraded canal and dyke system in two separate areas adjacent to the Yacht Club and in Salt Creek swamp. These enhancements to the physical control system were undertaken since the construction of the new bypass road and will help to ensure these areas do not become prone to flooding and, therefore, mosquito breeding.

Of course, Madam Speaker, the familiar fogging trucks which conduct the evening adulticide fogging were still active and I am sure Members will agree that their familiar hum is a reminder of the good work that the ladies and gentlemen of the MRCU do to enhance our quality of life. It wasn't long ago when, in relevant terms, these Islands were known as the place that time forgot and mosquito ridden and turtle inhabited. I think we have come a long way and have come

a long way largely in part due to the work done in the eradication or control of mosquitoes and people like Dr. Giglioli who came to these Islands and plodded through the swamps and took the bites and the hard life, but certainly left their mark and made a difference for us to be able to welcome tourists and others to these Islands in a very comfortable environment.

I grew up with a smoke pan, and I know many of us . . . I don't think there is anyone in this House (maybe one or two) who doesn't remember those days. I can tell you, when evening came, you couldn't wait to get inside. These days you want to go out. Again, thanks for all the work that is done in controlling and eradicating [the mosquitoes], and protecting us. We see how small the incidences of mosquito diseases are in these Islands when we hear about others that are suffering so much. It means we are doing extremely good work.

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is not a nice guy and he has sadly developed a lot of immune traits to some of the treatments that have been used in the past. On top of that, he has also now become an urban mosquito. He doesn't necessarily need a lot of swamp and water any more. And that's extremely concerning. He can now breed in drier areas. I know that's causing the department a lot of grief and a lot of worry. But they are working hard at improving their methods of combating and ensuring that this does not become too big an issue for us.

Equally important to our good standard of living is the work of the Department of Environmental Health. I know this is an area that everyone wants me to talk about because it is certainly the most topical issue out there. Last night I went to *Rundown* to have a good laugh at myself. They poked some good fun at the fire at the landfill, and coming down this morning I was listening to Radio Cayman and they had some of the young interns on there talking about the work they were doing, going out and getting their stories and stuff. And they asked the young man they were speaking to about what had been most topical in his research and, of course, the landfill was at the top. It shows it's still on everyone's mind and what we are going to do to sort our situation out with waste management in this country. And that's good, Madam Speaker, because when it goes to the back of the mind is when it gets put on the back burner. And that won't happen on my watch, I can assure you.

In 2013/14 the hardworking team at the Department of Environmental Health continued to deliver their services that are so essential to public health in these Islands. The department expanded its food safety testing to include another three organisms, listeria, campylobacter and clostridium in their testing regime. This is part of the DEH that is oftentimes forgotten because we only think of it as waste management, garbage truck and the dump. But there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes in the research and in the lab of the Department of Environ-

ment and the other roles that they play in terms of food handling and good hygiene.

They also coordinated a HAZWOPER course. And that stands for Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response that resulted in 24 newly certified persons with 11 additional persons completing a refresher course. Staff personnel from various agencies across government were able to take advantage of this excellent training opportunity.

This course has been run for a number of years, quite a number, by two individuals from the US, experts in the field. They come down and we had some of our people re-tooled as well as some new ones in. And we had people there from the Brac, from Fire, Police, DEH and other agencies. They had their practical exercises up at the end of the runway where the fire crew is trained. I went up there and saw them and saw the enthusiasm they had for what they were doing and it was good to know. Again, these are things that we don't really think about in our everyday life. But it is important, if we do have a disaster (God forbid!), that we have people who know what to do. And these guys and ladies have been well trained and were there with their suits and all of the . . . you know, having to get washed off. And it was quite interesting to see the role playing and practical training that was going on. They were all enthused and quite happy. I was happy to see how many took advantage and how well they did.

The Department also continued its recycling programmes, and the following materials were shipped overseas for recycling: 6,000 gallons of contaminated oil; 40,000 gallons of non-contaminated oil; 10 tons of aluminum cans; and 3,315 tons of scrap metal. So when people say there is no recycling in Cayman, and everybody jumps up and everybody is an expert on waste management all of a sudden, they have to remember that there is a lot that's being done. Yes, there is a lot more that we can do. But there is a lot that's being done. And it's unfair to the hardworking members of this department and others who really work extremely hard to do what they do when they hear the public and the media go on the way they do at times.

So, Madam Speaker, I just want to again give a shout-out to all those hardworking people who are toiling at the landfill compound, not just dealing with the Mount Trashmore issues, but are there doing many other things during the day in the various sectors in operation there. The site has been really tidied up as of late in the New Year and the management knows what I expect, the high standards I expect. But, at the same time, they know that they have to be provided certain tools to do their job. I know that, and we are working hard within the confines of a budget to give them what they need to ensure that they can do their work. Until we get a proper solution, a proper waste management policy and solution in place, Mad-

am Speaker, we still have to do collections and manage the operations as they stand on a daily basis.

The department has expanded its recycling programme to include household batteries and they are currently in the process of issuing another tender for the removal of the tyres at all three landfills. I am sure people will hear on the radio the recycling messages that are being regularly run, compliments of the DEH.

The main difference in this tender for the used tyres will be the fact that the tyres will be free of charge and can be processed on or off Island, which should hopefully make it a lot more attractive as we have had a couple of tenders already on this and both times we have not had any real interest. I think it was because of the fact that we were looking to make something from the used tyres as well as there was a restriction that no processing could take place on Island. So when I looked at it I suggested to the team that we make those changes. As far as I know, the new tenders should come out with those changes in place.

Madam Speaker, you will recall that we had two fires at the George Town Landfill over the past year. I am pleased to report that the department has taken steps to improve the fire prevention and fire response measures at the George Town Landfill, including the installation of six additional fire-wells around the site and the ordering of a standalone fire-fighting pump. My Ministry is also in the process of tendering for much-needed replacement equipment for the landfill as much of the current equipment is beyond its useful life and has proven incredibly difficult to maintain and keep in operation.

With the replacement equipment the operations of the George Town Landfill will be significantly enhanced. Also, with the hiring of a fleet manager, which is in the works, this will go some ways towards improvement of what has been the status quo there for far too long.

Madam Speaker, I came into office and found a landfill and operations there in desperate, desperate situation. I think I finally understood what happened, because with all of the confusion surrounding where the landfill was going to be moved to, and the like, staff and management had basically taken the approach that there was no sense in doing too much with what we had there now because the site was going to become a non-used site in the near future. That, along with the fact that machines were broken and some just simply at the end of their useful life, led to a very, very sad state of affairs that I inherited.

We ended up having to spend large sums of money on leasing equipment and in some cases . . . because we are talking about landfill (as you know, Madam Speaker, you have had this same subject) a lot of the machinery there is purpose built. For sanitary reasons we have to have enclosed cabins and we ended up having to work with less than favourable

equipment. But, at the end of the day, we were able to get the job done. The same applied, I guess to a lesser extent, to the Brac landfill. Again, we don't have the necessary equipment there and ended up with fires in the Brac as well.

One of the major, most important pieces of equipment that any landfill needs is a compactor. And we have two broken compactors. One is at the end of its useful life, and the other, with what it is going to take to fix it, appears that it's simply not worth it. As a result, when you cannot compact your landfill and then line it, you end up being very prone to fires because you have tons of garbage sitting there.

We have to remember, Madam Speaker, that we take in somewhere in the region of 230 tons, 240 tons of garbage a day for that landfill. In the Brac we are taking in another 10 tons to 15 tons. Little Cayman is miniscule in comparison. But that is a lot of stuff coming in on a daily basis. I don't think people realise just how much. And some of that should not be going into the landfill, once we get the right system in place. But that's another story. That will come out of the waste management policy that we are working on.

When you get all of this stuff going in, and a lot of it is fire hazardous material, you end up with a high risk of having landfill fires. Landfill fires are not nice, Madam Speaker. They can be very toxic; they can be very difficult to control. The last fire we had at the landfill was a deep-seated fire, meaning that it was burning deep down. That was, again, because of a lack of compaction and layering and lining of the landfill. When you don't have proper management of a landfill you are flirting with disaster. That is still not ideal to what it should be, but we are a long way from where we were back towards the end of last year.

We are getting there. The Brac can rest assured that they are very much on the agenda because there is . . . the scrap metal as you go through the gate there on the left is piled high. That needs to be taken out of there as soon as possible. You have your share of tyres and garbage as well and that all has to be properly managed. The site there is pretty much at the end of its useful life. There is a new site, land that was purchased for a new site on the bluff. That is something that we will have to look forward to going forward. But in the meantime, as with the Cayman landfill, we have to ensure that what we have is well looked after, equipment is well looked after, we can't have garbage trucks and excavators and compactors, whatever it is . . . Madam Speaker, we can't buy these things brand new, use them on a daily basis in garbage, in muck and in dirt, not maintain them and expect them not to break.

When spending \$400,000, \$500,000 on one piece of equipment, Madam Speaker, that is a lot of money. And we can't have irresponsible operators, irresponsible drivers of our garbage trucks. We need to look at the whole thing and ensure that our fleet is well looked after, well maintained and be proactive.

You will find that the cost of breakage going forward and the inconvenience of machinery being out of service, we all know . . . people forget about it until their garbage is not moved for a couple of days. Then we know how inconvenient it is when we smell it, and see the files. Some people need to be held to account, Madam Speaker. No two ways about it. We have to ensure that proper rules and procedures are put in place.

We all know. We see it. We see the garbage trucks on the road—these expensive pieces of machinery. When they come here they are beautiful and we get to show them off. They get out there and if you put some reckless individual in it, and you hear them shifting the way they do and going and banging the vehicle and doing whatever they want to do because it's not theirs. It's just a piece of machinery they are operating it. We need to make sure that these people are held to account. And people who are using the heavy equipment, it's the same thing. We have to ensure that people understand that this costs the country. This costs each and every one of us money. And we cannot have irresponsible operations.

So, there's a lot to be done, Madam Speaker. But I think the management team has now understood clearly where we are at, what we expect, and the high standards that we are expecting. And we won't let up. We will ensure that we get the right results in the end.

Waste collection is an area where the department has seen additions to its fleet. We just had three new residential collection trucks arrive early in the year at the cost of some million dollars. The department has been able to further enhance its service efficiency, thank God, because of these. We are still not back to where we used to be, and where we need to be. We still have some areas that are suffering with collections. We have a number of commercial properties that have recently gone private because, as my colleague from George Town, the Fifth Elected Member, referred to in his debate—and I know this is an area that he has a deep passion for, and we talk regularly about—this is something that eventually we would like to see . . . personally I would like to see privatised. There is no reason why this is one of those areas that we can't. After the exercise is over I am sure you will see a recommendation coming out of it that will probably recommend that waste collection be privatised.

In most of . . . in fact, in every waste to energy facility that I have visited in this past six months, a year, in fact, I have seen where the collection side of things is not run by the government but is actually privately run, and much better run. I think that although we are buying equipment now, there is no reason why, if that is the case, and this does become a privately run entity, why the equipment we have now can't find ownership with whoever takes over that side of things.

We have six additional vehicles that are currently being procured. I think once they arrive the department's fleet will be up to optimum levels. But we are very, very low in the area of our front loaders. I think they are basically all just about shot or irreparable. If we are providing a service and charging people thousands of dollars for collections on the commercial side of things, we have to be sure that we are producing the service that is required. If not, we simply need to be out of the business and let someone else do it. So what we have seen—and I am not afraid to say this—is government lose a number of commercial contracts lately to private entities who are doing, by all accounts and purposes, a very good job. So the writing is on the wall, almost, for this.

Right now we are certainly in the process of looking at tipping fees, because we can't then turn it over to private enterprise, which is going to make money, and then just allow them to dump for free into the area landfill. The way it works is that you then charge tipping fees as a private entity to come into the landfill. But that is expected by the private operators because they know full well that that is the way it works worldwide. And it will certainly be the same here. I have just reviewed some of the tipping fees, suggestions that were put forward by the department. Hopefully in the near future we will find a way of getting this implemented.

Madam Speaker, as I said, perhaps the largest single issue facing my Ministry is the one of procurement of an integrated solid waste management system for the Cayman Islands. As Members will be aware, I have formed a steering committee to guide this important project through the steps prescribed in the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility process. This committee has been working diligently to move the project forward under the guidance of my Chief Officer, Ms. Ahearn, as expeditiously as possible.

To that end, the [Strategic Outline Case](#) (or SOC, as it is known) for the project, was recently completed and issued to the public. This document provides the situational analysis of the issue and helps to frame the strategic context of the proposed investment, and provides stakeholders with an early indication of what is being considered in moving forward with the project.

Madam Speaker, I want to halt there and just say that I am very grateful to the Deputy Governor for his intervention, not just on my behalf, but for all of the large projects we are doing as a Government and where we are taking much unnecessary licks, as it were, to say, *Just get on with it; do these things*. Madam Speaker, we have seen the results of this in the past. When you rush, or when you do things for the wrong reasons, you always end up paying more in the end. This has to have a proper foundation. Yes, it costs money to get a plan. If you are building a house, it costs money to get a plan. But, trust me, unless you are building a shed—even for that you sometimes

need a plan—you don't want to build your house without a plan because you are going to get things wrong, you are going to end up having to come back and do things over. You are going to put things in place that are not easily changed and it's going to cost the country more in the end.

I prefer that we get this right this time around. We have started this project. The Member from East End and any other Minister that had this knows the trials and tribulations associated with it. It is not an easy task. The thing that we have lacked is the waste management policy. I think if we had that from the beginning we would have had a solution flow naturally from it. The problem is that we've never had that policy and that is something that certainly is going to be one of the first things to come from the consultants hired to do the outline business case in the near future.

Madam Speaker, people say that a lot has been done, and just use those plans, and why do you have to review again, and why do you have to do this. Madam Speaker, this is a dynamic business. This is not a static business. The improvements, like in most industries with processes and systems, are ongoing. You can't just pick up something that was done years ago and run with it. You have to at least review. And, trust me, the steering committee looked at everything that was done before, and they then formed their own situational analysis. That is now in black and white.

The next step is the RFP [Request for Proposal], which I think is almost complete. The drafting for that is completing this week. And that is going to allow us to hire the consultants to do the Outline Business Case which is not unlike what the Port and Airport have had to do, because this is what is required. This is not Osbourne Bodden's rule; these are the rules that are laid down in the FFR, which I think by now we all have come to understand and accept we cannot avoid having to comply with.

I would love to be able to go to the Governor or to the Premier and say, *Look guys. Here is what I think needs to be done based on the expert advice I have been given. Let's do it.* But we can't do that until we have that information from the [Strategic] Outline Business Case we are about to embark on. And it takes time.

The very, very important thing (as my colleague just reminded me) is that this is not an undertaking by the Government in terms of a borrowing that we are going to do the solution by funding it ourselves. We need a partner for this, and this partner is going to come in and make an investment in this country. Of course, they are going to make money in the long run, but it is long term. We are looking at 20 to 25 years, probably, before a sufficient return on investment in such a case. That is the norm in the industry. So, this is not going to be costing the Cayman Islands any great deal of money, except for these

front-end fees which have to be paid to get the plans in place.

That investor is going to come in, they are going to have the money and do what they have to do. We are going to have an understanding with them, a memorandum of understanding or agreement, all legally vetted. They will make their arrangements with CUC (if that is the case) or whoever else they need to, or with the water treatment plant or whatever else. They are going to do all of that. That takes the burden off of us from physically doing it because they are experts in the field. We are certainly not going to contract with someone who does not know this business.

They are going to be the experts and they are going to do this. What we are going to pay then as a country, if we continue . . . if we were to keep the collections . . . let's say we kept the collection side of things, then we pay tipping fees to that agency or that company, and that would be part of their investment return. But if we get out of that, whoever is doing the collections will be paying those tipping fees. So, this is the way it's going to run, Madam Speaker, and I really, really hope that some way or the other . . . because I think every time I get up to speak on this I speak Spanish or Italian or Greek, because no matter how much I say it, tons of people don't seem to get it. This is the way that the process calls for. We are following the process, we are moving as quickly as God gives us strength. Every day we are working at this, and it is going to get done.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: I know. For some reason when you don't want to hear, you won't hear.

The SOC forms the basis for the RFP for consultancy and this is where we will get our national waste management strategy and the Outline Business Case to support the preferred project option once it has been identified.

I look forward to the day when I will be able to present this to Members of this honourable House. This is a keep-awake portfolio. You can't sleep too long when you have this on you. You have to be thinking all the time, *What am I doing? Am I doing it right? Am I doing it wrong? Could we do this quicker?* Trust me, there is no shortcut. I just want to reiterate my thanks to the Deputy Governor. In fact, I went so far as to ask the Governor, but we all know that governors don't want to get involved in anything that is of a political nature. But I even asked the Governor if she would make a statement on this to try and see if they would understand proper English, as I don't speak [it].

Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to assure the various stakeholders that they will be given opportunities to provide their input into the strategy and the procurement process. I encourage them to take advantage of the opportunities to participate when they are offered.

I recently had correspondence with the Chamber of Commerce, who was, again, pushing for a yesterday solution. I had to say the same to them. *You are going to be one of the largest stakeholder groups in the country and I anticipate that you will take advantage of the opportunity to have your input when that time comes.* This is an issue of national importance, Madam Speaker. The Premier himself got up and said that he travelled with me to Tampa to look at waste management sites. So he has taken interest in this, although it's not his portfolio. And he supports me every step of the way with what I am trying to do.

There is one thing I want to say, because I really don't like to get up here in this honourable House and castigate anyone on the outside, and row and go on, because I believe there is too much work for that. But sometimes some things just get to you. There is one thing that gets to me—and it has to stop right now—and it is this accusation by the *Cayman Compass* and its owner, Mr. Legge (or whoever owns it) about me being given this subject because I was from Bodden Town to stop the dump from going to Bodden Town.

Now, let me tell you something, Madam Speaker, that gets me. That gets me because I don't know which horse he rode in here on, but I know how I got *heh!* And he doesn't understand a lot of things in this country and he believes that he can sit behind a newspaper now and run this country. But it is not going to happen.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: No. He won't get that privilege.

It is time that Mr. Legge and his newspaper acted more responsibly. They have 4 pages of local news and 15 to 20 pages of foreign stuff because they don't take the time to do what they need to do. And all they can do is get up and beat the Government day in and day out, instead of going out there and finding some good things to talk about. They look for everything and they keep going on and on and on about this landfill.

Now the only thing I can figure about him and the landfill is that he has some financial thing to gain for when the Dart group gets it (or got it), because it had to be why he could be so loyal to them and see that as the only solution (according to him). So, he should come forward and tell the country what his stake in that is, being fixed by the Dart group.

When I first sat in the first meeting that we had with Dart, and we sat with them about the situation we found ourselves in, and I asked them, I said, *Guys, why don't you all then just take and fix this issue since it's such a problem for you all?* They looked at me and said, *We are not in the garbage business, sir.* So, they are saying that, yet at the same time he is saying that they are the only ones with the solution to

put it . . . all they were going to do was dig two holes up behind Midland Acres, drop two liners in it, walk away from it (and they are not in the garbage business), and then we were going to continue to build another Mount Something else up in BT. Why would we do that, Madam Speaker? That does not make good sense.

They were not going to put a waste to energy plant there. Government couldn't afford to do it, and Dart was not going to do it. And they need to find out what happened with all those land transactions and all of the corrupt practices that were going on, and why what was going on, was going on in Bodden Town. That's what they need to be reporting on and stop talking foolishness about what I am trying to do for the benefit of this country!

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I hear ya Ossie. He can't do you a thing up in here. You deal with it.

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: Madam Speaker, I had to get that off my chest. Sorry.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: Madam Speaker, as I said to the Chamber recently, we all have a vested interest in this. It's an issue that affects each and every one of us, because the day that garbage is piled up, smelling and causing us health problems in this country, every single one of us is affected by it. We have to be responsible as a parliament, as a media, as an organisation and as individuals in this country to get behind the right solution, one where there are no allegations of corruption, a transparent and open process that will deliver the right product to this country.

Madam Speaker, recycling and composting of vegetative waste has to form part of whatever solution we come up with. Right now we all know that everything basically just goes to the landfill. That is very, very wrong. One of the things I am hoping will come out of this plan going forward will be the fact that we will have depots in outlying districts that certain items will not get to the landfill.

Vegetative waste plays a huge part of the amount of waste that goes into the landfill. Number one, it is bulky; number two, it is fire hazardous material. So what we would like to see is for us to have depots (transfer stations they call them in the industry) where we can do processing on site. People can come by and pick up mulch for their gardening, from what we would normally call waste. But it's not waste, because it's really biodegradable matter. We could actually create a small industry as it were from that. In some cases it's given away, in others there is a small charge to keep the process going. But you could have these chippers onsite that grind it up into the various sizes, depending on what it is that you are using it for.

That [is what] I would like to see, Madam Speaker. And I think it will come out of the . . . I am pretty sure, from what knowledge I have of the process and what I have seen, how things should be done, that this will form a part of the solution. We don't need that stuff, and, to be honest, it adds no value. If you were to have a plant, the burning of that vegetative waste adds little value to the type of fuel that we need.

We know that we have the mountain of tyres on the landfill site. It is estimated to be over a million tyres there. We can't keep them all there until a plant is built because, simply, it is too risky and they take up too much space. They are a breeding ground for mosquitoes and the like. So we really need to . . . there was a shredder purchased some time back. I don't know what the situation is with that right now. I'm trying to find out what can be done to process some of the tyres if need be.

As I was saying, Madam Speaker, the deal with the depots in the various districts would be a big opportunity to create some local employment in the districts. You wouldn't need a lot of employees, but you certainly need someone processing and someone safe-keeping on site. This will provide a good opportunity for the outer districts to have some employment and some entrepreneurship going on.

Madam Speaker, although the Strategic Outline Case had a rough timeline at the end of it, and the media, of course, has latched onto that in saying five years from now before a plant or a solution is found, I am a firm believer that this process will move along quicker than that. The committee knows the mandate that I have given them to have as much work done as possible in as short a time as possible, although some things naturally take time. But I personally think that if we can get an RFP in place next spring and a partner on board by early summer (that's 2015), we can have a plant in place within a year and a half to two years from that. So I am prayerful, very hopeful, that by the end of 2016, mid-2017, we will have a solution moving ahead and operations in place at the landfill's current site where it's located.

We have 71 acres there, Madam Speaker. We can put a processing plant there that will remove all complaints of odours and environmental health issues. Forty of those acres right now, probably, are taking up with the current landfill. Mount Trashmore has been building for 30 years. Driving there on your right it extends all the way down to the back. But we have a lot of land on that site. If organised properly, there is room there to build a plant and to actually build another lined landfill.

Depending on the process that's being used, we may end up with need for a landfill. Because if you have ash, or if you have plasma rock, or whatever residual it is that comes out of a plant, you will have a need for a landfill. So, we have to be cognisant of that. We have to ensure . . . I personally would like to see

this landfill that we have capped as soon as possible. I would like to see it remediated as soon as possible. I would like to see it ventilated as soon as possible because there are gases built up in that which need to be released. But I have been reliably informed from talking to experts in the field that the landfill can be remediated. Over the long term we can bring that site down to its original flat topography. We probably then could, if need be, line and put another landfill right where that one is, but, of course, a landfill that is not a problem to us, a landfill that doesn't smell, a landfill with inert products in it. That is my goal and my vision for that particular site. I think that whatever the outcome, one thing that is going to come out of it is that there is going to be a solution found.

Madam Speaker, I would like to turn my attention now to another big area of my Ministry, and that is to do with sports. I am very pleased . . . at least this one doesn't carry the stress of health. I can tell you, between environmental health and health, I don't think any Minister needs any more than that. I don't think you could add to that to make it any worse would be education and labour!

[Laughter]

Hon. Osbourne V. Boddan: I am pleased to report that the past year has been a very busy and productive one, Madam Speaker, with an increasing number of sports tourism events gracing our shores. We have seen an unprecedented number of visiting athletes, supporters and spectators. I want to publicly thank the Minister of Tourism who has . . . he and I have a wonderful working relationship. We have to, because these two things are cross-ministry and the support of each of us is very important for what has been achieved thus far.

The two CONCACAF tournaments, the Boys Under 15 in August, and the Women's Under 20 in January, brought more than 1,000 visitors to our shores. My Ministry undertook facility upgrades to our three main football fields, the Truman Boddan Field, the Ed Bush Field, and the Annex, in preparation for these events, including upgrades to the lighting systems to allow for the Women's Under 20 to be televised internationally. Not only were the residents of the Cayman Islands able to take in some world class football, football fans far and wide were able to see a bit of the Cayman Islands on their television screens.

I am sure Members of this honourable House will agree that this sort of exposure is invaluable for us and they serve us well as we continue to promote and explore opportunities in the area of sports tourism. We had so many really, really good events. We had NORCECA [North Central America and Caribbean] volleyball last month . . . no, we are now, in June, so in April we had NORCECA and the Cayman Islands have become quite a Mecca for beach volleyball. I have spoken to a number of visiting athletes and we

have our own athletes and two young ladies in particular out of West Bay that are new on the beach volleyball scene doing very well in regional tournaments, recently just missing out on a youth Olympic opportunity. They came in fifth, I think, in a tournament where they had to place one spot higher and they would have made it. They are doing great.

The stalwarts that we have had in that, we all know the OTs and the Kerwins, and on the female side we have Shervin and Cristin Alexander, a past Miss Cayman, and her partner. They have really put some good effort into beach volleyball under the leadership of Noel Williams, who has made a lot of contacts in the NORCECA and international volleyball scene. They have done really well and are looking to do more and more tournaments here. I think one of the goals that the association have right now, is to actually attract the world's top 20 teams here to Cayman for a tournament on the West Bay Beach in the summer. So, if we can do all of this, we continue to put Cayman on the map in terms of volleyball and other sports.

We had kite surfing for the first time in January/February. The winds weren't that favourable, but we had some of the world's best kite surfers come here through the [T.R.I.O.](#) group [The Rock International Open], which is the local group formed to promote the sport. Some of our young people are very keen on it and that brings in tremendous amount of visiting interest athletes as well as the entourage that travel with athletes.

We have to remember that when this happens all of our hotels and restaurants and rental agencies benefit tremendously. When people come here and we expose what's really good about the Cayman Islands to visitors, it creates a spinoff for tourism and stay-over tourism down the road. Just as cruise tourism does, sports tourism does the same in that it promotes future stay-over tourism and it is great exposure for these Islands.

We have a number of other events lined up for this year. We have the Under 15 Female tournament this summer. In fact, this evening at five o'clock I have to be at the Marriott for the launch of the PR around that event. That will be exciting for the young ladies in the country. Last year we had the boys and that drew such great excitement. I think the country was a-buzz with the level of play exhibited by our own Under 15 team and the success that they had. A lot of those young men have gone on to have various interests and are being scouted by countries and clubs. So that is very, very positive for the sport.

Football has always been our number one sport and I think that there is resurgence with the activities of CONCACAF. We have seen a new keen interest in this. And it bodes well with all that we have been able to do on the structural side. We have spent millions, Madam Speaker, and we continue to spend as much as we can to provide the infrastructure and

pray that the private sector and CONCACAF and FIFA will continue to support and spend their own and invest in opportunities for our own young people and the benefits that spew off to the country.

We have coming up this year as well a couple of big events. One in particular will be a sport education cross-ministry initiative, which is an anti-bullying event which should take place in the month of October. That is going to be huge. We are going to bring in some former basketball stars that can still bounce the ball and throw it up to the hoop. They are going to come in and put on some clinics and some exhibition games by a promoting group. This is going to be in honour of the young man who tragically took his own life in Prospect due to the effects of being bullied in school and out of school.

Bullying is a very, very serious scourge on our society. We have seen the effects of it on a daily basis and I am sure the Minister of Education will speak more about it in her contribution, but it impacts our young people in many ways negatively. We have seen the number of cases coming before us of young people that are being mentally scarred, long term. And, of course, the end result is usually that young person thinking about taking his or her own life and just getting rid of the nuisances that are around them. It's either that, or they end up wanting to take their life and they do something that we would call really stupid, but at the end of the day it is something that they felt they had no other course. Therefore, we in sports, and my Sports Ministry, will be very happy to partner with tourism and education on this initiative this year. I am looking forward to hearing more about that as we go along.

Young Ezra was a young man who came from a good family who, sadly, took his life. And he is known to this promoter because this promoter used to come here because of basketball. Therefore, he wants to do something to honour young Ezra who was a talented up and coming basketball player and he sadly took his own life last year.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Sports has continued to provide its excellent community sports programmes and assistance to the national sports associations and providing coaches for the Ministry of Education extended after school programme. A lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes in the Department of Sports under director Collin Anglin. He and I have built a very good relationship. He is still a young man playing basketball, so he is very much into sports. He knows what it takes and he is committed and deeply devoted to his job. I hope that we can hold on to him for some time as it is a pleasure to work side by side with him.

Madam Speaker, I would now like to turn my attention to the subject of Youth, which goes hand in hand with sports. My Ministry continues to take the lead as chair of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Youth Affairs. The committee works diligently to en-

sure that all seven of the specific goals identified in the National Youth Policy and Plan and, in turn, the goals, hundreds of action steps are further developed, implemented and assessed. There are several National Youth Policy action steps upon which progress is being made. One is the formal identification in evaluation of all youth institutions, organisations and clubs. Another is the creation of a standardised checklist and minimum qualifications for youth workers. Both of these measures will afford a set of standards in the field and greater safety for youth.

The Youth Services Unit continues its work to advocate for and lead the youth of these Islands. The Unit facilitated the production of two position papers from the Cayman Islands Youth Assembly. One was public transport survey and recommendations; and the other was the effects of alcohol and marijuana use in the high school setting and recommendations for remedy.

In addition, the Unit helped to organise a youth gospel concert in observation of Caribbean Youth Day, conducted leadership workshops for youth in ethics and core values and in everyday leadership, and continued in its weekly assessment visits to the programmes of youth service providers who receive government funding.

Our ["Proud of Them"](#) youth campaign continues with great success where we recognise and pay tribute to young people who are role models in our community. The bill boards are around the Island with the latest recipients of this honour and these young people have excelled in academics, sports, culture, and civic duties. We are proud of them.

Madam Speaker, we often talk about our young people in this country in negative connotations. But I can tell you that I have always known, and I know even more now as Minister of Youth, that we have some wonderful, wonderful young people in this country who serve as role models and do so much good in these Islands.

We know all about our Youth Flex show on Radio Cayman every Wednesday evening. We hear the sort of subjects and the way these young people conduct themselves on the air. These days there is a proliferation of young ladies on there. I was honoured to actually go there and do a visit with them a few weeks ago. I can tell you that they are so bright that they are actually intimidating! There are no fools in that group, Madam Speaker. And we have so many like that in our Islands that do great work through our Youth Parliament, our Youth Assembly, our Junior Achievement, and our service clubs, the Rotaract, Leos, you name it, through our various school associations that they have.

We have to pay more attention to the good and listen to these young people because they know what time it is, Madam Speaker. They know what's going on and these are the kinds of things that the good news paper, instead of killing me every day

about a dump, should be talking about, promoting these young people, and the good that they are doing in this country in setting an example for their peers to follow, and not just writing about everyone that got caught with a spliff. What happens is that we are too quickly condemning those and making them into full time criminals when the truth, in fact, was that if we dealt with them properly we could probably change their wayward behaviour through positive influences.

So I think the media in this country has a huge role to play at the print. The online media and the voice media, we have to understand that we have a huge role to play in not just being a negative source of information, and creating a nation of complainers, but instead being a country that promotes and glorifies its good people and its young people and its elderly. That's what a good media should be doing.

Yes, you have to talk about negative things at times, but it can't be that everything is wrong in a country, Madam Speaker. There is a lot of good going on by these same young people whom I am talking about, who are in our Cadets and various groups that are so wonderful and uplifting to be around. The Cadets continue to shine. I am glad that the Brac arm has gotten them going again. When you get around these young people and hear them talk and see the respect that they have for authority and for elders, it is refreshing to know that we have something to look forward to. We don't have just negativity. We have people that will be able to take the leadership in this country, that will be able to stand here and talk the way that I am talking right now, Madam Speaker, and deal with their ministries in the future because, trust me, I don't want to be here forever. I need someone to replace me. But I don't want that too quick either! I want to make sure you give me a little time now to finish what I started.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister, is this an appropriate time to take the luncheon break?

Hon. Osbourne V. Boddan: Yes ma'am. Just allow me to finish what I started. So, I will break right here.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The House is now suspended for the lunch break and will reconvene at 2:00 pm.

Proceedings suspended at 12:30 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:10 pm

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Before we took the luncheon break the Honourable Minister responsible for Health was engaged in his debate. I now recognise him for the completion of his debate.

You have 45 minutes remaining.

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

[Continuation thereof]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

During the lunch break it became quite evident to me that I have put some nervous tension in my camp, because all of my colleagues now are scared that for the next few days the *Cayman Compass* is going to be dedicated solely to yours truly, and probably they will get a little spin-off ricochet. But I don't think the man can do me much more than he has already done, because I have occupied him for the last six months and falling short of putting a hit man on me, I don't think there is much else he can do or say about me from calling for my job to saying that I was given it as a political favour.

Madam Speaker, it is obvious, though, that we are victims of a foreign press, largely, in this country. One thing I want to do is implore the Minister of Education that if she has scholarships to give, let's get some journalists. We need some local ones, some good ones! Because I have never done this man anything, to my knowledge. As far as I know, we pick up his garbage, and unless I have troubled one of his friends, that I didn't know was his friend, I can't see why he has such a personal grievance towards me and, in particular, the Minister of Education.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: In particular, Madam Speaker, I do not choose the size of shoes that he chooses to wear, and the colour and style. So, I have never done anything to this man. The last time I saw him he was smiling and said that . . . I told him we were busy and getting things done, and he said he was looking forward to it. And we put out the Strategic Outline Case and he goes ballistic again. So there is no pleasing him. So, I will continue to do my job and I guess he will continue to do his. But as long as he is not reporting about me in the prison or in court, all publicity, I just want to make him know, because he said something along those lines in his last instant message to me, all publicity that he gives me is also good publicity. Thank you, Mr. Legge.

I will move on now to Culture. Madam Speaker, Culture is a subject area that is now critical to several aspects of life in our Islands, in particular because of the large influx of other nationalities in our Islands. Well, that couldn't have come at a better time (I was just speaking about that). The work of the cultural entities and individuals help to protect and create awareness of historical elements of Caymanian heritage, celebrates and promotes our society as one, which is culturally diverse, strengthens the offerings of one of

our largest industries, that is tourism, and helps to drive the various creative industries coming to the forefront today, such as culinary and artistic expressions and businesses.

Madam Speaker, the Cayman Islands National Museum highlights over the past year included the following inspirational exhibitions: Olive Miller—"A Mission of Service"; "Passing Through: Migratory Birds of the Cayman Islands"—Birdie; "Voyages: A Sea Captain's Legacy"; "Sporting Stars"; and "Play". The latter two exhibitions are still in place and well worth the visit.

The Cayman National Cultural Foundation [CNCF] began offering Miss Lassie's House school tours in October. The iconic home's art and educational activities are a delight to locals and visitors alike. Additionally, CNCF produced the 20th Annual Cayfest, Cayman Islands National Arts Festival comprising several events, including the popular Red Sky at Night. Meanwhile, CNCF's neighbour, the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, created a new collections based school programme which was short listed for the Joanna Clarke Award of educational excellence.

The National Gallery forged new regional strategic partnerships resulting in an increased visibility for the National Gallery and Cayman in the Caribbean, including the recent Jamaican Art Show, and mounted further temporary exhibitions, namely, "Homage to Open-Air Painting" by Teresa Grimes; "Our Story of Art"; "Public Art – Sculpture Competition Display"; "Images of Yesteryear"; "Art of Assemblage"; and most recently, "Metamorphosis", which, Madam Speaker, is still on display for the enjoyment of the public.

The National Gallery also completed the National Gallery Strategic Planning exercise resulting in the new National Gallery Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019.

All three of these cultural entities have a diverse myriad of ongoing programmes and events that enrich the life of our society and ground our people in awareness and celebration of our cultural heritage. Examples include libraries, lecture series, tours, courses and workshops, apprenticeships, internships and scholarships.

Members will also recall that this year's theme for National Hero's Day was "Cultural Heritage" whereby we recognised our pioneers who have worked hard to preserve and promote Cayman's cultural heritage. We also recognised those individuals who have contributed over time with long service awards and those who have passed on were commemorated on the Memorial Scroll.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the members of the public who took the time to nominate these deserving individuals for this recognition. I trust the public will take advantage of this opportunity to recognise our deserving residents again later this year when we

call for nominations for next year's National Hero's Day which will celebrate our pioneers in health.

So, Madam Speaker, I hope you will agree with me when I say that the past year has been a very busy one for my Ministry. I am very fortunate to have a fantastic team of professional and dedicated heads of departments who are committed to working together to help our Ministry achieve our goals. I am equally fortunate to have a professional and dedicated staff in my Ministry ably led by my chief officer. While we are one of the smaller ministries in terms of numbers, I believe we have been able to achieve a great deal through dedication and teamwork.

I am grateful for their support during my first year as Minister and, in particular, my policy advisors. They work extremely hard putting together all of the various bits of information we need and getting Cabinet papers done and attending to meetings and all of the work that goes on in the Ministry. Ministries are very, very busy places. For people who think we sit there and do nothing, far be that from the truth!

I would now like to look ahead, Madam Speaker, to the coming year and the new budget. While we have achieved much over the past year, I think there is still much to be done. I would like to briefly outline some of my Ministry agency plans for the 2014/15 year.

Starting in the same order, the Health Services Authority [HSA], and the area of health, we will continue the implementation of their strategic plan with the aim of continuing to improve the quality of patient care, empowering staff and improving their financial sustainability. In 2014/15 the HSA plans to:

1) Develop and implement an affiliation agreement with an accredited overseas healthcare provider. This will allow for enhanced training opportunities for staff, the ability to access supplies, medicines and equipment through a larger procurement network and assistance and advice regarding possible enhancements in a way the HSA does business. This will result in better healthcare and customer service for our patients. The RFP is drafted, and we will have this arrangement in place this year.

2) Explore the feasibility to acquire additional space for the expansion of the specialists' services clinic.

3) Undertake a review of their facility master plan to help address issues such as space for clinical services, storage, parking and changing rooms, with a goal to ensuring the facilities are there to continuously improve the delivery of sustainable, high quality healthcare.

4) Launch a patient portal in an effort to increase patient engagement, allowing patients to see their results, schedule appointments and communicate with their clinicians.

5) New pharmacy software will streamline inventory and add improved functionality for the HSA's pharmacy services.

6) Procurement of non-emergency transport to reduce the demand on the emergency ambulance.

7) Procurement of a digital imaging system for the medical records department to curb storage requirements.

Madam Speaker, the other thing I want to do is direct as much business as we can towards our district clinics, because I think that in some ways they are underutilised. I have spoken to management about that. It may have some budget implications because, of course, you're looking at extra time, staff, night time and all that kind of stuff, but I think the more people we can stop coming to the central George Town Hospital, the more efficient the whole system can be.

When the previous Minister of Health, my colleague, Mr. Eden, the First Elected Member for Boddan Town, built those clinics, I think that was what he had in mind. Although they are utilised, and we are looking at renovating . . . not renovating, but refurbishing in terms of things that have been left too long and fixing the roofs and putting in generators and all that kind of stuff, I still think that we could do. I know that the management of the HSA shares my vision on this. But it does have budget implications, so we have to do our best to work to see how best we can do it.

Looking at the Department of Health and Regulatory Services for the coming year, they plan to continue their public education programme regarding health insurance and the health insurance legislation.

The Health Insurance Commission will pursue public/private partnerships with the approved insurers to provide access to health insurance for retirees, elderly persons, and persons with high risk medical conditions; implement the administrative fines provided for in the Health Insurance Law and Regulations, as well as enhance enforcement strategies including extending these enforcement efforts to Cayman Brac and Little Cayman; develop and implement guidelines for the processing of applications related to clinical trials and experimental research.

That's a very important point, Madam Speaker, because we are seeing more and more in relation to medical tourism in the Cayman Islands and we have seen people come in here wanting to start different clinics, addiction clinics, stem cell research, cancer, you name it. And right now we don't have the type of legislation that we really need on the books to control it, because it goes without saying that in some cases these are experimental procedures. They are also not allowed currently, in many cases, by the FDA (Federal Drug Administration). Therefore, a number of these are being done overseas outside mainland USA. And we have to protect ourselves as a jurisdiction to ensure that we are not getting ourselves into a situation where we become exposed and liable for various procedures.

Oftentimes these procedures are well tested and proven. And some have been around for a long time. But we have to make sure that we protect our-

selves. We welcome the new business and the interest in the area, but we have to be careful.

Medical tourism is an area on the rise with the Shetty Hospital being on line and available for tertiary care for locals through the referral process, and they are getting up to speed. They had some teething problems in terms of equipment and the like, but they are getting up to speed and will soon be bringing in their own patients from overseas. But in the meantime, I encourage all referrals that can be done to be made to this hospital to save us in the area of overseas healthcare costs which, it is no secret and is one of the large items in the budget for us.

In relation to the mental health area, finally, I would just like to say that we are working hard through the Mental Health Commission with Dr. Lockhart, to ensure that we look at existing capacity of what we can do for young people and adults. And then long-term plans for, hopefully, a public/private partnership where Government can maybe provide the land and someone can build a facility for us for long-term care. But we simply do not have the ideal situation right now where our loved ones are being cared for overseas or are left alone on the street.

They are wreaking havoc in the homes and when they go overseas we don't know what's happening with them. Our loved ones are unable to visit, and be with them and care for them. Regardless of whether the facility is top class or not, at the end of the day it's not an ideal situation and it certainly costs the Government well in excess of a million dollars every year for that care. So I think it's in our interests and very timely. We have had some recent incidents that have brought it to the fore. We have to make sure that . . . and I think the urgency is here now.

I think all of our colleagues, and I know the Minister of Education, in particular, with our young people in the schools, and the amount of attention they are getting . . . because if we can deal with, sometimes just about in all cases . . . if we can catch young people at an early age, before the age of 16, where these symptoms are evident in many cases, we can certainly have a better end result. So this is very important to me and to the Ministry and I think we are going to be making significant strides. And the Premier and I have chatted about this. We want to ensure that we get somewhere on this quickly.

In 2014/15 the Mosquito Research Unit (MRCU) will expand the aerial BTI trials to combat the dengue mosquito expanding this year's field trial to a full scale aerial operation treating an area of 400 acres on a weekly basis for a period of six months. This work will continue to include monitoring of the *Aedes aegypti* population, including trapping and monitoring of egg-laying behaviour. MRCU will also carry out three to four island-wide large-scale larviciding operations, including Cayman Brac and Little Cayman to prevent mosquito emergence.

The physical control efforts of MRCU, namely, the Hatch and Stand Programme will be expanded and more frequent operations will be carried out throughout the season. The programme focuses mainly on the Yacht Club, Salt Creek and Barkers areas.

Moving now to the Department of Environmental Health (DEH), there are plans for the upcoming budget year, including further enhancing and improving the operations of the George Town Landfill. As I mentioned earlier, the DEH is in the process of procuring some much needed replacement equipment and this will continue in the coming financial year. This new equipment and the hiring of some additional staff will serve to enhance operations of the solid waste section of the department. New security cameras will be installed at the Cayman Brac and Little Cayman landfills and the existing cameras will be improved at the solid waste dispatch locations.

In addition, the department will increase the application of cover materials for the landfills and maintain a smaller working face at the sites (of course, this is after compaction, so a compactor is definitely one of the priority pieces of equipment), while also continuing to improve and expand the department's recycling programmes.

The cemetery management plan will be updated in the coming financial year to include the structure needs and capacities of the public cemeteries in Grand Cayman, and an associated implementation plan will be developed. This updated plan will form the basis for cemetery management regulations to be developed, which will cover public and private cemeteries.

The procurement process for the integrated solid waste management system will continue and the coming financial year should see a new national strategy, as I said earlier, for waste management being finalised. As I mentioned briefly before, the procurement process set out in the FFR is one that requires the proposed project to undergo thorough assessment prior to any shovels being put in the ground. I have to repeat this because it needs to gain traction. So far it hasn't in many cases. Madam Speaker, there is no question that the process appears to add to the timeline of a project. However, I believe that the process will result in a better project with a smoother implementation and a significantly reduced chance of failure. I repeat: The process is one that is open and transparent and requires upfront consideration and assessment of the financial, environmental, and legal feasibility of the preferred project.

Simply put, it is much less expensive and much smarter to make any mistakes on paper rather than on the ground. Therefore, I believe that this process can only help to save costs as well as result in a more robust project. As I mentioned earlier, there will be opportunities for public input in the process and I

encourage everyone to take the time to have their voices heard on this important national issue.

Finally, in the area of health I plan to bring the proposed Cancer Registry Bill to this honourable House during the upcoming financial year. This legislation will make it mandatory to report cancer to the National Cancer Registry and will assist us in getting the valuable data we need to be able to better target our education, prevention and treatment investments.

Looking at the Youth Services Unit, for the coming year the National Youth Policy continues to guide our work with the Youth Services Unit and the various organisations and entities that serve the young people of these Islands. The Youth Services Unit will also serve many of the youth of the Islands with the following aims in the coming year:

- Culinary youth camp
- Youth summer summit
- 8th sitting of the Cayman Islands Youth Assembly
- Production of a revised Youth Services Directory
- Sending a youth representative to South Korea courtesy of the South Korean Government

The Youth Services Unit will also continue its weekly youth radio show, quarterly news letter, and life skills sessions.

Staying within the area of our young people, the Cadet Corps will continue to offer its programme in Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac with detachments in South Sound, John Gray High School, Clifton Hunter High School, Triple C and Cayman Brac. The Cadets will also continue their successful BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council) programme, as well as continue their work in the community.

In the Department of Sports, we have a number of exciting initiatives planned for the upcoming year. They include establishing an interschool sports system for the six focus sports, including primary and secondary schools. This will provide more positive after school activities for students throughout the week, help tackle childhood obesity through increased opportunities to be active, contribute to a reduction in youth crime by providing positive engagement during the critical hours between 3:00 and 6:00 pm, foster student athlete growth, improve academic performance and build school patriotism (that is obviously an initiative that we will be working closely with the department and Ministry of Education on); continue their provision of community sports and increased partnership opportunities with the private sector to promote sports and our athletes.

Upgrades to the Ed Bush Stadium will be completed in time for the CONCACAF Girls Under 15 Tournament in August. In addition, the Ministry's Strategic Sports Advisory Group (SSAG) will work with the national sports associations to develop their individual

sports development plans in accordance with the provisions of the National Sports Policy.

Finally, Madam Speaker, we turn to the policy area of Culture and our plans for the coming year. Our country's cultural activity, including elements of heritage and the arts, has been experiencing steady development and exposure locally and internationally. The time has now come to harness the work of the national cultural organisations along with the achievements of the Cayman Islands independent artists, musicians, producers, film makers, writers, and other cultural animators, both locally and abroad, to research and develop a national cultural policy. We have great talent in this country in our young people and we must allow its every chance of success and for it to blossom.

In addition, the three main national cultural organisations will continue their robust programming throughout the 2014/15 year. The National Gallery aims to conduct a full audit and review of the national art collections, including condition reports and suggestions for restoration considerations, storage requirements and a funding plan for new acquisitions.

They will also develop a three-year fund raising plan, including a strategy to broaden the demographics and increase annual membership. They will develop and publish their first national collection guide with an introduction to the history of the Cayman Islands art and scholarly catalogs for each major exhibition. They will seek to strengthen research partnerships with academic and institutional partners, and develop related materials for school and college level use. And, finally, they will develop a revenue-generating cultural tourism programme.

The Cayman Islands National Museum aims to complete and adopt a National Museum Strategic Plan 2014/15 through 2016/17. They will seek to acquire and move into a proposed collection storage facility that will be owned rather than rented to ensure good fiscal practice in a permanent home for the Museum collection; provide four to six changing exhibitions on during the year, including special events and openings; and revitalise the archeology programme. Right now the Museum is running our Sporting Stars and it has a look back at yesteryear of our sports and where we have come from.

I encourage Members and the listening public and viewing audience to take a pass through the Museum. It is a wonderful place. Actually, I call it a best-kept secret because I don't think it gets its share of local visitors as it should. But the Museum is well looked after, there is a lot to see and learn there. And our local sports exhibition is really something. It is not all inclusive, and some people are going to criticise and say, *Oh, this and that should have been there*, but it's a start in the right direction.

One of the things I would like to do while I am Sports Minister is to create in these Islands for the first time our own hall of fame for our sporting heroes. I

think we have reached that point where we have started to build enough calibre, enough pedigree, and we have people to thank for where we have reached. I think that that is something we need to start to work on. I would like to see that in my term or my time here.

We would also like to re-launch the land-based Maritime Heritage Trail, complete repairing signage, revitalise and re-launch the programme in cooperation with our MHT partners; that is Maritime Heritage Trail partners. And they are the Department of Environment, the Archive, and the National Trust.

We will also develop one or two shipwreck preserves as museums in the sea for the aquatic public, those interested in sea life. And start preparatory work to bring underwater cultural heritage legislation into agreement with international instruments.

Cayman National Cultural Foundation plans to publish a book of three Caymanian plays this coming year and they also will further develop the Cayman Islands Folk Singers, the National Theatre Company, and the National Dance Company.

Madam Speaker, from all of this it should be quite evident that it is a very busy time in my Ministry and all others, all my colleagues' ministries, I dare say. We are working together across ministries to get things done and going in one direction. We work particularly close with the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning (from my perspective) and this pays huge dividends in getting things achieved.

I am proud of all of my colleagues in this Progressive Administration, and I can assure the public that all and sundry are pulling their weight. The rookies are all councillors and they are doing the county and themselves proud. Every week we sit as a caucus in Cabinet. We have the wellbeing of these Islands and its people at heart.

Madam Speaker, before I end my contribution I would like to turn to my own district of Bodden Town. I will not go into extensive detail as this was well covered by my able councilor, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, and I am sure that my other colleague, our senior statesman, Mr. Eden, the First Elected Member, will also deal with Bodden Town and some of the details in his contribution.

I want to assure the people of Bodden Town that Minister Panton, our two MLA colleagues, and are experienced and hard-working representatives who give dedicated representation for the district. We opened our MLA office in January of this year in a very visible and accessible location right next to Wendy's in Savannah. This is staffed full time. And we hold clinics there weekly, time and engagements permitting.

I am there on Thursday evenings; Minister Panton is there on Friday evenings. Councillor Suckoo is there off and on during the week and MLA Eden, the First Elected Member, everybody in Bodden Town knows how to get him. We are dedicated to improving

Bodden Town and the lives of its residents. We continue to work with our committee and will be forming a much larger district committee or council to better represent the district in the coming months.

We work continuously with our cultural group in the area of the Harry McCoy Park, the Mission House and the Nurse Josie Senior Centre, and ensure that all of the events there are well supported by us and by the public, including Pirate's Week heritage activities and the recently held Mayfest which is another roaring success on the district calendar.

I think this year we were blessed with some showers, but to be quite honest, if those showers had not come we would have had trouble I think finding space for all of the attendees. It was set to be exhibitions of the various countries that exhibited. They were just amazing, fantastic. Words fail in the description of what those people that came out to exhibit did. In particular, I have to single out the . . . I don't think anyone will feel jealous if I mention the fact that the Filipino community in their exhibition was something that set such a high bar/standard, it's something we all could strive to do. Those people know how to work together. I think we Caymanians could take a page out of their book.

I want to thank the dynamic ladies that work with us led by Ms. Mary Lawrence, and Ms. Ellen Eden, who do so much. I won't name all the names, Madam Speaker, because I don't want to leave out anyone, but we all know the group I am referring to. They are our exhibitors. They do all of our cultural exhibits in Bodden Town, whether it's at the civic centre or down at the agriculture show or whatever. They could use some more manpower, but those ladies know how to get things done. They form the core of this group and they solicit help as needed. They have some males, notably, that assist them, Robert Wood, Crosby Solomon, Harwell McCoy and Emilio Watler, who continue to do really, really good work in Bodden Town, not for us as the four of us, but for the district of Bodden Town.

We have seen interest as a result of the good work that they do from other people in the district and they have formed a younger group, spearheaded by Mr. Renard Powell and they have cleaned up the district and they have done some remedial works and fixed up around the monument, for instance, and other things. They are very keen on getting things done. They have been sprucing up and cleaning up the town centre. I think they are a spin-off and have actually gone in and assisted the original cultural group. This all bodes well for the district to see the central Bodden Town area coming together, those remaining residents, and working hard to showcase Bodden Town and what we have to offer.

Residents can come and . . .

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden: The Member for East End was just asking me a very timely question about when are we going to do the police station. What he is referring to is that on the weekend just gone he and his colleague in East End, a community group in East End, came out and, as he said in his debate last week that they would, they spruced up around the East End Police Station. I think the same is planned for the holiday weekend for the North Side Police Station. And the three eastern stations all fall under one commander, one chief. And the Bodden Town one is also badly in need of ground work. I think that once I can have time to speak to the guys in Bodden Town I will certainly let the Member for East End know and he can hopefully join us and at least he may be able to do a little more work than I did for him. But . . . come out and give us some support.

I know he has a group of willing guys and they did some great work over the weekend up there. So we look forward to getting that done. Government can't pay for everything; we simply just do not have the resources. And I appreciate that generous offer by the Member.

Bodden Town has become largely a transient district in the original town centre. We will work towards beautifying and building this area back to allow the small entrepreneurs to take advantage of the flow-through of visitors and residents alike. Water sports and other activities should form an important part of this and we will seek to facilitate this for locals.

We have a number of tourist accommodations. The most popular is the Turtle's Nest. Vacation homes and services in Bodden Town are essential for their guests. Our locals must take advantage of these opportunities. Recent changes to encourage small businesses and incentives for the eastern districts should assist. We are here to offer advice and guidance to all of you interested and various government agencies are also available to assist.

We worked hard at putting together as a Government the small business incentives for the Finance Minister and all of us with our contributions, and certainly, under the Financial Services Minister, his agencies, which include the Department of Investment and Commerce and the Cayman Development Bank and others, are there to assist where possible. So, we want to see our people taking a share of the economic pie and not just picking up, as I have always said, crumbs from the table. We want to see us becoming stakeholders and sitting at the table and taking care of our own destiny.

I come from a family that has a small business that started in 1955. We have continued that business in Bodden Town, which is in the centre of Bodden Town. That was started from humble beginnings. My mother started with a 55 gallon drum and a piece of hose. Now we have a gas station, a liquor store and a fish fry. So it just shows what can be done. She put a lot of elbow grease (as the old people used to say)

into that, a lot of sweat, a lot of hard times. But she made it. She didn't have anybody give her anything.

Madam Speaker, we are seeing good economic activity in Bodden Town with the Cox Truss Plant and Store coming on line soon. The affordable homes will soon, God willing, be occupied. We had some delays there. The Minister responsible, the Minister of Planning, will speak to that when he gets up, and some access issues and stuff. But we are getting all that worked out. The Housing Development Trust is working hard at getting those screened and occupied as soon as possible.

We have plazas. We see new plazas being built in the area and others expressing interest in doing other things in Bodden Town. We expect to see the start of a large five star hotel in the Beach Bay area come to fruition. This all bodes well for the future, Madam Speaker. We want our local people to share in this growth and get much-needed jobs. And we plan to work with all the developers to ensure that this is the case.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to address the needs of Bodden Town and its people. They know they can call us to be there for them in good and bad times. And we strive daily to do this.

To the people of the Cayman Islands, I say to you, yes, things are harder than they were before the recession hit home. But it's a time for new opportunities. There is a time for hope. Do not sit and complain. But instead, look after each day as a chance to explore new options and take advantage of the initiatives that we as a Government are seeking to provide for you. We have to learn to hustle a little more and not just be laid back and expect that it's going to land in our laps like before. We are competing with people who come from countries where life is a little harder and, therefore, they know what they have to do to make it.

We also have to show the Caymanian toughness of our forefathers and grab the opportunities for us and our families. Do not sit idly by and wait for handouts. Do not sit by and just complain. Get out there and make it happen! Knock on doors until they are tired of seeing your face, if you're not working, until one opens. And when you get that chance, make the best of it. Show that you can be depended upon and work hard to prove yourself. We are putting plans in place for further education and for incentives for small businesses. See what you can do to improve yourself and your lot in life.

This surplus budget that we have prepared has much in it to better these Cayman Islands. We plan to do a lot more as we continue to right the good ship Cayman. Thanks to all of the hardworking civil servants, once again, who support us in our endeavors.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues in this honourable House, you yourself included, for their support this past year. And I note that

I look forward to continuing to work with them for the benefit of the Cayman Islands. I once again would like to thank my hardworking heads of departments and Ministry staff for their efforts and support in delivering the services and programmes of my Ministry.

Madam Speaker, we are certainly doing more with less. And it's not always easy because people find it difficult at times to continue to plug along and say, *We're not appreciated. We're not being paid this and we're not being recognised.* So it's our job as a Government and as a Civil Service, to find ways to incentivise and to promote and I think the Deputy Governor showed some of that here today when he had people in here, not necessarily senior, but civil servants in here who were being recognised for their hard work. That means a lot more, sometimes, than money. We have to make them know they are valued and appreciated, because at the end of the day it's what you can do for your country; not what your country can do for you.

May the Good Lord continue to bless these fair Cayman Islands, Madam Speaker, and may we strive to all play our part to make our home the best it can be. Remember that we are all ambassadors for Cayman, and remember what got us here—the hard work and determination of our forefathers, the vision of our early leaders, and the great Caymanian hospitality that we became famous for. Let us not lose any of these attributes as we take these Islands from strength to strength.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity and may God bless us all.

The Speaker: Thank you. You had about one to two minutes remaining, Minister.

Hon. Osbourne V. Boddén: I'll give that to my colleagues.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Sixth Elected Member for George Town.

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

I rise today to join my colleagues in thanking Her Excellency the Governor for her encouraging Speech from the Throne. I would also like to congratulate the Honourable Premier on the delivery of the [Policy Statement](#), entitled "Stability the Road [Map] to Prosperity."

Madam Speaker, last, but not at all least, I would like to offer my congratulations to the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Marco Archer, and his team, and, in fact, to the entire Government on a meaningful and well presented budget.

I clearly remember going through the budget process a year ago. It seemed such a tall order, even impossible with the restrictions, cuts and mandates imposed upon us to meet the FCO's approval. Today, one short year later, we have not only achieved our goals, but we have also exceeded projections while still stimulating economic growth. The year end results combined with the bold and deliberate budget being debated here today gives insight into the depth and strength of this Government.

Harry S. Truman once said (and I quote), "**In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.**"

Madam Speaker, in the past year this Government has displayed courage in tackling some very difficult issues that have been kicked down the political road from administration to administration. This Government has shown the fortitude to address complex, difficult and sometimes controversial matters—the prison, the police remand centre, the fire service, customs, immigration, labour, the environment, and the list goes on and on.

This Government has also addressed many of the capital needs of this country that for whatever reason have never been able to get off the ground, although needed for years—the landfill, the airport, the cruise berthing facility and the revitalisation of our Capital, George Town, are all being addressed in just one short year.

Madam Speaker, I have to take a side bar at this point to address some concerns of the Representative from the district of North Side on the cruise port. I think the Member was concerned that we may not be doing the right thing in developing or going forward with the cruise berthing facilities and that perhaps money would have been better spent in upgrading our current facilities. I think he also alluded to the fact that we have enough cruise tourism right now.

Madam Speaker, during my campaign, in fact during my time in the private sector, I have always heard that the way forward for our cruise business is to get the cruise berthing facility. That if we want to compete with the rest of the Caribbean then we have got to somehow have the by-in of the cruise line and develop our cruise berthing facilities. We developed a Strategic Outline Case and went for public consultation on that. We developed the business case which covers important aspects of, *Does it make financial sense?* and *Is it achievable under the triple P (public/private partnership)?* The business case came back saying that in both of those cases building the berthing facilities was the right thing to do.

Madam Speaker, we say that cruise numbers are up and have gone up over the last few months, and will go up again next year, but we do have to caution that we cannot rest on our laurels and that this means that they will stick around. There are several

external elements that have caused our numbers to go up, including some of the issues being faced in Europe. But, Madam Speaker, there is also the fact that this Government and the Minister for Tourism, the Honourable Moses Kirkconnell, have made major inroads with the cruise lines in providing them with some small needed improvements at the cruise ports. And by also giving them the comfort of knowing that this Government is going through the right process and will get it right in providing the cruise berthing facilities so that the cruise lines can offer our guests and their guests a much better experience when visiting the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, the press, as well as the Member for North Side, also expressed concerns about how we could be doing an environmental impact assessment when we don't have drawings or plans. When we did the Outline Business Case, the firm Mott McDonald was hired to do the engineering aspect and to make recommendations as to what would be the best way forward for us. In that exercise it was decided that two piers was the most viable option. And they provided us in that report with five possible pier layouts, which we did go to public consultation on with meetings at the Mary Miller Hall. Out of those five, two options were chosen based on the technical, environmental, and cost consideration.

Madam Speaker, all proper processes were followed during this time. And the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has been involved from the very beginning and worked along with us step by step. As we heard from the Deputy Governor, and also from the Honourable Minister of Health, the Honourable Osbourne Bodden, that when you are building a home you have to get the foundation right. You have to have plans, first of all, and you have to have the foundation built strong before you can go any further. And that is the same situation here with the cruise ports. This has been a very in-depth and technical process and we have proven that the piers are financially viable and that they are absolutely needed for us to continue to have a sustainable cruise industry for the coming decades.

Madam Speaker, I won't drag that out any longer. But I thought that I did have to address that in light of the comments that were published in the press over the weekend.

Madam Speaker, I will not go down the path of blame or provide any autopsies on the previous attempts at these projects. But what I can tell you is that this Government has been methodical in its approach to all of its capital projects. This Government has followed the framework of fiscal responsibility. And, like the budget, we have included the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in each step of the process. So when we have arrived at a long-term solution, we are confident that the support of the FCO will be there and that we are not wasting the country's time or money. Madam Speaker, whether we like it or

not, the harsh reality is that we have to follow the process outlined under the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility (FFR).

Several years ago I visited Jamaica. I arrived a few short months after one of their general elections. As I drove through the Montego Bay area I asked the cab driver how the economy was doing. He responded that things were not good. I then commented on the cleanliness of the streets and some of the newly planted flowers in the median and in the round-about, to which the cab driver quickly responded, "We can't pay bills with flowers."

Madam Speaker, I know that many of our people share the very same sentiment of that cab driver. But I feel very confident that this Government, through policy, process, and transparency, will succeed in breaking ground on all its capital projects. And, Madam Speaker, we will also see construction begin on many of the private sector initiatives that have been proposed to this Government since taking office.

Madam Speaker, this speaks directly to the increase in investor confidence placed in this Government because of its solid stance and process and managed development, combined with the display of financial prudence and overall high level of competence. It is my humble opinion that over the next 12 to 16 months we will enter into a well planned and sustainable development boom that will have a trickle-down effect on the people of this country in the hundreds of millions [of dollars].

Madam Speaker, these projects are all part of this Government's plan towards returning prosperity and sustainability to our country and its people. The airport redevelopment will provide much needed jobs, but it will also facilitate the projected increase in tourism arrivals, as outlined by the Honourable Minister of Tourism, Honourable Moses Kirkconnell, in his debate contribution last week.

Madam Speaker, the development of the cruise berthing facility in our Capital will provide jobs for hundreds. But, combined with the small business package presented in this budget, it will also ensure that the downtown merchants will experience sustainable growth in the future.

The road development budgeted as part of the George Town revitalisation will also create jobs and stimulate economic activity for the quarries, truckers, and the supporting industries. However, these roads will also mitigate any congestion or safety issues once our Capital has been rejuvenated and the numbers of tourists and locals visiting the Capital increases.

Considering the long-term plans and stimulants outlined in this budget, this Government has also fought to roll back some of the fee increases previously implemented. I know that some have said that it's not enough, or that it's not meaningful. But, Madam Speaker, it would also be irresponsible of this Gov-

ernment to throw aside commonsense and roll back all of the fees at once. Implementing the increases all at once had a very unfavourable effect on this country and its people. If we were to roll them all back at once, then, I believe the effect would be even more disastrous.

Madam Speaker, the journey of a million miles begins with the first step. And today this budget is the first step in the right direction towards sustainable recovery for this country's economy. The reduction in import duties for businesses and on the fuel for CUC will lead to the injection of \$8 million straight into the economy. And the trickle-down effect will be even greater. If the average person receives a reduction in their CUC bill and on their purchases at the grocery store, then I believe it will have a net positive effect on the individual's life. Madam Speaker, \$50 to \$60 can pay for a school child's lunch for a couple of weeks.

It is my hope that next year at this time the Government will have once again demonstrated its prudent financial management and visionary leadership and will be able to offer even more reductions in fees to alleviate the burden on the high costs that are now strangling our economy. As I just said, the journey of a million miles begins with the first step.

Madam Speaker, over the past year I have been working along with several entities in the tourism and transport sector. One of the more challenging areas has been that of public transport. I am happy to report that much improvements and advancements have been made in a short time since taking office. The number of Caymanians being employed in the transportation sector has increased by approximately 100 persons since June 1, 2013. This is a significant number of Caymanians that have found meaningful employment within the tourism and transport sector.

This is a positive tourism indicator where visitor numbers have seen tremendous growth in the last year, both at the seaport and the airport. As you may have heard from the Honourable Moses Kirkconnell, Minister of Tourism, last week, we expect the number of arrivals at both the cruise and the airport to increase over the next year as well. So, we hope to see more Caymanians given the opportunity to participate.

We have also been focusing in the Ministry on breaking down silos and combining efforts for the good of the country. The Department of Lands and Survey, the Ministry of Tourism, the Public Transport Unit and the National Roads Authority, and the Planning Department, are all working to enhance the cruise visitors' experience in George Town by installing kiosks with maps of George Town providing visitors with information such as transport, shopping, dining, historic buildings, locations of information booths, restrooms and a lot more.

We hope to work with the Cayman Islands Tourism Association that has offered to provide us with ambassadors to assist in these kiosks in and around the Capital and also at the airport.

Madam Speaker, it was also reported that the long awaited restrooms over at the bus depot are just about completed and should be available for the public in the coming weeks. We are also in the process of updating the uniforms of independent tour operators with images approved by the Department of Tourism highlighting Cayman's unique land-based attractions, such as the Turtle Farm and Pedro St. James.

The PTU (Public Transport Unit) continues to work with the Rotary Club Central and, as a result, the total number of bus shelters increased by 20 since last year. This is expected to further increase in the coming year, Madam Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the Rotary Club of Grand Cayman Central for their assistance in what can be described as a perfect example of public sector and private sector working together.

Madam Speaker, another area I have had the privilege of working in is the Film Commission and the concept of film in the Cayman Islands. During my campaign it became glaringly obvious that many of our young people are not interested in the traditional occupations that we once encouraged our young people to go into, that being banking or tourism and the financial services. But rather, they want to enter into the arts, film, the music industry, writing, film production. These are all areas that our young people today are looking towards for a career in expressing their talents.

We have young, brilliant Caymanians, Madam Speaker, who have to live overseas to follow their passions. We just recently heard the news that Frank E. Flowers has just landed a contract to write for a major motion picture company. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Flowers and his family who, I am sure, supported him on this achievement, and for staying focused and following his dreams. Madam Speaker, it is my hope that in the coming years we can invest in the infrastructure and equipment that would be accessible by young ambitious film makers and music producers, to give them the start they need, to one day enjoy the same success as Mr. Flowers.

Madam Speaker, I also learned that the Cayman Islands are a prime location for film producers to come and make major motion pictures, short films and other productions. Since taking office, I have made it a personal goal to revive the Film Commission and to embrace opportunities for film crews to visit and shoot on our shores. When a film crew visits, we not only fill hotel rooms, rent vehicles and fill restaurants, but we also gain free exposure to the world of our beautiful islands. Most importantly to me, it also allows our talented young people to take advantage of opportunities to work with these visiting crews and gain exposure to these industry professionals.

Madam Speaker, as at 1 July 2014, the Cayman Islands Film Commission will be transitioned to the Department of Tourism where it will be given a

reinforced structure and objectives. With the refreshing of the Film Commission's website, we will have an updated list of those in the industry so that visiting film makers, journalists and producers can contact them for local support.

In this fiscal year the Film Commission handled a range of projects, including travel shows, corporate productions, still photography, reality TV shows, TV series specials, short films, reports and documentaries. Occupations that were granted temporary work permits by Immigration for the visiting media productions from 2013/14 included directors, producers, journalists, photographers, coordinators, stylists, actors, camera operators, assistants, sound engineers, lighting technicians, stuntmen, story assistants, cheer leaders and entertainers. In the calendar year 2013 the Film Commission handled 18 projects, such as *Laugh Cayman*; *Event Flow Inc*; BBC News, ABC Boston News, *the Chronicle*, Cayman Production Epic Film, *Ocean Mysteries*, Sharp Entertainment, *Fish Tank*, the New York Jets and the BBC News Science Team, to name a few.

Madam Speaker, approximately 115 temporary work permits were issued by Immigration for visiting media productions in 2013. According to applications submitted for media production permits, expenditure while filming in Cayman was expected to be approximately \$110,000. As at 30 April 2014, the Film Commission handled seven projects, such as, Cayman Cook-off; Caymana Productions, Queen's Baton; and an untitled Atlanta project, just to name a few.

As of 30 April 2014, approximately 47 temporary work permits were issued by Immigration for visiting media productions. According to applications submitted for media production permits in 2014, expenditure while filming in Cayman was expected to be approximately US\$142,000.

Many of the above-named used local talent and supporting crews. From the figures we can see that there clearly is a real opportunity for us to create an industry for our young aspiring film makers to embrace and succeed in. We just have to create the opportunity for them and I am sure that they will grasp it.

On Friday, June 13, the Cayman Islands International Film Festival will be launched with the exclusive screening of a Virgin Productions major motion picture, the "Two Faces of January", starring Viggo Mortensen, Kristen Dunst, and Oscar Isaac. This is a tremendous step in promoting the Cayman Islands as an emerging force in the world of film and I would like to publicly thank the Department of Commerce and Investment, the Film Commission and the Department of Tourism for supporting me on this initiative. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Tony Mark and his team CayFilm for their hard work and determination in putting the festival together. Again, Madam Speaker, this is another perfect example of the Government thinking outside the box and partnering with the private sector.

Madam Speaker, we continue to work towards greater participation of Caymanians in the hospitality industry. The Honourable Minister of Tourism mentioned in his debate the wonderful job the hotels are doing in the eastern districts with levels of 60 per cent to 70 per cent Caymanian employees. Other hotels, such as the Comfort Suites, on the West Bay Road, employ a majority of the Caymanians in their hotels as well. However, we still struggle in the resort-style properties, Madam Speaker, which have heavy food and beverage components to their business models.

We are making progress in this area with initiatives being spearheaded by the Cayman Islands Tourism Association and the Department of Employment Relations. Last year this initiative had its growing pains, but I am optimistic that it would be more successful this year and that it will receive the support of our community leaders.

I also have to speak to the fact that we, as Caymanians, and we as Representatives, are continuously approached about assisting persons in finding employment. Madam Speaker, we are all very happy to assist, and we all go to great lengths to try and assist a Caymanian that we believe is able and willing to work. We are constantly saddened by report such as one I received on the weekend where I had set up an interview for a young Caymanian for a job, and I followed up on the weekend with the manager, and he said, "Well, she didn't show up for the interview." He said that he would like to give me some stats. He said that he had four interviews scheduled on Friday, two Caymanians, one married to a Caymanian and two expatriates—neither of the Caymanians showed up for the interview; the one married to a Caymanian showed up, and the two expatriates showed up.

We have got to all work collectively to ensure that we encourage our young Caymanians, our people and our constituents, our family members, in that we have got to take responsibility for our actions as well. And that we have got to seize opportunities when they are awarded to us. We can't just not show up and say, *I'll go next week*, or ask for another day to go. We are sending the wrong message when we do things like this and we are also making it much, much harder for those who will show up for the interviews and those who really want to work.

We have got to continue to positively influence our young people to seek a career in the hospitality industry, and to insist to employers that Caymanians are a viable and, in fact, the best employees once properly trained. We have had some spectacular breakthroughs recently with several rising Caymanian stars in the industry. One of these is Ms. Lexie [Alexandria] Bush, of whom I have had the privilege to work with on a couple of events. Ms. Bush was featured in an advertorial last week about her accomplishments. But what I want to read for you, Madam Speaker, is an interview with Ms. Bush on Cayman 27 (and I have copies of both the advertorial and the interview for

you, Madam Speaker). With your permission, I will read the interview with Ms. Lexie Bush on Cayman 27.

The Speaker: You may proceed.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: It's entitled "A Big Story: Local woman finds keys to success in hospitality industry."

"Alexandria Bush started her job at the Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman seven years ago, at the very bottom, and worked her way up to a management position.

"Now she's preparing for a new chapter in her career, miles away from her island home. She was picked for a management position at a Ritz-Carlton property in Toronto, Canada.

"I wanted to gain as much experience as I could, but I never thought doors would open like this," said Ms. Bush, who was just a teenager when she first started work at the Ritz-Carlton. "I started when I was still in high school so I started coming into the hotel after school, so I'd come in around 3:30 or 4 o'clock and work."

"Her first duties were far from glamorous. She was scrubbing dishes in the dish pit.

"You've gotta start somewhere," she quipped, "I worked in banquets for a little bit and I used to be a catering server as well."

She told Cayman 27 her positive attitude got the attention of her managers, transforming an after-school gig into a bona-fide career.

"Most people can do the job and get the job done, but employers want someone unique," said Ms. Bush, "They want something different and they want you to show your drive and your willingness to put in that extra hour and a half late at night."

"Before long Ms. Bush developed an interest in event planning, but she pointed out there are suitable careers for almost everyone in hospitality.

"You can work as a concierge, you can work in marketing, you can work in business, you can be an executive assistant, you could be a personal assistant, there's so many things to do here," she said.

"And once again, opportunity came knocking for Ms. Bush. She accepted a management position at a Ritz-Carlton property in Toronto.

"It's really exciting, it's a whirl of emotions, I'm so excited to learn something new and I'm so excited to got *[sic]* to a city and work with some amazing leaders and amazing ladies and gentlemen up there," said Ms. Bush.

"She told Cayman 27 her plan is to soak up the experience, and when she's ready, bring that knowledge back to her native Cayman.

"I want to gain the experience *[so]* that I can lead and guide people in the right direction

whether its *[sic]* working for the hotel, working for the government, working for tourism,' said Ms. Bush.

"She offered advice to those considering careers in hospitality.

"When you're younger you have to find one thing you like and go for it. You just have to show the drive and you have to show the willingness to work, and you have to be unique and you have to be yourself," she said.

"Advice she's planning to take herself in her new endeavour.

"Ms. Bush's last day at the Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman is Monday (2 June). She told Cayman 27 she's going to miss her 800 coworkers, and she's looking forward to wearing scarves and boots in the cooler weather."

Madam Speaker, I worked with Ms. Bush at the Ritz Carlton on a few projects that were held there. I can say that Ms. Bush is exemplary, an exemplary employee and an example for how we would like to see our young Caymanians in the hospitality. I would also like to point out that Ms. Bush was already at the management level when she accepted this job in Toronto. So it's not that she has had to move to Toronto to gain the position of manager.

Madam Speaker, Ms. Bush—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: This is indeed great news and an amazing opportunity for Ms. Bush, and I am certain that she will shine in Toronto as she does here. I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Ms. Bush and her parents. I wish her all the best as she embarks on what is sure to be an amazing journey.

Madam Speaker, last week the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Moses Kirkconnell, spoke about the hospitality school which will be launched in the fall. We hope that it will initially provide the opportunity for 25 Caymanians to experience the same success that Lexie Bush has.

Madam Speaker, during my time spent within the Ministry of Tourism and Transport as Councillor I have had the opportunity to participate in just about every aspect of the Ministry, and I have to thank the Honourable Moses Kirkconnell, Minister and Deputy Premier, for that. One of the opportunities I had was to attend the Global Tourism meeting held in Cayman Brac a couple of months ago with attendees from our US, London and Canadian offices, along with local and international industry partners. It was great to experience once again, as we did last year, the silos being broken down and the Ministry, the Department of Tourism, Cayman Airways, and other agencies working together for what we can now see are the fantastic results being achieved, including record numbers of arrivals since the year 2010.

Madam Speaker, the dive industry has not been forgotten. We continue to work with the dive industry to promote the Cayman Islands as the best in its class for diving. We continue to work with our partners, such as Stay-Focused, and [Cody Unser] First Step [Foundation] which uses diving in the Cayman Islands to rehabilitate and create awareness for the physically challenged and wounded veterans respectively.

The Department of Tourism will also be working with 10 operators on a Summer Only in Cayman promotion with special dive offers being promoted throughout the summer. It is also well known that the fall is the best time for diving in the Cayman Islands and so we will have many of our programmes, including Scuba Week, launched for that dive season. We will also strategically offer at the same time a deep sea fishing programme in partnership with the Cayman Islands Angling Club as an additional option during the fall for those who do not dive. This programme will also attract an international film crew which will film during that period and will be broadcast on international television such as Fox and other adventure-type channels.

Madam Speaker, as we approach the dive season in the summer and the dive season in the fall, I was reminded that one of the local recruitment firms, CML, has been putting on free boat captain and diving certifications for Caymanians. Regretfully, Madam Speaker, to date, no one has taken up the opportunity. So, I am hoping that with the dive season approaching we will see some young people take the opportunity to receive a free boat captain and diving certification from the agency.

Madam Speaker, during the fall, we will also have the Legends and Lions promotion, which is a trade and consumer based programme. Of course, our big event, and our feature event, Pirates Week, will also take place during the fall. Madam Speaker, overall, we are expecting that just as we did over the winter months we will see record numbers again over the summer and fall with all of the activities planned for our visitors to participate in.

Madam Speaker, on a Ministry level, I am also happy to say that I have been working along with the Fifth Elected Member for George Town, the Cabinet office and Home Affairs Ministry towards developing a policy to make Cayman a friendlier place to do business. From the hospitality view, we have got to do a better job in facilitating large conferences and other events, including the film industry and sports tourism.

The conference business is fiercely competitive and many of our competing destinations are, on a daily basis, rolling out the red carpet for individuals to visit and hold their conferences in their destinations. We have got to provide a coordinated approach towards ensuring that when we do attract conference business, when we do attract large sports tourism and film production crews and large film productions that

we provide the best level of service that we possibly can in allowing them to come here and do business in the Cayman Islands and rent hotel rooms and vehicles, employ Caymanians and use local goods and services.

Madam Speaker, the Fifth Elected Member for George Town mentioned last week about the competitive nature of financial services. Cities such as Halifax, in Canada, and other Overseas Territories try on a daily basis to recruit firms to move from the Cayman Islands to those locations. The world continues to evolve and change, and, the Cayman Islands will also have to change and evolve if we are going to stay competitive in these areas.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to touch on some of the activities around the George Town community. I can say that over the past year I have seen an improvement in the employment situation. We still have a ways to go, but on a daily basis we are seeing opportunities arrive and our constituents being employed. I would also like to publicly thank the Department of Children and Family Services for their continued programmes around the George Town area, especially with the seniors. A lot of our seniors don't get out in the evenings unless it is an event planned by the Children and Family Services and the community workers going and collecting these seniors to take to the events. So I hope that that continues. I would just like to thank the George Town community workers, especially Ms. Doraleen [PHONETIC] for her excellent work in that area.

Madam Speaker, one other concern I have is the availability of our town hall. We are at the moment a community without a town hall because it is being leased to the courts. I am hoping that we can find a way to perhaps assist the courts in finding another location. But it is becoming very difficult for our community groups to find a location where they can hold their community events.

Also on the community policing and crime, I would like to thank Chief Inspector Angelique Howell for her continued efforts. I would also like to recognise her team for the work that they continue to do around George Town. I think just recently (a week or two ago) they held a bit of a beautification work day on the waterfront and cleaned up a lot of the area across from Dairy Queen and along the waterfront. So I would like to thank the Inspector and her team for that.

Again, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank everyone in the Ministry of Tourism, Transport and District Administration for their support, for their patience with me, sometimes, and guidance when needed. I would also like to thank the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism, Transport and District Administration, the Honourable Moses Kirkconnell, for allowing me to walk side-by-side with him in the Ministry and for giving me the opportunity to really experience what it is like to play a very productive role in the Ministry and I am ever grateful to him. It

has been a fantastic year. We are making progress. Things are happening. I would again like to thank him for involving me in that.

Madam Speaker, we had an opportunity to thank the team here at the Legislative Assembly and wish them greetings at Christmas. But one year later, I would also like to thank the team here for their continued work and for their patience and understanding, sometimes, and guidance as well.

Madam Speaker, in closing I would like to quote Benjamin Franklin: **“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning.”**

With those words, Madam Speaker, I thank you and God bless the people of the Cayman Islands, and God bless my colleagues here in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

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, for allowing me the opportunity to make my contribution today to the Throne Speech, Policy Statement and Budget Address.

I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, that the Deputy Speaker, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, did a sterling job last week in your absence. But I would also like to add my words that you were missed in this Assembly last week. I say to you, welcome back.

I would also like to give thanks to the Deputy Governor. This morning he introduced us to two very fine young ladies who had recently been promoted to chief financial officers within his Ministry. It always gives me so much pleasure to see young Caymanians get their qualification and work hard and achieve such great progress in their career. These are young Caymanian accountants. By all accounts these two ladies are fairly young in their career, but have already demonstrated their capabilities to the point that they are rising to the highest levels of our Civil Service. And they deserve to be commended for their efforts. And the Civil Service too, the leadership there needs to be commended for the recognition of these two young ladies, recognising their potential and giving them the opportunity to succeed in their chosen career.

I feel especially warm inside because of Mrs. Neyka . . . I know her as Neyka Welcome. She actually did her initial training at KPMG while I was there. I am particularly pleased to see how she has ascended in the Civil Service (Webster is her last name). I wish her and the other young lady all the very best as they continue to build on their careers and make their mark in the Civil Service.

Madam Speaker, like everyone else I need to give thanks to Her Excellency the Governor for the positive message in the Throne Speech, and to the Premier for his Policy Statement, and, to the Minister of Finance for Budget Address. I told the Minister the day after he delivered that address that it was spot on; it just set the right tone, it set the right direction for Government, and reinforced the commitment of this Government to act fiscally responsible in dealing with the finances of this country.

Madam Speaker, it was but nine short months ago when we were debating the very first budget, the 2013/14 budget last October. The Hansard here will reflect that I said at that time that there was a very good chance . . . I thought there was a reasonable chance that Government would experience an upward surprise in their fiscal performance in this fiscal year. Based on the budget statement last week it seemed fairly confident that that is materialising. Revenues are \$7.4 million higher than forecast, expenses about \$1.7 million less than forecast, and an underperformance of about \$1.2 million in the statutory authorities and government companies shows that overall net surplus for the year will be about \$7.9 million better than originally planned. I do hope and pray that this will continue to hold up through to the end of the fiscal year at the end of June 30th.

Madam Speaker, by any account these are modest. But they are most definitely in the right direction. Had this been the other way, we would be scrambling to find every way we could to close revenue leakage and reduce expenses. But I believe, and certainly from all of indicators that I have seen from talking to senior leadership within the private sector, things are starting to look up. I feel confident that where we are in the economic cycle, we put in a base in 2013/14 and from here on out we will start to see upward growth and expansion in our economy.

I do not believe for any stretch at this moment that we will go back to the unbridled growth of the late and mid 2000s where, to some extent, I believe we had a bit of a false economy following the effects of Hurricane Ivan. But certainly, credit has to be given to Government and to the Minister, Ministry and staff that things are moving in the right direction and they point to continued growth.

Madam Speaker, the 2014/15 budget I think is no different. It is in keeping with the principles of fiscal prudence that the Government set out and established in their manifesto and the Medium Term Financial Plan which was tabled in this House last fall. Government stated that it is their goal to bring the country into compliance with the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility by the timeframe that is now incorporated into law. Now, what that means for us in terms of compliance is that we see this year that there has to be further cuts in expenditure and there will even be further modest cuts in 2015/16 to achieve compliance by the committed time.

So Government itself will be faced with further challenges as we move forward in achieving those targets. But I believe that the worst is now behind us, and that we are well on the way towards achieving that compliance. Madam Speaker, I think if Members and everyone else in here were to look at the Medium Term Plan that was developed, we would see that by the end of fiscal year 2016 we are projected to just barely achieve compliance. But what these excess surpluses mean to me is that they will provide some cushion and give us the little bit more confidence as time passes that we are well on the track and that we will achieve compliance by 2016. So while there are challenges, there is still hope.

But I think what the public needs to understand, and all of us here, is that even by achieving compliance, it doesn't mean that everything falls away. Those principles still remain. On an ongoing basis we have to achieve compliance every year. From what I understand, all that means for us is that by achieving compliance it means that we no longer have to go to the British Government to ask for approval. That's all it means. So we have to maintain compliance in order to do that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Absolutely. We must go back if we don't have compliance.

Now, Madam Speaker, turning next to the budget: One can only describe this budget as remarkable. We still continue to show increasing revenues, a reduction in expenses and, overall, a net surplus of \$128 million. I challenge you to find any country in this hemisphere of a similar size that can demonstrate such public performance in terms of its finances. Look at any other country in our region. They are all suffering with major shortfalls in revenue, runaway expenses, and deficits in their finances.

Some of our closest neighbours and other Overseas Territories are struggling with \$350 million deficits. And we are sitting here projecting a \$130 million surplus. It shows you the resilience of the country and its economy. And I must state here publicly, it shows you the resilience and the wise decisions that our forefathers took, and that subsequent Governments throughout the ages did not succumb to the temptation and the push to institute direct taxation. Our consumption based model works! It is the most effective, the most efficient taxing mechanism that there is. You consume, you pay. No question. And long may we continue to do that and not be pushed to do something that is not in our best interests.

Madam Speaker, the excess surplus in cash that will be generated by these projects will be used to build reserves, amongst other things, and to mitigate future economic shocks. I heard one Member of the Opposition bemoaning that fact saying that we have no plan to shelter Cayman against future economic

shocks. That's what building reserves is all about. That's what having 90 days of revenue set aside as a reserve is all about, so that when you economy tanks you have something that you can spend to help stimulate. That's the reason for it. It's all about prudence in what we do.

Madam Speaker, it is no different for the individual. That is something that each of us should consider in our own lives and personal finances. You have to have some fund set aside for the rainy day. And Government should be no different in what it does. I will say here again today (and I don't do so with any sense of pump or pride) that with what we have produced and what has been produced in this budget, there is a good possibility of an upside surprise next year. Barring any significant economic worldwide effects we will probably exceed performance targets in the coming year again. Good chance for it.

Let me turn next to economic stimulus measures. Again, this is very welcome. They are very specific and they are much targeted. They are done in such a way that there is something for every person in this country. Everyone is going to see the effect of this stimulus package. Duty reductions for CUC and licensed traders are going to affect every person and just about everything in this country in some way shape or form.

They are also very targeted primarily to assist small businesses, those who have been hardest hit during the recession and many who are still struggling to recover. Madam Speaker, it is no secret. The small business segment of this economy has been the worst hit in this recession we have experienced. And we have seen many—dozens of them—go out of business. You can drive to every shopping centre or commercial centre in this country; businesses that used to exist in the location are no longer there. They have gone out of business. They succumbed and have gone out of business.

So, I welcome this economic package with what it is designed to achieve. The amounts are modest. But they are planned in such a way that they are designed to achieve the biggest and best bang for the buck in terms of their stimulus effect. Simply speaking, Madam Speaker, money is being placed in the hands of those who are most likely to spend it, and that is what is needed for the economy to expand and multiply. I stand here now and say that I wish as a Government we could do more. But as is always the case, we must operate within the constraints of competing demands and the drive to comply with the Public Management and Finance Law.

The Premier indicated in his speech that this is the first of others to come. And I am looking forward to that time when we can continue to give relief to the business sector in this country to allow for continued real stimulus for economic growth and to also help the citizens of the country.

Madam Speaker, the Opposition also bemoaned the fact that the rollback of duty on diesel to CUC was being delayed until 1 January, and made a big hay-day over that. But, Madam Speaker, one only has to think for a few seconds to really understand why. There are some really good reasons for it.

I think first and most important, the country needs to understand that come 1 July and through the next six months of the year, Government's finances in terms of revenue collected are at their lowest. In addition to that, the Minister of Finance announced that this year we would not have the luxury of having a bank overdraft to rely on if revenues do not keep pace as planned, or if there are any other negative effects that might cause a drain on Government's cash resources. Therefore it behoves Government to act prudently and delay the implementation of this particular one to such time as when the revenues are there to support it.

I think what I have seen Government do in terms of this package as a whole is structure it in such a way that it allows it to move forward with confidence that come October, November, December, when revenue and cash collections are at their lowest, there is not much of a chance, or they have mitigated the risk of their being any significant challenges to Government in those months when cash collections are at their lowest.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Absolutely.

Madam Speaker, a number of colleagues have spoken at length, and the Deputy Governor also spoke this morning about the rationalisation plan that is currently underway. I can't stress how much I welcome the initiative. It is something that I campaigned quite strongly on, made it a centerpiece of my own campaign last year. I believe that it is very timely and one that we must see through to its natural conclusion.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned the efforts back in 2009/10, and specifically mentioned me because I was part of the committee that he had put together to try and lead and make recommendations to Government in terms of privatisation or other initiatives like that to help rationalise the Civil Service. But, as he said, it went nowhere. The committee got very frustrated fairly quickly and soon disbanded in early 2010. But, I think what is really different here now, Madam Speaker, is that this rationalisation exercise is being led and driven by the Deputy Governor's office. It is not, therefore, politically driven. That, in my mind, suggests that this gives it the best chance for a successful outcome.

I believe that the terms of engagement in my understanding is that they are broad and will also include guidance on how to implement the recommendations that will be forthcoming. I have no doubt that

once we move to the implementation exercise it will require substantial resources both internally and externally to achieve any meaningful success. And I have no doubt that the recommendations will run the whole gamut of possibilities from privatisation to an outright sale, to public/private partnerships, management buyouts or mutualisation (a term being talked about in recent weeks), or some form of centralisation or shared services arrangements. All of these I think are in the mix in terms of what the final recommendations will be.

But what I wanted to do here, Madam Speaker, is just send a few words to the good hardworking people of our Civil Service and to say that they need to embrace change and not fear it, because with change comes opportunity. And there will be opportunities for them to participate and to benefit from the overall exercise. So, as leaders I think it is incumbent upon us to spread that message and encouragement for them to embrace rather than to work against it.

I wish the Deputy Governor all the very best as he moves forward with it. There will be challenges. But I think if we can work together in making those changes that are needed we will have a far better chance of a successful outcome and, therefore, the country as whole will benefit from this much-needed exercise.

Madam Speaker, for the next few minutes I would like to talk about two projects that I am working quite closely with and update this Assembly and the wider public of the Cayman Islands on the activities of those projects and the committees.

First, I would like to talk briefly about the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act, most commonly known as FATCA. This is something that most Caymanians have probably heard about but don't necessarily care about because they aren't necessarily directly affected by it. This is a project that really affects US citizens who reside here in Cayman or who have accounts here in our banking system in the Cayman Islands, and the requirements now have to report that. This FATCA is wrapped up in a wider project that is being led by the G20 concerning the automatic exchange of information.

Madam Speaker, with respect to FATCA, there are two components to it. There is the US FATCA and there is UK FATCA. I chair the implementation committee, and it is working diligently to ensure that Cayman meets and fulfills its international obligations in a timely, effective and efficient manner. I have to say that so far the committee has been working extremely hard, meeting weekly, sometimes two and three times a week, to try and ensure that Cayman develops and implements this agreement in a timely manner. In my mind it is a great textbook case of the public and private sector working together to achieve an outcome that will benefit the entire country.

In our progress to date, enabling legislation has been drafted and accepted by the committee. It

has been issued within the 21-day timeframe and is to be dealt with at the current sitting of this Legislative Assembly. Guidance notes have also been issued by the committee to industry for consultation and feedback, and regulations are being drafted for approval by Cabinet. All of this must be completed and in place by 1 July 2014 to ensure compliance with our international obligations.

We have also formed an IT subcommittee to deal with the software reporting tool that is required in order to implement FATCA in 2015. This tool must be in place to enable compliance with the first reporting deadline of September 30, 2015. The committee will develop the terms of reference and we will go to market with an RFP to seek to purchase and implementation of the software to enable us to comply with FATCA by that deadline.

I would like to formally acknowledge the committee and the great work they have done to date, for their commitment, for the professionalism which they have displayed in approaching this matter, for the cohesiveness that existed throughout the work and deliberations of the committee. The committee comprises, Michelle Bahadur from the Ministry of Financial Services; Duncan Nicol from the Tax Information Authority; and Nanjel Kwong from the Ministry of Financial Services. Private sector committee members are Martin Livingston, David Conen, Mike Mannisto, Cecil Chan-A-Sue, Mike McWatt, Helen Dombowsky, Kate Taft, Anthony Fantasia, and Colin Hanson.

It's a pretty large committee, Madam Speaker. A number of names I mentioned there were basically stand-ins for the main committee members, but nevertheless participated and have continued to participate in the work of the committee. I feel very confident that the work will be completed on time and within budget and Cayman will be fully compliant with its international obligations and commitments with regard to the automatic exchange of information.

Secondly, I would like to touch briefly on the committee to review the Public Management and Finance Law (PMFL). Again, Members will be aware that I chair that review committee, and it has been quite active since January 2014. It is tasked with reviewing a number of issues relating to the Public Management and Finance Law with regard to accounting and reporting processes and budgeting. Again, a great example, I believe, of public/private collaboration.

The committee has largely completed its deliberations and is in the process of writing its final report. We have been faced with some challenges with resources in completing the work over the past three weeks. I have had to draft all of our members and get them involved in the writing of the final report, which we are working very diligently to get to the Minister and then ultimately to Cabinet for their consideration.

Madam Speaker, sometimes I think there is a need to manage expectations of those awaiting this

report. One of the things I found out when we got started with our review and deliberations was that since the Public Management and Finance Law was implemented in 2001 there have been at least three reviews of the law—one internal, and two external. And I have to say very excellent reports at that. So, what I would say here at this point is that the report will have no real surprises because these other reviews, most recently being the Keith Luck Report . . . many of the recommendations that are coming out of it will have been seen by not necessarily this Government but by previous Governments and will be known to the Civil Service and the Ministry of Finance.

Previous reports, from what I am able to determine from my viewpoint, have never been fully implemented, or some of them have been done on a piecemeal basis. Madam Speaker, I have to say that this will be no different if we do not commit the resources to get these things implemented. Let me preface that: Once accepted, and if the report is accepted by Government, we will need to commit significant resources in order to get these things implemented.

I too would like to thank the committee members who have comprised the public and private sector. In the public sector we had the Hon. Ken Jefferson, Financial Secretary; Auditor General Alastair Swarbrick; Chief Officer, Dorine Whittaker; Chief Financial Officer, Vinton Chinsee; the Accountant General, Ms. Debra Welcome; and Ms. Pat Estwick from Cayman National, the CFO; and Mr. Taron Jackman, a partner from Deloitte.

Madam Speaker, I would like to formally record my commendation to Government and particularly to the Premier for the gesture in awarding the Civil Service a bonus of 2.5 per cent of salary that was announced last week, Monday, as we first met in the Throne Speech and the Premier's Policy Statement. My opinion is, and by all accounts, that the 2.5 per cent bonus has been welcomed by the hardworking men and women of our Civil Service. I don't know if Members have seen it, but if you walk through the halls of the Government [Administration] Building and see the smiles on some people's faces . . . I have actually been stopped in those halls, Madam Speaker. Many have said to me, "Thank you for the increase."

I remember the first time someone stopped me and thanked me. I said, "Oh, did I do that?" And then I said, "Yes, we're going to do that." So I am grateful. And what I see is that this has had a very positive effect on the morale of the Civil Service. I am honoured to have played a part in that as well.

I have no doubt in my mind that they all appreciate it. Like the Premier said, we would have liked to have done more. But, as always, the constraints we operate under meant this was the maximum we could do at this time.

Madam Speaker, I would like to speak next to let Members know what has been happening (and I

think I can speak on behalf of Councillor Connolly, as well) with regard to our constituency office in George Town.

We opened the office in September 2013. The office is manned by a young lady named Christine Rae-Smith. In the nine months since the office has . . . our focus when we initially opened was to focus on trying to help constituents find jobs. It certainly is a very pressing need in our community. Since that time we have received over 240 resumes, and we have assisted many in helping them to write those resumes. We have also assisted with more than 50 job interviews and job placements during that time period as well, and we continue to try and assist people in matching their skills to jobs we see advertised, although I have to say that the work now of the NWDA continues and should drive much of that activity.

Our office also provides a computer with Internet and printing capabilities for constituents. So if they have need to have access to the Internet or they need to write a letter or resume, we make the facilities available to them. They just need to come into the office and they can have access. We also have a small boardroom that we make available to anyone who has need of that facility. I extend the same to Members of this House in the George Town . . . well, to everyone. If you are in George Town and you need a place to hold a meeting—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: You can come and we will make it available to you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: There better not be.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would also mention that we are working with Government and Caledonian to set up a homework club in the 2014/15 school year. We are still in the midst of trying to define how that programme is going to be working and the students, or children, that we will be targeting to assist in this. Also, the focus as well, potentially, is on either a literacy or a numeracy programme. I think what has emerged, since we were focusing initially on a literacy programme is that there are several literacy programmes that exist. I understand that there is quite a need for a numeracy programme to assist our young children. So we are working to try and shape what the final form of that programme will look like. But we are going to implement that for the coming school year.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I do need to beg your indulgence to address one matter that has been dogging me personally for a number of weeks. That, Madam Speaker, relates to the whistle-blowing. I guess the best way to describe it is the whistle-blowing fiasco in Cayman Brac when we met in April. I feel the need to comment in light of what I would de-

scribe as a political flogging that I've taken on the talk shows, particularly the morning shows in the days following the Meeting, and, most recently, last week with the article on *Cayman News Service* [CNS].

I do want to record my disappointment because the CNS article, in particular, I would have thought that I would have at least been contacted for some comment on the thrust of the story to provide some input. But that never took place. I would have liked it, yes. I was also disappointed that the article indicated that they had sight of the Minutes of the committee before they were tabled in this honourable House.

Madam Speaker, the Minutes will reflect, yes, I did move a motion at that committee meeting. But, Madam Speaker, the impetus for the motion did not emanate from me personally. It was the chair, I recall, who suggested if [I] would like to bring a motion and I allowed it by facilitating it, by proposing the motion, having it seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. We were the only two . . . there are five members of the committee and there were only three of us present, and that was Mr. Bernie Bush, the Member for North Side, and myself.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: He was not there. He was absent, as was the other member.

Madam Speaker, the Minutes reflected that we invited the chairman to draft a motion, but that is not what happened on the 9th April at the Meeting of the Assembly in Cayman Brac.

I'm trying my best to be as truthful as I know.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller, Member for North Side: [Inaudible]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Okay.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: [Inaudible]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: I know it will be tabled. But I have to say with hand on heart, I did not understand and appreciate that the motion which came before the House, and the way it came to the House, could be done. I expected and was looking for a motion that would have been filed, as I have customarily known them to be.

In fact, when those things unfolded that morning, the first question I asked was by reaching out to the Minister of Planning and asking him if that could be done. And he assured me, yes, it could but it is a section of the Standing Orders that is not very often used. I certainly had never experienced it or seen it done before. I simply did not know that it could be done that way. And, as I said, I expected a formal notice to be filed, and that is not how it unfolded.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, during the Meeting the discussions that took place, I was also made aware . . . but I was not at the time . . . I think it was the Attorney General who said that Government was in the advanced stages of drafting whistle-blowing legislation. And I was not aware of that. I believe also that the Deputy Governor made a comment that he was actioning a number of the recommendations, or dealing with a number of the recommendations that were contained in the report.

So, hearing all of this and seeing it . . . Madam Speaker, to me the motion that was before the House no longer made sense, nor did it have further merit. It had no legs to stand on. And my vote, Madam Speaker, made no difference to whether the motion had any chance of succeeding or failing. It was doomed to failure from the beginning, and I now appreciate that.

But I have to say that I have learned some lessons with regard to the experience and will do things perhaps a little bit different next time around.

So, I hope that this will be able to put matters to rest and allow that chapter to be closed and we move on.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Well, it is not my intention to lie.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I want to share some concluding thoughts just on a couple of other matters that . . . some of our colleagues here . . . well, we have all mentioned the fact that there has been no mention thus far of the one man, one vote initiative in the Policy Statement. I believe that if we are to achieve this, [if] we all agree it is something that needs to move forward, we must begin the process to implement it in the coming year. I would now like to see the wider debate and discourse begin to take shape and take place, and I am welcoming that as we move forward with this important initiative. I think we know that our supporters and the voting public expect to see some movement on this initiative.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would just like to mention too what I perceive as a shortcoming right now even within our own Standing Orders. It just strikes me that they are in need of a very big re-write to modernise them and make them compatible with our Constitution as it now exists. I believe the disconnect between what we have now and what needs to be is one of the reasons why we often have such heated debates amongst us with regard to the application of those Standing Orders. I would recommend to this House that we move forward with trying to put together a committee of Members of this House to try and re-write our Standing Orders to modernise them and make them compatible with our Constitution.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I would just like to record my thanks to the Minister of Finance and the

Minister of Financial Services, whom I have had the pleasure to work with over the past year. I have to say it has been an exciting and a very fulfilling year for me. I recognise that my role is to support them and assist them in the discharge of their duties. I am grateful to them for the way they have received me and I am also grateful to work with some excellent people in both ministries. I realise that in the ministries I am working with are some very hardworking, dedicated people in this Government's Civil Service. I would like to record my appreciation for them, for the friendships and the camaraderie we have developed as we work together to implement the policies of both the Minister of Finance and the Ministry of Financial Services.

I am looking forward to the challenges of this coming year. I believe there will be many, but I believe that the Government as a whole is on the right track in terms of bringing back prosperity and the good times for Cayman.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

[Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you.

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: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I too would like to congratulate Her Excellency on the delivery of the Throne Speech, to congratulate the Premier on his delivery of the Policy Statement, and the Minister of Finance on his delivery of the Budget Address which, as has been echoed by a number of my colleagues, captures the hard work and success of the entire Government on being able to deliver on and exceed in some cases the targets we set at the beginning of last year.

Madam Speaker, again, as expressed by a number of my colleagues, this could not have happened without the collective and cumulative efforts made by each Minister and the vital support of the councillors and backbenchers working with Cabinet to help us achieve the budgetary goals. And, very importantly, this could not have happened, certainly, without the hard work and dedication of the many civil servants that rose to the challenge of living in a fiscally responsible and prudent manner.

Again, I would like to echo the many sentiments expressed here over the last few days congratulating members of the Civil Service, in particular members of the Budget and Management Unit who worked tirelessly to put together the budget that we are here debating, but also the respective ministries staff, chief officers, CFOs that worked very hard to ensure that each of the ministries were able to deliver

our respective mandates within the financial constraints we were asked to work within.

Madam Speaker, it has been just over a year that we were forced as first-time elected representatives first sworn into this House . . . well, for the entire House actually, to be sworn in for this administration. As I said then, I will say now: I am humbled and blessed and thankful to be given the opportunity to serve my country in such a manner. I am committed to continuing to do so with a view to working collectively as a Government, but also bringing my independent voice, where necessary, in order to advocate for the betterment of the country as a whole.

As my colleague, the Fifth Elected Member for George Town, indicated in his contribution, the fact that we are here one year later and are able to demonstrate to this country the amount that has been accomplished in a short year is a testament to the fact that coalition governments can work.

Madam Speaker, this year saw the passage of some monumental pieces of legislation. It also rings to the testament that Government as a whole, working together across the aisle, is stronger when we are able to identify and work to a common purpose. We have seen that with respect to the passage of the National Conservation Law, and the Standards in Public Life Law, where it was unanimously passed by this House.

Madam Speaker, as a part of my contribution to this debate and in preparing to make such a contribution, it was important for me as Minister with responsibility for some of the fundamental subject areas pertinent to the development and advancement of our people, to be able to tell the story of the hard work, the commitment and efforts made by the various persons, various staff members in my Ministry, in the various departments, agencies and schools that fall beneath the Ministry.

In doing so, the Ministry has produced a progress report for the period June 2013 to May 2014. And with your permission, I would like to table it in this honourable House.

The Speaker: So ordered.

[Laid on the Table was the [Progress Report – No Excuses, Just Solutions](#)]

Moment of interruption—4:30 pm

The Speaker: And Honourable Minister, if I could now recognise the Honourable Premier, as it is now 4:30, to bring the motion for the adjournment.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: 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

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to enable the House to continue proceedings beyond the hour of interruption, for an anticipated conclusion of 7:00 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.

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

[Continuation thereof]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Education, please continue.

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

As I was saying, whereas I appreciate that a report of this nature produced by an individual ministry may be something novel, may be something new, many of the elected representatives in this House campaigned on bringing a new style of leadership to this honourable House and the country at large. So, Madam Speaker, in attempting to do so it was incumbent upon me, as Minister, to highlight the positives, highlight the hard work that has gone into being able to stand here today and speak to some of the activities, accomplishments and work in progress that is happening at the Ministry level and in Government.

Madam Speaker, in a sea of negativity that can be—and often is—politics in the Cayman Islands, it is important to recognise and acknowledge the positive and concrete action that is being taken and that has been done over the past year and to publicly congratulate the hardworking civil servants who help to achieve the various milestones as outlined in the Ministry's June 2013/14 Progress Report.

Madam Speaker, the progress report will by and large form the basis of the contribution I am about to make with respect to the work that has gone on previously or that has gone on during this past year. But I will also talk about the plans, and some plans that are already in motion, for the coming financial year as it relates to the various subject areas of the Ministry. Before I wrap up I would also like to speak to the district level initiatives as a representative of the district of West Bay as well.

Madam Speaker, a high quality education system is critical for our country's social and economic development and aspirations. As a country we must

continue to invest in our children and our young people. We must continue to work to help them achieve their best possible outcomes that help to position them for future success in learning, employment and life in general. We must set high expectations for all of our students. Every child can achieve. That must be the guiding philosophy in all that we do. We must create a sense of urgency for improvement within our schools, within our community and amongst our students themselves. We must promote a belief that our children can achieve the highest standards, and as Minister I try to promote a solutions-focused no-excuses ethos and culture to tackle under-performance behaviour issues and other barriers to our students' success.

Madam Speaker, the guiding philosophy of the last year in office has been to build on the positive strides that have been taken by previous administrations with a focus on implementing the National Strategic Plan for Education. But also on identifying the gaps and weaknesses in the education system which are not adequately addressed by the plan and outlining additional key strategic areas of focus and develop and execute plans of action to address them. As outlined in the Ministry's progress report, there are a number of significant accomplishments in Education which have been achieved in the last fiscal year. I will turn my attention to the area of Education at this time.

This summer for the first time, government high school students will be expected to meet a minimum academic standard in order to graduate. Until this year graduation criteria for schools has been solely based on attendance and behaviour. But now it will include an academic component. The graduation criteria set will mean that students will be recognised for different levels of achievement. Students will achieve different levels of diploma depending on their level of achievements. Students' diplomas will identify the levels achieved making it clear to students, parents and employers the level at which individual students have performed.

This will also provide an important bridge to higher qualifications for students who improve their performance after graduation or for adults in the community who may wish to pursue a high school diploma in the event they did not get one while they were in school. Once such persons earn the required number of subjects at the right levels to qualify for a particular diploma, they can apply to the Department of Education Services for that diploma. Madam Speaker, this actually creates in real terms a system which promotes lifelong learning and the pursuit of basic secondary level education even after persons may be out of the formal secondary education system. It allows persons to achieve a high school diploma, which for many people was not within their reach at the time for whatever reason.

Madam Speaker, this is a welcome development for which the system has been preparing for a

number of years. For the first time graduating from high school will mean more than a social event. This will be a wakeup call for some on the importance of valuing education. For others, it will be a way of recognising the excellent standards many of our students already achieved. I hope that going forward it will inspire everyone to strive for excellence.

Madam Speaker, as can be seen in the National Priorities Plan the Independent members of Government campaigned heavily on raising standards and creating a world class education system. As Minister, I have sought to introduce a new category of "High Honours" diploma to reflect this position. This too was welcomed by principals and educators alike. Based on feedback from the principals and senior education officials, in order for students to qualify for a high honours diploma they must achieve nine or more high level passes as grades A* to B at GCSE/IGCSE or CSEC/CXC at grades I to II or the equivalent.

This addition to the graduation criteria was made to recognise and encourage the very highest levels of achievement in our government schools. Our external examination results in Year 12 shows that year on year the top performers in our schools can hold, and in fact do hold, their own with respect to the top performers in the private schools and internationally. It is important that we celebrate their outstanding achievements and that having such a category allows us to recognise those students that strive and achieve such grades and numbers of subjects.

Early childhood care and education will continue to be a strategic priority for the Ministry. This year we have achieved two important milestones in this area, the development of a new Education Council Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education Programmes for the Registration and Operation of Early Childhood Centres, and also the finalising and passing of the curriculum framework for early childhood care and education.

Madam Speaker, providing our young children with a foundation from as early as possible is absolutely fundamental to their future success in whatever they do. So, in the 2014/15 financial year we intend as a Government to fully implement these critical frameworks and to continue with the implementation of the re-registration programme for all early childhood care and education centres.

Madam Speaker, the early childhood and education centres operating in these Islands have already been assessed and have been working with the early childhood education unit within the Ministry to identify the areas of improvement that each of them would need to put in place in order to be compliant with the re-registration process. The unit has been working very diligently to raise the level of understanding amongst early childhood educators about the need to have such a framework in place for the curriculum to be delivered at these centres. The aim is to move away from just providing daycare centres to providing

centres of educational instruction for our very earliest learners.

Madam Speaker, professional development for early childhood practitioners and workshops for parents will continue to be a focus for the early childhood education unit. Educating parents and practitioners will help them to provide better environments and experiences for young children to give them a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

Attracting Caymanians to the early childhood profession is also a goal of the upcoming fiscal year. Exposing and informing high school students and young adults about the professional options available in early childhood and guiding them based on their passion, talents and abilities will enable some of them to see careers in early childhood as options they may pursue. Encouraging them to pursue local programmes offered at CIFEC, at UCCL and through other local tertiary institutions as a pathway to earn the requisite qualifications to work in this area is also another goal to be pursued in this coming financial year.

Madam Speaker, funding through the early childhood assistance programme will continue as it assists many families who are in need and not able to afford access to early childhood services. Those families who meet the criteria for funding will be assisted financially to place their children in early childhood centres. Early childhood centres and reception classes will receive additional training and support in the coming year in the area of accommodating children who display difficulties and delays in development, or who have been identified as having special needs.

Madam Speaker, you may recall having heard me speak on a number of occasions about the focus and the need to focus on special needs in education that is appropriate for students who display special education needs, including the gifted and talented, and those on the other end of the spectrum who display delays or difficulties in their development. So, Madam Speaker, this year not only in our primary schools and high schools will this emphasis be placed, but we will also be placing this in the early childhood centres as well and will be looking to assist early childhood professionals to better be able to identify and to work and provide for such students.

Madam Speaker, moving now behavioural concerns: Following on from the statement that I made in this honourable House during the previous session, I will speak about the critical work that has been undertaken since that time and is currently being undertaken by the Ministry, by the Department of Education Services and schools to strengthen the way in which school behaviour and student discipline is managed in government schools.

As a Government, and as Minister with constitutional responsibility for Education, we expect that all students are taught in an environment which is safe, conducive to learning and free from disruption. As a Government we also expect appropriate action from

school staff according to the school's disciplinary procedure which is aligned to the Ministry's guidance and requires that each incident be considered on a case by case basis. It is also important that I outline and help the country understand the various roles and responsibilities of each entity in the education system as it relates to dealing with behaviour and behavioural issues presenting in some of our schools.

Responding to negative behaviour is the responsibility of each school with the oversight and support of the Department of Education Services. The Department of Education Services is expected to monitor behaviour across the system, identify any concerns or growing trends and to work with schools in addressing these issues. The Ministry's role, on the other hand, is to establish national policies and guidance relating to school discipline and school behaviour, working in collaboration with the Department of Education Services and the schools and to be able to provide a planned response to any concerns or trends that may exist or that may be brought to the Ministry's attention.

As outlined in my statement to this honourable House in April, I asked the Ministry to undertake a critical review of the resources in the education system aligned to deal with student behavioural issues. As a result, a proposal was put forward which takes a comprehensive approach to address the behaviour issues experienced in our schools.

Madam Speaker, as a result of this work undertaken since November of last year, and which continues to date, the country can expect to see significant changes for the new academic school year starting in September 2014. As a part of the review of the policy and practice relating to school discipline and student behaviour, the Ministry is currently undertaking a consultation exercise with teachers, students and parents. This consultation is aimed at identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the current system to highlight areas of concern and to assist in finding pragmatic solutions to address the issues.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry has already received feedback from a number of participants in the survey on the national code of conduct, and I am told that, to date, 267 individuals have responded. Although these responses are initial responses, the results, I'm told, are generally positive about the stated values and behaviour expectations in the system. But what the responses to the survey do identify is the lack of consistency in the implementation of these various values and behaviour expectations. So this is a critical area of improvement.

Madam Speaker, as I indicated in various public media (talk shows, TV, et cetera), my own visits and discussions at the various schools, and also through concerns expressed to the Councillor for the Ministry of Education, who is also very diligent in working with and hearing from educators in the system and other persons who have concerns through

the various discussions, deliberations and schools visits, we have also identified a lack of consistency in the application, and poor communication generally, as it relates to the various national and school policies that already exist.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry has been tasked to find ways to strengthen the current education system. As an outcome of this consultation exercise a strong message will be delivered to teachers, students and parents at or before the beginning of the new academic year this August. This message will deal with the expectations relating to school behaviour, school uniforms and the use of cell phones and other electronic equipment at school.

Madam Speaker, I would just like to share that at a very recent meeting of all the principals in the public education system along with senior management at the Department of Education Services and the Ministry, it was decided that the use of cell phones in school during school hours will no longer be allowed, in the sense that we have heard the Minister of Health speak very passionately about issues of bullying. In the age of technology that we live in, unfortunately a lot of the bullying that takes place does not take place through the normal face-to-face communication anymore; it is through what is known as cyber bullying and other antisocial behaviours. The misuse of such devices has perpetuated and exacerbated this problem in our society, and oftentimes manifests itself at school causing grave concern amongst our students, our teachers, and in some very unfortunate instances may lead to a person actually taking their own life.

A decision was taken, and I fully support that decision, and I gave the commitment to the principals and the members of the education system that from the standpoint of the political directorate we will stand behind them with respect to supporting whatever decisions they feel are necessary in order to curb some of the antisocial behaviour that is having such a negative impact on the school environment. So, this is one message that will be delivered in the New Year, and, if not before, there will be a public relations campaign to inform people well in advance what to expect, what is going to be expected of them and how we are working to improve the lives of all of our students in the education system.

Madam Speaker, an updated school discipline and student behaviour policy, a revised student code of conduct and amendments to the home school agreements will be introduced to high schools at this time. More specific training will also be provided to help teachers explicitly teach behaviour expectations and the rights and responsibilities which are expected of students.

As I discussed in my statement previously, rewards and sanctions will play a more prominent role in the behaviour management strategy to be adopted in the coming year. This has also been highlighted as a positive step in that within our student survey, 63

per cent of the student respondents thus far have agreed that in a subject where the teacher never gives any sanctions for poor behavior, students tend to misbehave more often. This is the kind of empirical data that we are trying to gather in formulating the policies going forward in dealing with the issues our children are faced with.

Madam Speaker, we must also recognise that teachers who engage students are less likely to encounter negative behaviour within their classrooms. This view was also highlighted in the recent survey of secondary school students conducted by the Ministry whereby, I am told, 60 per cent of the 219 respondents thus far have stated that rewards from a teacher make a difference on how they view the subject. Again, Madam Speaker, it is the positive reinforcement that can be as powerful, if not more so, than the negative. So we are looking to have a system where we recognise the value of both rewards as well as sanctions for behaviour displayed.

During the coming year a professional development policy will be introduced as it relates to teachers and other educators in the system. There exists an important link between effective teaching and student behaviour. If we were to focus on improving teaching and learning, we would see an improvement as it relates to curbing disruption in the classrooms.

In the coming 2014/15 budget you will see that the Ministry hopes to also introduce a role of behavioural support manager. This role was identified as being critical in order to help better manage the resources that exist in our system currently, to better facilitate a more consistent and effective approach to meeting the needs of the schools and the individual students. Madam Speaker, there are resources dedicated in the schools.

We do have specialists educators, we have specialists in terms of psychologists and speech pathologists, and the other specialists service providers, inclusion specialists, behaviour specialists . . . although, Madam Speaker, if you ever speak to any educator you will always hear that there are never enough resources. And that may, in fact, be true. But the fact is we have to make sure that we better utilise and manage the resources that we do have to get the maximum effect from the investment made in the system. So, the lack of effective coordination and management and the deployment of these resources have led to the recommendation. And I hope that this House will support the creation of the position to have someone specifically charged with the responsibility to manage this process in the system at the school level so that there is a level of accountability, which seems to be lacking in the system now.

Madam Speaker, all primary schools currently have in place a school discipline and student behaviour policy as well. As with the high schools, it is the Government's expectation that the majority of behaviour issues are dealt with consistently by the class

teachers and other school based staff within the disciplinary procedures of the school. However, we recognise that within the primary schools, as with the high schools, there is also a minority of students who are extremely challenging in terms of their behaviour and the ability of the school system to cope and deal with that behaviour. So, from September, in line with the secondary schools, the Ministry and Department of Education will be looking to increase the capacity and to strengthen the effectiveness of the specialists' behaviour team working with our primary students, as well as part of this newly defined behaviour service to be rolled out in the coming academic year.

Madam Speaker, even though the statistics gathered by the Department of Education Services will show that only a handful or a minority of students, as compared to the entire student population, are the ones causing the behaviour issues at each respective school, not effectively dealing with those individuals can lead to a snowball, or knock-on effect which may cause serious disruption for the rest of the students. That is simply not an acceptable situation going forward.

The new behaviour management system is being designed to provide clearer system-wide consistent guidelines, rewards, repercussions and accountability for behaviours displayed. It should also be designed to ensure that the necessary levels of accountability amongst the players in the education system are clearly delineated so that the passing-of-the-buck syndrome does not occur. With these structures in place, it is my, and the Government's, expectation that schools will be better positioned to deliver on their responsibility to manage student behaviour and to implement effective school disciplinary measures.

Madam Speaker, we have seen press reports that speak to some of our teachers on occasion being threatened or, in some instances, assaulted by pupils. I want to make it clear, Madam Speaker, that there is absolutely no place for threats, violence, or intimidation in our schools. And when such instances occur, as Minister, this Government and I expect that appropriate interventions by the school or the Department of Education Services, and/or as appropriate, intervention by RCIPS in line with the Penal Code, will be made. We will not tolerate attacks on our teachers, attacks on our educators, attacks on anyone in our schools.

Madam Speaker, it is equally unacceptable to harass, to degrade, and to bully our students by other students or by teachers, or by other persons in the schools. This is something that we don't often talk about, but it is something that I must speak about because I get a number of complaints from students and from parents making such allegations. So, Madam Speaker, I want to send a very clear message to the persons within the system to understand that that type of behaviour is also not acceptable. It is not acceptable to say that our children are dumb and that they

can't learn, or that I am just here to collect a pay cheque whether they advance or not. So a new anti-bullying policy, as well as a new complaints policy will be introduced in the new school year. I beseech those in charge who are responsible for carrying out any disciplinary procedures within the Civil Service to be vigilant and to act accordingly when instances of such behaviour are observed or reported.

I say that because oftentimes I and Councillor Connolly will get complaints asking us to do something about somebody hired in the system. And our standard response is that we will make sure that we raise those concerns with the Department of Education Services, with the chief officer in the Ministry, and with whomever else in the Civil Service that is responsible for taking those complaints forward, because as Minister, as elected officials, we are not involved with the disciplinary procedures, the hiring, the firing or anything to do with the administration as it relates to civil servants. And it's important for me to set that expectation to be known that, yes, we are there to hear you, and we will definitely advocate and continue to advocate for our children. But with respect to action being taken, we are in a position where we have to refer to the relevant authorities to take such complaints forward.

Madam Speaker, at times we hear the cry to permanently remove the "problem children" out of mainstream schools. But historically, moving students out of the mainstream education into alternative provisions indefinitely within the Cayman Islands has not been a very successful model. We have ample sociological and statistical evidence in the form of the [Yolande Forde Report](#) and AEC [Alternative Education Centre] statistics, to name a few, to show that students who are placed outside of mainstream education provisions for indefinite periods often become marginalised, they often drop out of education and are more likely to engage in criminal activity.

Madam Speaker, the country as a whole has a responsibility for ensuring access to education for all of our students, including the most challenging ones. In addition to providing a supportive and positive learning environment for the majority of our students, which we must aim to provide because we cannot let the majority suffer as a result of the minority, we also need to ensure that any alternative provisions or alternative pathways suggested or created, meet the individual needs of our most challenging students and go not hinder their chances of reaching their potential and becoming successful adults.

Madam Speaker, to put it very bluntly, gang leaders are still leaders. If we are able to harness those innate leadership abilities with sufficient and early enough positive intervention, then maybe, just maybe, we can help minimise, or even eradicate, the gang-related activity and other antisocial behaviours amongst some of our youth and some members of our society at large.

As bad as it may seem to some, or as bad as it may be portrayed to be by others, it is important to keep in mind that the majority of our students are well behaved and well adjusted. This point was emphasised again by the respondents to our student survey whereby 54 per cent of those students responding said that they never received a sanction and another 17 per cent said that they received only one in a term. In fact, at the recent award ceremony, 85 per cent of the Year 11 students at one of our high schools received some form of awards recognition. So, Madam Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognise and congratulate our hardworking young people, our hardworking, enthusiastic and passionate-about-education children, and also to recognise the hard work that many of our parents are doing to help foster the sense of belonging and of viewing education as the vehicle, as the tool, to better their circumstance whatever it may be.

Madam Speaker, many of the parents dealing with some of these same children that present the most challenges in the schools, some of them are working very hard. I know I am working with many of them on an individual basis in my constituency clinic. But I would like to challenge those parents that if you know you can do better or that you should do better, then you must do better. You must do better to support your children at this time because there are so many negative influences in school, outside of school. And if they don't have that grounding and they don't have that support in the home then what are we really expecting from our children with respect to learning the values they are taught from home?

So, again, I congratulate those children, those young people that are striving for excellence and I challenge those parents who can do better to do better so we can improve the system as a whole for the betterment of this country as a whole.

Madam Speaker, in my statement to the Legislative Assembly in April I also recognised, as was echoed by the Minister of Health, that as a country we recognise the severe, complex and significant behaviour and mental health issues plaguing many of our students, as well as many of our residents and citizens as a whole. These issues go beyond the scope or the intervention of any one ministry and it requires a collective effort between the Ministries of Health, Education, Community Affairs and other agencies that are involved in working with young people in the homes, in the schools, that present these behavioural and other mental health challenges.

Madam Speaker, the lack of a secure therapeutic accommodation for students who pose significant risks to themselves and other students is a problem. We recognise also that the lack of suitable residential mental health facilities is significantly impacting our most vulnerable amongst us. It's ironic that when I first raised that issue some in the community tried to paint that as finding an excuse. And then several

weeks later it is now the mantra of those same individuals. But the fact is, we as a country must do more to provide the necessary framework to ensure that our people who are living with, coping with, struggling with mental health illnesses are adequately provided for in society. And I have given my private commitment and I continue to give my public commitment to ensure that this Government does more than just talk about it. And I am heartened to know that the Mental Health Commission has been convened and they are working diligently to try to find a solution. I look forward to supporting any recommendation that they bring forward in this respect.

I would also like to agree with the Member for North Side in his assertion that more needs to be done by way of insurance coverage by private insurers for persons suffering with mental health [issues].

Madam Speaker, people living and coping—and I use those positive words because it is something that many people have to live with every day and they do their best. And we must recognise that they have the right to participate in society to the best of their ability and so they should be adequately provided for in the disability policy being developed and to be adopted in short order.

Madam Speaker, although placing students in overseas institutions is a last resort, it is something that we only look to do once we have exhausted all other local alternatives. The fact is, on occasion we have to do so. Such can be quite costly and the provision of strengthening the on-island facilities should help to reduce the cost and the need for overseas placement. To this end, the Government must look more closely at a number of the institutions that we have set up. I would also like to suggest that the CAYS [Children and Youth Services] Foundation can assist in this regard by looking at the effectiveness of the Bonaventure Boys' Home and the Frances Bodden Girls' Home, and by looking at the programme as it relates to the expenditures made in that area. Also, to find ways to suggest for areas of improvement, if necessary, and ways in which these programmes can be strengthened.

So, Madam Speaker, I look forward to continuing to work with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Community Affairs to find ways in order to address this concern in an efficient and effective way as possible with a posthaste agenda.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to report that as a part of the Government's strategy to help to provide additional positive intervention and positive support within the school system, the Government has introduced a pilot project, a Pastoral Support Workers Project. With this pilot project, the number of adult support and presence has been increased with the hope or expectation that these persons who have gone through a period of training to ensure they have the basic tools to do what is expected of them in this role, will help to positively reduce and de-escalate events

before they arise and to also better facilitate positive relationships with parents.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to report that the Ministry of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs has worked in partnership with the private sector organisation to implement this pastoral support worker pilot programme which was launched on 27 April this year and runs until 27 June.

Madam Speaker, we are really excited to be working with four schools in this pilot programme and the students who were targeted for support from the pastoral support worker are those students who have poor attendance or punctuality, students who appear to be disengaged from learning, they lack confidence and self-esteem, have suffered loss or bereavement, have demonstrated difficulty in managing strong feelings of anger and the like. So, once this pilot has been conducted, a review of the programme will take place using the feedback from the students, principals, school staff and pastoral support workers, with a view to continuing and expanding the programme if it proves to be successful in the coming year.

The role of the pastoral support worker is very varied and will depend on the needs of the school as well as the needs of the children that they have been identified to work along with. So, again, it is something that we as a Government developed to be proactive in dealing with the concerns we saw. We saw the increase in number of security guards in the schools. But the last thing we wanted to do was create an environment where school is synonymous with prison, because we need to break the cycle for some people, of this mentality that the school is a prison which, unfortunately, a number of our young people have fallen prey to. So, by having these adult interveners to act as guides, to act as advocates for the students with the establishment as well as developing relationships with parents and the schools, should hopefully put forward and help to create the positive relationship that we need to build with the community and that each school should have with the parents of the students.

Madam Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to specifically mention that the pastoral support worker programme is not only aimed at meeting the needs of our students, it also has met the needs of the five unemployed persons who were registered with the National Workforce Development Agency [NWDA]. So, as well as being a strategy to deal with behaviour issues and helping our students in the schools, it was also an ability for the Government to get creative and to promote job creation and help our people find employment. As I said, I was told that the candidates that were chosen to be a part of this programme were all sourced from persons registered with the NWDA and they went through a rigorous selection process, as well as training in safe management and risk reduction, child protection and reporting procedures, first aid and CPR, and the use of restorative practices.

The pastoral support workers are now employed in this programme. As Caymanians they are able to relate and interact with our children and they have spent time at different schools before settling into the individual school they are assigned to currently. Madam Speaker, it is early days, but so far the feedback on this programme from the principals has been positive. They report that the pastoral support workers are settling in well and interacting positively with our students. The Ministry will be evaluating the results of this pilot programme over the summer with a view to continuing the programme during the coming school year, should the results prove to be favourable.

Madam Speaker, I am in receipt of a newly completed report on the Review of the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre, which I commissioned in February of this year. Members of the review team included a range of key stakeholders from the private sector, from within the Ministry, within the Department of Education Services and CIFEC [Cayman Islands Further Education Centre] itself. The remit of the team was to review the current provision of CIFEC in the context of student needs and interests, societal needs and capacity and market competition.

Madam Speaker, the overall review team found that CIFEC has provided valuable new opportunities to students in the Cayman Islands education system. It also identified a range of unexploited opportunities and areas for development. There are calls from all quarters demanding relevant and targeted training and education provisions that reflect the needs of Cayman's economy. As the review team highlights, these needs are within the wider community of which CIFEC is ideally positioned to address.

So, Madam Speaker, I look forward to sharing and discussing the many insightful recommendations made by this group in the near future and to establishing an aggressive action plan for change that could see some key suggestions implemented as early as this September.

Madam Speaker, the education system must be continuously challenged to ensure that standards continue to improve and that we are providing the best educational opportunities for children in our government schools. Since taking up post, I have visited the schools and engaged with parents through the launch of a national parent forum in December of last year, as well as at various PTA meetings. I have met with teachers and continue to meet with teachers at the bi-monthly National Teachers Forum which was launched and held through October of last year, with principals, with representatives of the private sector to help identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps that exist in the education system.

Madam Speaker, to date, work involved the education system self-reflection, [is] analysing the feedback from stakeholders and adjusting practices for improvement. As a Government and as Minister, I wish to advance this work to include an objective and

external review of our education system together with an objective baseline inspection of our schools. As the Councillor for the Ministry of Education mentioned in his debate, we have not had a thorough inspection of our schools for a number of years (since 2007/08). This financial year we will be pursuing a review of the educational governance model, the funding model, the provision and student outcomes in our government schools with a view to look for evidence based recommendations for improvement.

Madam Speaker, just to let this House know, we have already started reviewing the governance model in earnest. We have been working internally as well as working with members of the private sector to talk about the creation of a governance model that utilises the good will, the resources, and the expertise of both public and private sector in terms of managing our education system. The result of this dialogue is still being determined. But I can say the excitement that exists amongst the private sector in terms of their interest in being involved in devising an education model that enhances the level of accountability and the level of devolvement of responsibility to, and at the school level, is exciting. So I look forward to being able to speak to this issue in more detail in months to come.

A big part of that move looking to improve the actual management and the governance of our school system is to actually get an understanding of the baseline of what is happening in the system currently so that we can understand where it is we are starting from and where we need to go. So, a big thrust this year will be to establish that very critical baseline as it relates to student outcomes and performance, but also as it relates to the management and resources and funding within the system.

As discussed previously, as a result of limited Civil Service head count and other resources that we are constrained to work within, we will have to be creative and develop a model that includes an outsourcing aspect of this inspection. The intention is to have this inspection model re-established where it is an independent inspectorate. I am determined to set this renewed inspection programme on the soundest possible footing within the structure so that the inspection reports would be presented to Cabinet and published, as well as an annual report to be laid on the Table of this House summarising the inspections conducted in any given year so there is transparency in the system.

I think a big part of the concern we should have as a country is that education is everyone's business. We all have a vested interest in the education of our children, especially those of us who are parents. So, Madam Speaker, it is incumbent that we all look to understand the challenges, to challenge the system, but to also offer solutions. So I ask and state publicly that moving the education system outside of the political realm is a goal that as Independent candidates we campaigned very heavily on. It's a goal

that I have tried to live by in this administration with respect to looking at not just what was done in the last administration, but looking beyond that to the previous administrations to find what seemed to be working, what was good, and building on that to show and demonstrate the continuity. But also to bring a critical analysis of where we are and where we need to go and to implement ways to fill those gaps as have been identified.

So, Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with all the Members in this honourable House and the community at large to be able to move the agenda of improving our education system.

Madam Speaker, whereas, I think in this one short year I have demonstrated that I am prepared to call a spade a spade and to acknowledge the challenges and weaknesses in our public education system, there are some critics of the system who are persistent in painting the most negative picture possible of our schools who fail to acknowledge, deliberately or otherwise, the progress that has been made over the years and are painting a picture of our students with one broad brush as failures and badly behaved.

Madam Speaker, this barrage of negativity is affecting the morale of our schools and, most notably, it is affecting the morale of our students. It is also not helping the Department of Education's efforts to retain good quality, solid teachers in the schools, nor is it helping to attract good quality, solid teachers to our country. Education is everybody's business. And the business should be about building up. It should be about enabling, not tearing down. As Minister, I am encouraging these collaborations across the aisle, across the country from individuals and sectors that have the best intentions for the education system and our country in mind.

Yes, challenging the system is important, but in doing so always have a solution-focused approach, not just criticism, because it does nobody any good—least of all our students who are living the experience on a daily basis.

Another concern negatively affecting the morale amongst teachers, especially the long-serving teachers, is the inequity that exists in the pay structure that has been adopted by the Civil Service over the years whereby, as a result of the salary freeze instituted awhile back, there are serious anomalies that exist with long-serving, more experienced teachers oftentimes making less than newly or recently qualified teachers just joining the service. This, coupled with the relatively low pay scale of teachers as compared to some other administrative posts that exist in the Civil Service has contributed to an exodus of teachers. There is a real concern that there will be more to follow. And it has also contributed to a difficulty in attracting teachers to take up teaching positions.

My colleagues on this side, and many teachers themselves, will know that I have been advocating from day one, and Councillor Connolly has been ad-

vocating in our deliberations as well, that the Civil Service (and now I am speaking directly to the Deputy Governor and all that fall under him) who are responsible to helping to find a solution to this problem. But also, my colleagues in Government who, once a solution is found, hopefully, will then have to decide to support. But we must find a solution to address this problem.

I have asked on many occasions, and I would once again ask, that the Deputy Governor work with the chief officer in the Ministry of Education to devise a viable plan to increase teachers' remuneration—be it through performance management incentives, or some other mechanism that is fair and measurable and that will address the concern I just expressed.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Madam Speaker, I am hearing a suggestion which I tend to agree with. We may need to look at somehow having a system designed uniquely for our teachers, because the fact is that our teachers do not have the same vacation schedule, they don't have the same ability to do a number of things that other civil servants have. They also have a system that isn't very intuitive when it comes to the academic cycle. So it may be time to look at creating a system that is more aligned with the realities of what teachers' experience.

But again, as I have outlined, this is something that I will ask of the Deputy Governor. And I have been given a commitment that he will take this forward. So, Madam Speaker, I look forward to being able to bring that to my fellow members in Cabinet and in Government and be able to move and finally address this issue which seems to be a real concern and which seems to have been plaguing the system for a number of years now.

Madam Speaker, during the 2014/15 financial year, the established goals of the [\[Cayman Islands Strategic Plan \[for Education\]\]](#) will be pursued through action plans that are implemented and whose success will be monitored. It will involve the National Parent Forum, the National Teacher Forum and a students' forum to be launched in the coming year. These six strategic goals will be strengthened through further development of key strategic objectives which have been introduced as a result of taking office.

The introduction of a crime reduction strategy and curriculum: We see that improving the school climate and strengthening school discipline and student behaviour is a prerequisite to crime reduction. So, the focus this year will definitely be on instituting a three-tiered approach to intervention which is to be rolled out in September and to establish these national and consistent expectations about student behaviour and responses to such.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry is also making provision to introduce a programme known as SNAP,

"Stop Now and Plan." I understand this is a Canadian based, evidence programme for 6- to 11-year-olds, and that the number of jurisdictions in which SNAP has become a part of their crime prevention strategy, and is a cognitive, behavioural strategy, helps children and parents regulate angry feelings by getting them to stop, think and plan positive alternatives before they act impulsively. I am also made to understand that this is an award winning evidence based model which has been subjected to rigorous evaluation which has demonstrated positive treatment outcomes amongst children under the age of 12 with conduct and related behavioural problems.

Crime prevention awareness days for high school students first introduced in September of last year will continue in the next academic year as well. In addition, conflict resolution training will take place to help our children, students and educators manage the risks and deescalate certain instances before they become a crisis. Madam Speaker, improving positive learning environments through a new strategy and intensive teacher professional development, including the impending adoption of a professional development policy, will be pursued in the coming year as well.

Madam Speaker, one of the things I have discovered as a result of taking the time to do the research on some of the programmes and recommendations that came before me in the Ministry of Education was the emphasis that appeared to have started under the previous PPM administration as it relates to the profile of the educated Caymanian. This was a civics education programme and something that, as Minister, I will look to bring forward again in this year. For whatever reason it wasn't carried forward during the last UDP administration, but in looking at those values, it is very clear that what was determined to be the aspiration and goal for what our children should be when they leave our system is still very relevant today. The importance of teaching values and citizenship in education will also be a thrust in the coming year. So, we will look to adopt this type of value based education and a profile of what we want our students to be during and after they leave the education system.

Madam Speaker, vocational training is something we hear the cry for often in many different quarters. Increasing the range and the terms and types of programmes and level of vocational training will also be a thrust in this coming year with the particular focus on increasing a number of level three programmes at CIFEC to bridge the provision between the school and further technical studies. But, we are also looking to increase exposure of high school students to the job related aspects to complement the vocational and technical subjects they have chosen with the goal of helping them develop marketable skills which they can build on.

In this year's budget you will see that it actually falls under the National Workforce Development

Agency, but there is a position as it relates to a TVEC (Technical/Vocational Education Training Coordinator). This coordinator will look to strengthen and work with the schools to build the technical and vocational education training programme from the high school itself. We're looking to target even students as young as Year 10 to get those students who have demonstrated an aptitude, ability and inclination to technical and vocational education while helping to develop a pathway for furthering those studies as well as practical education and training on the job. So, this coordinator is going to be responsible for working both at the post secondary level as well as within the schools themselves and working to find a suitable curriculum.

Madam Speaker, the Councillor for Education touched briefly on the introduction of a new legislative framework which is being worked on as we speak. This framework looks to update and build upon what was done through the work of the Premier during his time as Minister of Education in looking at the Education Modernization Law and at drafting the accompanying regulations needed to successfully implement that law. Since then, we have had the introduction of a new Constitution. So, some of the work that is being done is to also make sure that the law is in line with what the Constitution and the Bill of Rights require and call for, but also to ensure that we have a sufficiently robust framework that will allow responses, reactions to the changing dynamics of education in the country.

We will also look to continue maintaining and upgrading education facilities where necessary and, of course, within the budgetary parameters given in order to ensure that teaching and learning are supported in a high quality resources delivered in safe and productive environment.

Madam Speaker, we recognise within the education system and within the area of facilities that there are always more wants and needs than you can actually address because of borrowing or other financial constraints which we have to live within. That is the reality. So, what we have done, and what we will continue to do is prioritise the priorities in looking at ensuring that our school environments are safe. That is the first guiding priority, and then looking to address the needs as and when they arise and within the financial constraints that the Ministry has to work within.

So, the construction or the restart of construction of a new John Gray High School has been deemed a priority. This is our largest high school in the country and it is by far one of the most dilapidated physical buildings that our students have to endure on a daily basis. They have to sit exams scattered all over the place because there is no central place for them. There is no central hall for them to be able to go to sit an exam in the peace and quiet and solitude of being able to focus on performing to the best and optimum that they can.

So, the hall has been identified as a key area to start with. We have to do a phased approach because we cannot afford to do otherwise. And the fact is that since the hall is substantially far along with respect to its construction, this gives the added benefit or the key benefit of providing a place for our students to sit their exams. Right now they are sitting their exams in less than ideal (to say the least) situations where there is noise and construction and everything else under the sun, so how do we expect our children to excel in an environment where they do not have the peace and quiet necessary in able to perform at their best?

So we will be starting in this current budget year towards working on finishing that hall so we can provide that environment so necessary for the school to be able to conduct these exams, as well as graduations and other whole school activities, and also for enhanced community use.

Madam Speaker, during this academic year we will be continuing to review the scholarship criteria and process. This review began in 2013/14 and we have already begun to implement some systematic changes in the academic scholarship application process and criteria. You will have noticed that we moved the application deadline forward to facilitate a more timely scholarship application processing, review and response time by the Secretariat, so as to alleviate some of the stress experienced by parents and students in having to wait to hear back from the Secretariat.

Madam Speaker, in this coming year a sub-committee of the Education Council, headed by the Councillor for the Ministry of Education, will be reviewing the current scholarship criteria with a view to making recommendations to strengthen and improve the scholarship application and award system.

We have also recognised the need to find better ways to ensure human capital development strategy through the granting of scholarships for tertiary education and for vocational and technical training, which is a vital part of that overall strategy to help develop our people to take on roles in employment, business and otherwise in the community. So, we are looking to put in place a system that does a better job at helping to identify the priority areas that we recognise based on the employment trends in the country.

We are looking to put a system in place that recognises the excellence that is achieved by some of our students, and whether or not those students need additional support in the event that they are able to get into the top schools and other areas which are being currently reviewed. So the intention is to do a critical analysis of the criteria that currently exists with a view to helping all of our students to be able to find their rightful place in society. That includes finding and creating opportunities for more technical and vocational type track as well. But again, the key is to link the provision of scholarships with the needs in the

community, looking at the trends of work permit holders, et cetera.

Madam Speaker, the education of our citizens is essential to continue advancing our country and to ensure that Caymanians are adequately prepared to take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities and to excel in the local community and compete in the global economy. The Ministry recognises that our local tertiary institutions play a critical role in achieving this.

Madam Speaker, we believe that local tertiary institutions should work together to complement one another through programmes and services that do not unnecessarily overlap, compete or create redundancies. We believe that it's important to facilitate a seamless access to tertiary level programmes which bridge students' prior learning experiences. We believe that the academic standard of local tertiary institutions should meet or exceed internationally recognised accredited and competitive standards to ensure that our local institutions are delivering programmes that successfully facilitate international portability for other studies as well as access and success in the local labour market.

Madam Speaker, we believe that it is vital to facilitate appropriate pathways for students to ensure flexibility and variety in terms of access and programming which centre around the need of each student and that promotes diversity and caters to individual abilities and aspirations. As a Government, we believe that local tertiary institutions should operate with a view to ensure that their programmes of study reflect the needs of the country and that graduates are prepared to be successful in the workplace. We believe that local tertiary institutions should create a sense of pride and community where students feel welcome, safe, engaged and inspired.

While private and national tertiary institutions should work together to fulfill this national vision for tertiary education, we must recognise and embrace the differences that exist between the private and national institutions. Private tertiary institutions, such as ICCI [International College of the Cayman Islands], are able to set their core purpose and develop their institutions based on a business model that reflects the strategic objectives of their stakeholders. National institutions, however, such as the University College of the Cayman Islands [UCCI], have a broader remit which include the accountability to the Government and the citizens of the Cayman Islands. Strategies of the national institutions must be set within the core Government policy, a central tenet of which is for the national tertiary institutions to be relevant and responsive to the needs of our citizens to enable participation and success within the core and developing industries within the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, the Cayman Islands need productive skilled citizens. That's a fact. And we count on our tertiary institutions and, in particular, our national tertiary institutions, such as UCCI, to be leaders

in engaging with relevant community partners, including the private sector, to implement proposals and strategies to achieve this national vision for tertiary education. It is the vision of the Ministry that tertiary education in the Cayman Islands will provide its citizens with educational programmes that meet internationally recognised standards of learning in the core and developing industries relevant to the socioeconomic wellbeing of this country.

Madam Speaker, I have been given assurances by the new leadership of the University College of the Cayman Islands Board of Governors that their commitment is there to working towards a strategic alignment of the UCCI programmes, courses and services to deliver educational programmes that provide citizens with access to these world class educational opportunities, an alignment which positions them to successfully participate in and contribute to the core developing industries in the Cayman Islands economy.

Madam Speaker, the chairman of the UCCI Board of Governors has established a number of board subcommittees charged with responsibility to access and make recommendations that will lead to the reengineering of UCCI to ensure that it is positioned to adhere to the high standards of governance and management expected to deliver internationally recognised educational programmes; to deliver programmes that meet the social and economic needs of the country and its workforce; and to support and engage private sector in developing and delivering these programmes. Because, ultimately, it is the private sector, as well as the public sector, that are the buyers of their product, so to speak. We need to make sure that the students who leave UCCI, either at the associate, bachelor or master's level available, are, in turn, absorbed into the workforce and that their qualifications are recognised as such. So, working with private sector in this regard is absolutely critical.

The board will also look to enhance the use of technology to increase accessibility of education. Again, we know we have a disability policy coming on line which will make it mandatory for institutions, such as UCCI, to be able to deliver their programmes to students that may have physical disabilities who may not be able to access their programmes by physically coming to the campus and otherwise. Also, another key goal of the Board of Governors is to ensure the financial stability and long-term viability of UCCI with a view of UCCI becoming self-sustaining.

Based on the work that has taken place through the Board of Governors at UCCI, the Ministry is heartened to know that there will be an even greater return on the country's investment made in UCCI. The Ministry looks forward to the continued partnership with UCCI as our national tertiary institution.

Madam Speaker, turning to another area that falls under the Ministry dealing with employment, I would like to speak about some of the exciting work

that has taken place and some of the accomplishments and achievements to date of the National Workforce Development Agency [NWDA]. That is to say that there is still a lot of work to be done and I will acknowledge and recognise that. But it is absolutely imperative that I recognise the hard work that has gone on during this past year by members within the Ministry and members at the NWDA to get us this far.

Also, I would like to recognise and thank Councillor Suckoo for agreeing to act as the chair of the NWDA task force in working with NWDA and the task force in order to help to put forward the recommendations in many instances, which were carried forward by the Ministry as he indicated in his contribution. As Minister, I took the decision that this was such a critical area that needed to move posthaste that as the conversations were had, as the recommendations were had, the Ministry took the proactive approach to act on those recommendations. And to actually be able to stand here and talk about some of the key accomplishments is very encouraging, and again I would like to thank all of the persons who have worked very hard and diligently in getting us to this point.

Madam Speaker, in an effort to better equip and position the NWDA to meet the needs of the various stakeholders, as I said, in September the Government approved the convening of a task force and the accompanying internal review committee. Given the importance of the NWDA and the role it plays in helping to support—and I use those words “helping to support” and will talk more about that in a while—Caymanians in their employment efforts it was important for the agency to take this swift and proactive approach.

Madam Speaker, through the reengineering that took place at the NWDA over the past year, I am pleased to report that it is now much better positioned to be what its mandate is: a valued partner and facilitator in the training, development and employment of Caymanians by supporting the work readiness of Caymanians through skills assessment and a range of education, training and development opportunities. And by helping to align Caymanians who are actively seeking employment or career progression within needs of employers. Also, by helping to advance a national workforce development and training agenda informed by relevant and meaningful research and data.

Madam Speaker, the reengineering process was focused primarily on the Employment Services Unit of the NWDA and resulted in the following advances being taken during this last financial year.

The Speaker: Minister, you have 22 minutes remaining.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Madam Speaker, am I able to ask for an extension of time either today or Wednesday?

The Speaker: Perhaps at the conclusion of your two hours you could have a word with your Premier and see whether they are prepared to move the appropriate motion.

Hon. Tara A. Rivers: Thank you.

Madam Speaker, the reengineering was primarily focused on a number of activities: 1) The determination that the activities of the NWDA must be related to the overarching goal of human capital development focused on training, development, retooling and the re-skilling of job seekers.

Madam Speaker, in assessing the Employment Services Unit it was determined that the greatest shift in the work that the unit was undertaking would be from a position of finding jobs that matched the current skills and experience of job seekers to a position whereby the NWDA was assisting with the process of human capital development. Historically, the instrument that was used to measure the success of the unit was predominately based on one output, which was defined by how many Caymanians were successfully placed in jobs. So, when a candidate referred by the NWDA was not hired for the job, the NWDA was categorised as a failure.

The challenge with this method of measurement only, is that it does not take into account the various variables related to the NWDA's inability to place a Caymanian in a job. Some of these variables go beyond the scope of the NWDA, such as the work permit approval process handled by the Immigration Department and its boards and other things that don't fall within the scope of the NWDA. So, Madam Speaker, it was important to recognise that if we are measuring the success of the agency, we need to do so with metrics that make sense to what the agency is set up to do.

Again, the goal of the NWDA is to be a partner and facilitator—not sole provider—in the training, development and employment of Caymanians. I would also like to say at this point that I have asked the Deputy Governor (and he has agreed) to ensure that employment within the Civil Service also will be registered with the NWDA, because, again, there is something that I need to clarify. A number of people will come to me, or come to the Ministry, with respect to employment concerns as it relates to the Civil Service. But as I have outlined before, this is a matter that is not under the ambit of my Ministry. Anything to do with Civil Service employment, or Civil Service employment related concerns, must be directed to the relevant heads of departments or chief officers or the Deputy Governor within the Civil Service structure. But I am happy to know that the Deputy Governor has agreed to work with each of the chief officers to ensure that the positions advertised for government jobs will also be advertised through and registered with the

NWDA. So, all persons registered will also have access to that information as well.

So, in reengineering the Employment Services Unit the Ministry has set the unit on a course designed to focus on human capital development. The premise of this shift is now to help identify why Caymanians are unemployed. The NWDA can then support the Caymanian in addressing that particular barrier, or barriers, by working to connect jobseekers with programmes either run by the NWDA or other government agencies where necessary. The Caymanian is then better positioned to access, maintain and progress in employment.

In facilitating this shift in focus and scope of work, it was determined that a comprehensive intake and assessment process was needed to identify what these barriers to employment are for respective job seekers. In some instances there may be very little, so the level of service necessary to be provided by the NWDA staff would be minimal. In some instances these barriers may be very great, so there may be a need for greater intervention and greater support provided by the officers.

However, through this assessment process the aim is for the agency to become more efficient at identifying very quickly who needs what level of support. And to be able to work with other government agencies in order to coordinate that work, if necessary, depending on what those barriers are as presented during the assessment process, these may include training opportunities offered by the NWDA or externally. They may also involve coordinating volunteer work, therapeutic services, temporary support with housing or food, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, et cetera.

Madam Speaker, job-seeking clients will be held accountable for this professional development plan that will be introduced as of Friday last, going forward, for those persons who identify with significant barriers to employment. And contingencies may be placed on jobseekers that require them to comply with a plan in order to access NWDA referral system. This process will provide the foundation for developing what is commonly known as a "welfare-to-work programme."

This Government is committed to helping to employ or to see that our people find meaningful employment in the best way possible and by actually working collaboratively as a system to dealing with the issues of employment and helping those persons who can work find work, keep work, and progress in work. But, as I indicated, it is a collective responsibility of this Government and the various ministries. And this Government recognises that we must take a holistic approach to employment. So, in this coming year we will be looking to do just that because there is a role and there is a responsibility of the NWDA, and there is also a role and responsibility of economic development and the ministries are responsible for entrepre-

neurship, job creation, access to healthcare, health insurance, housing, social support, et cetera. So, again, it is this holistic approach to employment that will be employed by the Government going forward. The NWDA looks forward to being a valued player in this process.

Madam Speaker, I see that time is against me. In the event that I am not in a position to detail all of the work of the Ministry, and all of the work the Ministry has done over the past year in this debate, I will look to bring forward specific statements addressing some of the advancements made by the NWDA in particular.

Madam Speaker, with that in mind, I want to touch on a few of the highlights which would be remiss of me not to mention in this forum. And that is the development and launch of the database interface from NWDA to Immigration. As I said before, Madam Speaker, what we have done from the NWDA's perspective is taken away that barrier, which was information, and information sharing between the agency with respect to persons registered, persons applying for jobs. Now the Immigration Department has the tools, has the information necessary to make an informed decision. But, as I have indicated, that responsibility lies with the Immigration Department. And we would hope and expect, as a Government, that they would use that information wisely when making decisions about whether or not a work permit should be and is granted for a particular job based on persons who may have applied for that job.

Madam Speaker, we will be moving to build on the National Internship Programme and the National Apprenticeship Programme which we have started in this coming year. I am currently in conversation with a number of private sector organisations, and I have started the conversation with the Chamber of Commerce as well, to move this programme forward in the coming year. As I have indicated, we actually created a position that will help to coordinate. So the apprenticeship programme will be based on a community model working with companies already in existence who may be offering this training to their employees but to expand that to include provisions for persons who may also benefit from that training but who, through the auspices of that job, may not be able to offer. So, we are looking to work collaboratively in a community based model in order to develop and promote a National Apprenticeship Programme.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of advances made within the Department of Labour and Pensions and I would turn your attention to the progress report which I just distributed. Again, I would look to inform this honourable House at a later point, given that time is against me today. I also want to recognise that the minimum wage committee has been appointed in earnest and will now be working to move forward the agenda of determining an appropriate minimum wage regime for the country. Again, more

statements or more information will be forthcoming about that at a later point.

Madam Speaker, with respect to Gender Affairs, I need to speak briefly on that point because we have achieved a number of milestones in this year. Madam Speaker, as you are aware, the Ministry hosted the first ever national conference on women. I have to say it was, by all accounts, a great success. And these are the accounts of the participants themselves. We had a packed room and a tremendous amount of dialogue and discourse among the women and men who participated from all age groups, professional backgrounds, all categories. What we are looking to do is build upon that and we are currently in the second part of the consultation phase which allows people who may not have been able to attend to actually submit written comments or concerns with respect to issues of lingering discrimination in legislation, in practice or otherwise, in the country.

So, we look to actually build upon that and develop a plan of action once the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has been extended to us. And we look forward to a favourable response from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in this regard.

Madam Speaker, as I indicated, I would like to speak briefly about some of the West Bay related initiatives. Since taking office, and as you know, as a Minister it is often very difficult to find the time, especially with a Ministry such as mine, where there are more subject areas than time will permit in terms of being able to discuss, to be able to spend the time with constituents and make the kind of time to be in the constituency. But I am happy to be able to report that I am committed, and have been having regular district meetings since the beginning of this year on Wednesday afternoons. I am committed to being at my district office, which is above Centennial Towers, or above Subway at Centennial Towers, on Wednesday afternoons, if I am not in the House or off Island.

Madam Speaker, I encourage the constituents who may not be aware of this to come out to the district office, and make an appointment if necessary, to see me. I have been seeing a number of constituents since actually formally launching . . . well, I haven't actually formally launched the office, it was more of a soft launch, but the office has been operational and there is someone there on a part-time basis because, Madam Speaker, of the unique situation of me being one of four representatives in West Bay, but obviously as an Independent it is something that I am having to be able to manage on my own in that respect. But nonetheless I am very happy to say that I have been consistent with my weekly constituency meetings, seen a number of the constituents, and have been able to interact at that level which I committed to doing when I agreed to take the position as a member of Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, I was also very happy to be able to host four public meetings in the district of West Bay since taking office. Again, it was something that I committed to when I campaigned, to bring a new style, a new form of participatory governance. So, by actually making the time to have these quarterly meetings, I wasn't sure I was going to be able to do it, so I didn't commit to quarterly meetings, I just committed to regular meetings at first. But in my mind I was aiming for the quarterly meetings. And I have to say that I am very happy to have been able to deliver upon that promise to be accessible to the community and the turnouts have been very encouraging. So I will continue to have regular meetings in the community in the coming year.

Madam Speaker, I also want to state that there are a number of district initiatives which, as Minister, I am not able to necessarily drive, but I am there to act as support. I say that because my goal in being one of the four representatives in the district of West Bay is to act as an enabler and to act as a facilitator, and to act as somebody who helps the community empower itself. This is exactly what has happened with respect to a number of the district committees that have evolved initially out of my campaign committee, but now we have members of the community who are just concerned about the various issues in which those committees address, so we have a very active tourism committee, an environment committee, and an employment committee.

Again, I want to publicly thank the very hard-working efforts of the people involved with those initiatives on the ground in West Bay, in saying, thank you for giving of your time and demonstrating that the people in West Bay are concerned. We are concerned about what happens in our district, and we are concerned about taking action and doing stuff that is positive with respect to promoting the interests.

Madam Speaker, I also want to talk about some of those initiatives which I hope will move forward in the coming year and to continue to support, which is the Heritage Craft Market. At my last public meeting the chair of that tourism committee, Mr. Cresswell Powery, spoke at great length about it.

I also want to state that as being one of the four representatives in the district of West Bay, I am there to represent all. I know that the persons who support me are across the political divide, across the political spectrum, and so persons that may not necessarily be involved on my campaign committee, I want to give a public invitation. If you are concerned about issues related to tourism, the environment, and employment, I invite you to become a part of these district level committees. As I have said in this honourable House before, elections are now over; it's time for the community to come together, to work together for the betterment of West Bay and the country as a whole.

So, with respect to the workings of the craft market and the initiatives of the district committee being taken forward, I know there are a number of other persons in the community who are also interested in that. So, I invite them to come and be part of this community wide initiative to provide an alternative to some of the George Town spots for tourism. (No offence to my George Town colleagues, of course!) But we are working with the Minister of Tourism and the Ministry of Tourism to develop these local West Bay related tourism products. As everyone in this House recognises, West Bayers in particular . . . our lifeline is very much associated with the tourism industry. So, we have a lot to offer and we look forward to continuing to work with the Government in developing these projects going forward.

Madam Speaker, at this point, I also want to recognise the hard work of everyone in this House. It is important for us to also promote a sense of camaraderie, but to also recognise that we are here to serve the interests of this country. I would like to again commend my colleagues in Cabinet, commend my colleagues on the Government bench. But to also commend the other representatives who are also working diligently in their districts in order to better the lives of their constituents.

We may not always agree, but we are all here for the same reason, which is to work towards promoting the best interest of this country and the people that we are elected to represent. So, with that, Madam Speaker, I would like to say thank you very much for your indulgence. I would like to say thank you to the very hardworking civil servants who have allowed me to stand here and talk about some of the achievements. Again, I promise to speak to some of these in greater detail with some statements to be forthcoming in the House. But also to say one year has gone by and we have a lot to show for it. I am very proud to be a part of this Government that has worked very diligently and very determinedly to get us to this point. And I look forward to continuing to work as hard in the coming year to ensure that we continue to move this good ship Cayman forward on the right path.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

ADJOURNMENT

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

We are getting near the end. It is my intention to complete the debate on the budget on Wednesday, when next the House will resume. By my calculation, I have been told that the two other Members from West Bay will not be speaking on the budget, so we have two left on this side, plus the wind-up by the Minister of Finance and myself. So, my intention is that we complete the debate on Wednesday, even if that

means we work a little bit later than seven o'clock, and for us to commence Finance Committee at 9:30 am on Thursday. I am saying that now so that Members can make the necessary arrangements for them to be able to stay.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I move the adjournment of this honourable House until 10:00 am on Wednesday.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House be so adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

At 6:26 pm the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 4th June 2014.

